

**PRACTICES OF WITCH ACCUSATION IN TAMANG COMMUNITY IN
KAVREPALANCHOK DISTRICT**

A Dissertation

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By

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LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

We certify that this dissertation, entitled "Practices of Witch Accusation in Tamang Community in Kavrepalanchok District," was prepared by Mr. Sabin Bahadur Zoowa under our guidance. We hereby recommend this dissertation for final examinations by the Research Committee of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University, in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology.

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Date: March, 2024

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation, entitled "Practices of Witch Accusation in Tamang Community in Kavrepalanchok District," is my own work and that it contains no materials previously published. I have not used its materials for the award of any kind or any other degree. Where other authors' sources of information have been used, they have been acknowledged.

Signature:

Name: Sabin Bahadur Zoowa

Date: March, 2024

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ABSTRACT

All past research on witchcraft accusations has claimed that it is a form of violence against women and considered it a social problem, but its social causes and existence in human society have not been well explored. To address these shortcomings in past research, this dissertation seeks to explore the reasons for the social structure and construction of witchcraft. This is probably the first study on witch allegations that seeks it from a socially constructive perspective, and it also helps to raise awareness and draw the attention of all concerned in this regard.

The main purpose of this study was to identify the socially perceived attributes and factors associated with witch allegations that are mostly prevalent among women in the Tamang community in the Kavrepalanchok district. A qualitative research approach was adopted that helped in acquiring knowledge, attitude, and practice regarding this complex phenomenon to a greater extent. This dissertation studied fifteen incidences of witch allegations in the Kavrepalanchok district and triangulated the findings with each other. The victim, perpetrator, and witch doctor are the primary informants of the study.

Some sociological concepts, such as the social construction of reality, social theory and social structure, theories of social facts, and theories of gender inequalities, were used. Unlike these concepts, the explanation of witchcraft presented by the social anthropologist Evans Pritchard was also used in some ways, where he argued that the witch accusation cannot be understood without the social context and its social function.

The findings indicated that most of the factors leading to an allegation of a witch in Tamangs are present at their social and structural levels; they are social structure, social network, power, and gender role. Therefore, this dissertation has succeeded in uncovering such hidden social forces related to witch accusations, such as emphasizing that this accusation of a witch is just a myth in the minds of the people.

Finally, this dissertation would be a new milestone that helps in bringing knowledge of social reality and the social function of witches. Therefore, this dissertation would be of great significance to the future researcher who wishes to research this subject matter. In the context of Nepal, it certainly helps to reduce the incidence of witch accusations, whereas the international community will be compelled to reflect on it. Along with this, it could be further helpful and valuable to interested NGOs, INGOs, governments, and individuals to plan and implement programs to reduce witch accusations in all parts of the country.

Keywords: *witch, accusation, social structure, social network, power, gender role*

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This research focuses on the practices of witch accusation in Kavrepalanchok District, where such practices are reported highest in Nepal (Nepal Police, 2016). In the district, the incidence of witch accusations is found to be comparatively higher among the Tamang community than in other ethnic/caste groups. Therefore, this research has made the Tamang community of Kavrepalanchok district as the focus of the study.

According to a report issued by the Government of Nepal (2012) on forms of violence against women (VAW), accusations of *boksi*¹ are seen more commonly in Nepal. The report concluded that women, particularly those from *dalit*² or religious minority groups, widows, divorced or separated women, and women living in hilly areas experienced higher levels of witch accusations. Women in their mid thirties and above with lower levels of social networking were subjected to discrimination, physical, sexual and psychological abuse (p. 95). This shows that young women are the most vulnerable and it may be because they are subjected to other forms of violence too. Therefore, the practice of accusing women as witch is not a new phenomenon in Nepali society.

Although it is a common practice to accuse witches in almost all communities in Nepal, such practices are more prevalent among the poor, lower castes, and tribal people. Women are more affected than men in most of the incidents of accusations. In Nepali society, there is a custom of attributing mental and physical diseases in humans, along with material losses, livestock diseases and other misfortunes to witchcraft. It is believed that witches bewitch individuals during the night, causing them to experience feelings of suffocation, which are attributed to the witches' attacks. Victims often awaken suddenly, drenched in sweat, and experience intense fear. This process is called *aithan* in the Nepali language. The following morning, people report that a witch attacked them last night. Similarly, people also show some blue patches on their skin and consider these patches to be witch bites. These patches are believed to be the blood-sucking sites of witches. Therefore, witches are also blamed for sucking blood from people while they are sleeping.

¹A woman having alleged supernatural powers to control people or events by the use of magic

²A member of the lowest class in the traditional Hindu social hierarchy

Even though there is widespread belief in witches among people, they, however, cannot say what a witch is. No one, including *dhami/jhakri*, has ever seen a witch and can identify one. For them, a witch is a bad person who hurts anyone. This is what the people have heard from their childhood. Therefore, a witch is a common term in human society used for a bad and evil person. So, in society, if someone is angry, aggressive, jealous, uncontrollable, and has family disputes, then the strong call the weak as a witch. In this way, without understanding the meaning of the word 'witch' and without ever encountering one, this word is being used frequently in human society.

People perceive a witch as an invisible power and believe that it enters someone's body and makes that person sick or dead. People believe that it is driven by a person who has learned witchcraft, who is then targeted as a witch. Moreover, after listening to *dhami/jhakri's* words, people suspect a weak and helpless woman in their close relationship as a witch. This practice has been going on until now based on what someone has said and heard in the past.

Based on the information gathered from newspapers, online news, and websites (see annex 9&10), we know that the practice of accusing witches is more prevalent in Terai than in hill. In Terai, most of the incidents are resolved within the village in presence of *mukhiya*³ or *panchayat*⁴. Such cases are often not reported to the police. Thus, the reported cases are being lower than the actual cases that have happened in Terai. Even in the hills, like in the Terai, it was customary to settle the case of witch accusation within the village itself, but in the last few years, people have started reporting such incidents to the police. The Witchcraft-Related Accusation (Crime and Punishment) Act of 2015 has also encouraged people to lodge the cases in the police. Based on the gravity of such offence, the convict is punishable by imprisonment and fine, or both. Due to this reason, as a hill area, the cases of witch accusations are found to be more in Kavrepalanchok than other places.

Similar to other societies, witch exists as a social and cultural reality of the everyday life of the Tamang community. Witches are endowed with a power of coercion, by which they may control individual behaviors. However, although there is no universally accepted definition of witch, the layperson's understanding is that it is the art of doing evil through spiritual power that is believed to be controlled only by *dhami/jhakri*, as they have stronger powers than

³The headman of a village or clan etc.

⁴Traditionally panchayat consisted of elderly and wise people chosen by the local community, who used to settle disputes between individuals and villages

witches do. The Tamang community also has people who do the same thing as *dhami/jhakri*, whom they call *bombo*. In Tamang community, there is at least one *bombo*, and if someone in the family is sick or has some misfortune, they go to the *bombo* for treatment and resolve misfortune.

In fact, the *bombo* and the witch have a very close relationship like two sides of the same coin. One cannot not exist in the absence of another. In most of the cases, accused women or men normally do not accept the charge, but once overpowered by the so-called *bombo*, they are forced confess. It is believed that the *bombo* can easily identify the demands of witches, which are then explained to the family of the victim. The belief is that the witch releases her magic bond from the victim after fulfilling her demand, which will then cure automatically the victim. This kind of faith healing procedure carried out by the *bombo* is deep-rooted in Tamang community and this helps them to conduct their affairs with no hindrance. In general, women are often accused of practicing witchcraft, but men can also be accused in some instances.

The accused women are subjected to the worst forms of maltreatment. Different forms of psychological harassment like humiliation, threats and public denouncement as a witch, expulsion from house, restriction in social gatherings, and ostracism from village are common. This series of violence against women and accusation of being a witch is carried out. *Bombo* plays a key role in providing an authoritative accusation against the targeted victim in order to rouse the whole Tamang community to participate in the violence. We can see the deep traumatic impact of such an experience not only in the lives of the women who are accused of being witches, but also in their families who bear the consequences. Often, all the family members are tortured or compelled to leave their homes and the areas in which they have been living for many years. However, an accusation of witchcraft against women is a serious problem, but it often receives little attention from the relevant authorities. Therefore, witches are the byproduct of the beliefs in witchcraft and the practices of witch accusations.

1.2 Statement of the research problem

The accusation of witchcraft has been prevalent as a major social problem in Nepalese society. Even in the 21st century, persecution and killing of women in the name of witch is still rampant in Nepal, which can be considered as a social evil. There has been perpetual discrimination in Nepal because of accusations of witch, where women are more vulnerable

to abuse than men. In the context of Nepal, however, witchcraft is viewed as an undesirable and harmful phenomenon for society, as it still exists in almost every part of the country, but is mainly prevalent in rural areas. This may have happened because the current law of Nepal regarding witch accusations is not in favor of the survivor. If a complaint is filed and the guilty is imprisoned, the person is apprehended for a short duration and slapped with a fine. Those involved in witch accusations are not severely punished under the Nepal's legal system.

According to Nepal Police (2016), 175 cases of witchcraft accusations have been registered during the five-year's period from 2011/12 to 2015/16 BS. Incidents that have occurred within these five years have proven that instead of decreasing, such incidents are increasing every year. Nepal is featured prominently in media reports on witch-hunts. The Informal Sector Service Centre (INSEC) Nepal, a non-government organization working for the protection and promotion of human rights in Nepal, however, reports a different set of data related to witchcraft accusations. The number of witchcraft accusations has seemingly increased within the last 3 years, including 5 deaths in total. The data shows that the number of incidents in the year 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020 is 34, 33, 63, 44, and 62 respectively. The numbers have massively increased in the year 2018 and 2020 (HEAL, 2023)⁵.

Moreover, since the cases of witch accusation are not decreasing, it has become a big challenge and a matter of concern for the Nepali society. Various efforts are being made by the government level as well as the various national and international organizations to reduce this practice of witch accusation, but this practice is still prevalent all over the country. Therefore, the phenomenon of witch accusation is becoming a burning issue in Nepal.

The various people's movements have brought changes in the political system of the country, but they have not been able to change the attitude, beliefs, behavior and social distortions of the Nepali people. Due to our inability to understand the lives of women who are accused of being witches, this problem has started to worsen without any solution. No one is interested in the fact that their community life, norms, and values also play an equally important role in accusing women of being witches. Witch accusation and persecution, more commonly known as 'witch-hunting', are often overlooked but, they are the major social problems in many

⁵ HEAL Group provide support in immunization, cold chain, nutrition, HIV/AIDS, education, assessment studies in Nepal

societies across the global south, including Nepal (Adinkrah & Adhikari, 2014). As a result, the incidence of witch accusations is increasing day by day.

People indulge in heinous crimes and inhuman activities like witch accusation without restraint and fear. In our context, the poor, miserable, helpless, single women, widows, *dalit*, *janajati*, and untouchables are mostly suspected of being a witch without any proof. Once they are accused, it is difficult for the survivors to stay in society for the rest of their lives. In Nepal, women accused of being witches are vulnerable to various forms of violence. Many times, soot is smeared on their faces and they are to consume human urine and excreta (Adinkrah and Adhikari, 2014). Some alleged witches are forced to wear garlands of shoes around their necks, while many are physically assaulted or battered with sticks and other blunt objects, slapped or kicked. Among different forms of violence perpetrated against women, the accusation of the witch is a problem in Nepal and one that makes women more vulnerable to abuse (Gurung, 2016).

This is one of the big social issues facing such women, leading to their being socially ostracized, psychologically and emotionally disturbed, and even being killed. However, most of these incidents are not reported because women and their families fear reprisals. Poverty, systemic gender inequality and weak state laws provide a context in which these behaviors occur. Sharma (2009) suggests that it is terrible for a woman to be charged being a witch baselessly. Once charged, people give mental and physical torture to the accused women. Most of the times, if one member of the family is accused of being a witch, the whole family is excluded from society. Therefore, the social condition of the family accused of being witch is very miserable. Even to this day, women facing the charge of witchcraft are compelled to leave their homes and families.

Reports about witch accusations, which are often published in newspapers, online news, and websites (see annex 9 & 10) also confirm that such incidents are deep-rooted in Nepali society. However, the number of accusations is much higher than we know because most of the incidents are resolved within the village itself and remain unreported. In most of the cases, the survivor does not try to report the injustice done to her to the police due to the fear and threat of the perpetrator. If we look for cases where a woman is accused of being a witch but the accused did not report the incident to the police, many such cases can be found. This means that even in today's scientific era, women are severely exploited, and are thus living in fear. Looking at the nature of the incidents that have been reported to the police, the survivor

secretly takes only a few relatives with her because the perpetrator can do anything to her. In this sense, we can understand that the survivor is afraid to complain about the injustice done to her.

There are several witchcraft related incidents in Nepal. Some of the selected representative cases that have occurred in different parts of Nepal from 2013 to 2018 are presented below:

45 years Domani Chaudhary of Dhodana VDC-2, Siraha, was severely beaten by her neighbors over the death of a newborn in her village. Ramakanta Chaudhary, the father of the infant, allegedly roused her neighbors into beating her. She suffered severe injuries to the chest and head, and had to be admitted to the hospital. Her son and daughter were also injured when they tried to shield their mother⁶.

A 32 years dalit woman Laxmi Pariyar of Kavrepalanchok was found dead in her home on 13 December 2016, following a public torture and repeated assaults on 9 December 2016, by a group of people led by schoolteacher Hira Lama near the premises of Suryodaya Secondary School in Sano Bangthali⁷.

65 years Kusama Devi Yadav of Siraha was attacked inside her home and beaten by Shiva Nath Yadav and two others from her village on 13 April 2017. Her husband also sustained injuries trying to shield her. She was taken to a medical center for treatment after being rescued with the help of other villagers. Shiva Nath Yadav's daughter had been ill, for which he blamed the victim of witchcraft⁸.

Radha Chaudhary, 20 years, of Deukali of Ghodaghodi Municipality-5, Kailali, was beaten black and blue on the charge of practicing witchcraft by Ram Bahadur Chaudhary, a so-called Bhole Baba. She was dragged to the ground and thrashed. A group of seven persons were involved in beating her mercilessly. No one came for her rescue, when she begged for help⁹.

There is a wider belief that a person involved in witchcraft inflicts harm upon others. This notion has been passed down from one generation to the next as a cruel legacy. Further, it is believed that witchcraft can be passed down from one person to another or women can pass on their powers of witchcraft to their daughters and daughters-in-law, who can also pass it on to their children in a never ending cycle (Sah, 2007).

⁶Republica, 6 February 2013

⁷The Himalayan, 21 December 2016

⁸The Kathmandu Post, 18 April 2017

⁹The Himalayan, 11 March 2018

Talking about the health care system and health care workforce in Nepal, the World Bank has published the World Health Organization's global health workforce statistics, OECD, supplemented by country data in 2021¹⁰. This shows that, there are 0.9 physician and 3.5 nurses and midwives for 1,000 individuals in Nepal. As recommended by WHO, the number of nurses and midwives is satisfactory, but the number of doctors seems to be insufficient, which is recommended to be 2.3 per 1,000 individuals. Due to lack of physicians, people mostly rely on the traditional treatment system in the rural areas, and patients often suffer premature death.

Therefore, the residents of rural communities and even of the cities who have traditional belief that illness are caused by bad spirits may refrain from seeking medical attention, preferring to visit local shaman or faith healers known as *dhami/jhakri*. These *dhami/jhakri*, also known as witch doctors, play a role in witch-hunting because they ignite superstitious beliefs. Gurung (2016) also says that in Nepali society, illnesses, financial troubles, and a range of other misfortunes are associated with witch accusation. The traditional healers, who are the main actors that enable this practice, are very strong. Despite various efforts and attempts to stop it, this social evil seems to grow stronger, and its reach has become wider than ever before.

The Tamang community is one of the marginalized and backward communities, where the tradition of accusing each other of witch has been in practice for a long time and is still the same today. When family quarrels and disputes take a big shape and there is a situation of hand-to-hand combat between them, then the strong accuse the weak person of being a witch, which is a common phenomenon. The sad thing is that people are excited to find witches and torture them. They closely watch the incident, take photographs and videos and clap but do not speak against the torture. In most situations, the accused are forced to confess to the charge. It is because the accused cannot do anything in front of a large crowd of people and is forced to accept whatever the reality is. In this way, it the accused is declared as a witch. When people get sick or face some misfortunes in Tamang community, they primarily go to *bombo* for treatment. Treating the patient by the *bombos* does not always guarantee a cure. In addition, when *bombo* cannot heal the sick person, he blames it on others, which has led to innocent women to be accused of witchcraft.

¹⁰ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.MED.PHYS.ZS?locations=NP>

1.3 Research questions

The relevant sources of information got from the review of literature helped to know what are already studied about the research topic and how extensively this has already been researched. Doing a series of searching research questions, wild cards were used to identify a method of study that applies to the research. Conceptualizing, developing, writing, and re-writing research questions were done to achieve a dynamic, reflective, and a qualitative inquiry process. Finally, gaps or inconsistencies were determined and unanswered questions about the research topic or the research problem were discovered. Then, a rationale behind the questions asked in the research was carefully arranged.

In this backdrop, the following research questions have been generated. Generally, why the case of witch accusation is often made especially against women in the relationship, whose family does not have a male presence or even if, they are not aggressive, where accuser's strong social power and networks functions as a weapon.

Specificially,

- a) Why do witch accusations mostly happen only within a close social structure and not with distant and unknown people?
- b) How do the social networks and power of an accuser function as a tool for accusing witches?
- c) How do the socially expected gender roles play an important position in accusation of witch?

1.4 Objective of the study

Generally, the aim of this dissertation is to explore the social structure and context in which poor and helpless women, whose male partner is either absence or non-violent, are mostly targeted as witch because of the accuser's strong social power and networks established in the society.

Specifically,

As witch accusations mostly happens within the close relationship and known people, this dissertation aims to explore the social structure and social context that promotes the accusations.

Knowing that powerful people accuse the poor and weak of being witches, this thesis attempts to understand the social forces and networks that are imposed upon the survivors.

Even in this modern time, gender discrimination is still widespread and it is seen that it plays an effective role in relation to the witch accusation, so this dissertation focus on such gender roles expected by the society, where women are more affected than men.

1.5 Rationale of the study

Most of the past research conducted on witch accusations only emphasized the fact that witch accusation is one form of violence against women. Such studies do not talk about the social phenomenon that promotes the occurrence of witch accusations upon the poor, widow, and deprived women. These studies do not trace out the 'why' and 'how' of the witch accusation and its impact on society, especially the accused and her family. Thus, to a large extent, this research seeks to explore and clear the subject of witch accusation from the sociological perspective, based on sufficient empirical information received from the field study.

Talking about the Tamang community, their religion and culture has highly influenced them due to which witch accusation is the part that they believe and practice from generation to generation. Many scholars from national and international institutions have conducted research and studies about the Tamang community and their beliefs and practices in witchcraft. However, none of them attempts to explore the social factors of witch accusations. They do not go in depth to bring out the social matter that promotes witch accusations in the Tamang community.

This research explores the social basis of witch accusation and its social construction. Only by knowing the social reasons for accusing witches, we can reduce this social malpractice. The finding of this concludes that close social relations, social networks and power, and gender roles are socially constructed matters that promote witch accusations in the Tamang community. They were discovered by applying of few social theories and concepts of

legendary sociologists. Therefore, the achievement and conclusions of the research have both theoretical and empirical basis too.

Finally, this dissertation would be a new milestone that helps in bringing the knowledge of social reality and the social function of witches. Therefore, this dissertation would be of great significance to the future researcher, who wishes to research this subject. In Nepal, it may help to reduce the incidence of witch accusations, whereas it will compel the international community to think once on it. Along with this, it could be further helpful and valuable to the interested Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs), government, and individuals to plan and implement programs to reduce witch accusations from all parts of the country.

1.6 Methodological limitations

This is a fact that there is in the world that is without its shortcomings and this research study is no exception. This study has also some limitations, which are as follows.

Even though it is common to hear in news and newspapers that the cases of witch accusations are more in Terai, however, according to the records of Nepal Police (2016), Kavrepalanchok district of Bagmati province has the highest number of such cases. Therefore, this area was chosen for the study. There may be many unreported cases of witch accusations in the area but they are not included here as this research only covers cases of witch accusations reported to the police.

As a male researcher, investigating a sensitive issue such as witch accusation is not an easy job. Thus, every visit to the participants was accompanied by a female who was either a local teacher, a social worker, a representative of women development office or the researcher's relative. It was done in order to establish a conducive environment between the researcher and the survivors. In some cases, researcher used them to act as a patient in front of the *bombo* to observe and experience his healing procedure.

Similarly, language was the next challenge faced during the conversation with the participants. Tamang language is predominantly used for speaking in the study area. Thus, their customary words are little difficult to translate into Nepali and then English. In such situation, the participants were asked to speak slowly in Nepali language and their words

were written down as accurately as possible. In addition, some noted Tamang words were translated and written after returning from the study area. The most interesting and telling thing was that the researcher also felt a lot of anxiety and fear to meet the woman who was accused of being a witch, which then gradually subsided.

1.7 Organization of the study

I organized this dissertation along thematic lines. The dissertation contains seven chapters. The first chapter contains an introduction. Witch accusation is one of the various forms of violence to which Nepalese women are exposed. Every year, many women are accused of being a witch in Nepal. This chapter attempts to prepare a short background of the study, covering certain aspects. The chapter covers the following sections: background of the study, problem statement, research questions, aim and rationale of the study, methodological limitations, and operational definitions. The brief presentation of these sections creates a good starting point for the study.

Similarly, the second chapter reviews the related literature and also includes theoretical background, along with a conceptual framework. This chapter develops a theoretical/conceptual framework where related literature are reviewed and different sociological concepts such as the social construction of reality, social theory and social structure, theory of social facts, and theories of gender inequalities are used. Unlike these concepts, the explanation of witchcraft presented by the social anthropologist Evans Pritchard was also used. He argues that we cannot understand the witch accusation without the social context and its social function. The chapter covers the following sections: social science explanations of witch accusation, cross-cultural practices of witch accusation, legal provisions regarding witch accusation in Nepal, conceptual framework, and research gap.

The third chapter presents the methodological procedures that have been applied to the study. This study employs interviews and observations as qualitative research methodologies. The data were coded, analyzed to identify recurring themes, and used to draw conclusions. This study covers fifteen cases of witch accusation scattered all over the Kavrepalanchok district. The participants of the study were survivors, perpetrators, and *bombo*. The chapter contains the following sections: motivation for the study, research design, nature, and source of data, selection of the research participants, researcher's position, tools of data collection, triangulation and verification, and ethical consideration.

Chapter 4 presents the introduction of the Kavrepalanchok district as a study area. This includes rationale of the selection of the study area, Tamang community and community life, survivors with their life history, pattern of witch accusation, and socio-economic status of survivor and perpetrator.

Chapter 5 presents the social structural embeddedness of witch accusations. The discussion has shown that the accusation of a witch mostly prevails in a closer social relationship (composed of kinship, relatives, and neighbors). Each relationship is associated with some meaningful action. The closer a person to each other, the more they know each other's strengths and weaknesses. Thus, the weaker person in the society is being targeted for the accusation of a witch. People do not blame a witch on an unknown and strange person. They do not have any interest to blame witch to distant and unknown people and if that happens, it makes no sense to them. Thus, for the selfish interest, blaming each other for being a witch exists in a closer social relationship.

Chapter six deals with the role of social networks and power in witch accusation. Social network is important in all areas of social life. It implies the ability to impose one's will on others, which can manifest in many forms and witch accusations. Strengthening a social network means increasing one's social power. People having a good social network consider themselves as superior and stronger in society and can accuse weaker people of witchcraft. This chapter explores intra-ethnic feuds within the Tamang community, including issues related to class hierarchy, disputes arising from latecomers and weak social ties, conventional conflicts over property, and manifestations of jealousy, all of which contribute to witchcraft accusations.

In a patriarchal society like the Tamang community, a man plays an important role in the family. This chapter presents the accused women from such families where the men were naïve, weak, and not aggressive. Such incidents happened when men cannot fulfill their expected gender role in society. If a woman is brave, aggressive, and very active, then she is also likely to be accused of the witch. This is the virtue of a patriarchal society where women are prevented from moving forward and accused of being witch. This chapter highly emphasizes men and women's assertiveness leading to witch accusations.

Finally, the seventh chapter presents the summary of the findings, conclusions, and knowledge contribution. The chapter summarizes the overall findings of the study. The

findings indicate that accusations of witchcraft predominantly occur within close social networks, comprising kinship, relatives, and neighbors. Failure to fulfill socially expected gender roles, as well as social networks and power dynamics, serve as significant factors driving people to accuse others within the village. This chapter draws the conclusion that witches are the byproduct of the beliefs of witchcraft and the practice of witch accusation. Regarding the knowledge contribution, this chapter presents that the witch is the product of interaction between survivors, perpetrators, and *bombo* in the society. In addition, with the support of relevant facts, it can be said that witch is socially and culturally constructed. Therefore, if the qualitative and effective programs of various non-governmental organizations, government organizations and other related stakeholders engaged in social change and development work are implemented, it helps in changing the thoughts and beliefs of practice of accusing witch in Tamang community.

1.8 Operational definitions of the key terms

It ascribes meaning to a concept or construct by specifying the operations that must be performed in order to measure or manipulate the concept, as the data collected during research is in terms of observable events (Ary, 1985). Operational definition ensures a succinct description of concepts and terms applied in this research to standardize the information collected. This provides the meaning, function and scope of terms, concepts and processes of research contexts. Thus, operational definition in the research is important for replication and reliability of data and information. In order to avoid misunderstanding in interpreting the information, the researcher has provided some terms that support the reader in understanding this research.

Bombo :The *bombo* who is considered as priest and one of the societal leader in the Tamang community, works as a primary treatment person and prevents the community from various misfortunes. The *bombo*'s drum or *dyangro* is the key that unlocks the spirit world. When a *bombo* beats his *dyangro* and chants *mantras* passed down to him through an ancient oral tradition, he is summoning his protector deities.

The German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) commented that, 'What really raises one's indignation against suffering is not the suffering intrinsically but the pointlessness of suffering'. As the archenemy of witches and the mediator of the spirit world, the *bombo* provides the villager with a point of his or her suffering.

Witch:A woman who is believed to be possessed by evil spirits and to have become a witch. Thus, the witch is a person who has knowledge of witchcraft, *Tuna Muna* and *Tantra*. According to *Tantra-shastra* and *Shivapurana*, a witch (*boksi* or *boksa*) is a woman/man who differs from

normal gods or goddesses and has their own language. Witch has a divine power and is believed that they can transmit deadly or chronic diseases by food or drinks.

Witchcraft:Witchcraft refers to a belief in the perpetration of harm by persons through mystical means. It is considered a harmful and anti-social attitude and action, believed to involve the possession of evil powers through a pact with devils. We may blame witchcraft in Nepali societies for material loss, sickness of cattle, and other misfortunes, besides mental and physical illnesses in humans.

Accusation:A claim that someone has done something wrong or illegal. In the Tamang community, when a personal dispute escalates, a strong person accuses a weak and helpless person as a witch, which is a common phenomenon. For this reason, even today, the tradition of accusing each other has continued.

Survivor:A person who can continue living their life successfully despite experiencing difficulties. This research pronounced the survivor to such people who were accused of witch and have faced physical and psychological torture upon them.

Perpetrator:A person who perpetrates, or commits, an illegal, criminal, or evil act upon others. Accusers in this research were considered as perpetrators, who have committed physical and psychological torture, even inhumane activities upon the accused one with no scientific basis.

Practice:It is an action rather than thoughts or ideas. In another sense, something that is usually or regularly done, often as a habit, tradition, or custom. In the Tamang community, accusing someone of being a witch is a common phenomenon and thus measured as a practice in that community where most of the women were suspected and accused.

Social constructivism:Social constructivism is a sociological theory of knowledge, according to which human development is socially situated, and we construct knowledge through interaction with others (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Likewise, social constructivism is an interpretive framework, whereby individuals seek to understand their world and develop their own particular meanings that correspond to their experience (Creswell, 2013).

This research confirms and supports that practice of witch accusation in Tamang community is socially constructed which was in the past and even today. From the discussion with the participants and their respective responses, there is no doubt that the tradition of witch accusation originated within their own society.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

Literature review plays a major role in the study and research work. Reviewing the literature reveals who has done what before in research regarding the research topic or area. What they have said and done in relation to research has played a huge role in this research, too. Although studies and research related to the incident of witch accusations by Nepali scholars and writers are scarcely available, foreigners have come to Nepal and conducted many such academic types of research. Therefore, even if this accusation is overlooked by Nepali scholars and writers, foreigners seem to be very curious. They have been doing this kind of research for a long time. As research never ends, so far, the studies and research on this subject could not find the entire thing related to the witch accusation. Many questions came to mind during the literature review, and it has also helped me develop these questions as research questions. So this literature review has also helped to identify the rest of the research on this subject and has bridged the research gap to some extent.

2.2 Literature search strategy

In a scientific investigation, to succeed in drawing new conclusions and establishing the facts, a literature review on the respective research topics is very essential. That's why several searching methods were used to explore the knowledge of accusations of witchcraft made by others. The very common and simple methods used were to track the name of key authors and locate their original works (track and map the authors), look for patterns and frameworks in what is written about a topic such as a context-social, political, or historical (record key definitions and their context), determine the types of materials needed (books, primary sources, government documents, statistics, scholarly articles, opinion pieces, etc.), and access them to work out the best way to search each journal index along with Google and Google Scholar and list search terms, subjects, and descriptors that are specific to each index (strategically use journal index and search engine), search key authors and specific works in a citation index to find who has cited them (use citation indexes), use reference works to manage references, and search on different websites related to the research topic.

The keywords that mostly come under the research, i.e., witch, witch doctor, witch hunt, the accusation of the witch, shamanism, faith healer, and superstitious, were mainly used to

search the related literature in the well-known search engines such as Torrent, Scribd, Journal Storage (JSTOR), and Portable Document Format (Pdf drive). Besides this, the central library at Tribhuvan University, Martin Chautari, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), the Women Development Offices (WDO), the Centre for Nepalese and Asian Studies (CNAS), the Women's Rehabilitation Centre of Nepal (WOREC-Nepal), and the Informal Sector Service Centre (INSEC) were also visited, consulted, and collected useful literature related to research topics and then carefully studied them. Some famous and trustworthy newspapers and magazines in which witch-hunt news was published were also looked at. In this way, it widened the research.

While reviewing the literature, I also studied theories related to research and empirical subjects in depth. Upon completion of the literature review, it developed a solid foundation of knowledge in the research area and confidence to conduct the research. Thus, after reviewing the literature available from various sources, many unanswered questions regarding the research topic were generated, which were placed in Chapter 1 accordingly.

2.3 Social science explanations of witch accusation

According to Berger and Luckmann (1966), social construction theory contends that society is 'actively and creatively produced by human beings. We create a social world, a means of interpreting the phenomena we experience, by identifying and externalizing specific patterns of behavior or belief. I made those patterns into objective facts, or institutions, which are made legitimate through reification, making them natural, creations of divine will, or the products of inevitable processes. We accept and internalize these new truths, which are then passed on to others through socialization. This supports the practice of witch accusations, a social fact that exists in human society from yesterday to today and tomorrow, as a pattern of our conduct. Explaining the phenomenon of witch accusations based on this theory, I also understood that man has created it in his society. As this theory says, there has been some modification in the process of accusing witches, but it has not disappeared from human society. Therefore, according to this theory, the occurrence of witch accusations is a pattern of human behavior or belief.

Merton (1957) explains that with a self-fulfilling prophecy, even a false idea can become true if they act upon it. One example he gives is of a 'bank run'. Several people falsely fear that their bank is soon to go bankrupt. Because of this false notion, people run to their banks and demand all of their cash at once. As banks rarely, if ever, have that much money on hand, the

bank does indeed run out of money, fulfilling the customers' prophecy. Here, reality is constructed by an idea. His statement clearly explains and supports the prevailing belief and practice of witch accusations. This is the cultivation of a lie, as he said. No one can say or see anything about the witch, but people still believe she exists. People can't say it's a lie. It is difficult for them to say so. Everyone in society argues that there is a witch because it is accepted, even though it is a lie. People accuse witches of various selfish interests. If people go to the extent of saying that witchcraft is a lie, then the strong in society cannot despise the weak. Accusing witches under the pretext of expressing anger towards others is their main weapon. So people don't find out what is true or false about the witch. Only they know when and how to use this witch accusation with whom they have some disputes.

Thomas and Thomas (1928) also argued about social reality. They said that our behavior depends not on the objective reality of a situation but on our subjective interpretation of reality. The consequences and results of behavior make it real. Thus, sociologists examine the social constructions of reality as they relate to gender, race and ethnicity, age, economic class, religion, and other factors that make up our social location. We all take on various roles throughout our lives, and our social interactions depend on what types of roles we assume, who we assume them with, and the scene where these interactions take place. As he said, there are various affecting factors in accusing witches. Witchcraft is nowhere to be found, but it is the influence of the social structure that makes it real. According to him, the incidents of witchcraft accusation are mainly because of social factors such as poverty, illiteracy, gender, age, and religion. These factors explain what people can easily understand, which they can't deny, and that's what makes it real.

These things have deepened people's faith in what Durkheim (1982) argued about social facts. He talked about the existence of two types of social facts: material (physical objects) and immaterial (meanings, sentiments, etc.). The latter cannot be seen or touched, but they are external and coercive, and they become real and gain facticity. Thus, according to him, witch-like other immaterial social facts exist independently of the will of an individual, cannot be eliminated, and are as influential-coercive-as physical laws such as gravity. Many social facts, however, have no material form. This also gives the meaning that a witch, as a social fact, exists independently in society and is caused by other social facts, whether an individual likes it. It has been practiced all over the world, in one form or another, for thousands of years, and these social facts cannot be reduced to biological or psychological grounds.

According to Durkheim (1982), social facts are collective phenomena and make up the distinctive subject of sociology. We can embody social facts in social institutions, such as religions, political forms, kinship structures, or legal codes. They are realities in their own right, with their own laws of organization, apart from the ways these facts might appear in the individual's consciousness. Social facts have control over individuals. These act as guides and controls of conduct for the members of society. This concept helped to open up questions like how values, culture, and norms control the actions and beliefs of individuals and society in witch accusations. However, this concept helped a lot to find out the truth about witchcraft in a broader sense.

Bever (2002) observes that nearly every human relationship that goes wrong could lead to accusations of witchcraft. These accusations did not follow any pattern in terms of the social class of the defender or accused; it was not simply a matter of the wealthier members of the community picking on the marginalized poor. These witch beliefs provided a means of power, both for the accused and the persecutor, which they might otherwise be denied; this explains why many of the reasons for the accusation of witches have their basis in some sort of power struggle, whether between gender, social class, or individuals.

Unlike the previous scholars, social anthropologist Pritchard (1937) argued that we cannot understand the witch accusation without the social context and its social function. According to his study among Azande, witchcraft and oracles played a great role in solving disputes among them. The Azande's faith in witchcraft and oracles was quite logical and consistent once some fundamental tenets were accepted. As he said, we cannot say the subject of witch accusations is like this without studying the social context and its social function. The oracle by *bombo* in Tamang is like the Azande. There are many types of oracles used to identify witches in the Azande, while *bombo* uses only one type, and that differs completely from theirs. *Bombo* takes rice and acheta on a plate and moves them from one place to another, and at the end, he says that the sick person's planetary condition has deteriorated or that someone has harmed the sick person. The sick person and his family closely watched *bombo's* actions, which have had some sort of impact and meaning on them, and they easily believe what the *bombo* says. Thus, social context and structure influence the identification and meaning of witches differently. According to which a witch is understood and explained in different ways regarding societies.

Turning to the concepts of gender inequalities and social construction feminist theory by Lorber (1994), inequality is the core of gender itself: we socially differentiated women and men to justify treating them unequally. Social construction feminism looks at the structure of the gendered social order. As a social institution, gender determines the distribution of power, privileges, and economic resources. The main point feminists have stressed about gender inequality is that it is not an individual matter but is deeply ingrained in the structure of societies. In a patriarchal society like ours, it is a common phenomenon to oppress women in all aspects. Any society expects a gender role. Thus, if the gender role expected by society goes up or down, then that society cannot digest it, and the society watches such people, and most of the women are suspected of being witches.

2.3.1 Anthropological explanation

Witchcraft refers to a belief in the perpetration of harm by people through mystical means. The most significant contribution of anthropological studies has been to show that the belief in witchcraft is encountered on nearly all continents of the world and that it continues to be an important feature of contemporary times. It is the generality of these beliefs that has attracted analytical attention. Anthropological studies have left open questions about the reality and actual performance of witchcraft. Instead, they have sought to unearth the social and psychological factors underlying witchcraft beliefs.

The French anthropologist Auge (1974) has proposed a general definition of witch, which can apply to various contexts. For him, a witch is a set of beliefs, structured and shared by a population, that address the origin of misfortune, illness, and death, and the set of practices for detection, treatment, and punishment that correspond to these beliefs. The diagnostic aspect often pinpoints a person as the source of the misfortune within the family, place of employment, or community (p. 52–73).

Anthropologists have tried to show that witchcraft and witch accusations had important effects on the social structure of a particular society. They analyzed order and social cohesion in the presence or absence of witch accusations. The studies revealed accusations were more frequent in societies where the social order was unstable, where social relations had broken down, and/or where the expectations and responsibilities of members were not satisfied.

Anthropological studies claim that witchcraft is only effective in a limited geographical space. The witch can only operate in the neighborhood and/or among relatives, and, as a

result, accusations target individuals with whom one has frequent social relations. Therefore, witchcraft studies became inextricably linked to studies of kinship. In this sense, it restricted accusations within the family group to very specific members (Gluckman, 1965; Mayer, 1970; Mitchell, 1956; Nadel, 1952; Turner, 1957). We linked accusations to social change and spread them as a source of instability and insecurity within a family group. By witchcraft, most anthropologists mean a set of beliefs in an evil power that vests itself in adult people and empowers them to do a variety of fantastic and terrible things. Unlike magic and sorcery, the power is not learned but innate, lodged within the body of the witch.

Anthropologists have long been fascinated by the phenomenon but have struggled to study it with qualitative methods-their understanding of how and why it arises. But a study they conducted in one Chinese region provided an opportunity to test the most common hypothesis that witch accusations act as a punishment for those who do not cooperate with local norms. According to this theory, witch tags mark supposedly untrustworthy individuals and encourage others to conform out of fear of being labeled. However, some empirical studies have shown that witch-labeling undermines trust and social cohesion in a society (Mace, 2018).

Until the 1960s, Western anthropologists studying tribes of Africa examined witchcraft as part of their discovery of religion and magic in primitive societies, with an eye on the rituals and mysticism that defined these tribes (Evans-Pritchard, 1937; Gluckman, 1956, reviewed in Pospisil, 1966). These framed witchcraft as a characteristic of tribal, backward societies in contrast to civilized, industrial societies (Pospisil, 1966). While earlier anthropological work showed witchcraft as part of traditional African social organization, in the nineties, Western anthropologists and scholars from Africa placed African witchcraft within modernity, global capitalism, and state structures (Rutherford, 1999). Ethnographic studies around the world have shown that it did not limit witchcraft beliefs to Europe and New England but also spread widely across Africa, Melanesia, the Pacific, Asia, and the Americas at different times and places. Thus, the most important contribution of anthropological studies is to show that belief in witchcraft has appeared on almost all continents of the world and is an important feature of contemporary times.

These examinations of witchcraft focused on rituals and customs, all recorded as much for their entertainment value as for their sociological importance (Marwick, 1969). The main theory proposed through studies such as Evans-Pritchard's study of witchcraft amongst the

Azande tribe of Africa was that witchcraft was socially useful as a solution to social strain-it had a function in maintaining the social order of the tribe and in dealing with everyday uncertainties, like death and illness. Evans-Pritchard observed witchcraft accusations (rather than witch hunts), which came up in social disputes. These were rationalized as a means of expressing and discharging tensions between people within a particular social structure (Stewart & Strathern, 2004, p. 363-364) and could be ritually dealt with (for example, with the accuser blowing on a chicken's wing).

The process of victimization that culminates in an accusation of witchcraft and acts of extreme violence is actually dynamic and complex. Once accused of being a witch, the woman is stigmatized forever. The act of violence against witches represents a kind of reassertion of the norms of the social order. Witchcraft belief interferes with the value system that governs human behavior (Pritchard, 1937).

Gluckman's work on tribes in Zululand sought to explain the logic and coherence of witchcraft beliefs to the Western gaze and interpret ceremonies in these 'tribal societies'. He observed that witchcraft accusations or witch hunts could also be related to disruptions in relationships or instability in society, such as that brought about by colonialism (Gluckman, 1966).

Two Cameroonian anthropologists unhesitatingly wrote: The word witchcraft does not refer to any known concept in the local languages of Cameroon. It is difficult to find an equivalent or a word that can translate it. One is almost inclined to consider it a transposed category, something conceived by an outside observer, a European who regards a somewhat bizarre phenomenon whose outline he cannot fully detect and yet which resembles something he has seen before, and who then gives it a name that, through the magic of words, likens it to phenomena that may not be what he believes them to be (Abe & Abega, 2006, p. 52-57).

It would not be easy to show that the African of today more often supposes himself to be a victim of witchcraft than his grandfather did, although the South African anthropologist, Marwick (1969), has said that witchcraft is suspected in all the new competitive relationships that this century has created, particularly where there is rivalry for the approval of a superior whose values are not fully understood, such as an employer or an agent of government.

Most anthropologists working in Africa have found that the belief in witches is a fundamental part of the worldview of the people they have studied and that it can properly be seen, not as ridiculous superstitions but as a necessary part of their belief in the universe as a moral order.

Sociologists also turned their attention to these communities briefly, but rather than ritual and culture, they were more interested in the organization and structure of these societies, often critiquing anthropologists' lack of engagement with class, kinship, and occasionally gender (Kennedy, 1967). Social anthropologists combined methods of both disciplines to link rituals of witchcraft to the overall religious system of tribes, usually based on the belief in good and evil spirits.

Frazer (1976), a Scottish social anthropologist, says that witchcraft and sorcery have existed since human beings first lived in groups. Prehistoric art depicts magical rites to ensure successful hunting. Western beliefs about witches as sorcerers grew out of the mythologies and folklore of ancient peoples, especially the Greeks and Romans. Roman law distinguished between good magic and harmful magic, and harmful magic was punishable by law. When Christianity spread, the distinctions vanished. Witchcraft came to be linked with the worship of the devil.

Representations of the witch, who is driven to commit harm by the irresistible force that may be the product of jealousy, envy, maliciousness, ambition, an irrepressible and excessive thirst for power and possession, or increasingly a desire to gain wealth only for oneself, or to misappropriate socially approved authority for personal gain (Marie, 1997). This statement argues that a witch is not a power that people think; instead, they constructed it because it is created by a human's attitude, beliefs, and behavior in his day-to-day life. Human qualities function as the social factors that promote the witch's accusations.

Mayer (1970) explains that witchcraft causes misfortune to neighbors or kin, never to strangers or people far away, working "from envy, magic, or spite, against individuals rather than in pursuit of material gain." He states that witches work in secret at night. They are not entirely human. They reverse all normal standards, such as practicing incest, standing backwards, eating human flesh, and digging up corpses, and they are always immoral. Dreaming and eating, especially human flesh, is a similarity for most African witches, but not so much in Europe. It is, as Mayer says, society that creates the witch. However, his work is only a guideline from which to work, and from many of the societies discussed in this post,

witchcraft can be seen to be a vast array of differences, not only in Africa to Europe but in each continent themselves, although the many great divides happen between the two.

2.3.2 Social construction of witch

Witch accusations serve several purposes in the social sphere. To begin with, they explain destructive power. As Mayer (1970) writes, the witch system can save other belief systems from being deluged with the blame that might otherwise deservedly fall on them. Spirit possession, usually the result of witchcraft, can be a symbolic manifestation of psychological and social stress, often for women the result of their subordinate position in a patriarchal society. The shamanic system, however, does not point to social inequality and tension, creating living conditions, as the cause of such illness; rather, the blame is fixed on another woman, the witch (Norman, 1986).

We can see witches as a creation of the existing social mythology as a tool for maintaining social order. The behavior attributed to witches provides a set of boundaries-an anti-example or warning-by which the behavior of women is defined and controlled. The socially created image of a witch goes a long way toward showing what its socially created opposite should be. A woman who behaves too freely, too definitely, or not in accordance with her prescribed role risks being labeled as a witch.

Bennett (1983) writes that daughters-in-law are frequently accused of influencing their husbands to break up the joint family. A mother-in-law is frequently accused of mistreating her daughter-in-law. The pressure of the in-law relationship, especially between women, is ripe for stress-caused possession, illness, and suspicions of witchcraft. Hitchcock (1974) writes that shamans divining the cause of illness frequently point to the in-laws as sources. Mayers (1970) writes that witches and their accusers are individuals who ought to like each other but, in fact, do not. They are almost always people in close physical proximity, often in the same neighborhood or household. The inbuilt hypocrisy of the system further fosters suspicions and paranoia about witchcraft.

People perceive reality differently, and when they decide how they are going to view a person or a situation, they act accordingly. Since we all perceive reality differently, our reactions differ. Our definition of a situation as good or bad, to be embraced or avoided, dictates our response to it. It refers to the theory that the way we present ourselves to other people is shaped partly by our interactions with others as well as by our life experiences.

Witch as a reality has thus existed in our society today since time immemorial. Most of the factors leading to an accusation of witchcraft are at the social and structural levels. Women's relative poverty compared to men, their isolation from the wider community, and their exclusion from educational and employment opportunities were important contributors to women's vulnerability to the witch accusation. Besides, legal subordination, economic dependency, cultural obligation, and the social position of women construct and reinforce male dominance. It mostly aimed the witch hunt alignment at women and away from men, but it is not uncommon for men to be accused of wizards, too.

Social constructivism originated as an attempt to come to terms with reality. The major focus of social construction is to uncover how individuals and groups take part in creating their perceived social reality. It involves looking at the ways social phenomena are created, institutionalized, and made into tradition by humans. A socially constructed reality is one that is an ongoing, dynamic process that is reproduced by people acting on their interpretation and their knowledge of it. In short, the social construction of reality argues that humans create and sustain all social phenomena through their social practices. People externalize their thoughts about the world, such as by writing or creating a story about an idea they have. As other people tell this story or read the book, this idea becomes an object of consciousness for the people the idea spreads to.

The *Social Construction of Reality*, a book by Berger and Luckmann (1966), presents an argument stating that everyday reality is socially constructed by human interaction. Society is created by humans and human interaction, which they call habituation. Not only do we construct our society, but we also accept it as it is because others have created it before us. Thus, our perceptions of reality are colored by our beliefs and backgrounds. And what is real depends on what is socially acceptable. The following extract from Berger and Luckmann (1966) adds to our understanding of habituation. All human activity is subject to habituation.

Any action that is repeated frequently becomes cast into a pattern, which can then be reproduced with an economy of effort and which, ipso facto, is apprehended by its performer as that pattern. Habituation further implies that someone may perform the action in question again in the future in the same manner and with the same economical effort (p.54).

Most people have a belief in a witch to a greater or lesser extent. The belief is not because there is something highly convincing or logical in it. Some people believe evil beings exist in a realm totally outside of science and modern western medicine. In our community, it is not unusual to find educated people who rail against a witch also following it in times of trouble.

The main aspect of using this concept is to define the difference between aim and subjective reality. We define objective reality as the natural world. For example, the moon, the stars, or the ocean. These are phenomena that are always present and do not change. It socially constructs subjective reality. For example, a role or status in society, such as a person's job title, becomes real and internalized through interaction and social definitions. The process of socialization did this. People are not born members of society; it makes them members of society (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). The interaction between people makes this real. It also defined subjective reality as the subjective interpretation of objective reality. For example, society has determined that the sky is blue. This gives social meaning to an objective phenomenon. Clearly, this is a subjective interpretation of objective reality.

Subjective reality comprises concepts that can be shared unproblematically with others. There is shared meaning and understanding, so much so that concepts do not need to be redefined each time they are used in everyday conversation and come to assume a reality that is by and large taken for granted (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 149).

As this study addresses the phenomenon of witch accusations, it mainly uses the subjective reality aspect. The subjective reality of a witch is something that is subjective and is based on personal opinions and feelings rather than on facts. It is the product of our brain that works as a pattern generator. People have different ideas and beliefs about witches. Such beliefs contend that women, possessed by the power of witchcraft, handle a wide range of misfortunes, including the sudden deaths of people, family members, or animals, the sudden loss of property or crops, miscarriages, and other illnesses and misfortunes. In Nepal, we believe witchcraft to be practiced by witches (boksi) and wizards (bokso), who possess mostly evil and destructive supernatural powers. These allegedly enable them to commit such atrocities as causing earthquakes, droughts, or floods, inflicting ill health and diseases on either humans or animals, causing epidemics, deaths, crop damage, and more (Adinkrah & Adhikari, 2014; Paudel, 2011; Sah, 2007; WHRIN, 2014).

Similarly, Merton (1968) developed a theory of deviant behavior based on different social adaptations. He defined the interrelationship between social theory and empirical research, advancing a structural-functional approach to the study of society and creating the concepts of manifest and latent function and dysfunction. He developed notable concepts such as "unintended consequences," the "reference group," and "role strain," but is perhaps best known for the terms "role model" and "self-fulfilling prophecy. For this purpose, the concept of self-fulfilling prophecy is used in order to explain and build a relationship with witch accusations.

The concept of self-fulfilling prophecy, which is a central element in modern sociological, political, and economic theory, is one type of process through which a belief or expectation affects the outcome of a situation or the way a person or group will behave. As Merton defined it, "the self-fulfilling prophecy is, in the beginning, a false definition of the situation evoking a new behavior, which makes the originally false conception come true (Merton, 1968, p. 477).

This statement clearly explains and supports the prevailing belief and practice of witch accusations in Tamang. This is the cultivation of a lie, as he said. According to this, no one can say or see anything about the witch, but people still believe that she exists. People can't say it's a lie. It is difficult for them to say so. Everyone in society argues that there is a witch because it is accepted, even though it is a lie. Accusing witches under the pretext of expressing anger towards others is their main weapon. So people don't find out what is true or false about the witch. Only they know when and how to use this witch accusation with whom they have some disputes. However, this concept was used as a broad concept with a logical extension.

Lorber (1994) states that inequality is the core of gender itself: women and men differ socially in order to justify unequal treatment. Social construction feminism looks at the structure of the gendered social order. As a social institution, gender determines the distribution of power, privileges, and economic resources. The main point feminists have stressed about gender inequality is that it is not an individual matter but is deeply ingrained in the structure of societies. In a patriarchal society like Tamang, it is a common phenomenon to oppress women in all aspects. Any society expects a gender role. We find another general classification as socialist, liberal, or radical feminist. However, Agassi (1989) has used the

classification of gender inequality theories based on production and property relations, family structure and household, social roles, and sexuality.

The idea forwarded by Ritzer (2010) on gender inequality is also relevant for this study. According to Ritzer, men and women are treated in society not only differently but also unequally. Women get less of the material resources, social status, power, and opportunities for self-actualization than do men who share their social location, be it a location based on class, race, occupation, ethnicity, religion, education, nationality, or any intersection of these factors.

The explanation of witchcraft presented by the social anthropologist Pritchard (1937) argued that we cannot understand the witch accusation without the social context and its social function. According to his study among Azande, witchcraft and oracles played a great role in solving disputes among them. The Azande's faith in witchcraft and oracles was quite logical and consistent once some fundamental tenets were accepted. As he says, it is true and relevant that the subject of witch accusations cannot be said to be like this without studying the social context and its social function. Thus, social context and structure influence the identification and meaning of witches differently. According to which a witch is understood and explained in different ways regarding societies.

2.4 Witch accusation: cross-cultural practices

Some popular present-day religions include Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Judaism. Every religion has different rituals and practices that accompany and highlight religious experiences. Religion serves many functions in society. French sociologist Emile Durkheim claims that, in addition, religion attempts to offer a singular answer to life and thus allows for the social cohesion of a society through its shared beliefs. So religion serves to unite society under a system of belief (religion), which leads to the group's ability to successfully interact within itself and allows for social control.

Turning to the explanation of witchcraft in religion, Islamic tradition also holds that the Quran and hadith both refer to witchcraft and sorcery in the time of the Prophet Muhammad (Khan, 2009). According to the hadith, the Prophet Muhammad confirmed that the evil eye, borne by jealousy or envy, is real and capable of causing harm or misfortune (Khan, 2009). Some Muslim practitioners believe they may seek the help of the Jinn (singular Jinni) in magic. It is a common belief that Jinn can possess a human, thus requiring exorcism. Still, the

practice of seeking help from the Jinn is prohibited and regarded as the same as seeking help from the devil. The belief in jinn is part of the Muslim faith.

Millions of American people in many countries with Christian backgrounds celebrate Halloween as a culture included in their religion. We also knew it as a time of witches, ghouls, goblins, and ghosts. Witches and Satanists love Halloween. Their parents encourage children to dress up as scary demonic icons and walk door to door, demanding candy from strangers with a threat of 'Trick or Treat'. On this unholy night, witches covens meet, drink, dance, spit out curses and spells, conjure up spirits, engage in sexual orgies, induct new members, and offer an animal and human sacrifice. So, Halloween behaviors are also against the norm in purposefully celebrating symbols of evil, such as witches and vampires, and death, such as skeletons and mummies, which are normally considered taboo in Christian society (Kelley, 2014).

In Hinduism, we believe humans can appear divine and gods' human. Hinduism is also called Sanatana Dharma (eternal religion) and Vaidika Dharma (religion of the Vedas). There are two major divisions within Hinduism: Vaishnavism and Shivaism. Hinduism is unique because there is no real distinction between being divine and human. According to Hindu mythology, Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati are the origins of this culture. 'Om' is the most powerful mantra. 'Om' is the special mantra Shiva gave his shamans so they could defeat the witches wherever they found them. It was said that Lord Shiva was the first dhama or jhakri. Whatever it is in form, it gives the strong message that where there is sin, dirt, anger, and poverty, those become the victims of ghosts and witches. Still, the country is highly influenced by Shiva culture, and Lord Shiva is the great god (Winner & Rai, 2003).

According to Winner and Rai (2003), Hinduism has created awareness in society. They have taught things like paying attention to cleanliness, not doing bad deeds, not committing sins, and not getting angry, and those who do not do this may get sick or be tormented by ghosts or witches. Therefore, religion, in this sense, teaches society a code of conduct for living a well-organized and quality life for their wellbeing.

Whereas Buddhism can be considered a philosophy rather than a religion, according to some scriptures in Buddhism, tantra was given to Buddhists by the dankinis. That is a strangely ambiguous word. Dankinis may be supernatural or human. They can be terrifying or alluring, malignant or helpful, Buddhist or not. The one thing that is clear is that they are female. Witch is probably the best translation since it covers many of the same ambiguities. Dankini

is now often used vaguely to refer to any female spirit and also to any female tantrika. Broadly, most Buddhist tantra is a means to enlightenment through identity with tantric deities.

It is sometimes also called "deity yoga." Vajrayana, also known as Tantric Buddhism, is a complex and multifaceted system of Buddhist thought and practice that has evolved over several centuries. Buddhists practice magic through the use of chanting mantras, such as "Om Ma Ni Pad Me Hum," a six-syllable prayer. Chanting this prayer with our hearts (believing in its power) can destroy demons, sins, bad karma, etc., but we must chant for the good of others, not ourselves (Buswell, ed., 2004, p. 603).

Finally, turning to Judaism is the religion of the Jews. Jewish sources offer several accounts of the origins of witchcraft. According to I Enoch, witchcraft was first taught by the fallen angels to their mortal wives. This presumably explains the special association between women and witchcraft that marks subsequent Jewish literature. While Jews are regarded as exceptional magicians, and even some rabbis use incantations, potions, and healing rituals, in Rabbinic literature, witchcraft is most associated with women. Witches seem to be a source of the evil eye; showing envy and jealousy motivates them. Others use their powers for personal profit (Lesses, 2011, p. 196–222).

There are several references to witchcraft in the Bible by Strong (1894) that strongly condemn such practices. For example, Deuteronomy 18:11–12 condemns anyone who casts spells, who is a medium or spiritist, or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the Lord, and because of these detestable practices, the Lord your God will drive out those nations before you, and (Exodus 22:18) states, Do not allow a sorceress to live. In this way, Judaism clarifies that Jews shall not try to learn about the ways of witches (Deuteronomy 18:9–10) and that witches are to be put to death (Exodus 22:17).

2.4.1 Anglo-Saxon perspective

Occultism, paganism, and witchcraft have been dynamic, influential forces in the development of western society and culture (Webb, 1971) but have attracted relatively little attention from British sociologists. In the modern western world, witch accusations have often accompanied the satanic ritual abuse hysteria. Such accusations are a counterpart to blood libel of various kinds, which may be found throughout history across the globe. In

early modern European tradition, witches were stereotypical, though not only women (Gibbon, 1998).

European pagan belief in witches was associated with the goddess Diana and dismissed as 'diabolical fantasies' by medieval Christian authors (Ginzburg, 1990). Witch-hunts first appeared in large numbers in southern France and Switzerland during the 14th and 15th centuries. The peak years of witch-hunts in southwest Germany were from 1561 to 1670 (Midelfort, 1992). The familiar witch of folklore and popular superstition is a combination of many influences. The characterization of the witch as an evil magic user developed.

Ryan (1999) said that powers typically attributed to European witches include turning food poisonous or inedible, flying on broomsticks or pitchforks, casting spells, cursing people, making livestock ill and crops fail, and creating fear and local chaos. The Russian word for witch is *ved'ma*, literally "the one who knows", from Old Slavic *vedeti* "to know". Macfarlanes (1970) careful analysis of the Essex trials confirmed that 92 percent of the survivors were women, an extraordinarily high percentage, but he concluded that there is no evidence that hostility between the sexes lay behind their prosecutions. Thomas (1971), in his influential study of English folk religion, concurred with Macfarlane. While denying that either misogyny or psychological factors mattered, he made the useful point that economic and social considerations were valid because women were the most dependent members of the community and thus the most vulnerable to the accusation.

The most public figure associated with the new religion of witchcraft was Gerald B. Gardner (1884–1964). His book, *Witchcraft Today* (1954), is a non-fiction book. This book recounts Gardner's thoughts on the history and practices of the witch cult and his claim to have met practicing witches in 1930s England. It also deals with his theory that the Knights Templar had practiced the religion and that the belief in fairies in ancient, medieval, and early modern Europe was because of a secretive pygmy race that lived alongside other communities.

Witchcraft today is one of the foundational texts for the religion of Wicca, along with Gardner's second book on the subject, *The Meaning of Witchcraft* (1959). Gardner has shown in his book how much of the so-called 'witchcraft' is descended from ancient rituals and has nothing to do with spell-casting and other evil practices, but is the sincere expression of that feeling towards God that is expressed, perhaps more decorously, though not more sincerely, by modern Christianity in church services.

2.4.2 Oriental perspectives

Although belief in witchcraft in the non-western world is probably less common today than in the past, It remains an important social construction in both rural and urban areas, often explaining misfortune. Each individual community has distinct details regarding their belief systems. Witchcraft beliefs in non-western cultures suggest such beliefs existed in about 60 percent of societies in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, most commonly in societies bordering the Mediterranean Sea and in sub-Saharan Africa and among descendants of people from those regions in the Americas, and least often in East Asia.

Cross-culturally, people believe in two types of witches: every day and nightmare. Everyday witches are the people who live in the community, although they are typically considered to be deviant and cause misfortune to others out of envy. Nightmare witches are far evilr and more feared. They operate at night, take non-human forms, cause widespread illness, death, or misfortune, and come from the supernatural world or from places where humans do not live, such as the forest.

In cultures with a belief in witchcraft, people take measures to protect themselves from witches by wearing protective amulets, saying prayers, performing public rituals, avoiding places where witches go, and avoiding people who are envious (and, therefore, might be witches). When preventive measures fail, people take action to reverse the witchcraft, using either a sorcerer or healer to reverse the witch's work, identify the witch so that compensation can be sought, or punish or kill the witch.

In the eastern world, in Japanese folklore, we can separate the most common types of witches into two categories: those who employ snakes as familiars and those who employ foxes (Carmen, 1999). The fox witch is, by far, the most commonly seen witch figure in Japan. Differing regional beliefs set those who use foxes into two separate types: the Kitsuné-mochi and the Tsukimono-suji. The first of these, the kitsune-mochi, is a solitary figure who gains his fox's familiarity by bribing it with its favorite foods. The Kitsuné-mochi then strikes up a deal with the fox, typically promising food and daily care for the fox's magical services. The fox of Japanese folklore is a powerful trickster imbued with powers of shape-changing, possession, and illusion. These creatures can be nefarious, disguising themselves as women in order to trap men, or they can be benign forces, as in the story of 'the grateful foxes' (Mitford, 1871).

Accusations of witchcraft that result in communal murder have long been a part of rural India's history. In India, a person accused of being a 'daayan' or 'witch' can be tortured, raped, hacked to death, or burned alive. Daayan is a term for a witch in India, descended from the Sanskrit word *dankini*, which refers to a female supernatural being. Daayans are reported in and around cemeteries, abandoned battlefields, crossroads, toilets, and squalid places (Fane, 1975). Daayans worship the mother goddesses Kali and Durga (Chakraverti, 2000). We believe witches are capable of killing cattle and humans, destroying crops, and causing illness. In part of Jharkhand, we believe that if we write the name of a witch on a branch of a Sal tree, the branch will wither away (Masoodi, 2014).

The belief in witchcraft is widely prevalent in Oraon society in India. There is a strong belief in the potent powers of a witch, who is thought to be productive of the greatest misfortunes and diseases. We consider them a great threat to whole society and look upon them with fear and suspicion. We believe they cause harm to animals, property, agricultural land, gains, and individuals. They can cause severe harm to the whole community. Among the Oraon, there is a locally known witch known as *bisahi*. Both men and women can become *bisahi*, although references to female *bisahis* are more frequent. It reported most of the female witches to be old women or childless women (Joshi, Kaushal, Katewa, & Oinam, 2006).

In China, we term black magic as 'ku', which implies magic that can be used as an instrument for injuring someone. The word 'ku' sounds quite similar to the word 'Wu', which means white magic, which is used for the benefit of others. Though the term black magic is used so generically that its actual meaning has been lost somewhere in this entire e midst, We have seen in several cases that the practices of such black magic have several disastrous effects, causing the victim to become insane and sometimes causing the death of the individual. We have found wizardry to be of various types, comprising the five elements, namely, fire, water, earth, air, and wind. Individuals who practice witchcraft, wizardry, or black magic summon the spirits of deceased souls. The spells that are enchanted by this witchcraft-practicing individual are strong enough to summon spirits and bring about both mental and physical changes in the life of an individual and in the energies of nature present around us (Idrakisyah, 2018).

2.4.3 African perspective

In many African cultures, particularly those south of the Sahara, there is an idiom used to explain misfortune within a community. This misfortune may be physical or social; we

usually think it to emanate from the ill will of someone within the community. Among the Shona-speaking peoples of Zimbabwe, for example, if a person falls ill with malaria or if a person loses a job, witchcraft is often understood as the reason, and it is assumed that someone within the community (often a relative) used witchcraft out of spite, jealousy, or the desire for revenge. In most African contexts, the idiom of the witch is commonly used to explain why something unfortunate happens to a particular person, often with the implicit understanding that someone else bewitched the person in question because of a strain in their relationship (Mariko & Eva, 2004).

In Africa, witches are always viewed as evil and are not always female. In many African countries, it is believed that witchcraft runs in the family and that one is born a witch. We believe witches have a natural inclination to carry out evil, making people ill and even causing death. It cannot be disputed that, to the African mind, sickness and misfortune are closely linked to witchcraft, where witchcraft is regarded as the primary cause thereof.

Mbiti (1970) writes: “The Nyakyusa believe that God has the power to drive away from the witches, who, in African societies, are thought to be the main cause of sickness and misfortune.” While Africans categorize the causes of illness into three categories, namely: ancestors, witches/sorcerers, and nature, it is illnesses caused by witches and sorcerers that are said to be fatal.

In Ghana, women are often accused of witchcraft and attacked by neighbors. Because of this, there are six witch camps in the country where women suspected of being witches can flee for safety. In Nigeria and Malawi, it is common practice to accuse children of witchcraft, and many children have been abandoned, abused, and even killed. As in other African countries, both African traditional healers and their Christian counterparts are trying to make a living out of exorcising children and are actively involved in pointing out children as witches (Byrne, 2011).

In his classic work, *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic among the Azande*, the social anthropologist Pritchard (1937) describes the beliefs and practices of the African tribe, the Azande. According to Azande's belief, various misfortunes encountered in daily life may be attributed to the actions of witches. Someone may fall ill, crops may fail, or a hut may catch fire. Such events may be because of the magic of a witch who lives close by. Azande witchcraft involves no rituals, spells, or medicines. Evans-Pritchard describes it as a psychic act whereby “the soul of witchcraft” leaves a witch’s body and travels over not too great a

distance to interfere with its victim. The Azande employs several techniques to determine the action of unseen forces. The Azande believe that witchcraft is at the root of all misfortune, great or small.

2.4.4 Witch accusation in Nepal

Witch accusation, which is one of the traditional forms of violence because of traditional beliefs, is still in practice in almost all parts of Nepal (Glover, 1972). It has been accepted by the people for generations and is passed down from generation to generation, even today. It is not only because of a lack of awareness among the people who lay charges against innocent women, but sometimes so-called educated persons who are especially working for society's welfare are the main perpetrators. The people in the community consider most cases of witch accusations to be social matters.

There is a strong animistic and shamanic tradition in Nepal. Belief in ghosts, spirits, and witches is widespread, particularly in rural areas. Spiteful witches, hungry ghosts, and angry spirits are thought to inflict illness and misfortune. Shamans mediate between the human and supernatural realms to discover the cause of illness and recommend treatment. In Nepali society, where the caste system is prevalent, boksi (witches) usually hail from the lower castes, including Dalit or the untouchables (Poudel, 2011). The prevalence of lower-caste people among those accused of witchcraft and violently persecuted in witch hunts stems from their social and economic marginalization. Evidence from Nepal shows widows are more likely to be survivors of witch hunts than women who are married or single (Dahal, 2013).

In Nepal, we practiced witch accusations in the name of culture, religion, and social norms and practices. Patriarchal values attempt to subordinate women to men, and in these communities, women have fewer opportunities for education and employment. Patriarchy is both a social structure and an ideology, or belief system, according to which men are superior and in the dominant position. Under patriarchy, different forms of violence may control and subjugate women, and someone may even consider such violence culturally legitimate in such a society. Accusations of witchcraft prevail as a common practice. Thus, a wide range of cultural beliefs, ideologies, and religious beliefs and practices in Nepal justify different forms of violence against women, including the accusation of witchcraft. Speaking of this issue in Nepal, the practice of accusing witches is more prevalent among ethnic and tribal groups than among caste people (Adinkrah, 2014).

In Nepal, widowhood is considered a curse and is often blamed for any misfortune that befalls a family and/or household. The death of a husband can bring tremendous changes to a woman's life in terms of her identity and relationship with society. She becomes an outsider in both her affinal and natal home; she no longer belongs, and in this sense, she shares the sense of being an outcast. Worse, still, widows are also accused of being 'witches' because of the belief that to learn witchcraft, they have to sacrifice their husband or son, which enables them to have the power to cause illness or even death to a person to take vengeance (Sharma, 1981). Although they possess maintenance rights, in the event their spouses die, the greed of their kin to illegally acquire the land leads to an accusation of women as witches, resulting in torture and even death. Therefore, the interplay of structural, cultural, and individual factors contributed to an accusation of witchcraft against women in Nepal.

Bennett (1976) states that in Brahmin and Chhetri, households' co-wives and older widows are suspected frequently. The widows, as well as women who have never conceived, are excluded from birthing processes as they have the reputation of making an innocent woman unable to conceive. Thus, infertility, miscarriage, and the death of newborn children are most often mentioned as being caused by witches.

According to Firth (1956), magic, as commonly accepted, can be broadly classified as productive, protective, and destructive. In Nepalese society, we can categorize witchcraft as destructive magic. This is because we always found it to be used for something harmful to others. An analysis of the belief system in Nepal highlights that it is broadly similar to that of other countries because it has prevailed since ancient times because of the dominance and impervious nature of deep-rooted cultural and religious practices. In Nepalese society, we often consider culture to be a part of religion. Various harmful cultural practices are carried out by the general people of Nepal, regardless of their brutality and inhuman features, because they fall under the shadow of religion.

Peters (1980) also states that the belief that *lato/lati* is caused by 'bad'karma'-consequences of bad actions by parents or patrilineal kin in previous lives - is widespread. We attribute other mental disorders with supernatural causes to witchcraft, spirit possession, or soul loss and are, in principle, amenable to cure by traditional ritualistic means (Stone, 1988). Despite the many ethnic groups and varied religious groups, it is noteworthy that witchcraft belief is common across Nepali society, cutting across all ethnic, religious, and linguistic groups. The huge

majority of people accused of witchcraft in Nepal are female and elderly. Only rarely are males accused of witchcraft (Adinkrah, 2011).

According to Hofer (1973), in Tamang mythology, the first witch was Lasya Khanda mo, adulteress and wife of Naru Bon, one of the first *bombos*. After finding out about her adultery, Naru Bon was going to kill her when Galden Lama intervened and punished her instead by making her the first witch and mother of all subsequent witches. Lasya is not just a witch; she is one of the important mythological socio-religious founders of the Tamang religion. This supports the theory that witch-like characteristics are not reserved for witches alone but are possible for all women.

The etiology of the disorders treated by the Tamang shamans (*bombos*) is attributed to supernatural agents. To combat these agents of affliction, the shamans enter ecstasy, i.e., they become possessed and sometimes send their souls from their bodies. All of this is done in a ritual context. Primary to Tamang animism and concepts of illness are gods, spirits, witches, and ancestors who live in the atmosphere and on the earth (Peters, 1979).

Holmberg (1989) argues that Tamang imagines Kami to be not so much polluting but perpetually wanting, begging, and, by implication, inherently evil. Connotations of evil culturally supersede impurity or defilement in Tamang representations. Tamang is likely to accuse *Kami* of being *boksi* or witches, of keeping *bir* or familiars for the appropriation of wealth and vitality from others, or in female form, of capturing the shadow souls of young children. Tamang exorcists and sacrificers chant out the evils of *sarkini*, *damini*, and *kamini* - female representatives of hill outcastes - when curing or protecting children.

Kami are not the only ones who are accused of being *boksi*, of keeping familiar (*bir*), or of being evil. Tamang accuses each other of such predilections and of being *mengko*, or poisoners. Tamang, however, figures Karni as being inherently predisposed toward evil, whereas Tamang is not; they must prove it through their accumulative and greedy actions, actions that defy the reciprocal ethos. To understand this formulation of Kami and ultimately how Tamang frames their interactions with Kami, we must see Kami considering Tamang village's social ideology and practice. Kami, as we constructed social evils like spirit evils according to a logic that stresses inclusive reciprocity, Evil is for Tamang linked to those who are left out of symmetrical exchanges, those who do not receive their fair shares (Holmberg, 1989).

Every religious system in Nepal, including that of the Tamang, is multifaceted and has many practitioners. Without apparent contradiction, western Tamang simultaneously engages Buddhist lamas who preside over elaborate rites of death, sacrificial lambu who propitiate chthonic divinities and exorcise harmful agents, and shamanic bombo who recapture lost shadow souls, revive life force, unveil an enigmatic divine, and reveal. Interpretations of religion in Nepal have treated divergent ritual strands as isolates, and there is a persistent image of the religious situation in Nepal as an amalgam of Hindu, Buddhist, and indigenous strands. The ritual structure of the Tamang emerges as a variant of other ritual systems found throughout Nepal and in greater South and Southeast Asia (Holmberg, 1984).

Gurung (2000), in her study among Newars in Bungamati, describes that boksi (one believed to practice black magic) is also greatly feared by Newars and even non-Newars. Boksi is mostly female, but there are male bokshas too. Gathe Mangal festival, celebrated mostly by Newars in the valley, is believed to be the main day for their evil activities. The panejus of Machhendranath worship at the temple of Hayagriwa Bhairav on this day in Bungamati to ward off the evil influence of boksis. A thumba (lamb) is sacrificed at the temple, and there is a feast at the temple for the paneju households. People from Bungamati and other parts of the valley visit Machhendranath Bahal to worship at the Bhairav temple, and this goes on for an entire day. The day of the Pitha puja in Bungamati is the day when the boksis dance around the tree that stands at Pitha (the place of worship for goddesses 'devis') at midnight. Boksis can possess a person, making them either ill or insane. They can also administer potions to food, making a person ill and eventually causing death. Thus, the explanation for misfortune is also sought in the boksi influence, and protecting oneself from such influences is an important concern in the village even today.

Another study by Macfarlane and Gurung (1990) In the Gurung village of Thak, which lies in the hills some twelve miles north of Pokhara, there may be a dozen or more suspected witches, usually older women with powerful characters. In the past, some were driven out of the village, but it is now illegal to call a person a witch. We consider it dangerous even to mention one's suspicions about them out of fear of the witch. At night, they are thought to prowl around the village, wearing a sort of metal armor under their ordinary clothes, their eyes red, and fire coming out of their fingertips. We believe they cause much of the misery in the village.

Devkota (1984) did another study among the Newars in Kirtipur, explaining their belief in witchcraft. The Newars of Kirtipur consider witchcraft (*mikhawangu*) responsible for several illnesses. When a person suspects an evil eye, he goes to a local exorcist. The practitioner can tell who, where, and how the deliberate act of witchcraft (*kukartu*) was accomplished. He performs anti-spells (*ultamantra*) to remove the evil act. When the evil spell is cast through the food items, the exorcist asks the patient to bring food items and consult him either on Tuesday or Saturday. From the tantric viewpoint, we consider these two days of the week auspicious. On the chosen day, the exorcist recites hymns to extract evil spells from food items and asks the patient to eat them by putting them on the patient's opposite side of the right palm.

There have been many instances of community members seeking the help of traditional spiritual healers, locally known as *jhakris* (witch-doctors), to detect witches or to endorse their accusation so that they may comfortably pursue their reprisals. For their services, *jhakris* are given a few hundred rupees, a bottle of liquor, a goat, a rooster, or any other petty animal, along with a few other holy offerings. People with a profound faith in sorcery seem to use witchcraft to solve their problems with undiagnosed illnesses, disasters, and even sudden deaths in their families or neighborhoods to soothe themselves and their loved ones. By accusing innocent and vulnerable women of practicing witchcraft, they find an easy scapegoat to blame for their chaotic situation and misfortune, as well as self-satisfying explanations for their unknown sufferings (Poudel, 2011).

Like others, the Tharu ethnic communities are followers of animistic beliefs as defined by Tylor (1871): they believe in life after death, about good and bad spirits, fetish, and are believers in spirits that dwell on stones, animals, trees, streams, and mountains, as in the Vedic ages. The general belief that persists is that if the spirits are dissatisfied, then evils such as natural calamities and epidemics would befall them, and to please such deities, they offer ritualistic sacrifices, and the medium of transmission between man and spirit is the *dhami* known by the name of *guruba* among Tharus. Tharus are believers in ghosts, spirits, land, and mantras. In fact, for outsiders, it is a land of witches. Every village has eight to ten people known as *daayans*, and an unshakable belief exists that if *daayans* get offended, they not only kill but spread epidemics in the village. In order to scare away the *daayans*, help is taken from an exorcist (*guruba*), and he is given paddy by villagers, thus protecting them from epidemics (Varya, 1985).

Hence, the accusation of one being a witch is increasing and is one of the major social problems facing Nepal. This type of violence is justified in the name of culture within society. How witches are identified is questionable, since we cannot prove scientifically that a person is a witch. People take measures to protect themselves from witches by wearing protective amulets, saying prayers, performing public rituals, avoiding places where witches go, and avoiding people who are witches. When preventive measures fail, people take action to reverse the witchcraft, using it to reverse the witch's work, identify the witch so that compensation can be sought, or punish or kill the witch.

Finally, from this review of the literature, it could be concluded that the belief system of a witch in the culture as a religion, the witch doctor in the area, and the poor implementation of existing laws against witch accusation are the major causes of the witch accusation incidence in Nepal. It remains an important social construction in both rural and urban areas, often explaining misfortune. Thus, the literature reviewed here has not sought to address these issues vigorously. So, this research was strongly focused on finding the present situation of all these socially constructed issues in promoting witch accusations.

2.5 Research gap

Many kinds of research-related literature from national and international publications were accessed, reviewed, and critically analyzed. I reviewed the resource materials again until the meanings, intentions, and things sought were not clear. Almost all the literature studied was descriptive, where the scholars described the information and characteristics of what was being studied. They have described the phenomenon of witch accusation in a highly accurate and trustworthy way, which helped in gaining a better understanding and building knowledge on the topic. As I conducted this research from a social constructivist perspective, I identified some contextual gaps in the existing literature.

Sufficient numbers of theories, thoughts, and insights relating to this research topic were significantly used to a greater extent in the literature, but some of the major theories, such as the social construction of reality and the theory of social facts, were not seemed to be used in the literature. Thus, this research was conducted in order to address these theoretical gaps in the literature. This is the first research gap where there is an opportunity to use such theories to make this research more sociological.

Holmberg (1989) has long studied the Tamang people of western Nepal. He incorporates the iterative and progressive recursive and holographic characteristics of Tamang. He conducted fieldwork, and his analysis was based on noticing, collecting, and thinking. His analysis is not only an ethnographic account but also penetrates the Shaman/Sorcery, Buddhism, and traditions of the sacrifice-based complex cultural structure of the Tamang. He then offers descriptions of the culture, mythic imagination, and ritual field of the Tamang. Exploring both structural and historical dimensions of Tamang rituals, he shows how they form a system linked to a cultural logic of exchange upon which it built Tamang society.

He also sheds light on the relationship between gender and ritual, considering the close association between femaleness and the shamanic in Tamang culture. He argues Tamang imagines *kami* to be so polluting but perpetually wanting, begging, and, by implication, inherently evil. Tamang is likely to accuse *kami* of being *boksi* or witches, of keeping *bir* or familiars for the appropriation of wealth and vitality from others, or in female form, of capturing the shadow souls of young children. Thus, his study of Tamang even said that there is a practice of accusing witches, but the function of '*bombo*' in this relation is not mentioned and is missing. This might be because of the limitations of his study. But this research considered *bombo* as one of the important issues to be studied. *Bombo* is an important part of the Tamang society, and that keeps the Tamang under his influence and control. We know *bombo* to be the main reason for the accusation of witches. So there is a growing curiosity about the relationship between *bombo* and the witch. Thus, this is the second research gap identified in his research work that encourages conducting this research and is intended to fulfill that gap.

March (2002) is another scholar who spent a long time studying in Tamang, western Nepal. For twenty-five years of her study in Tamang, she has collected the life stories of the women of a Buddhist Tamang. She allows the women's own words to paint a vivid portrait of their highland home. Tamang women frequently told their stories by singing poetic songs in the middle of their conversations with her. In conversation and song, the Tamang open their hearts and minds as they address a broad range of topics: life in extended households, women's property issues, wage employment and outmigration, sexism, and troubled relations with other ethnic groups.

She attempts to represent the stories of the Tamang women as an enduring text that is readable and understandable to non-Tamang. Although a leading figure in the study of

Tamang, her published work includes a study about the empowerment and mobilization of women and women's informal associations as a catalyst for change. Her study helped in getting rich information about the socio-economic status of Tamang women, which is very important and useful information for this research. As it focused her research on Tamang women's empowerment, she did not study the violence with them. Thus, this research should fulfill this missing gap, which is considered a third research gap.

Social anthropologist Pritchard (1937) argued that we cannot understand the witchcraft accusation without the social context and its social function. His study among Azande focuses more on the social significance of accusing each other of witchcraft. This witchcraft and oracles played a great role in solving disputes among them. Azande's faith in witchcraft and oracles was quite logical and consistent once some fundamental tenets were accepted. His study found that the social context and its social function were important in accusing witches. However, his research findings are closer to this research; there is some missing for this research purpose. His research has not clearly mentioned the social structure in which the practice of accusing witches is to prevail. Thus, to fill this gap in his research work, this research attempt may help in bringing a clear picture of the social structure in which the accusation mainly prevails. In this way, this research has fulfilled the fourth research gap realized in his research work.

Bennett (1976) states that in Brahmin and Chhetri households, co-wives and older widows are frequently suspected, and infertility, miscarriage, and the death of newborn children are most often mentioned as being caused by witches. They attributed other mental disorders with supernatural causes to witchcraft, spirit possession, or soul loss, which are, in principle, amenable to cure by traditional ritualistic means (Stone, 1988). What we can understand from this is that people accuse women of witchcraft only because of their beliefs, and we see witches as responsible for any health problems. Therefore, this research is important to find the research gap. How do people believe in witchcraft? And what makes people believe in witches? She did not mention this.

Peter (1979) states that the etiology of the disorders treated by the Tamang shamans (bombos) is attributed to supernatural agents. To combat these agents of affliction, the shamans enter ecstasy, i.e., they become possessed and sometimes send their souls from their bodies. All of this is done in a ritual context. Primary to Tamang animism and concepts of illness are gods, spirits, witches, and ancestors who live in the atmosphere and on the earth.

Although *bombo* is mentioned in his research, his social status and how he convinces people are not reported. Therefore, if *bombo* is the main factor in the accusation of witchcraft, then it is necessary to know his details, so this research has gone in that direction, fulfilling the gap in his research.

Considering all these shortcomings, I carried out this research from a social constructivist perspective. It emphasized the importance of culture and context in the process of knowledge construction regarding witchcraft accusations. It has focused on an individual's learning about witchcraft. It has explored the human learning and knowledge that he constructs through social interaction and shares rather than individual knowledge. The research gap mentioned above, which was missing or insufficient information, was made available through this research work and presented accordingly. The research aims to fulfill the missing link in the existing body of knowledge that is derived from a critical review and analysis of empirical and ethnographic studies of witchcraft accusation in Tamang.

In the end, most of the past research was informative, and I was encouraged to conduct this research to fulfill some of the gaps that are required for this research. Thus, this research mainly focused on exploring social matters existing in the respective social structures, drawing knowledge from the previous literature. The social matters that exist in the respective social structure are the major factors that encourage and promote accusations of witchcraft. Therefore, this research would be of great significance as a new milestone that will seek to understand the practice of witchcraft from a social constructivist perspective. This study could be further helpful to interested scholars and institutions in planning and implementing programs to overcome this accusation.

2.6 Legal provisions regarding witch accusation in Nepal

Witchcraft-related accusation (Crime and Punishment Act, 2015) is the law recently enacted by the Government of Nepal (GoN) focusing on Violence against Women and Girl (VAWG). The Penal Code (2017) has updated all legal provisions related to public offence and punishment, including those relating to VAWG. Further, the Courts have started continuous hearings at all stages of the proceedings on cases related to VAWG. The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and the National Women Commission (NWC) have been monitoring the cases of VAWG countrywide. Women, Children and Senior Citizen Service Directorates (WCSCSD) have been setup in all districts under Nepal Police to provide special services to women and children (GoN, 2019)

Legal Provisions:

- a. To combat the crime of witchcraft in the country, the parliament enacted an Act called Witchcraft Act (Offense and Punishment) 2072 (2015).
- b. The Act enumerates a list of acts falling under witchcraft and treats the survivor in section 3.
- c. Police officials must ensure that doctors prepare a treatment report of the survivor according to section 5(2) of the Act.
- d. The officials also have a duty to arrange for the psychological counseling from an expert, but this support is only supposed to be provided immediately with necessity, as mentioned in section 5(3). An assessment of which of the situation to be considered as an immediate necessary situation is still nowhere mentioned.
- e. It provided a relief package to the survivor as an interim protective order, compensation, and money for treatment in sections 10 and 12 of the Act. It provided the survivor with food and stays in the shelter he/she has been living in, along with the protection from beating and to have gentle behavior. It carried the assessment of the compensation out on the crime, quantity; the pain inflicted on the survivor, and the economic status of the perpetrator. In case of the inability of the perpetrator to pay the survivor, the court will pay for the compensation.
- f. The perpetrator should pay all the costs of the treatment of the survivor and the person accompanying the survivor in the hospital. They can draw the money for such a cause from the 'Gender Violence Prevention Fund' in case the court finds it necessary based on the economic status of the perpetrator. The survivor in the case requires security and separately treated, the police station should arrange such as ordained by Section 14 of the Witchcraft Act (Offense and Punishment) 2072 (2015).
- g. The Criminal Code Bill passed in 2017 stipulates penalties for the inhuman treatment of an individual by accusing them of practicing witchcraft. According to section 168 of the bill, the perpetrator of such an act could face up to five years in jail and up to Rs 50,000 in fines to be granted as compensation to the victim.
- h. According to section 168 of the Criminal (Code) Act 2074 (2017) of Nepal, a fine of up to 50,000 Rs and five years in prison will be applied for the inhuman practice of accusing a person of being a 'bokshi/witch'. In addition, perpetrators will be prosecuted for other charges related to the incident, such as torture, assault, or murder.

Although these laws exist, they are not strictly implemented. There are cases in which local police have declined to file complaints, claiming that they are personal matters and should be resolved within the community. This shows the complexity and severity of this phenomenon. A large proportion does not seek legal aid, and many survivors are not even aware of their legal rights, while some do not report the violence because they fear reprisals. (Atreya, Aryal, Nepal, & Nepal, 2021).

2.7 Theoretical/conceptual framework

This conceptual framework established the theoretical underpinnings and provided a lens through which the collected information was analyzed and interpreted. It is a structure that provides a theoretical or conceptual foundation for this research, allowing researchers to examine and analyze the complex phenomena of witch accusation. Key concepts, ideas, and theories that underpin the study were used in order to guide the research process. Thus, it helped in identifying the research questions, the variables studied, and their relationships. It also provided a way to visualize the research problem, clarify the research methodology, and explain the research findings as well.

There are some influencing factors for witch accusations, such as socio-demographic factors, economic factors, cultural factors, and religious factors. Age, sex, marital status, education, households, class relationships, and attitude were some of the major variables studied under the socio-demographic factors. Whereas occupation, income, and in-law property are economic factors, and similarly, patriarchy, social beliefs, taboos, norms, and values are studied and observed under the cultural factor. Whereas superstitious belief, sacred things, worship, sinfulness, and salvation were studied under the religious factor.

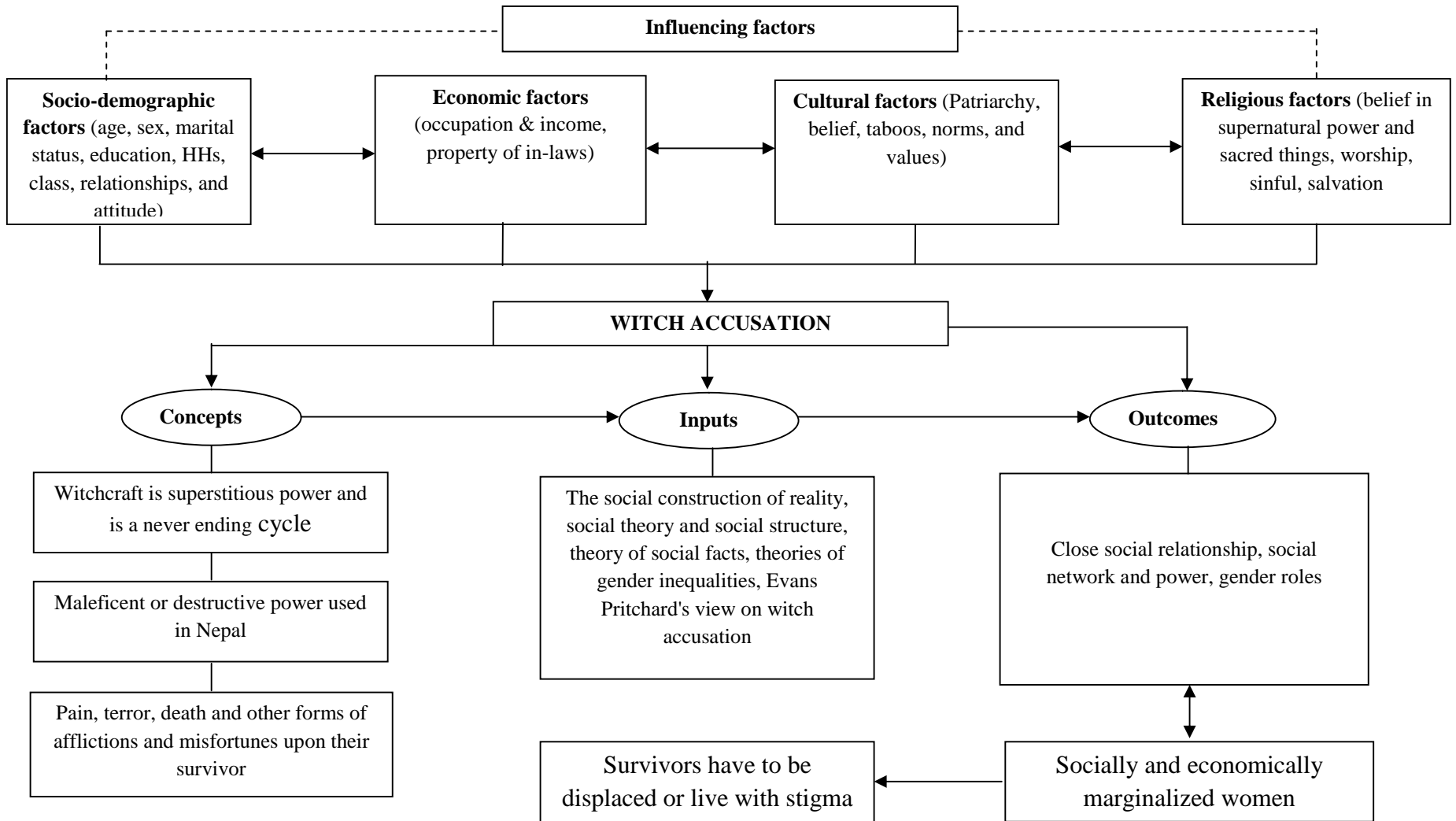


Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework of witch accusation

There are some influencing factors for witch accusations, such as socio-demographic factors, economic factors, cultural factors, and religious factors. Age, sex, marital status, education, households, class relationships, and attitude were some of the major variables studied under the socio-demographic factors. Whereas occupation, income, and in-law property are economic factors, and similarly, patriarchy, social beliefs, taboos, norms, and values are studied and observed under the cultural factor. Whereas superstitious belief, sacred things, worship, sinfulness, and salvation were studied under the religious factor.

To understand the occurrence of witch accusations, concepts, inputs, and outcomes were developed according to the meaning of the variables studied. These three areas of the study also have interconnections and interrelationships between them. There are some underling ideas in the concept. People have the idea that it is a superstitious power and believe that witchcraft is a never-ending process, as the accused witch handed over her knowledge and skill of witchcraft to her close one, i.e., either her daughter or sister-in-law. However, in Nepal, it is believed that witches have maleficent or destructive power, and due to this, survivors feel pain, terror, death, and other forms of afflictions and misfortunes.

When talking about the inputs, different social theories helped in explaining the complex phenomenon of witch accusation in a simple way. Social theories such as the social construction of reality, social theory and social structure, the theory of social facts, and the theory of gender inequalities were used. As we know the witch accusation to be one of gender-based violence, the theory of gender inequalities was used to make this study meaningful. The outcomes of these concepts and inputs are that witch accusations are socially constructed, where they are only practiced in close social structures composed of kin, relatives, and neighbors. Social networks and the power of the accuser also influence the accusation. Gender role also plays an important role in accusation, where the presence of males and masculines can protect the female from accusations. And in the Tamang community, *bombo* also played an indirect role in the accusations.

The accusation was made mostly of the socially and economically marginalized women who have poor, ugly faces, uncombed hair, wrinkled faces, old age, widowhood, and are single. If someone in the village suspects the witch, the villagers used to be apart from her and gradually do not allow her to take part in social activities. Such accused women need to be displaced or live with stigma in the village to some extent. In most of the incidents, survivors

have to be displaced or live with social stigma. The survivors' other family members were also affected by this.

Study importance behind this conceptual framework is to examine why these accusations had credibility. Who created this? How does this exist in society? And what made people believe in witches? Considering this, it has drawn a conceptual framework with the following flowchart to guide the research in a proper manner.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The chapter presents the methodological processes of the study. This study uses qualitative case-study research methods. According to Stausberg and Engler (2013), qualitative research is more descriptive and does not employ numerical measurement. It also uses more open-ended questions and investigates human or social phenomena. Through the probing questions, an in-depth understanding of witch accusations inflicted on women was gained. A qualitative study related to the phenomenon of witch accusations helped in discovering the underlying motives and desires that provided a valid answer to the research questions.

As qualitative research is increasingly recognized and valued, I also conducted this research in a very rigorous and methodical manner to give meaningful and useful results. To be accepted as trustworthy research, I have conducted information analysis in a precise and consistent manner through recording, systematizing, and disclosing the methods of analysis with enough details. It includes the nature and sources of data, tools of data collection, sampling and identification of participants, triangulation and verification, ethical considerations, and methodological limitations of the study.

3.2 Motivation for the study

There are many incidents related to witch accusations in Nepal. Even in the 21st century, witchcraft continues to plague Nepal, and the oppression of marginalized people, especially women, continues. The exact extent of the prevalence is unknown, as only a small fraction is reported. The increase in reports of witch hunts in recent years may reflect an increase in awareness in Nepal (Kohler, 2013). Many of the cases go unreported, especially when they occur in remote rural communities (Femandez & Thapa, 2012). When I saw and heard cases of witch accusations in various newspapers and news media, and especially women were more victimized, my curiosity increased, and finally I was motivated to do research on this matter. And for research, my curiosity has become more competent and time-relevant than ever before. I also believe that this research of mine can definitely contribute academically, and because of that, it also helps to raise awareness and reduce the incidence of witch accusations in the public, particularly in the Tamang community.

Analyzing the incidents of witchcraft accusations in the last five years (2011–2016), it was found that more incidents occurred in Kavrepalanchok district in Nepal, among which,

compared to other communities, such incidents occurred in the Tamang community, and these Tamang communities became the focal point of this research. Then, a research topic entitled "Practices of witch accusation in the Tamang community in Kavrepalanchok district" was determined, and the research work was conducted accordingly.

Introducing the Tamang community to this research topic has a special meaning and importance. In sociology, we define community as a group that follows a social structure within a society (culture, norms, values, and status). They may work together to organize social life within a particular place, or they may be bound by a sense of belonging sustained across time and space. Especially with witch accusations, the word community has been chosen because we know that these social structures have played an important role in promoting the accusations. As we also know, a community is a group of people who interact with one another, and we typically view this interaction as occurring within a bounded geographic territory. We can see among the Tamang where the accusations are highly prevalent. They even share common values, beliefs, or behaviors. Because they often share a common culture and historical heritage, it is common practice in Tamang to believe in witches. Because of these reasons, the term community has been selected to make this research meaningful and tangible and is explained throughout the research as 'Tamang community'.

Recently, my curiosity has been piqued by the fact that the practice of accusing witches, especially women, of witchcraft has long been prevalent. So the question is why and how this happens. To illustrate this point, I have done this research to find the real social basis of this practice using a social constructivist perspective.

There were a few incidents of witch accusations during the time of this research. In most of these incidents, they beat the victim to death. This inhuman act touched deeply, which started doing research in this area. I was particularly encouraged by following witch accusation cases that were published in the newspapers, on television, and in the news.

Her family members beat Jug Chaudhary, a 30-year-old mother of four children, up and paraded naked around a village in Kailali. They dragged her out of her home, beat her mercilessly, and then forced her to eat human excreta. (Nepali Times, December 2009). According to a report by the Telegraph published on February 15, 2010, Kali Kumari Bishwokarma, a 47-year-old Dalit woman and resident of Pyuthar VDC, Lalitpur, was

abducted by a group of 35 people from her own village, held for two days in a cowshed without food or water, and tortured. They made her eat human feces and drink urine.

Similarly, a forty-year-old widow, Dhegani Mahato of Chitwan, was killed by burning alive after a shaman accused her of witchcraft (Republica, February 18, 2012). In another incident, her relatives attacked Sunita Pudasaini of Jorpati, Kathmandu, including her siblings, and blinded her with a sickle (Ujyaalo Online, March 22, 2012). In another incident, forty-five-year-old Domani Chaudhary of Dhodana VDC-2, Siraha, was severely beaten by her neighbors over the death of a newborn in her village (My Republica, 6 February 2013). In the same year, a forty-five-year-old woman called Parvati Devi Chaudhari of Supadi Village Development Committee was accused by a group of influential people, and they beat her to death. They accused her of witchcraft for the illness of a local girl (My Republica, August 15, 2013).

These incidents of witch accusations encouraged me to investigate the various aspects emerging from this phenomenon. For example, why does such structural violence occur? Why is Shaman's name linked to witchcraft accusations? Why are women often suspected of being witches? And I was shocked and excited to see all the witch accusations happening in our close social relationship. Through this study, I intended to come up with some important findings that may support finding significant facts that are essential for policymakers and other concerned authorities to minimize such problems.

3.3 Research design

This research has adopted both an exploratory and a descriptive study design. As an exploratory study, it focused on studying a relatively unstudied area regarding the research topic. The approach is supported by Nieswiadomy (2008) as the method to use when there is limited knowledge of the topic. There have been very few attempts to study the events of witch accusations through the lens of a social constructivist. Therefore, it has become easier to bring out things that have not come to the surface with the help of this exploratory approach. This also provided answers to questions such as what, how, and why about witchcraft accusations. This research also used a descriptive approach, which is best suited where there is limited existing information available on the topic of the research. The choice

is supported by Bickman and Rog (1998), who state that the descriptive approach is used “when I was attempting to answer ‘what is’ or ‘what was’ questions.” Therefore, adopting the exploratory descriptive study design helped in gaining familiarity with witch accusations and gaining new insight into them.

3.4 Nature and sources of information

All the information included in this research is qualitative. I also collected this qualitative information using two methods. These are primary and secondary methods of information collection. Under the primary method, it has been collected by meeting the survivor, perpetrators, shamans, and people of the village directly. Under this, information was also collected by observing some events related to the witch accusation. Talking about secondary data, necessary information has been collected by studying books, articles, journals, and websites published by various scholars related to this research topic. Thus, this research has been done through primary and secondary data.

3.5 Selection of research participants

Witch accusation incidents that happened in Kavrepalanchok district from 2011/12 to 2015/16 were included in this research. Most of the incidents related to witch accusations in this district are in the Tamang community. Among the 15 incidents, 13 were of Tamang, one Dalit, and one Chhetri. As these incidents were registered with the District Police Office, Dhulikhel’s victim’s name, address, and contact numbers were collected from there, and I met with them in their respective places.

The study covers all 15 cases of witch accusations in the Kavrepalanchok district. Among these 15 incidents, 13 are related to Tamang, and the other two are related to other castes. In one case, the survivor had committed suicide after the accusation, and the perpetrators were all in prison, so the study could not cover this incident. However, the status quo of the incident was understood, and the necessary information was collected. These 15 incidents are scattered all over the Kavrepalanchok district.

Similarly, for participants, survivors, perpetrators, villagers, and witchdoctors are included. Survivors of witch accusations have been interviewed, and a few perpetrators, villagers, and witchdoctors have also been interviewed. It was not as easy to communicate with the survivor at first, as I was a stranger to them. Some Tamang do not speak Nepali well, and I took the help of others to communicate with participants in such cases. In searching for the

participants, I used as many resources as possible. In particular, various NGOs, women's development offices, social workers, school teachers, and some local people were involved. Cases of witch accusations included in the research are given in Annex 6.

After the selection of the Kavrepalanchok district, my next goal was to know the names, contact numbers, and addresses of the survivors and perpetrators there. Then, I contacted the District Police Office (DPO), Dhulikhel, to collect information on the incidents lodged with the police. DPO Dhulikhel also asked for an official letter to provide the information, and again, I got a letter from the Tribhuvan University Department of Sociology and submitted it there. Then details of the information about the accusation were provided. Following that information, it could meet with survivors and perpetrators in their original places.

3.6 Information collection guidelines

The easier it was to meet and talk with the participants, the more challenging it was to record what they said. Most participants said not to write the discussion along with their names. However, the discussion held with them was recorded with their permission, assuring them not to disclose their name. In this way, I have completed the study, missing some of the discussions and interactions with the participants, using both writing and recording. It has also helped to provide more information about the study's findings. The most common and effective tools, such as the interview and observation methods, were used in information collection.

3.6.1 Interview

This is one of the most popular and trusted methods of qualitative information collection. Different open-ended questions were designed for different participants (see Annexes 1, 2, 3, and 4) that helped to elicit the details of the participant's knowledge or perception surrounding the accusation of witchcraft. However, a few questions in these interviews overlapped, but they were tailored to elicit information specific to the respective participants. It also helped in understanding the social reality of the culture, an individual's behavior, opinion, and experiences, and could develop insights into the phenomenon of witch accusation.

The questions in this interview were more open-ended and structured, designed based on their beliefs, experiences, and perspectives on witchcraft accusations. There was no time set for the interview. This method of information collection also helped with indirect interaction and face-to-face conversation with the participants in natural settings. Thus, it was found to be a

useful, helpful, and reliable information collection tool that explored experiences, views, opinions, or beliefs about the witch accusation matter. As this research was complex and sensitive, I tried to interview in a secure place where very few other people could present. And finally, I addressed the terms of confidentiality to the participants and ended the interview by giving thanks.

3.6.2 Observation

The observation method was used to collect information about people, processes, and cultures. People's accounts and actions in an everyday context relating to witch accusations were carefully studied. It helped me understand phenomena by studying people's accounts and actions in an everyday context. It enabled me to describe existing situations on the ground, which helped in developing a holistic understanding of the witch-related phenomena under study. While using this observational method, I kept a few questions in mind, such as: What should I observe? How do I record? And how can accuracy be ensured? Among the 15 cases, it happened almost all due to dhami/jhakri (bombo), who used to give some indications to the perpetrators to encourage him to identify the witch in his surroundings.

Witch-related phenomena such as misfortunes because of witches, the social system, and the social structure of a witch doctor's healing practices were mainly observed. I found such phenomena and carried out the observation in a natural setting. Prior to observing the phenomena, I got permission from them and then sat down for observation. In my every visit with participants, direct or indirect observation of the phenomena related to witch accusations was done. However, I took part full-time during the healing procedure conducted by bombo in five different places. About 15–30 minutes are required for each person while bombo cures the patient following his ritual healing method. Thus, this finding from the observational method is more trustworthy, as I spent a considerable amount of time studying the respective phenomena.

3.7 Information analysis procedure

As we know that sociological research is a fairly complex process, I considered many steps and much more when collecting information on human behavior and attitude towards the accusation of a witch. This research attempts to search for knowledge, belief, and practice that led to the discovery of hidden truths regarding the accusation of witches and also to understand the ways in which people interact and shape their society.

It transformed the qualitative information obtained through recording during the interview into narratives. I listened to responses from each participant collected in the Nepali language again and again and prepared the narratives of the incident. A fully compiled case report of the research was prepared. In this way, I converted all the verbal matters collected into written form and made them ready for information analysis. Under this, information reduction, information display, and information analysis, which are the most common information analysis tools, were used.

Under the information reduction, narrative information was carefully read, all statements relating to the research questions were identified, and I assigned each a code or category using different eight colors: red, yellow, green, sky blue, pink, light brown, light green, and orange. Then, the information units (statement or sentence) were clustered into common themes (the same code), so that I grouped similar units into first-order themes and separated them from units with different meanings. I then repeated the same process with the first-order themes, which were grouped into second-order themes. I repeatedly did as much of this as possible. In this way, it condensed information with the help of coding, writing summaries, discarding irrelevant information, and so on to make it more manageable. Thus, information reduction was done without significant loss of information. It displayed these codes to conclude.

I then displayed the reduced information in narrative form according to research questions and preferences under the respective themes, following the color code. This information display helped in effectively communicating the study findings visually and simply. It also helped in showing detailed or causal explanations of the action and behavior related to the research topic, which permitted conclusion-drawing. Before this, I returned to the information set and compared the themes against it to make sure the themes were useful and accurate representations of the information. In this order, a few themes were combined to create a new one that makes the themes more useful and accurate. It combined the previous eight themes into three.

And the concluding subjective form was made and reported in soft and in-depth words. Explanation, understanding, and interpretations of the phenomenon under study based on the meaningful and symbolic content of qualitative information were done. Similarly, systematic and re-examining of the information, including noting patterns and themes, making contrasts and comparisons, for the conclusion was done, which included the introduction and method too.

3.8 The researcher's position

In fact, it is a challenge for a male researcher, as most of the witchcraft accusations are against women. It is a great challenge for a male researcher to go to a new village or place and talk to a woman about such a sensitive subject. Considering these challenges, I took help from different people, such as teachers, social workers, NGO staff, the Women Development Office, and so on. They especially helped me identify the village and the house of the survivor. As I need to talk with women in Tamang village, a conducive environment for conversation needs to be created. For this, each visit was accompanied by a female, who may be from the same place or village as my acquaintance. This made it easier for the participants to talk with me. Along with this, the participant's neighbors and villagers were also not in a position to interrupt and raise other suspicions about my work.

No matter how difficult it was, I could gather enough information to make this research very meaningful. In fact, in this kind of qualitative research work, bringing all the things from a single visit can also raise questions about its reliability and validity. Therefore, the researcher had to visit the same place again and again to eliminate such doubts in the research. It also helped in re-examining the taken information and their interpretations and confirmed the credibility of the information from their responses. Along with this, some of the important information that was missing and not captured by the interview questionnaire was also covered by this frequent visit to the participants. During this research, I met the participants up to three times at most.

The first visit during the research was just used to introduce the participants and other people in the village, highlight the purpose of the research, observe the participant's thinking about the incident, provide assurance of security and confidence, and observe the socio-economic status of the place, market, and so on. I also planned accommodation for the next visit.

The second visit was followed by questions for the participants. Questions were asked one by one, which were already prepared, and I attempted to get as many answers as possible from the participants. According to the participant's interest, some answers were written and some were recorded. Comparing these two methods of collecting information, recording seems to be more effective than writing because it will not interrupt participants during the recording of the conversation. This time, I had planned to stay in the same location as where the participant was. This helped me to be closer to participants and be able to gain as much

information as possible. Villagers did not seem to pay much attention to me during this visit. Even after the second visit to the field, it did not gather adequate information from some participants. Therefore, sometimes, as per the requirement, a third visit was carried out (see Annex 7).

3.9 Doing field research in sensitive issue

Whether we like it, accept it, or believe it, the supernatural arguably plays a huge part in our lives. It is intertwined with religious beliefs, and it is the mythological foundation for many religions. This research about the witchcraft practice is one of them, considered a sensitive issue as it deals with the potential fear of stigmatization for the survivors, and researching such sensitive issues is more challenging and complex. Although I was well concerned and prepared with preventing subjects from being harmed, protecting their secrecy and privacy, not deceiving them, and securing their informed consent were made.

During the study, it was not possible to gather all the information from a single visit, and it was also not possible to explore everything from the participants during the first visit. Though witch accusations are a sensitive issue in society, the most challenging for the participants was to create an environment of trust. As I was a new person to them, they did not trust me immediately. When I came in contact with participants from time to time (either by telephone or visit), they gradually believed in me and showed their willingness to have a real conversation.

Talking about witch accusations is a sensitive issue in society; that's why participants, along with other people, are hesitating to talk about it. In some legally resolved cases, participants did not want to talk and said that they didn't want to remember the past. It was because they had a fear that something bad would happen if they spoke about the incident again. So I made many attempts to win their trust and bring them back to normalcy. In this way, the participants happily presented their views and shared their experiences with accusation with no hesitation. While talking with the participants, most of the people were sitting around her and closely watching the conversation. Because of this, I was very careful, sensitive, and highly alert during the conversation and tried not to hurt anyone with my words.

3.10 Triangulation and verification

Targeted participants, such as survivors, perpetrators, witch-doctors, and villagers, were directly met and interviewed to get first-hand information. Secondary information that has been collected by studying books, articles, journals, and websites published by various scholars related to this research topic was also used in this research. I mostly used audio recordings in this research, which were found to be more reliable. I have also kept the contact numbers of all the participants and their recent living places safe. Thus, a conclusion was drawn based on this triangulation. Other districts were not included because saturation took place. And I also conducted the selection of the target participants in the proper way, i.e., I studied only the registered cases under the research. This made the investigation somewhat easier, and the survivor also had no chance to stay away from the investigation.

Similarly, to assure validity, a standard interview was conducted using open-ended questions. Participants such as survivors, perpetrators, witch- doctors, and villagers were interviewed with the related interview questions designed separately. All kinds of participants answered their questions easily and without hesitation. They were feeling comfortable and willing to answer. This reliability and validity increase transparency, decrease opportunities for research bias, and establish the ability to maintain neutrality and trustworthiness.

3.11 Ethical consideration

Ethics are the norms or standards that distinguish between right and wrong. They help to determine the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviors. Thus, protecting the identities of the participants prevents the fabrication or falsification of information and, therefore, promotes the pursuit of knowledge and truth, which was the primary goal of this research. This research about the witch accusation is considered sensitive as it deals with the potential fear of stigmatization. Thus, doing sensitive research is more complex. Thus, I was well concerned with preventing subjects from being harmed, protecting their secrecy and privacy, not deceiving them, and securing their informed consent, and I did accordingly. I changed the names of the participants from their originals in order to maintain their privacy and secure environment.

Along with this, I also maintained the responsibility to ensure the adverse effect of the research on research participants. Thus, to reach ethical standards, measures to guarantee the

participants' dignity, privacy, and safety were considered. I gave special care and alerts to the participants who were highly vulnerable due to factors such as age, disability, and their physical and mental health. The anonymity and privacy of those who took part in the research process were respected and kept confidential to protect their rights. However, as the participant's details (name, address, and contact numbers) are mentioned in the case filed, this research did not wish to disclose them publicly. District Police Office Dhulikhel will also not provide such information to an unaffiliated person or institution. In this way, information collected during the research is kept confidential and is not used without their consent. I changed the real names of the accused. Force collected no information or without the consent of the informants. And I was strongly obligated to disclose research findings without omitting or distorting significant data.

This research is qualitative and seeks to understand the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of individuals coping with their condition in natural settings. One of the main points was to approach participants humbly, making sure they would at all times feel comfortable and not be coerced to take part. Information is gathered and analyzed objectively, setting aside their personal preferences, beliefs, and opinions. I maintained value neutrality, a proactive of remaining impartial, without bias or judgment, during the study and in preparing the dissertation. And also not allow personal feelings to influence the information's interpretation. The research information was stored on the computer, and I saved a copy on an external hard disk for its safety.

CHAPTER IV

STUDY LOCALE AND WITCH ACCUSATION AMONG THE TAMANGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter includes an introduction to Kavrepalanchok district, where the study was conducted. A brief explanation of other matters necessary to connect the introduction of this district with the incident of witch accusations in the Tamangs is also given. The rationale for choosing this Kavrepalanchok district for the study is also briefly explained, along with some incidents studied and their life histories. As this study focuses on Tamangs, an ethnographic note on Tamang is also described in this chapter. In order to further explain this chapter, the socio-economic condition of the survivors and perpetrators involved with the witch accusation is also described. A *bombo* found in Tamang village who is directly or indirectly involved in the witch-accusation incident is also briefly described. Similarly, it is also described how a sensitive issue like the case of the witch accusation was successfully completed.

Kavrepalanchok District, a part of Bagmati Province, is one of the seventy-seven districts of Nepal. Ramechhap surrounds the district in the east, Dolkha in the north-east, Sindhu Palchok in the north, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur in the west, Makwanpur district in the south, and Sindhuli in the east-south, respectively (CBS, 2014). The district, with Dhulikhel as its district headquarters, is 30 km. east of the capital city of Kathmandu. The total geographical area of the district is 140486 ha. (1446 km²) out of which the forest area covers 39,565 ha. or 28.16 percent of the total area coverage of the district (DFO, 2018). The total population of the district is 3,85,672, out of which 1,88,947 (48.99 percent) are males and 1,96,725 (51.01 percent) are females, with 70,509 households. The average household size is 5.47, and the population density is 276 per sq. km. (CBS, 2014). Tamang, Brahmin, Newar, and Chhetri are the main caste groups in the district.

The elevation of the district varies from 1007 m. to 3018 m. It has a sub-tropical and temperate climate. The main trade road to Tibet, the Arniko Highway, passes through the district. Information Technology Park is also in this district. The district is culturally rich, with historical places like Dhulikhel, Panauti, Banepa, and Chandani Mandan. In the Kavrepalanchok district, there are many basins like Panchkhal, Sunkoshi, Indrawati, Dapcha, Khopasi, Panauti, and Bhakunde Besi. These basins are the granaries of the district. There are

big religious fairs like Chandeshwari Jatra of Banepa and Namobuddha Jatra of Namobuddha, which are celebrated on the birth date of Lord Buddha (Buddha Purnima), and Kumbha Mela of Panauti, which happens every twelfth year.



Figure 4.1: Map of Kavrepalanchok district

Socio-economic and political status

Kavrepalanchok district is culturally rich with historical places like Dhulikhel, Panauti, Banepa, and Chandeni Mandan. It has great potential to raise its local economy through tourism. Kavre has the same potential as that of other tourist sites in Nepal. We can see the long Himalayan Gaurishankar range from Dhulikhel. Kavre is famous for short-circuit trekking in places like Dhunikharka-Narayanthan, Dhulikhel-Kavre-Namobuddha, and Sankhu-Panauti-Banepa.

The major occupations of the people of this district were agriculture and animal husbandry, whereas the city people have their own trade businesses. Potato and milk are the main cash crops of the district, and this district is one of the biggest suppliers of them to the Kathmandu Valley. With the implementation of federalism, Kavrepalanchok has been divided into 6 municipalities and 7 rural municipalities, comprising 13 local levels, under which 135 wards, 2 federal constituencies, and 4 provincial constituencies were divided.

According to the results of the local-level election held in 2079 BS, the Nepali Congress came first, the Communist Party of Nepal, Maoist Center (CPN-Maoist Centre) second, and the Communist Party of Nepal, Unified Marxist-Leninist (CPN-UML) third in Kavrepalanchok district. The Congress has won seven seats, the CPN (Maoist Center) four, the CPN-M one, and the CPN (Unified Socialist) one.

Education

Despite being home to a university, the educational status of the area can be compared to that of a remote district. Banepa, a town in Kavre, is one of the very few areas in Nepal to have a school like Ajad Secondary School that has remained in operation for the last 70 years, a fact all Banepalis are quite proud of. This school is an autonomous co-educational institution at a distance of 10 minutes' walk from the Arniko Highway in Banepa. It was established in 2007 B.S. (1951 A.D.), immediately after the establishment of democracy in Nepal. The school is committed to providing skilled-based and job-oriented education with a task-based learning (TBL) environment and a student-centered teaching approach. However, this school is beyond the reach of many of the district's children, especially those who live further away from the main town. The literacy rate is 69.80%, with male literacy at 79.59% and female literacy at almost nineteen percent lower, at 60.92% (CBS, 2014). There are many private and governmental schools educating the secondary level within the district.

Health

The government has created positions such as auxiliary health workers (AHWs), auxiliary nurse midwives (ANMs), and community health workers (CHWs) who are trained medical practitioners and fully qualified to treat minor health issues. However, the small health centers in many Village Development Committees (VDCs) are without auxiliary health workers (AHWs), auxiliary nurse midwives (ANMs), and community health workers

(CHWs). It is very difficult for people to go to the health post and back because of their geographical vulnerability. Despite the improvement in the health sector of the district, its use is not satisfactory. People seeking emergency health help have to travel long distances to district headquarters or Kathmandu or end up dying because of a lack of treatment. Many people still believe in *dhami* and *jhakri* and don't always seek medicine or go to the hospital for treatment.

Table 4.1: Number of health centers in Kavrepalanchok district

General Hospital	Provincial Hospital	Ayurveda Health Centre	Primary Health Centre	Health Post	Urban Health Centers	Community Health Unit	Basic Health Service Centre
6	1	1	4	90	18	17	29

Source: Annual Health Report, 2077/88

Currently, a NGO, PHASE Nepal, is working on several projects in this district, including community health and education, livelihood, hygiene, and sanitation programs. The main aim of PHASE Nepal is to provide awareness to the local people and help them learn about sanitation, livelihood, hygiene, community health, and education.

Table 4.2: Number of health workers working in Kavrepalanchok district

Doctor	Health Assistant	Auxillary Health Worker	Auxillary Nurse Midwife	Staff Nurse	Lab Technician	Female Community Health Volunteer
11	52	178	222	15	19	943

Source: Palika Level Health Status, 2079/80

Government program and facilities

Kavre district has been a high priority in the government's reconstruction efforts since the 2015 earthquake destroyed most of the existing infrastructure. Currently, the district's key challenge is to provide quality health, nutrition, education, and sanitation services to the most underprivileged population. District Development Committee (DDC) Kavrepalanchok implements all the programs and activities of the local governance process as per the Local Self Government Act (LSGA)/Land Surveying and Geo Informatics (LSGR) and other rules, regulations, and manuals of the Government of Nepal to 76 VDCs and 5 municipalities for implementing the development activities assigned by the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development (MoFALD).

Municipalities are autonomous in deciding and implementing their development activities, and they get the central grants directly from MoFALD. DDC plays the role of guardianship, implements the overall activities of local governance, and distributes the development activities to municipalities as well. DDC Kavrepalanchok has the role of overall coordination on development activities with all VDCs, municipalities, line agencies, and international non-government organizations (INGOs).

The Kavre District Chamber of Commerce and Industry has urged the government to explore the district's potential in meat processing, dairy farming, and tomato cultivation for nomination under the One District, One Product program. The government has supported the concept recommended by the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI).

4.2 Rationale of the selection of the study area

Kavrepalanchok district is at the forefront based on the number of incidents reported to the police regarding the witch accusation. The district has had the highest number of witch cases in the last five years (2011/12 to 2015/16), with 15 incidents. Therefore, the Kavrepalanchok district, which has the highest number of witch accusation cases, has been selected as the major area of study. Most of the incidents related to witch accusations in this district are in the Tamang community. Of the 15 incidents, 13 related to Tamang, while the other two incidents involved one Dalit and the other Chhetri. Because of this, the study has become more focused on Tamang. According to a census conducted in 2078 BS, Tamang has the largest population, composed of 34.50% of the various castes and ethnic groups living in the

district. This may be one reason the incidence of witch accusations is higher in Tamang than in other castes and ethnic groups. I have passed various stages before selecting this Kavrepalanchok district for study.

In the first phase, the incidents of witch accusations published in the news and media at different times were collected, and I attempted to identify their location. It was not possible to find the reallocation of the survivors as published in the news and media because the names and locations of the survivors mentioned in the news and media were not correct. When I reached the mentioned place and asked the name of the survivor, the people there replied that they did not know him or her. The villagers said that the survivors gave false names and places to the journalists. As it is difficult for the survivor to live in the village, they hide their identities as much as possible.

Then, I adopted another procedure and accordingly included only the incidents reported to the police. Here, the actual details of the survivor and the perpetrator are mentioned because there is an incidental issue between them. So I consider this reliable for the study. When I came to know that the record of the incidents of witch accusations related to violence against women was available in the Women, Children, and Senior Citizen Service Directorate (WCSCSD), formerly known as the women's cell under the Nepal Police Headquarters, I contacted them there with the letter from Tribhuvan University, Department of Sociology. And I easily got five years (2011–2016) of information from across the country on witchcraft accusations. With passing time, the new constitution of 2072 changed the country into a federal democratic republic and divided it into seven provinces. I also categorized the incidence of witch accusations (see Annex 5). Incidents related to witch accusations that have taken place after 2072/73 are also included in this, so that it will help inform the prevailing accusations across the country.

4.3 Tamang community and community life

Tamang is one of the fifth-largest ethnic groups in Nepal and makes up 5.62 percent of the total population (Census, 2021). However, a considerable number of Tamang people live in Kathmandu valley's neighboring districts, such as Dhading, Dolakha, Kavrepalanchok, Makwanpur, Nuwakot, Ramechhap, Rasuwa, and Sindhupalchok, in Nepal's central hilly area, including Kathmandu valley (Census, 2021). This shows that the Tamang are more concentrated in the central region of Nepal and in and around the Kathmandu valley.

Origin and history

Norbhu (1981) traces the migration of Tamang from Tibet in the 7th century. It was most probably before the conquest of Ghurkha in Nepal or during the time of Songten Gampo in Tibet. Bista (1967) states that Tamang originally came from Tibet. They were called Tamang for their profession in horse-trading. 'Ta' in Tibetan means horse; 'Mang' means traders. According to Yonjan (2004), after the Tibetan king Srongchen Gampo invaded the south and occupied the northern parts of Nepal in 640 AD, King Anshuvarma of Nepal had intelligently established rapport between the two countries after he wisely married his daughter Bhrikuti with Tibetan King Srongchen Gampo and extended friendship between Nepal and Tibet. Then King Shrongchen Gumpo returned to Tibet with Princess Bhrikuti along with some horsemen, and many horseback troops remained in Nepal. They were called Tamang, and the Nepalese people mispronounced the word Tamang later.

Tamang has been regarded as a brave soldier since ancient times in Nepal and is considered one of the ancient inhabitants. However, they came to the outer world's knowledge very late. After Prithvi Narayan Shah captured all of Tamsaling, he imposed very high taxes on the Tamang people; not only this, he also banned the use of 'Tamang' as their surname, and all the Tamang's land was distributed among the Brahmans, Rajputs, and his ministers. He even destroyed the scripts where the history of the Tamangs was written. Even he changed the names of the Tamangs from Passang, Doma, and Pema to Nepali names such as Ran Maya, Man Maya, Bir Badhur, etc., and forcefully Hindu culture was imposed upon the Tamangs. If any Tamang family celebrated their own culture, they were given severe punishment by the king. From then on, Tamangs started celebrating Dashain, Tihar, instead of Sonam Lhochhar. Thus, Tamang grandparents and elders put tika on the foreheads of their younger ones during Dashain; they say in the Tamang language, "chu tika hyangla akin panch sarkar gyalu thim heena," meaning this tika did not belong to us; this tika belonged to Shree Panch Sarkar's festivals (Yonjon, 2004).

Tamangs could not serve in government offices as a civil servant or get admission to the police force due to a lack of education. In the past, Tamang used to carry the luggage of travelers, especially under Rana's regime (Tamang, 2014). The term Tamang was not common official usage in Nepal until the twentieth century. Under the leadership of Janga Bir Tamang, a group had requested that King Tribhuvan and the then Prime Minister Bhim Shamsher separate them from the Bhote caste and identify them as a Tamang caste group. In

1932, a government decree declared that people formerly known as Bhote, Lama, or Murmi were now officially named Tamang (Holmberg, 1989). Whatever the case, there is no doubt that the Tamangs are of Tibetan origin and one of the oldest tribes in the kingdom of Nepal (Bista, 2008).

Tamang were economically important as hewers of wood and carriers of loads, but their social position was low. They normally entered Brahmin/Chhetris' and Newars' houses in no other capacity than as servants and farm hands (Furer-Haimendorf, 1966). However, until 1950, Tamang was neither accepted into government posts, whether administrative, judicial, or political, nor allowed to accept foreign employment, serving as a manual labor pool for the ruling class. It prohibited them from joining the British and Nepalese Army (Holemberg, 1989). Because of the discrimination made by the rule, it compelled them to live the miserable life of being oppressed and unidentified for many years. As the Tamang have deviated from access to the source of the economy, they cannot maintain their lives from their traditional sources. Tamang is ritually and culturally rich but economically and educationally poor.

Community structure and leadership

Tamang prefers to live in a big community for their group. Through this type of living pattern, they get cooperation from society. The Tamang has a system of six types of societal leaders: *tamba*, *ganba*, *bombo*, *labonbo*, *lama*, and *choho* (Tamang, 2004). It helps them keep the Tamang community continuously alive and dynamic. The six have their respective and important roles to play in the community. The *tamba* looks after the cultural aspect and has a very important role to play in marriage ceremonies. He functions as the *lami* (middleman) because of his knowledge of the ancient traditions of the Tamang.

The *labonbo* keeps alive the history of the clan and lineage through the worship of the clan deities; *Choho* looks into cases and dispenses justice, maintaining peace, security, and wellbeing in society; Ganba takes part in many social, political, and religious activities and observes them, as well as whether the duties have been fulfilled by the other leaders; and *bombo* also called as *jhakri*, acquires the magical power from the god and goddess of the jungle and protects the Tamang people from distress, illness, and any form of evil power. Lamas are considered the main priests to maintain the social and cultural systems. They also play the role of a witch doctor and use their mantra (the verse of a secretly learned lesson) for the primary cure of the patient.

The Tamangs are composed of patrilineal exogamous clans that are classified into two endogamous status groups. They are divided into twelve tribal groups that had occupied a certain territory, which became the line of identification for these Tamangs. They were inhabited in their ancestral area (*kipat*), which made them pure twelve Tamangs and eighteen *jaat* Tamang, which are broadly divided into three groups. These are Gothar, Nharba, and Shangri. These Tamangs do not have a sub-clan. If a Tamang man marries a woman of Brahman, Chettri, or Thakuri of Khas caste, then his child bears the clan of Gothar. This is neither pure Tamang nor ostracized Tamang, but this is the clan that is subject to purification. The children of Tamang men and Newar women become the Nharba. And a child from the intimacy with Magar, Limbu, Gurung, Rai, and Sunuwar woman will get the Thar of Shangri (Furer-Haimendorf, 1956).

Both clans were used to describe the people of higher and lower status, respectively (Bista, 1967). The *barha* clan was socially superior to the *athara* clan in matters concerning ritual or ceremonial aspects of society, and these clans were exogamous and patrilineal. Twelve Tamang are believed to be a pure descendant of Lord 'Maheswar' and thus socially higher than the eighteen *jaat* (Vansitart, 1993). Thus, the classification of twelve and eighteen Tamang is not based on caste but on the 'pure Tamang' and 'mixed blood Tamang' (Furer-Hemendorf, 1956).

Religion

Most of the Tamangs are Buddhist by faith and birth. Their religion is traditionally Bon Lamaism, a fusion of shamanism and Buddhism. Bon was the prevailing religion in Tibet before most Tibetans adopted Buddhism. Bon emphasizes its religious grounds more on spirits and deities than philosophy, and hence the religion is sometimes regarded as shamanism. It is a pre-Buddhist belief concentrated in Tibet and still widely practiced in Tamang. They have gumbas (monasteries) in every sizeable village. The gumbas are looked after by the ghyang guthi (association), which sees that these ghyangs are swept and cleaned daily and worship is performed (Bista, 2008). Every family has a special Buddhist god and book to worship every morning. The Tamangs keep jhakris (shamans) besides their lamas (priests). These jhakris perform certain rites, such as trances and sacrifices, to ease problems or assure good fortune (Tamang, 2004). They worship guru Padma Sambhava as Rinpoche, or a great teacher by Tamangs. With the intermixture of Tamangs with Nepalese races, they

are gradually adopting the Nepalese form of Hinduism and also celebrating some of the major feasts and festivals.

Education

Tamang lives in this community, and most of them used to communicate in their own mother tongue. Education is one of the fundamental means for alleviating poverty and improving the standard of living through different socio-economic activities. Education enhances access to information that may be necessary to conduct various essential activities in daily life and work. Despite living close to the Kathmandu Valley, Tamang's literacy rate is one of the lowest compared to other communities. There was hardly any person above the age of 40 or 50 who had been to school in their time (see Annex 8).

Many girls were found married while studying in grades 7 or 8 and then dropped out of school and started their married lives. Love marriage during the school-going age was found to be an increasing trend in Tamang. One could find some girls in the village who had become mothers at 16 or 17, which is a common phenomenon. With boys, there was a great attraction towards joining the Nepali Army. So, many boys were found trying to enter the Nepali Army soon after completing Grade 8 for the Sipahi post. If they failed, then they would make passports and try to go abroad for work.

On the other hand, Tamang is in their community, and most of them used to communicate in their mother tongue. However, the school was fully a Nepali-medium school. Children needed to walk one or two hours downtown for secondary education. There was a common concept that going to school was the business of so-called higher caste people, such as Brahman and Chhetri. While reaching higher grades, both parents and children would face various discomforts. Parents need to pay a higher price. Sending a child of 14 or 15 years was the loss of their daily wage. In such conditions, they did a cost-benefit analysis of sending children to school.

Likewise, in higher grades of school education, children would find the classroom more painful than the expected gain of schooling. Because of their compulsory engagement in household chores and weak performance in lower grades, many children found it difficult to cope with classroom teaching and maintain satisfactory performance in the classroom. Their inability to cope with the school had forced them to compromise and quit schooling before completing school education.

Because of the discrimination experienced by this ethnic group in the past, they have genuinely remained poorly educated. Tamang is in the 58th position in education. The main reason for this is that Tamang was treated as a Masinya caste by the feudal state government and excluded from education. Many Brahmins in the Tamsaling area used to say, '*bhote ko choro padhera k garcha*'. Likewise, enough mental pressure is given by the Brahmin to the Tamang in order to discourage them from education. Its main reason is that if Tamang are educated, then Brahmin will have to stop the way they are exploiting Tamang. Even today, these Brahmins try to stop the Tamang children from going to school with different excuses (Yonzon, 2006).

Rituals

The importance of ritual in strengthening social bonds is noted, as is how utilitarian activities are subordinated to religious values and ordered according to symbolic ideas of time and space. Three ritual modes are then described and discussed. First, those concerned with protecting the individual and the community, either by appeals to the traditional village guardians or by invoking the Buddhist protective deities. Second is the use of exorcism to expel evil, personified as the demons and witches believed to cause illness, misfortune, and death. Third, rituals, which, through offerings to the high Buddhist deities, seek access to their divine power and compassion in order to transform the worshippers (Hall, 1982). There are two principal religious specialists in the Tamang community: lamas and shamans (*bombo*). Both are part-time practitioners fulfilling different social roles. Lamas officiate the funeral ceremonies and calendrical rituals; shamans perform rituals in the treatment of mental and physical illness (Peters, 1979). Some of the ritualistic dances performed in the Tamang community are *bakcham nach*, *mhanichepa*, *tormamharsha*, and *jungwanach* where the role of the Lama is highly esteemed and important.

Importance of liquor

Homemade alcohol is part of the culture and day-to-day life in the Tamang community. All Tamang men and women routinely drink liquor, which they prepare themselves in their house. Tamang women are involved in the traditional trade of distilling and brewing liquors out of millet, rice, and other grains to support their families. They need this homemade alcohol on all occasions, from birth to death. It is not considered bad in their culture and is used in religious ceremonies and for medicinal purposes (Khatiwada, 2019).

On the wedding day, even a poor Tamang, because of social tradition, should be ready to send twelve to eighteen bottles of liquor to the bride's house. This sort of process is called 'perungolane' among the Tamang. According to their social system, when a man dies, immediately all the villagers bring a bundle of firewood, incense, drinks, and rice for the cremation of the deceased person. Then, they orderly offer the drink to the deceased body, and then only fire is given to the pyre. The married daughter brings liquor to her natal home and serves it to the funeral participants for the whole night. The purpose of serving this drink to the villagers is to be free from her deceased father or mother. She paid her debt to her deceased father or mother. This tradition is called 'nhelabhar'. According to their belief, without offering the liquor, no family deities will be pleased with them (Kunwor, 1984).

Tamang is involved in the production of local liquor as an important source of income. Liquor is known as a necessary thing from a socio-cultural point of view in this community. So, the production and consumption of liquor are common activities in a household. However, in those days, households produced local liquor for cash income, not only for domestic use. Some households have adopted it as a small enterprise. They produce local alcohol to meet the demand of the local market. So, it has become an important source of cash income for the people in the Tamang community (Khatiwada, 2019).

Status of women

Tamang women's position was guided by a common understanding of the distinct division of social roles between men and women in the community. They considered women a limited group in Tamang; they went to their husband's home, gave birth to children, and did household chores. They considered the role of men a little broader: to go outside for work and manage the financial aspect of the family. All members of the community accepted and acknowledged this social division of work between men and women. As a result, they judged the success of a female member of the family based on the inner management of the household, while that of a man was viewed based on the income he earned to run the household.

In fact, women in a male-dominated society are treated differently, unconsciously or unintentionally. The underpinning cause of such discrimination is societal norms, where women are still considered secondary to men. Tamang women also denied both males and females as discriminators but claimed that customary practices were responsible for discriminatory practices at the household level, such as food and marriage time decisions.

Along with this, they considered women to be working machines. Thus, the parents get their young sons married to older girls who serve as laborers. They also believe that if their daughters-in-law are older and more mature than their sons, the girl could manage her home perfectly and do hard work. Some boys agree that, if wives are more mature than their husbands, they would be more practical in household management and could tackle any problem by themselves.

Tamang women are mostly illiterate and believe themselves to be a liability to others. However, they believe a daughter is the wealth of others and that they never truly belong to their parents. The women unanimously accepted marriage and the practice of child marriage as their only fate. The brothers are always the caretakers of the Tamang women, who have and enjoy an equal share of the paternal property. Even in cases of divorce, a woman may claim her right to property given by her brothers, as well as her right to claim a share of her husband's property. Tamang accuses each other of such predilection, i.e., of being a witch and of being mengko. A distinction can be drawn between witchcraft, which is thought to be a permanent and hereditary attribute of certain women, and the accusation of witchcraft, which is a frequent ploy in quarrels between women (Macdonald, 1975).

4.4 Survivors of witch accusation under study

I prepared this dissertation based on case studies of witch accusations in Kavrepalanchok District. Of the fifteen incidents studied in the Kavrepalanchok district, thirteen have happened with Tamang, one with Dalit, and one with the Chettri caste. In all these cases, the survivor has been accused of being a witch on various pretexts. And these incidents of witch accusations have happened within a close social relationship. An unknown and strange person had never been accused. The studied cases that occurred in Kavrepalanchok from 2011 to 2016 are presented below. I took sources of the case information from Nepal Police Headquarters, the Women, Children, and Senior Citizen Service Directorate (WCSCSD), the District Police Office, Dhulikhel, Kavrepalanchok, the news, the media, and study participants. I described a few numbers of witch accusation incidents studied under this research in detail in Annex 9.

4.5 Pattern of witch accusations in Kavrepalanchok District

Although witch accusations are practiced in all castes, they are more prevalent in Tamang than in other castes in the Kavrepalanchok district. Of the 15 incidents covered by the

research, 13 are in Tamang, one in Dalit, and one in Chettri. Looking at the incident, I found that both the perpetrator and the survivor were Tamang in all the incidents that took place in Tamang. The rest of the cases of witch accusations have also happened within the same caste.

In all the cases studied, the perpetrator has accused an acquaintance of being a witch. Incidents of witchcraft have been made, particularly against one's own family, neighbors, relatives, and villagers. Neighbors and villagers have been blamed in five incidents, while the rest have happened to their own families and relatives.

In all the cases studied, the survivor and the perpetrator had a good relationship and knew each other well before being accused of witchcraft. There are no cases of witchcraft being accused by distant and unknown people. Therefore, this incident of witchcraft is happening in the same house, place, and village. Similarly, in all the cases, the survivors were married and have been living with their families. Women between the ages of 25 and 50 are more likely to be at risk of being charged with witchcraft, while few are older.

Most of the survivors are young, and a few are old. The study found that young women were more likely to be targeted for witchcraft accusations. Women of this age often quarrel over various household matters and some other pretext, and the stronger one accuses the weaker of being witches. Out of the 15 cases of witch accusations studied, in 11 cases, the age of the victimized women is between 25 and 54, while the age of the rest of the victimized women is between 62 and 68. I include the details regarding the age of the survivors in Annex 6. The main source of income for all perpetrators and survivors is agriculture and animal husbandry. Often, both the perpetrator and the survivor grow up in the same lifestyle and environment; they know each other, and most of the perpetrators have a better financial position compared to the survivors. Due to this, the perpetrator can easily harass, oppress, and even accuse the survivor of witchcraft. When the survivor understands that the financial situation of the family is weak, the family is accused of witchcraft. Most of the family members of the survivor have gone to the city or abroad for work. Therefore, it has been found that the economic condition of a few survivors is better than that of the perpetrator. After the incident, because of the lack of social support for the survivor's family, they started working in the city and abroad, and the economic situation has somewhat improved.

4.6 The Socio-economic status of survivor and perpetrator

Socio-economic status has a profound effect on the incidence of witch accusations. This socio-economic difference between the perpetrator and the survivor makes it easier for the poor and vulnerable to be accused of witchcraft. The person having good property is respected in society, as seen in Tamang, and his identity in society is also found to be higher than others. Such a person with a sound economy in the village will have strong social ties and be considered strong and prestigious in society. Therefore, most times of witch accusation, the perpetrator is stronger from a socio-economic point of view than the survivor.

Of the 15 cases of witch accusations covered in the research, I found the survivor to be weaker than the perpetrator in 11 cases; the survivor was in better condition than the perpetrator in the other two cases (this change occurred after the incident); and the socio-economic condition of both the survivors and perpetrators was similar in 2 cases. This analysis of the incidence of witch accusations shows that the socio-economic status of the perpetrator is necessarily strong in all cases of this nature. The appearance and behavior of the perpetrator also play a big role in the occurrence of such an incident. A study of news media and literature also states that with witch accusations, the perpetrator is richer and stronger than the survivor, which is significant here.

Depending on traditional agriculture and animal husbandry, so-called survivors and perpetrators have a hard time raising their families. As a result, most of the Tamangs started going to the city for work. Nowadays, most Tamangs have gone abroad as there is no good income from the city. In this order, some people earn more and some people earn less, and those who earn more have a different identity in their village. A person with a good income also spends and has a lot of friends. Because of this, he considers himself powerful in society. Thus, from the study of the cases, it is known that wealthy families with good income target weaker or poorer families for witchcraft accusations. Because of this reason, these days' members of the poor and needy families go to work in cities and abroad so that others do not oppress and neglect them in society, which could prevent them from being accused. This study also proves that, in the words of the survivors, poverty is the main reason for being accused of witchcraft, which is true.

CHAPTER V

THE SOCIAL STRUTURAL EMBEDDEDNESS OF WITCH ACCUSATIONS

5.1 Introduction

Social structure is, in sociology, the distinctive, stable arrangement of institutions whereby human beings in a society interact and live together. Although it is agreed that the term *social structure* refers to regularities in social life, its application is inconsistent. It is simply defined as patterned social relations - those regular and repetitive aspects of the interactions between the members of a given social entity. It refers to a society's framework, comprising the various relationships between people and groups that direct and set limits on human behavior.

The larger the social entity considered, the more abstract the concept is. For this reason, the social structure of a small group is more closely related to the daily activities of its individual members than is the social structure of a larger society. Therefore, when we study social structure, we do, however, follow an empirical (observational) approach to research.

Social structure provides stability and order to society. It creates a framework in which people can interact, cooperate, and coexist. It helps to understand the relationships between different elements of society and their roles. Social structures are not immediately visible; however, they are always present and affect all dimensions of human behavior and experience in society. Social structure is composed of social institutions and patterns of institutionalized relationships, but we also understand it as present in the social networks that connect us and in the interactions that fill our everyday lives.

This study found that witch accusation mostly prevails in closer social relationships within the social structure (composed of kinship, relatives, and neighbors). Each relationship is associated with some meaningful action that is appropriate to the relationship. The closer a person is to each other, the more they know each other's strengths and weaknesses. In this way, when people know everything about each other, they may like or despise each other. Therefore, the closer people are to each other, the more disagreements occur between them and the sooner they are resolved. This is indeed the characteristic and importance of the social structure where we live. Broadly defined, social relationships refer to the connections

that exist between people who have recurring interactions that are perceived by the participants to have personal meaning.

This study revealed that it is a common matter to have minor misunderstandings between these relationships because they have different interactions going on in their everyday lives. In a mutual transaction, it is normal for them to have disagreements. But, when these petty disagreements escalate, a quarrel begins and both accuse each other of being witches, with the stronger one mostly accusing the weaker. Therefore, these various relationships within the social structure have been taken with great importance to study the subject of witch accusations. Thus, accusations are usually preceded by conflict or the emergence of strains in interpersonal relationships. Because of this, when an individual experiences sickness or misfortune, the person with whom relations are strained becomes the prime suspect. Thus, witchcraft beliefs and accusations become part of the fabric of everyday life in the Tamang community.

It limited the accusation of witchcraft to the people with whom they knew each other. They do not blame a witch on an unknown and strange person. They don't have any interest in blaming distant and unknown people, and if that happens, it makes no sense to them. Because of this, there were no cases of blaming a witch on an unknown and strange person. People accuse someone of some vested interest. When someone is accused, it may result from old wounds or remind them of something from the past.

Although it is not so easy to make witch accusations within acquaintances and relationships, often such cases of witch accusations are directly or indirectly influenced by other forces that we know as *mata* and *bombo*. Whenever someone in a Tamang's family is sick or faces misfortune, they first go to visit to *mata* or *bombo* in the village. Some people get relief from the treatment of these *mata* or *bombo*, while others do not. And when the treatment of this *mata* or *bombo* does not solve the illness or any other misfortune, they blame the person close to the patient. This Tamang community, influenced by the healing practices of *mata* or *bombo*, cannot deny what they say. As a result, they look at the weak and the poor in their close relations with suspicion and watch closely. Most women are more suspicious. The study has shown that earlier they used to directly say that such-and-such a person is a witch, but nowadays, because of the law regarding witch accusations, these *mata* or *bombo* do not directly say that such-and-such a person is a witch, but they give some hints. Based on this sign, the patient doubts his close relationship because the *mata* or *bombo*

never gives a similar sign to a distant or unknown person. Therefore, with these accusations, the patient's nearest relative and close relatives are the survivors.

A person's respective culture also determines a person's beliefs and behavior towards witches, which shape attitudes, morals, and ideals. In the Tamang community, *bombo* is considered one of the societal leaders according to their religion and culture, and *bombo* highly influenced this community. Whatever the case may be, once a woman is accused of being a witch, it is difficult for her to return to normal life, and she has to face a lot in society. Neighbors and relatives also look with suspicion, directly or indirectly. And sometimes, the whole village might be against the survivors, and in such a situation, the survivor is forced to leave the place.

5.2 Conceptual underpinning

Pritchard (1937) suggests that people living at a distance from one another have insufficient social contacts to produce mutual hatred, whereas there is ample opportunity for friction among those whose homesteads and cultivations are close. Thus, witchcraft is selective and takes a toll on people between whom social bonds already exist. He explores the beliefs and rites of the Azande group in Sudan, Africa. In it, he observes the Azande relationship to magic and how this relationship influences the social structure in the Azande community. Hutton (2006) argues that a witch does harm to neighbors or kin, rather than strangers, and represents a threat to individuals and the community.

Max (1969) argues that where misfortune occurred, someone foremost sought the witch among those neighbors with whom survivors had already been in problematic relationships before the misfortune occurred. Similarly, Macfarlane (1970) also argued that accusations of witchcraft were mostly made between people who not only came from the same village but even from the same part of the village and knew each other intimately, and that the accusations were limited to the area of intense relationships between individuals.

According to these scholars, in fact, this study also finds that it limited the tradition of accusing witches to close acquaintances and relationships. Therefore, this research has fully supported their opinion in this sense. However, this study categorized the relationships into three types, as they are significantly different from each other. They are kinship, relatives, and neighbors. Although they look and sound the same and intersect with each other, they have different meanings and applications, which are known from this research.

Kinship is a system of social relationships between people based on blood or marriage. It is one of the main organizing principles of society. There are two main types of kinship: consanguineous kinship and affinal kinship. The relationship between people may be based on closeness or distance from the relationship. There are three degrees of kinship: primary, secondary, and tertiary. Each of these three degrees also has two types: consanguineous and affinal.

Primary kin refers to direct relations. There are eight basic primary kinships: husband-wife, mother-daughter, mother-son, father-daughter, father-son, sister-brother, younger-elder brothers, and younger-elder sisters. The only primary affinal kinship is the relationship between husband and wife. Therefore, all other primary kinships are consanguineous. Secondary kin refers to the primary kin of the primary kin. For example, a father's sister, a mother's mother, a wife's father, etc. are secondary kin. One's in-laws fall under secondary affinal kinship, while relationships like grandparents-grandchildren, aunt-niece, uncle-nephew, etc. fall under secondary consanguineous kinship. Tertiary kin refers to the primary kin of secondary kin, or the secondary kin of primary kin. For example, one's grandmother's (secondary kin) mother (primary of secondary kin) is one's tertiary kin. This is an example of consanguineous kinship. An example of a tertiary affinal kinship is a brother-in-law's wife or a mother-in-law's brother.

Another relationship in which the witch accusation prevails is that of relatives, which can be defined as an individual's relationship to another individual or group through fictive ties. Fictive kinship is a term used by anthropologists and ethnographers to describe forms of kinship or social ties that are based on neither consanguinity (blood ties) nor affinal (by marriage) ties. It contrasts with true kinship ties. In the sociology of the family, we refer to this idea as chosen kin, fictive kin, or voluntary kin. Sociologists define the concept as a form of extended family members who are not related to either blood or marriage. The bonds allowing for chosen kinship may include religious rituals, close friendship ties, or other essential reciprocal social or economic relationships (Ebaugh & Mary, 2000). Examples of chosen kin include godparents, adopted children, and close family and friends (Ciabattari, 2016).

And similarly, there is another relationship, which is with a neighbor, about which it also made accusations of witchcraft. We define a neighborhood as a relatively autonomous and meaningful socio-geographic area of residents characterized by high interaction among the

residents. It is an area where people live and interact with one another. Neighborhoods have their own identity, or "feel," based on the people who live there and the places nearby. Neighborhood residents have similar incomes as well as similar social characteristics such as education level, housing preference, and a sense of public order. In this way, although these three relationships seem to be the same, it is clear from the above definition and explanation that they are sociologically different from each other. Therefore, an attempt has been made to describe with incidents how and why witch accusations are made between these relationships in the Tamang community.

5.3 Unpacking social structural embeddedness

In the Tamang community, witchcraft accusations often occur within their social structure, which is composed of kinship, relatives, and neighbors. Therefore, in this chapter, an attempt has been made to explain why and how witches are accused only of acquaintance and relationship in the Tamang community. Based on the in-depth interviews taken with the research participants and observations of the healing procedures, I have sought to make this chapter more meaningful. *Bombo*, who works as *dhami* or *jhakri* in the Tamang community, is one of the societal leaders in Tamang. The primary treatment place in the Tamang community is *bombo*. When people get sick or some misfortune happens, they soon consult with *bombo* for treatment.

According to *bombo*, they cannot cure all patients. Therefore, when they cannot cure the patient, *bombo* gives some indications to the patient or his family members during the treatment. They mostly say that the patient gets sick or faces misfortune because of the intention of evil eyes or abuse by someone whom the patient knows well. Because of such matters, the patient or the patient's family looks suspiciously at the poor and helpless woman they know or are around and quarrels with her on small matters. Gradually, this quarrel takes on a bigger form and accuses witches, so that poor women have to be known as witches in society for no reason. Since *bombo* has an indirect role in accusing witches within acquaintances and relationships in Tamang, this chapter tried to clarify *bombo* as well.

5.3.1 Kinship and witch accusation

Among the studied cases, about half of the incidents are related to kin. We have made accusations within kin regarding ancestral property, the division of land, and some personal reasons. As for the division of property, according to the present law, parents can also keep a portion of

the property and give it to the person with whom they are living and who is taking care of them. This law influenced the Tamang community, which practiced it accordingly. According to this, the son who follows and stays with his parents gets almost double the wealth of the others, so the other brothers get angry with him. I quote this case from Panauti, where the widowed mother is living with the younger son, whose wife they accused of being a witch by his *bhauju*. As the accusation was concerned with the property issue, I talked to the accused woman's husband about this. The survivor's husband explained my curiosity like this:

We were just two brothers. After my father's death, I got married, and my brother asked for his part of the property with our mother. My mother divided the property into three parts. She kept one part for herself, one part for my brother, and one part for me. My mother stayed with me for the rest of her life. And she also gave her property to me, which my brother didn't like and became angry with my family. He argued that the mother's part of the property should be divided equally among the two brothers. Because of this issue, a rift arose between us, and our two families stopped talking, and I also went abroad for work. In the absence of me in the family, my *bhauju* started arguing with my wife, even over minor matters, and finally she could accuse my wife of being a witch. Even though we are the children of the same mother and of the same blood, we have to live like enemies.

In this incident, the major question comes to mind: why does the mother choose the younger son rather than the elder one? It is because the younger ones are gentler and more responsible compared to the older ones. The younger son is also more polite and does not drink alcohol or smoke, while the elder son and his wife used to drink alcohol and smoke, and from time to time they quarreled with the family. His wife is also from the same village that their mother knows well. She is ruder than a younger daughter-in-law. Because of these reasons, the mother liked to stay with her younger son and his family, where she could feel comfortable. It is because of the eldest son's bad behavior that he proposed to separate within a few months of his younger brother's marriage. Such a sudden offer from the elder son must have raised some doubts in his mother's mind about why she spent the rest of her life with her younger son.

In another incident from Patichaur, Dhawa Lamini, a 46-year-old woman living with her husband and two daughters, was accused of being a witch by her *jethani*. Her husband was a trekking guide and often out of the house. When her husband was not at home, *jethani's*

family used to abuse and bully her. Because of this, her husband's previous two wives have left home, and she is the third one. The first one stayed at home for a year, and they forced the second one to leave within a month. Her *jethani* family used to abuse and scold Dhawa like the previous two. But Dhawa endured whatever abuse and grief her *jethani's* family gave her. This is how Dhawa described the abuse done to her by her *jethani*.

My *jethani* does not give me food and often fights with me. She blames me; I do not work at home. She talks badly with her husband about me, and he again shares that with the villagers. Even my in-laws listen to them and speak softly with them, but they scold me. Once, when my son was in my womb (three months), my *jethani* told me not to stay in the house and scolded me to leave the place. *Jethani* said that she came before me in this house, and I am not eligible to share the property.

It was observed that *jethani's* family has planned to ruin her family and take the entire in-law's property themselves. Therefore, the fear of having a child from Dhawa, her *jethaju*, in the absence of her husband scolds and quarrels with her, making her forced to leave the home. To draw her husband towards them, her *jethani* and *jethaju* used to call her husband from time to time for food and drink. They even told her husband to leave her after having two children. Once, her husband was away from her for eighteen months, according to *jethaju's* plan. Even after such a long time, they did not give her any information about her husband.

In this way, Dhawa's *jethaju* and his wife tried to make her very frustrated. But she is also different from her husband's previous two wives. Even after being abused, insulted, and beaten, she did not leave her home. Her *jethaju* disobeyed the villagers' advice to divide the property equally. He wishes to take part in the parent's property himself, which is not practical as the parents are living with Dhawa. The fear is that she would get a lot more wealth than her *jethaju*, which causes a rift between them. The *jethaju* once went to the *malpot karyaralaya* to transfer the in-law's part of the property into his name, but it was not possible there. This is the reason they used to quarrel with each other, and one day, when Dhawa quarreled with her *jethaju's* daughter-in-law, she accused her witch.

Indeed, accusations commonly take place within the family system for various reasons. My observation found that when people live close to each other, there is a greater chance of friction. Family quarrels and property issues are more effective measures that contribute to witchcraft accusations between kin- relationships. They may accuse someone of bewitching

one of his or her own family members by his or her own kin. I am describing how the concept of witchcraft accusations has been extended to kin-relatives in Tamang. Thus, notions of kin can now incorporate individuals with whom someone is connected by other than familial ties. Family bonds and other close connections may be placed under strain or be broken by certain turns of events, and symbolic forms of kin are far more easily severed.

I want to quote a case that happened in Khattar, Panchakhal Municipality, Ward No. 7. In this incident, Sampelma Tamang was accused of being a witch by her brother-in-law. I understand everyone lived together before this incident, and there was no misunderstanding between them. In such a close relationship, when the brother-in-law fights with his *bhauju* and says that a witch has entered her body, this incident has taken a big turn. A brief description of the incident is as follows:.

Sampelma Tamang, 49 years old, is a mother of two, one son, and one daughter living with her husband. Her husband's three brothers were living separately, and they did not have any disputes. Sampelma was the third wife of her husband. The earlier two wives had left him with their children. So her husband loved Sampelma, and her husband had little control over her. She loves to drink alcohol, returns home late at night, and ignores household chores. Although her husband considered these things, the other brothers did not. So the other brothers used to remind her husband about her from time to time. Her brother-in-law used to remind her that 'we have a good reputation in society, so if you do such a bad deed, our dignity will be tarnished and people will start talking about us'. But she didn't care about the advice of her brothers-in-law.

Sampelma's brothers-in-law did not like her for this kind of habit and behavior, but because of the presence of their brother, they could not abuse her. And one day, when Sampelma was shaking her body, her younger brother-in-law beat her, abused her, and told her not to drink again. But the next day after the incident, with the help and suggestions of other people, Sampelma presented a statement that his younger brother-in-law had beaten her on the accusation of the witch, which was actually false. She also knows that she has persecuted her brother-in-law. She talks about how the incident was recorded differently from reality.

I went to meet my *fufu* (father's sister) at Panchakhal after the next day of the incident. I had some personal work with her. Then she saw the cut on my hand and asked about that. I told her about the incident, and she told me to meet with a woman activist.

Then, we went to meet her, and she encouraged me to complain to the police. I know I am guilty, but I couldn't stop myself from listening to her lodge a complaint.

From this statement, we can understand that she complained about the instigation of others. She also said that it saddened her when the police took her brother-in-law away after registering a complaint. Even well-meaning family relationships can be strained by someone else's interests. Even in this incident, Sampelma has not understood the matter and has complained to her brother-in-law. But later, she realized her mistake. In this incident, an agreement was reached between the two parties, but we understand outsiders manipulated the incident for their own interests and registered it with the police.

Conflict takes place when family members have different views or beliefs that clash and when they misunderstand each other and jump to the wrong conclusion. It is a normal phenomenon to disagree with each other from time to time, and the occasional conflict is a part of family life. But, because of this, accusing someone of being a witch is a great sin for her. Once accused of witchcraft, she cannot escape from it for the rest of her life. But in the Tamang community, this is a common word, so people call it witchcraft without thinking about the impact in the future. When there is a fight between women in Tamang, it is normal to use the word witchcraft against each other, particularly when the strong one accuses the weak. It doesn't matter how the word affects someone's life. Whatever the situation, such things become stressful and damage family relationships. Most times, people having such things couldn't manage their feelings and became intentionally hurtful, aggressive, and even violent and labeled as inferior or defective within the family, relatives, and neighborhood, which explained a relationship problem.

This study observed that family conflict, because of various internal and external reasons, is often found in a joint family, where over two generations of people live together and share the same kitchen. Since many members of a joint family live together, there is a greater chance of getting into conflict. Often, in such a family, the actions or decisions made by one person will not satisfy the other, and quarrels begin. After the marriage of the brothers, they cannot tolerate each other's advances, and resentment and jealousy begin. In such a joint family, it is difficult to satisfy everyone about various issues such as children's quarrels, quarrels between mother-in-law and brother-in-law, income, etc. I quote a case from Devitar where the joint family was broken into nuclear after the younger brother's marriage, and the family got separated. Then the elder brother's wife (*jethani*) quarreled with her daughter-in-

law (*buhari*) even in small matters and finally accused her of being a witch. This is what the survivor says about the incident:

Before my entry into this house, *jethaju* and his wife used to drink alcohol and fight with their mother. Since my husband is often out for work, they have caused a lot of pain for my mother. But after my marriage, it was difficult for them to do whatever they wanted because I was not the drunkard and quarrel like them. Because of my presence, they couldn't do what they said and left the family. He demanded that he needed half of his in-law's property, but his mother did not agree, and he got only one-third of it. And my mother also stayed with me, and because of this, they were furious with me. Later, my *jethani* started getting angry and scolding me, even for small things. I also tolerated her behavior many times, but later I couldn't bear it either, and there was a big fight between us, and she accused me of being a witch. After hearing such words from *jethani's* mouth, I was very sad, and with the help of my husband and brother, I registered this incident with the police and punished them.

In this way, because of various reasons, there are conflicts in the joint family. Nowadays, most of the people in Tamang prefer to live in a nuclear family. As there is more mobility in the village nowadays, there is a shortage of males in the family. Even when there is a shortage of males in the family, relatives and neighbors are jealous and uncooperative and try to oppress and control her under them, and such families are also more likely to be suspected of witchcraft.

5.3.2 Witch accusations within neighbors

Someone would only accuse a person of being a witch by someone who had a higher social standing. The trials of witch hunts were simply a device used by the socioeconomic elites to control the poorer sections of the population, which was a key element in causing people to accuse their neighbors of witchcraft. And it was usually a neighbor with whom they had personal tension or conflict. Old feuds between the accuser and the accused spurred many charges of witchcraft. The reasons for accusing neighbors of witchcraft differ from those of kin relatives. However, these relations intersect with each other but differ from each other in practical life. However, females who are related to or otherwise associated with a known suspect, married but have few or no children, and are of relatively low social position are prime suspects for being witches in the neighborhood.

We define a neighborhood as a relatively autonomous and meaningful socio-geographic area of residents characterized by high interaction among the residents. In this way, there is a high level of interaction among the neighbors, so everything is open between them. Everyone knows each other's strengths and weaknesses. And when there is a situation to suspect or accuse someone of being a witch, the weak neighbor is the first suspect. I also know from this research that neighbors do not treat weak people well and try to oppress such people or families. I present some facts to further prove that even neighbors accuse each other of witchcraft in the Tamang community.

In an incident from Kharelthok, Kavrepalanchok, the accusation was made because of disputes about the land boundaries between the two close neighbors. The main character of this incident is Lasang Tamang, 64 years old, who was accused of being a witch by her neighbor along with her daughter and charged with killing chickens, goats, and spells cast upon them. Their houses are built just opposite each other and separated by a *goreto bato*. According to Lasang, the reality was like that:

The neighbor mostly quarreled with her; she encroached on her neighbor's land. When I look at that place, the water from the roof of Lasang's house is falling to the land of her neighbor, and this is what she claims is encroaching on the land. They used to quarrel over this issue, and they became enemies. As the dispute between them escalated, other misunderstandings also enhanced this issue. They also divided the villagers into two parts, some on the side of Lasang and some on the side of her neighbor. When one of their cattle ate the grass in the other's field, and even when the chickens moved around, her neighbor used to quarrel with Lasang. Whether it was going to fetch water from a well, working in a field, or at a ceremony, her neighbor used to talk to everyone about her. And after Lasang's husband passed away, her neighbor accused her of being a witch.

Political conflicts and family feuds could also cause witchcraft accusations between neighbors. This is because people are trying to gain power through politics to control others in society. It also includes their dignity. So if someone betrays their dignity or insults them, it creates a conflict. I am going to use the context of an incident where an old woman, Yangchen Lama, of age 68, was accused of being a witch by her neighbor.

This incident happened at Darimbot, Kavrepalanchok. They nominated Yangchen as a representative of the ward on behalf of the former CPN-UML. They gave her this post because of her faith in the party. The Nepali Congress also claimed the same post, which did not happen. On behalf of the Nepali Congress, her closest neighbor had hoped for his wife. Prior to this, there was a family feud between these two families. So when Yangchen became a female ward member, her neighbor was worried about what she would do. Because of her fear of being with Yangchen, her neighbor started looking for her fault so that it would disgrace her in society. One day, her neighbor's son started trembling after drinking the water given by Yangchen. Though her neighbor is also known to be a *mata* in the village, she suspects her and says, 'You put the *boksi mantra* in the water and gave it to my son, so that he trembled'. Villagers also believed in her. Yangchen could not refuse this at that moment. There was a scuffle between them, and her neighbor severely beat her and her husband.

In another incident from Patharchok, the accusation was made because of disputes about the land. This differs from the previous land issue. Dolma, who was accused of being a witch in this incident, bought a piece of land that her neighbor was also looking to buy. Dolma came to this place from Dadagaun. She was living with her husband and four children. She grows maize and wheat on that land. After Dolma bought this land, one of her neighbors got angry with her. And her neighbor started doing things like cutting down the trees on her land and not letting her cut the grass either. Thus, her neighbor hurt her in various ways. Despite this behavior of the neighbor, one day Dolma went to her neighbor's house to take chicken. A few days after she left, the neighbor's buffalo stopped giving milk, and his wife also fell ill. A neighbor then suspected Dolma of being a witch. But one day, when the neighbor's wife got skin disease and her father, who is also a *bombo* said that 'it was all because of your neighbor's witch power', the perpetrator quarreled with Dolma and blamed her as a witch. Then her neighbor sends a few youths to kill her at her home. Dolma explains;

I was working at my house. It was almost evening, and suddenly, a group of people, including that neighbor, came with a sharp weapon and scolded me. He blamed me - I am a witch - and spelled cast on his wife, making her sick. My husband was out of the house, and the children were playing. I was alone and scared and ran to the neighbor's home nearby. My neighbor saved me, and they went back. This made me so worried that I left Patharchok and lived near my mother's home.

What is clear from this story of Dolma is that the perpetrator did not go forward, and he mobilized others because he wanted to show himself apart from this incident. Currently, Dolma has left her old place and settled into a new one, but the perpetrator still doesn't stop calling her a witch. But I found the villagers take Dolma as normal.

When we think about it, it may seem that the closer a person is, the less likely they are to have misunderstandings and quarrels, but that is not the case. The closer the relationships, the faster they become angry. Not listening to others, answering without understanding, listening to a third person and believing in it, insisting that what you say is right, etc. are some of the easily visible actions observed in this study. In this way, when the relationship is close, the tendency to despise each other also increases. One does not even know how to respect each other. This can lead to increased arrogance and resentment, as well as greater conflict. Thus, conflict in close relationships, particularly between neighbors, begins for many reasons.

We can thus understand witchcraft accusations as an incidence of social tension in society (Marwick, 1970). This study observed that the people indeed often emphasized problematic relationships among neighbors in the village and talked about them with bitterness. People seemed concerned about how to be careful about talking to each other and saying bad things in the community. We think one of them is our best friend, but he turns out to be our worst enemy. In studying the case of witch accusations, I reached a village where no house in the village was free from witch accusations.

This is a village called Gokule, where there are around 27 houses. Here, each house accuses the other house of witchcraft. It is known that there are more educated people in this village compared to other villages. Accusing each other of witchcraft is considered a common occurrence. Even among these villagers, who have lived in the same village for generations, there was a practice of accusing this witch. In this village, whenever there is a quarrel between people, they call each other witches. Especially poor and weak women will be affected by it. If someone in the village falls ill or faces some misfortune, a witch is suspected among these neighbors. This study has studied the accusation of Chewang Yonjan as a wizard. His cousin's brother accused him. Chewang's *fufu*, 76 years old, is an unmarried woman who is also living with him, and she is assured to give her property to him after her death, whereas the perpetrator also expects the same property as they were from the same grandfather. This matter made the perpetrator angrier and more jealous of Chewang, and he

blamed him as a wizard. After they accused Chewang of being the wizard, a teacher also accused the wizard of being the perpetrator of this incident in the village. Thus, no one in this village is exempt from being accused of witchcraft.

Especially close neighbors with whom people were in everyday contact represented the most threatening source of harm and the most obvious targets of witch accusations almost everywhere. As Pritchard (1937) writes for the Azande, its members maintain that one can be sure to have both secret and open enemies among neighbors (1980: 45). Macfarlane (1970) argued that accusations of witchcraft in the Essex trials from 1560 to 1599 were mostly made between people who not only came from the same village but even from the same part of the village and knew each other intimately, and that the accusations were limited to the area of intense relationships between individuals.

5.3.3 Accusations among relatives

Another relationship in which the witch accusation prevails is with relatives. We define it as an individual's relationship to another or group through fictive ties, which mean a social tie that is neither based on blood nor marriage. I am going to quote an incident where the accuser was influenced by *mata* and accused her close relative of being a witch.

This is the case from Dolalghat, where Lingsha Tamang was accused of being a witch by her daughter-in-law. The perpetrator is the survivor's maternal uncle's daughter-in-law. The economic situation of both families in the village was poor. They had a good relationship before the incident. Seeing Lingsha's grief, her father helped her build a small house near the market, and she started a hotel there. Once she became a businesswoman, her relationship with the perpetrator gradually faded away. Lingsha's children also grew up and could help her. But the perpetrator's children were young, and she could not improve her financial situation like Lingsha. Seeing the situation of the perpetrator, Lingsha supports her in various ways, but her standard of living cannot be raised.

Meanwhile, the perpetrator fell ill, and Lingsha took her to different places for her check-up and treatment. But because of the perpetrator's habit of drinking alcohol, they could not cure her illness. Even after trying so hard, her health did not improve, and she went to Sanga, Bhaktapur, to see the *mata* where she was told that 'the witch had spoiled her and who has a small white dog'. Upon hearing this, the perpetrator

suspected Lingsha of being a witch because her dog was also white. Then the perpetrator started spitting on Lingsha wherever she met her. After spitting like this many times, Lingsha also got angry, and one day there was a fight between them, and the perpetrator told her she was a witch. The relationship between them broke down.

Indeed, the causes of these conflicts are usually simple at first and gradually get bigger. If they manage the causes of these conflicts at an early stage, a major conflict can be prevented, and they cannot level accusations at each other. In Tamang, both men and women drink alcohol equally, which is normal in their society. This happened because they were also making alcohol. In this way, when they are drunk, they differ from other times, and they fuss over even the smallest things. During this quarrel, sometimes they accuse each other of witchcraft, and it takes on a big shape. When someone gets sick, they go to *bombo* for treatment and follow everything he says. During the treatment, if *bombo* says witchcraft or evil eyes possess him, the sick person's family first suspects that person, with whom he had a fight or some misunderstandings earlier. Therefore, anyone in the family or among the relatives can be suspected and accused of witchcraft.

As the practice of accusing witchcraft is prevalent within close relationships, if people suspect someone among the relatives of being a witch, they prevent any member of the family, including himself, from going to her house. The villagers should not gradually involve the person with such suspicion in social activities and observe her daily activities. Because of the belief that such a person spoils the food, no one eats the food she has given. Because everyone believes that witchcraft happens, it has the support of everyone. Because of this, it excluded the suspect and her family from society. Along with this, the traditional faith prevails among the people and also plays a big role where they believe that people they know, family members, and neighbors can only be harmed by their invisible power or be bewitched. This fear made them be apart from each other in their everyday lives and not like to see each other too. I am going to quote a case from Panauti, where Palmo Tamang is being accused of witchcraft by her relative.

Palmo often lives in her house and does not like to mix well with relatives and neighbors. When the villagers and relatives knew that this was her second marriage, they treated her differently, due to which she kept herself away from the village and her relatives. She gradually moved away from social activities, too. I heard it from a villager that because of such behavior, her son also left home and went to Bhaktapur for work. Her husband often left

home when they had a quarrel, and her husband went back home after a long time. But she is comfortable with her daughters, who come to meet her. Her neighbors and relatives closely monitored Palmo's behavior. Gradually, her neighbors and relatives cast doubt on her. One day, a couple of her relatives shook their bodies, and people came to call her to present there. She explained this situation in her words:

I was sleeping with my younger daughter. My husband was sleeping out of the house. Around 9 p.m., suddenly one of my *buharis* was knocking at my door and asking me to come out to see that couple who were shaking their bodies. I was tired on that day and not willing to go, but my daughter encouraged me, and we went there. When I reached there, the villagers pushed me into the room where the couple was shaking. As soon as they saw me, they first confirmed whether I was Palmo. And the two of them pronounced them white tiger and *mata* and started biting into my body. *Mata* told the tiger that I was a witch and ordered him to kill me. Everyone in the village was watching the scene from the window, but no one came to save me.

As mentioned earlier, I observed that Palmo usually lived at home, did not like to talk with relatives and neighbors, and spent most of her time on her own. Her relatives and neighbors did not like her behavior. Her son and daughter-in-law could not stay with her because of her behavior. And most of the time, she used to quarrel with her straight husband. Because of her behavior, the villagers and relatives made her isolated and suspected her of any unpleasant incident that happened in the village.

According to Palmo, both the survivors and perpetrator lived together in the same house for a long time. The perpetrators are Devar's son and Buhari. They were living together after the earthquake destroyed the perpetrator's house. When they lived together, they had a good relationship, and there was no quarrel. But after the perpetrator made his home and moved there, they started shaking from time to time. They took various medicines and treatments but were not cured. And finally, perpetrators suspected that this was because of Palmo's witchcraft power.

5.4 Ritual aspect of Shaman's (*bombo*) exorcism

While explaining the discovery of the witch, *bombo* commonly says that they need to have a special skill. They mostly use grains like lentils or rice and divide them into many groups.

Then move grains from one group to another in their own way, which is difficult for the people to understand. In this way, they finally declare the cause of that disease or misfortune, which may be claimed by either witches or something else. In another way, beating a *dhyangro* (drum made of deerskin) is one of the most important ritual objects. By beating and shaking their bodies, *bombo* goes into a trance, where he communicates with the spirits and finds the cure or answer for the client's problems. Incense is an important part of every shamanic ritual. Most interestingly, in the course of their work, *bombo* also consumes alcoholic beverages without suffering the usual effects. These activities are very much influencing Tamang, which has strengthened the trust in *bombos*.

So if any of the Tamangs get sick or face any misfortune, they go straight to *bombo* for treatment. The treatment of *bombo* is cheap, locally available, and has regular service. All the *bombos* are devotees of Lord Shiva and call on the name of Shiva during the treatment. Treating the patient in this way does not always guarantee a cure. According to *bombo*, all this is Shiva's wish, and he will do it. If someone is cured, no one is cured; this is also the fate of the sick. They are just devotees of Shiva, and they ask him to heal the sick. Whatever it is, there is no shortage of Tamangs believing in *bombo*. Because of this deep belief in *bombo*, they also try to cure the sick anyway. *Bombo* sometimes blames others for what he can't do.

When *bombo* blames others in this way, they often blame the patient's close relatives, neighbors, and sometimes even family members. Since *bombo* belongs to the same village, he uses to blame the people whom he knows. So he accuses the poor, the old, the weak, the helpless, the widow, the single woman, etc. of witchcraft. Accusing such a class of witchcraft will not even attack *bombo* and he will be safe. If *bombo* accuses a distant and unknown person of being a witch, they can fight with him, and *bombo* is at increased risk. Blaming a distant and unfamiliar person cannot be tried by the sick person's family, and it does them no good. Because of these reasons, the tradition of practicing witchcraft among one's close relatives has increased. And most of the survivors and perpetrators of the incident admitted that the *bombo* was behind the incident. Therefore, the limit of *bombo* blaming others is only within the relationship of the sick person. I quote an observation of a *bombo* at Tinpiple. A glance at the conversation between us is as follows:

The *bombo* called Nepe Sarki from Tinpiple says that he uses a necklace made up of 21 pieces of snake bones to heal the sick person. His father-in-law, who was also a renowned *bombo* in his place, gave it to him. I was also very curious about this and

wished to see. Nepe was confused for a while when he heard my wish. I also felt that he was a little scared of me. He said that the necklace was lost in the earthquake of 2072 and that he could not show it to me. After losing the necklace of snake bones, he is treating the patient according to another method.

Nowadays, *bombos* do not directly accuse witches like before. They know that the person who accused others of being witches is penalized and imprisoned, too. So they are currently indirectly blaming witchcraft, which makes them not appear responsible for the incident. They usually tell it in a slightly twisted way, like close to your home, direction, just in front of your home, hair like this, face like this, age like this, male or female, tall or short, black or white, belongs to the same kitchen, etc.

Thus, with witchcraft accusations, we only see the accused and the accuser. But when we talk to them about the incident, we will trace out the involvement of *bombo* somewhere in the occurrence of a witchcraft accusation. People don't want to say that *bombo* is involved in the incident as much as possible because they don't say it out of respect for *bombo*. After repeated meetings, as I got closer to the participants, I could ask about this. And the participants also believed in me and told me openly about the role of *bombo* in witchcraft accusations. *Bombo* seems to have been doing this to continue his family profession. He also does this to protect his reputation in society.

In the course of this research, I met with six *bombos*, including one *mata* within the district, and found that most of them live in the highlands of the village. There is a special reason for staying in such a high place. Sitting in a high place makes it easy for the *bombo* to monitor every activity in the village and everything, like who came and who went in the village. In addition, during the treatment of the patient, *bombo* is having various conversations with the sick person. In this order, *bombo* collects the information. In this way, *bombo* has already guessed based on the information he has seen and received from the sick person, who is easier to accuse of witchcraft in relation to the patient's relationship.

Table 5.1: List of *bombos* interviewed

S.N	Name	Social status	Address	Age	Sex
1	Nepe Sarki	Bombo	Panchakhal	80	Male
2	Bhaicha Danuwar	Bombo	Bhimtar	75	Male

3	Raj Kumar Tamang	Bombo	Panauti	45	Male
4	Maila Tamang	Bombo	Panauti	63	Male
5	Paighar Tamang	Bombo	Kharelthok	57	Male
6	Ishori Manandhar	Mata	Banepa	52	Female

Source: Field survey, 2019

I also found some *bombo* to have been treated over the phone. I found *bombo* to cure the disease by extracting the power of witchcraft from the sick person's body by talking to the patient over the phone. Such activities that *bombo* does during his treatment influence Tamang. *Bombo's* attitude towards witchcraft is as follows:

Witches always harm others. If someone is doing well in his or her life or looking beautiful, they are more susceptible to the evil eye of a witch. When a witch casts an evil eye on a child, he falls sick and keeps on crying constantly for no reason. If they cast an evil eye on a pregnant woman, it may cause difficult labor pain, miscarriage, etc. Even animals are susceptible to witchcraft. When a witch casts an evil eye on a cow, it stops to yield milk. Witches shoot invisible arrows, which hurt and paralyze the survivor. Talking about their magical power, witches go through secret training, which is learned from their guru. They also perform rituals that comprise the chanting of *mantras*, charms, songs, and invocations to please their main deity, evil- spirits and *masandev*.

Bombo also said that witches hand over their knowledge and skills to their nearest and dearest. Thus, *bombos'* role in the Tamang community is to please the bad spirits and cure the ill effects caused by humans or animals by such spirits. *Bombo*, who treats and cures not only the diseases of the physical body but also the illnesses of the soul, in order to bring the psyche of the afflicted individual back from fragmentation and alienation into wholeness and well-being, The soul-centered healing processes are considered meaningful by the Tamang people. *Bombo* has also explained this subject. It has been made clear that people get sick because of the *lagu* or *lagan*. It is also said to be a witch who uses *lagu* or *lagan*. That's why the sick person obviously goes to meet with *bombo* for his treatment.

5.5 Institutional function of *bombo*

Every Tamang community has employed a person to cure all kinds of health problems and misfortunes. Tamang called him a *bombo* in their mother tongue. At least one *bombo* is found in every Tamang village. The sworn enemy of *bombo* is a witch. Holmberg (1989) states that there are only two causes of physical and mental illness in the *bombo*'s etiology: the curse of a witch (*bokshi*) and the influence of a malevolent ghost (*bhoot*) or sprite (*pret*). Motivated by evil intentions, *bokshis* lay curses on innocent villagers, while the mere sight of a *bhoot* or *pret* can cause serious illness. The *bombo*'s drum (*dyangro*) is the key that unlocks the spirit world. When a *bombo* beats his *dyangro* and chants *mantras* passed down to him through an ancient oral tradition, he is summoning his protector deities. The *bombo* is a transgressing figure, standing at the liminal edge of society with one foot in the village and one foot in the charnel grounds. Holmberg's rich ethnographic description of Tamang ritual life is the basis for insightful interpretation, showing that the ritual practices, mythic visions, and fundamental structures of Tamang social existence are deeply interconnected.

Bombo, also called *jhakri* (Nepali), is one of the societal leaders found in the Tamang community with particular roles and responsibilities. *Bombo*'s major work in Tamang society is to cure all manner of health problems and misfortunes. This is a common occurrence; the *bombo* is always a villager's first resource in times of illness. Even if a doctor is to be consulted, the *bombo* must remove all spirit-caused obstacles to cure before a cure can take place. The Tamang community believes that this *bombo* has gained magical power from the god and goddess of the jungle (*ban jhakri*) and protects the community from disease, illness, and any form of evil power and misfortune. *Bombo*, for these reasons, behaves like a priest in the Tamang community, is considered a shamanic doctor, and travels around the villages to heal the people.

Apart from treating the sick, *bombo* also has his own private life. Like others, he is also involved in farming, doing business, and sometimes even working in the office. *Bombo* usually conducts the treatment in the morning and evening, and in the afternoon they are busy with other work. *Bombo* has been conducting this treatment work as a profession of the generation. This is because there is a tradition of handing over the learned knowledge of treatment only to one's own family members. While *bombo* can be male or female, the lineage medium is only male. In the process of transferring the knowledge and

skill of such treatment, it was found that most of the male *bombo* were handed over to their sons and the female *bombo* to their daughters.

As the archenemy of witches and the mediator of the spirit world, the *bombo* provides the villager with a point of his or her suffering. First, he provides an etiology of illnesses that directly addresses his patients' existential needs. The second way in which the *bombo* provides meaning is through his ambiguous subject position. The mode of thinking in which the idea that everything in the world has and is defined by its equal opposite (or binary opposition) is a helpful and well-established conceptual framework with which to create order out of the vastly complicated and ever-changing flux of reality. The *bombo* breaks down binary oppositions by transgressing their borders: sane/insane, life/death, material world/spirit world, village/charnel grounds, day/night, sun/moon (both usually carved into the *dyangro's* 'torme' or drum handle), health/decay, order/chaos, and blessing/curse. In fact, a witch does not differ from a *bombo* gone badly, so even the fundamental opposition of *bombo* and *boksi* is precariously balanced in the *bombo's* worldview.

Peter (1979) also mentions that primary to Tamang animism and concepts of illness are gods, spirits, witches, and ancestors, who live in the atmosphere and earth. Any of these gods or spirits may cause illness if their territory is encroached upon, their shrine is disturbed, or if one cannot perform proper homage. Most times, however, they were said to have attacked unprovoked. In the process of diagnosis, the shaman (*bombo*) resorts to these explanatory devices to articulate and explain the cause of the disease. Norman's (1986) prevailing opinion is that doctors and *bombos* handle different illnesses. For spirit-caused illness, one must consult a *bombo*; the doctor is powerless in such cases. Conversely, doctors are believed to be more effective for non-spirit-caused illnesses.

Bhaicha Danuwar, an old, well-known *dhami* from Kavrepalanchok, says that, in shamanic cosmology, the soul is the central power of the body. After some external attacks on the body, the soul becomes weaker and cannot handle the situation. As a result, the body becomes weak and unable to function normally in the absence of a strong soul. Thus, the soul, the body engine, has to be kept in good condition. After all, tracking the lost or weakening soul and bringing it back to the proper order in the body is what the *bombos* are supposed to do. Tamang believes that the soul never dies but transmigrates from one body to another through many cycles of death and rebirth. Thus, physical and mental problems or disorders result from disharmony in the

natural and moral order of the world. Thus, *bombo* does healing rituals to balance and bring order into harmonious interaction.

Lord Shiva, which was also mentioned by Maire (1986) in her research conducted in Tamang, brought this path of the *bombo* to the world. Because of the influence of Hinduism, despite the other religious sites, Gosainkunda Lake is the main religious site for *bombo*. Gosainkunda Lake is the most sacred lake, dedicated to Lord Shiva. We believe Lord Shiva created it when he thrust his Trisul (holy trident) into a mountain to extract water so that he could cool his stinging throat after he had swallowed poison. On the day of Janaipurnima, small groups from every Tamang community, comprising a main shaman and his or her disciples, travel along with hosts to Gosainkunda Lake. Tamang believes Janaipurnima marks the end of the deities and can again be evoked in shamanic healing ceremonies.

Paigar Dhimi, a *bombo* from Kharelthok, Kavrepalanchok, says that Lord Shiva is his guru, and he uses to pronounce the name of Lord Shiva during the treatment of the sick person. He remembers Lord Shiva in his mind and pronounces the name of Lord Shiva. That's why the Tamang are influenced by Hinduism too. According to him,

Not all the patients or clients get cured by my healing procedure. During healing rituals, I pray to Lord Shiva with my thoughts to cure the patient. But I am not sure about this; sometimes it works and sometimes it does not work. *Bombo* fully depends on Lord Shiva for their healing procedure. We think of ourselves as descendants of Lord Shiva. Because of this, *bombo* has a high place in the Tamang community. Everything depends on God's interest, and *bombo* is one mediator to communicate with Lord Shiva. The patient who is looked at and compassionate by God will be cured; otherwise, he will not.

Bombo's dialect and behavior are so powerful and influential that anyone can't help but believe and follow him. It is very difficult to deny his words at the time of treatment. Most *bombos* talk about an abstract thing and their dreams that are far from reality. This is interesting to the sick person and his family, and they listen carefully. This is the art of *bombo*, through which he keeps his profession, earns a good income, and raises the whole family. While observing the *bombo's* healing rituals, usually, they blow off magical formula (*phukne*) and brush away the pain from the affected part of the body with a broom while reciting a '*mantra*' known to be *jharphuk* in the local language. Checking the pulse (*nadi*

herne) and looking at the fortune (*jokhana herne*) performed by *bombos* is also one of the effective healing tools to draw people's attention and belief toward them. All of this is done in a ritual context.

Sometimes, for a more severe natural illness or spirit-caused illness, the *bombo* suggests the *chinta* ceremony (shamanistic healing rituals). Such a ceremony would take place out in the open and involve children and elders alike. With the sick person in the middle, *bombo* and his associates pray all night long. In this, a conversation between the *bombo* and the patient is held, and sometimes the *bombo* also gives simple to complex torture to the sick person. During such torture, the patient listens intently to what is being said, and based on what he has said, *bombo* gives some hints about witchcraft in front of everyone. And people discuss and often cast doubt on the poor and helpless women of the village.

Gartoulla (1998) also supports *bombo's* claim. He describes how *bokshi* (witch) may harm people: they produce a small figure representing the survivor and pronounce magic spells, or they actively mix bewitched substances into a survivor's food. They keep such substances - human hair, finger and toenails, animal claws, or bone fragments - in small bundles. *Bokshis* are believed to harm or cause illness through the evil eye. A *bokshi* is also believed to induce certain gods or other supernatural powers (*masaans*, *bhutas*) to harm a survivor or to send dangerous animals like snakes or tigers to kill him or her. They say witches can shoot bewitched spiritual arrows that cause illness, or witches come to their survivors at night and drink their blood so that they get weaker and weaker.

Thus, with this accusation, we only see the accused and the accuser. But when we talk to them about the incident, we will trace out the involvement of *bombo* somewhere in the occurrence of a witch accusation. People don't want to say that *bombo* is involved in the incident as much as possible because they don't say it out of respect for *bombo*. Nowadays, *bombos* do not directly accuse witches like before. They know that the person who accused others of being witches is penalized and imprisoned, too. So they are currently indirectly blaming witchcraft, which makes them not appear responsible for the incident. They usually tell it in a slightly twisted way, like close to your home, direction, just in front of your home, hair like this, face like this, age like this, male or female, tall or short, black or white, belongs to the same kitchen, etc.

5.6 Revival of relationship

I observed that when accusations happen in a close relationship, conversation between them, visiting each other's homes, and all other daily relations, all are stops. But such behavior will not last forever. Witchcraft accusations will become normal after a long time, and the amount of anger between them will also decrease. Living in the same village and in the same place, they need each other's help.

Since both the survivor and the perpetrator live in the same place, they often meet each other. Apart from this, they also meet at various parties and events. In this way, after a long time of incidents, I found that the anger between them decreased and they talked slowly. Because there will be accusations within the close relationship, there will be a need between them from time to time. For this reason, I found that after a long time, the conversation started even to fulfill each other's needs. In Tamang society, they celebrated birth and death rites with great fanfare. They invite all their friends, relatives, and neighbors from the village. Therefore, such an occasion is also seen as a special occasion for conversation between survivor and perpetrator. In some of the incidents studied, I found that the relationship between the perpetrator and the survivor has improved more than before.

I would like to quote here some such incidents in which the relationship between them improved. Actually, if we look closely at the incident of the witch accusation, what we can understand is the perspective of society after they accuse the survivor of witchcraft, and because of the jailing of the perpetrator, there is anger between them. We know that this matter will be very painful for both parties. This is the case of Choden Syangtan, from Panauti, where she says:

There was no conversation between us for about 3 years after the incident. Since my husband was abroad, I was busy with housework and did not have any dealings with the perpetrator. Later, gradually, my children started playing with her children and started visiting each other's house. And after some time, my mother-in-law also started going to *jethani's* house. But *jethani* spoke well to my mother-in-law and did nothing about the old things. As the days passed by, my *jethaju* also started talking to me slowly, and my *jethani* has not spoken yet. Maybe my *jethani* could not speak to me because she was ashamed. Now we meet at different ceremonies, and nothing happens between us about old matters. Now my husband has also returned from

abroad, and they are treating him well. I also think it would be better for our relationship to improve rather than deteriorate. It is better for us to live together as brothers.

What we understand from the above statement is that those involved in such witch accusations do not stay in the same situation for a very long time, as they are the people in their relationships, and gradually return to normal after a certain time. As a social being, man also needs the mutual support and sympathy that he receives from his own society. In the same way, the anger of one another will not always be the same, and it will gradually diminish.

Similarly, in another case from Khattar, Panchakhal, the perpetrator slapped her *bhauju* (Sampelma Tamang) to extract the evil intrusion from her body when she was shaking her body. He did so with his brother's permission. She regained consciousness because of the onslaught of the perpetrator, and they started fighting. By late at night, the misunderstanding between them had cleared up. But when Sampelma arrested the perpetrator after listening to others, she felt self-pity, and there was no conversation between them for a long time. Because of this, Sampelma left the place and settled elsewhere. And after a long time, the perpetrator invited the survivor's family to his wedding ceremony, and the survivor's family, including Sampelma, joined the wedding program. In this way, the broken relationship was gradually restored.

In an incident from Devitar, Dechen Tamang was accused of being a witch by her *jethani*. Some time after the incident, Dechen left the village and started living in nearby Banepa. Dechen entrusted all her property to a *bhadai* (brother's daughter) in the village. And she sometimes went to the village but did not live there. The perpetrator will know that she went to the village. After a long time, the perpetrator, through other people in the village, asked her to return to the village. The survivor says this:

After we had a fight, I started living in Banepa. I did this because my husband is only at home sometimes. I have left my property, land, and livestock in the village. I have handed over the property, land, and livestock to my niece. She came to this village after getting married. In the meantime, I only occasionally go to the village and return straight after completing my necessary work. Some people tried to talk to me, but I didn't like it. I could not forget the hurt in my heart. Recently, through my niece, I

hear the perpetrator has asked me to return to the village. She also promised not to abuse me anymore. But I have not returned to the village immediately because I do not trust them. In the future, if the situation is favorable, I will definitely return to the village. The perpetrator is my *jethaju*, and I need them, but recently I could not decide.

Looking at incidents like this, after a long time, the survivors and the perpetrators have talked to each other through various means. In fact, it is a positive thing. Even in this case, the perpetrator has realized her mistake and has promised not to hurt her. The perpetrator of the incident could not win the heart of the survivor, as she did not immediately try to return to the village. But the survivor also seems to have returned to the village to some extent. It will take some more time to win the heart of the survivor, and one day there will be an understanding between the survivor and the perpetrator. Of course, they will be in the same place and in the same village.

5.7 Conclusion

In Tamang, we often find the practice of accusing each other of being witches, with their social structure composed of kinship, relatives, and neighbors. It is difficult for them to accuse a distant and unknown person of being a witch, and it does not serve any interest to them. Therefore, the primary target of witch accusations is prevalent within their social structure. Pritchard (1937) has also clarified this issue. He also suggests that people living at a distance from one another have insufficient social contacts to produce mutual hatred, whereas there is ample opportunity for friction among those whose homesteads and cultivations are close. Thus, the accusation is selective and takes place between people with whom social bonds already exist.

Witch accusations are common among Tamang because of the unequal distribution of parental property, misunderstandings, and land encroachments; being unable to move forward in politics like others; being unable to make economic progress like others; having regular family quarrels; and listening to others. Thus, these relationships played a significant role in the origin, spread, and accusation of the witch in the Tamang community. These events mostly happen between family, relatives, and neighbors. In such an event, the outsider and the distant people have no meaning in it. Because of these causes, there are misunderstandings and fights between them, and the strong start accusing the weak of witchcraft. Therefore, this witch accusation has been made only of social relationships.

Every Tamang has a primal desire to be good. Thus, it is clear that they usually seek culprits responsible for their sickness and misfortunes foremost in their immediate relationships, with

whom they were in everyday contact, as the most threatening source of harm. Sometimes, the broken relationship between the survivor and the perpetrator has been normalized after a long time of being accused of witchcraft.

Revival of the relationship of the incident here shows that the social relationship between survivor and perpetrator is established. As the survivor and the perpetrator are from the same place and within the same social structure, there is always a need for mutual support between them. In the countryside, living alone is not as easy as in the city. There needs to be mutual support and harmony. That is why sometimes, in witch accusations, something is established between the survivor and the perpetrator. Children and the elderly in both families are also seen as factors in the re-establishment of the relationship between the two. The conversation between the survivor and the perpetrator started shortly after the incident because of the children of both families playing together and coming and going to each other's house, as well as because of their love for the elderly. In the same way, when they meet again and again in various social and religious activities, the dialogue between the two sides gradually starts. In fact, the accusation of witches only happens within close relationships and acquaintances, so there is always a need between them. The only question is how long it will take.

Tamang usually goes straight to *bombo*, when they get sick or face any misfortune. *Bombo* does not cure all sickness and misfortunes, and when such a situation arises, he blames someone else for the illness. Since *bombo* is also from the same village, he blames the person close to the sick person, providing some indications. On this basis, the perpetrator suspects witchcraft against the poor, the old, the weak, the helpless, the widow, and the single woman within his relationships. Thus, the person with whom the perpetrators have a problematic relationship becomes the first survivor of the accusations that mostly happen within social relationships. Max (1969) and Macfarlane (1970), people whose intense relationships between individuals are mostly made, have also argued that an accusation of witches' happens.

Finally, this chapter concludes that, after a very long time, the incidence of such witch accusations gradually returns to normal. This also changes. But as long as this practice of making accusations against a witch prevails in Tamang, it is always blamed only within the relationships that are meaningful to them. Incidents of accusations of witchcraft are only limited to these social relationships.

CHAPTER VI

SOCIAL NETWORK, POWER AND WITCH ACCUSATIONS

6.1 Introduction

The social network plays an important role in all areas of social life. It has a direct or indirect effect on various life events. It implies the ability to impose one's will on others, which can manifest in many forms and include accusations. Strengthening a social network means increasing one's social power. People with a good social network consider themselves superior and strong in society and can accuse weak people of witchcraft. Other people in society also supported such people.

This type of person has good communication and support in society, so they do not feel afraid to make false accusations against anyone. They interact with almost everyone in society, and their identity differs from others. They can also live together with anyone and cope with difficult situations easily. In this way, if a person has a good social network in his society, he will feel less fear of harm from others. That is why human beings are known as social beings. If a person cannot live according to social norms and values, he is endangered in various ways in society. Such a person is also more likely to be accused of being a witch.

In Kavrepalanchok, I saw most cases of witchcraft accusation as exploited because of powerlessness. Powerlessness here denotes a person who has no power at all in society. It shows a person who can't get along with anyone, doesn't care about others, doesn't care about what is going on in society, and spends time only on one's household chores. In this way, people who prefer to live alone and rarely go out of the house have become lonely in society and gradually distanced themselves from their social relationships. And society expects nothing from people with such tendencies. Therefore, this type of person has little value in society, and we find his social power to be very low.

The study also found that even wealthy people could not escape being accused of witchcraft if their social network was weaker. We think that the social network of a wealthy person may be good, but that may not be true all the time. With witchcraft accusations, it determines the extent to which a person's social network is stronger than that of the rich and the poor. A person who has a strong social network can accuse a person who does not like him or is angry

with him for being a witch. So we can say that social networks have a very important role to play here in witchcraft accusations.

6.2 Conceptual underpinning

Max Weber, a German sociologist, defined social power as the ability to control others, events, or a resource; to make happen what one wants to happen despite obstacles, resistance, or opposition. He argued that power is the ability to exercise one's will over others. They used power in adversarial relationships involving conflict between those with power and those without (Weber, 1978). It is because of this social power that strong people in Tamang society have accused the weak of witchcraft. Others, whether they liked it or not, accepted such a powerful person. So if he accuses someone of being a witch, others will agree. Thus, in Tamang society, the tradition of accusing witches because of such powerful people continues to this day. Weber's statement is thus supported in this way.

In contrast to this, Karl Marx used the concept of power concerning social classes and social systems rather than individuals. He argued that power rests in a social class's position in the relations of production. Thus, in this sense, power is the ability to influence others to believe, behave, or value as those in power desire them to or to strengthen, validate, or confirm present beliefs, behaviors, or values. Power does not lie in the relationship between individuals in domination and subordination of social classes based on the relations of production (Marx & Engles, 1943). According to Marx, someone well respected the powerful man in society, and the other was afraid of him. It is this: his power compels other people to support him and what he has done, good or bad. This is a society where power functions to influence others. Even with witch accusations, people are on the side of the powerful person or the perpetrator, but no one is on the side of the survivor. It's all about the power. As there is a huge gap between the powerful and the powerless in Tamang society, the incidence of witch accusations is increasing day by day.

Michel Foucault, one of the most important figures in critical theory, has been the center of attraction to the concepts of power, knowledge, and discourse. He termed power a complex set of relations, which is the total of the influences that actions have on other actions. Power is not something that is gained, seized, or shared because it is ever-present in the environment in which human beings are subjects and agents. It is a complex network of acts of

domination, submission, and resistance. Individuals not only circulate between its threads, but they are always in the position of undergoing and exercising this power (Foucault, 1980).

As Foucault said, in Tamang society, the powerful person dominates the weak one. In Tamang society, we consider a person who has a lot of contact with outsiders to be more powerful than others. So with this witch accusation, it has leveled most of the accusations against a woman who has a very limited relationship with an outsider. This meant that the accused woman was powerless compared to the perpetrator. Because the Tamang community believes in a patriarchal family, women are more likely to be survivors of witch accusations. In this society, it is also seen that women are less powerful than men. Therefore, as he said, power is not brought from anywhere; we create it in our society. Our environment, culture, and behavior determine who has how much power.

A definition comes from Talcott Parsons, who is regarded by many as the twentieth century's most influential American sociologist, who argued that power is not a matter of social coercion and dominance. Instead, he said, power flows from a social system's potential to coordinate human activity and resources to accomplish goals. In his view, power is not constant or fixed but capable of increasing or decreasing. To him, power lives in society, not with a single individual, small group, or the powerful elite (Parson, 1991). According to him, society also has a role in making a person powerful, or it is society that makes him powerful. He argues that power is the same for everyone and that social things make someone more powerful than others.

For the social network, social capital also comes together because we conceptualize social capital as a network component; it involves social relationships between individuals. Social capital is embedded in social relationships and is felt when people interact. Francis Fukuyama, a professor at Johns Hopkins University, argues that the norms that produce social capital are partible; that is, we can share them among limited groups of people and not with others in the same society.

While social capital exists in all societies, we can distribute it in very different ways. Families are important sources of social capital everywhere. But family structure differs from one society to another, and the strength of family bonds differs not simply from family ties in other societies but relative to other types of social ties. Sometimes, there appears to be an inverse relationship between the bonds of trust and reciprocity within kin groups and between

kin and non-kin; while one is very strong, the other is very weak (Fukuyama, 1999). His statement seems to be very effective with the accusations of witches in Tamang. As he said, having a good family relationship is your first strength. If there is a quarrel in the family and there is no good relationship between husband and wife, other people hate it. In such cases, women in the family are at greater risk, and the incidence of witch accusations is an example of this.

Prior research on witchcraft, such as that conducted by the late British anthropologist Evans Pritchard, argued that fear of victimization through witch accusations promotes cooperation in small-scale societies. He came to this conclusion after studying the Azande people of north-central Africa. He suggested that witchcraft labels are used to mark untrustworthy or uncooperative individuals (Pritchard, 1937). What he says is related to the current witchcraft accusation law in the nation. In Azande, healers used to control such incidents by showing fear, but now, in a society like ours, a law has been made, the aim of which is to reduce such incidents.

6.3 Intra-ethnic feuds

A study reveals that all the cases of witch accusations have taken place within the same caste and ethnicity. Many things have affected this. For social networks and social power, it is often more effective and influential within the same caste or ethnicity. Social traditions, customs, caste hierarchy, values, beliefs, etc. play a major role in this. Since these things are the same for every caste or ethnicity, everyone expects the same from everyone. But when there is an imbalance in their expectations and people blame each other, Even in the same caste and ethnicity, people have different social networks and powers, so the one who has more social networks and powers accuses another weak person of witchcraft. They have accused each other of being witches on various pretexts.

6.3.1 Caste hierarchy

Lasang Tamang from Kharelthok, Kavrepalanchok, was accused of witchcraft because of the practice of class hierarchy. Two types of class in Tamang known to be twelve Tamang and eighteen *jaat* (*barha tamang r athara jaat*) exist where twelve Tamang are considered socially higher than the eighteen *jaat*. We believe twelve Tamang to be the pure descendant

of the lord '*Maheshwar*' (Vansitart, 1992). These Tamang are socially higher than the eighteen *jaat* (Vansitart, 1992).

Many writers interpret the concept of '12 Tamang and 18 Jaat' as '12 Jaat and 18 Jaat'; this reflects the notion of caste hierarchy in Tamang like Hindu social order. The concept of '12 Tamang and 18 Jaat' Tamang shows that the 12 Tamangs are pure and who had occupied the settled place hereditary (*kipat*), and the 18 Jaat Tamang are those who get birth from the union of Tamang men and women of Newar, Gurung, Magar, etc. (Vansitart, 1992). The Thar of 12 Tamang is the same as that of 18 Jaat Tamang, but 12 Tamangs believe themselves higher than the clan or Thar of 18 Jaat Tamangs, who are the offspring of the mixed marriage system. So, according to Furer-Hemendorf (1956), in his 'Ethnographic Notes on the Tamang of Nepal', the classification of 12 and 18 Tamang is not based on caste but on the 'pure Tamang and mixed blood Tamang'.

In traditional Tamang society, marriage with another caste is not permitted if anyone does so, and then one has to face the consequence of being ostracized from the Tamang clan system and getting the new clan or *thar* by the offspring of such marriage. Such marriage makes the eighteen *jaat* Tamang, who is below the pure 12 Tamangs, and has to purify them for three generations to get the earlier place in pure Tamangs (Vansitart, 1992). Tamang social structure is very traditional, and one instance of this system is '*thar*' brotherhood. The '*thar*' or clan that worships the similar '*kuldevta*' is considered the '*swangey bhai*' by the Tamang people. The Tamang community does not marry within the '*swangey bhai*' *thars*, or we consider them brothers from the same ancestor. Tamang (1994) has given the names of '*swangey bhai*' of 18 *thars* of Tamang:

Table 6.1: 18 *thars* classified under '*swangey bhai*'

1	Dong	Grangdan, Goley, Titung, Bal, Dimdong, Gongba, Gyamden, Dartang, Gangtang
2	Yonzon	Bonzan, Dumzan, Lopchan, Mikchan
3	Ghising	Lo, Glan, Yhesur
4	Moktan	Syangdan, Pakhrin, Syangbo, Thokar
5	Rumba	Zimba, Gyaba, Waiba, Gongba
6	Lopchan	Chothen, Blenden, Shyongsun, Nharten, Galden

7	Thing	Marpa, Toisang
8	Nyasur	Singar, Blon
9	Lo	Loba, Ghising, Glan
10	Marpa	Thing, Toisang
11	Tupa	
12	Blon	Syangbo, Syangdan
13	Singar	Yhesur, Thing, Toisang, Blon
14	Bajyu	
15	Lungpa	
16	Gyapa	Rumba, Zimba, Waiba, Gongba
17	Thokar	Moktan, Syangdan, Pakhrin, Syangbo
18	Pakhrin	Syangdan, Moktan, Syangbo, Thokar

Source: Field survey, 2019

In this case, Lasang Tamang belongs to eighteen *jaat*, while her neighbor (perpetrator) belongs to twelve. Likewise, she married '*dhong*' within the 18 *thar*, which was banned in Tamang society. They do not marry within the '*swangey bhai*' *thars*, or we consider them brothers from the same ancestor. But it happened to the survivor. Because of this reason, her neighbor, who is within twelve Tamang, started harassing the survivor, even over small things. She says;

My husband belongs to *dhong*, came from Timal, and lives here in *Guthi* Land without paying the tax. Now the family of this *dhong* has been reduced to four. Even though I was *blon*'s daughter, my family became *dhong* because I married with *dhong*. My marriage took place inside '*swangey bhai*' which really should not have happened. But since I was married at a young age, I did not know this, and my family also arranged such a marriage. The villagers were angry with my family over this issue because I did not follow the norms. That is why my neighbor, who belongs to 12 Tamang, usually despised the small number of *dhong* families living here. The perpetrator abuses and uses words like '*bhatuwa, antim ma aune maajha ma basne, baag ko chala ma shyal ko rajae, etc*'. After my husband's death, this neighbor started flirting with me on various pretexts, and finally she accused me of being a witch.

Lasang's above statement clears us that Tamangs are rigid in their traditional beliefs about 12 Tamangs and 18 *thars*. They are also strict in enforcing the sayings of twelve Tamangs and eighteen castes. The prevalence of this caste hierarchy in Tamang makes up a set of social inequalities within which there are deep conflicts of interest. Because of this, there is a possibility of conflict and social discrimination among the Tamang, whether we see it directly or indirectly. This is a meaningful example of the social network and power of the Tamangs in society. What I know from this is that if one falls within the twelve Tamangs, he will be superior to others, and we will also consider his social status higher than others. This clears that Tamang's social structure is still seen to be influenced by the traditional one, and one instance of this system is *thar* (brotherhood).

6.3.2 Late comers and weak ties

Some features of social networks, such as social power relationships, mutual support, shared norms, social trust, migration history, relatively isolated kin, a person not having children, political participation, and a sense of mutual obligation, affect the ability of individuals to work together in society. I understand these features as the glue that holds together social aggregates, such as networks of personal relationships that provide a form of informal social control. I found these social features different in the family who was already there and the family who has been moved from another place to there. In this way, latecomers will have comparatively fewer social networks and weaker ties in society than the family members who were already there.

Strengthening social networks means growing in touch with people. Gathering at a local hotel in the morning, having tea with friends, smoking cigarettes, chewing tobacco, drinking alcohol, attending frequent meetings, and hanging out with the villagers also strengthens the social network of the people. Therefore, those who behave in such a way in the village are loved by everyone and get along with everyone, while those who do not behave in such a way are almost like strangers in the village. The newcomer or the family who moved there from somewhere needs enough time to understand and be involved in such a new community. That's why they are being treated as powerless in the Tamang community, and the villagers have various suspicions against such people, and one of them is accusing them of witchcraft.

Different driving forces under the social network and migration history also played a very important role, where the newcomer is mostly oppressed by the pre-existing group.

Discussing this, people migrate for several reasons, such as environmental, economic, cultural, political, and social. If someone has lived for a long time, he considers himself the master of the place and wants to be respected by all newcomers. They monitor the activities of the newcomers and think about how to control them. This is a common characteristic seen in Tamang. The number of immigrants is less than the number of people who have lived there before. For that reason, the natives dominate most of the immigrants. The study observed that the natives used to quarrel with such migrants and even accused them of being witches. I quote the incident from Darimbot where Yangchen Lama was accused of being a witch by her neighbor. This is how the survivor talks about the incident:

My husband is the offspring of this *thing*, and our ancestors came here from a place called Timal of Kavrepalanchok. My family has lived here for the last three generations. And my neighbor's (perpetrator) ancestors came here before us, and they came from Nepane of Kavrepalanchok. I heard that since my husband's ancestors came to this place, they tried to oppress, but because my husband's ancestors were too strong, they could not do it. But they had the idea that my husband's family should be suppressed at any cost, and they were waiting for an opportunity. Even for my husband's turn, they tried to attack my family, but they could not because my husband was also very strong. And as we grew older, they oppressed us. My children were also young, and they could do nothing. The relationship of the perpetrators is more than ours, and everyone is united, but ours is less because my husband's family has shifted here from other places. Meanwhile, one day my neighbor's son asked me for a drink, and I gave it to him. And after some time after drinking the water, he started shaking his body. The neighbor started saying that her son had this condition because of my witch power. A *dhami* from another village also came to the village, and he also suspected me. Both of them were easily accepted by the villagers, and they accused me of being a witch.

This observation clearly shows that *bombo* played a role in this incident. Since the perpetrator herself is a *jhakri*, it is okay for her to be accusing others of being witches, but it is known that another *jhakri* from Dandapari is also involved in this incident. The suspicion of witchcraft by the perpetrator toward Yangchen was further strengthened by another *jhakri*. On the day the perpetrator's son was shaken, this *jhakri* also reached that place by chance. And when there was a rumor about what happened in the village,

this *jhakri* said that Yangchen was a witch. After hearing this, most of the villagers, including the perpetrator's family, believed that Yangchen was a witch. Therefore, what can be understood from this incident is that the people who have settled there since the beginning will suppress the people who came later, and they can even accuse such families of witchcraft for their own interests.

6.3.3 Conventional feud over property disputes

This case is from Tinghare, where Dechen Tamang was accused of being a witch. There are some excuses behind blaming someone as a witch. In this incident too, they have blamed Dechen for the death of a goat and illness in the family. Tamang strongly believes that this is because of witchcraft power. Speaking about the social networks of Dechen and the perpetrator, who were directly involved in the incident, a difference was found between the two.

Dechen is simple, doesn't talk much with other people, and is often busy with her housework. The perpetrator has a local hotel in the village, and she sells liquor there. So she has more acquaintances and relationships with the people of the village than Dechen. Perpetrator not only sells alcohol but also drinks too, so she has relationships with many people. Good and bad things happen between drunkards, and they also backbite others. One day, these people talk about Dechen as she is handling the home, even in the absence of her husband. Since the villagers also called her mother-in-law a witch, they thought that she had learned witchcraft from her mother-in-law. Therefore, they cast doubt on Dechen, and that's why she often lives alone at home. The perpetrator could accuse Dechen of being a witch with the support of these people, and she also knows the weak support of the survivor. Dechen says;

I was removing weeds, and the perpetrator suddenly appeared and scolded me with dirty words such as *randi*, *beshya*, and *bhalu*, and then attacked me and accused me of being a witch. Her husband supported her, and both pulled my hair and dragged me. The villagers were watching our fight, but no one spoke. I knew that the people of the village used to talk about me, but I didn't even think that I would be called a witch. Most of the time, they see me alone at home, so they have so much courage to attack me. All the drunken people of the villages have united and risen against me. I have gained some property in the village through hard work, and even when my husband comes home, he gives me some money. Seeing that I have gained some property like

this, my *jethani* is angry with me because she loses all her property by drinking. And *jethani* once even asked me for money, which I did not accept. In this way, since no one could get any benefit from me, they thought they all joined and acted against me and accused me.

I would like to extend some more observations regarding this incident. Dechen was living independently. Even though her husband only comes to the house occasionally, she manages and handles the whole house. She had also deposited money in the bank, which is given by her husband from time to time, and the money she earned from farming. The perpetrator once asked her to borrow some money, which she refused. Because of this, the perpetrator was away from her and was angry. After that, the perpetrator started looking for a fight with her from time to time. And one day the perpetrator took the opportunity that Dechen's husband was not at home and abused her and called her a witch. It was clear to the perpetrator that no one from the village would speak in favor of Dechen because all the people in the village were in her hands.

Speaking of this social network, female community health volunteers (FCHVs) could not be untouched by this accusation. Although the main reason for this is property, indirectly, *bombo* has also played a role. The incident took place at Pokhari Narayansthan, where Dhawa Lamini has been accused of being a witch by her *jethani* and her daughter-in-law. Being a health worker, her work influenced the work of the *jhakris* of the village, and as a result, they were also indirectly angry with her. Dhawa's children are also small, and her husband is often not at home for work, so *jethani's* family despises her. Many times, they even tried to beat her and chase her away. Dhawa has briefly described the incident as follows:

I have been working as a female community health volunteer in this village for twenty years. I satisfied the people of the village with my work, but the *jhakri* in the village did not like my work from the beginning. I would advise any patient to go to the hospital or the nearest health post, which would reduce the number of people going to *jhakri*. As I worked, I grew older and lost two of my front teeth. Taking advantage of my situation, it became easy for *jhakri* to accuse me of being a witch. And one day, when my *jethani's* grandson was ill, *jhakri* said that a close relative had cast a witch power. Hearing this, *Jethani* and her daughter-in-law called me a witch.

What we can understand from this statement of Dhawa is that the social power of *bombo* among the Tamang seems to be higher than that of the female community health volunteers. This is because of the deep influence of their religion and culture on Tamang. Although the villagers listened to the female community health volunteers, they could not deny what *bombo* had said. These *bombos* accuse witchcraft in the village to maintain the dignity of their profession. My observations in this incident revealed *bombo* was aware of the quarrel between Dhawa and her *jethani*. When Dhawa's *jethani's* grandson fell ill, she showed it to *jhakri*. Taking this opportunity, *jhakri* said that it was all because of witchcraft, which she easily believed. *Jhakri* said that this witch is also in the house with her, and she suspects Dhawa. That Dhawa does not have two front teeth also gives people an environment worthy of trust that calls her a witch. This is one of the good examples among the incidents where one person accuses another person of being a witch because of his power in society.

The next incident was from Raviopi, where a woman was accused of being a witch because of her infertility. Both the accuser and the accused are of the Chettri caste. From this evidence, we can say that not only in Tamang but also in other castes, it is customary to accuse only within the same caste. The survivor, Rama Thapa, had married her husband in the same village. Rama could not give birth after her first child died at age two. Because of the belief in her society that a woman learns witchcraft by killing her child, she was also suspicious of the villagers. People only talked to her superficially. They have done this only because she is from the same village. Her brother was the one to help her in the village. Because of her weaknesses, her neighbor fights with her and accuses her of being a witch. Even though the subject of conflict was too small, it took on a big shape, which was like this, as the survivor says.

The cauliflower plants in my garden were broken, and I screamed. Hearing my screams, the perpetrator's mother-in-law said that the perpetrator did all this work. Hearing this from her mother-in-law, she jumped up. Her mother-in-law and I had a good relationship, but she and her mother-in-law did not. Perpetrator used to burn because of my relationship with her mother-in-law. So this small incident caused a big rift between us. She uses abusive words against me. "*I killed my child and became a witch,*" she said. This made me very sad, and I cried a lot. Seeing my condition, my neighbor helped me report the incident to the police and did accordingly.

They accused Rama of being a witch because of her family situation. The woman who accused Rama is her sweet sister (*meet bahini*) who was married to this place to support Rama. The perpetrator was angry with Rama because of her good relationship with her mother-in-law, with whom she had broken up earlier. The perpetrator could not express her anger with Rama, and she opened her mouth at the time of this fight. In her anger, she insulted Rama indiscriminately. Her in-laws did not give the perpetrator property, so she was intense. She was angry with Rama for not being able to settle. As the perpetrator's husband was illiterate and he was also a stepson, her mother-in-law treated her in an indecent manner. According to my observation, the perpetrator's husband bought a small plot of land in the village with the money he earned by going abroad. She has a small house on the same land. After this, she left the village and started living near her natal home in Lalitpur. She sometimes comes to the village but does not talk with Rama and her in-laws.

6.4 Gendered terrain of witch accusations

In a patriarchal society like Tamang, men play an important role in the family. He has to perform the duties of not only the husband and the father but also the mental leader. An analysis of the incidence of witch accusation included in this study revealed that women from such families were accused of witchcraft where the men were weak, straightforward, and not aggressive. Such incidents have happened even when men cannot fulfill their expected social roles. Incidents of witch accusation are increasing day by day because of men's inability to fulfill the roles that society expects.

Fukuyama (1998) suggests that violence and coalition building are primarily the work of men. For him, males are by nature always aggressive and violent, always seeking a 'dominant' position in the status hierarchy, whereas females are emotionally attached, conciliatory, and cooperative. He also supports the idea of Herbert Spencer that women are altruists (Spencer, 1884, as quoted in Sayers, 1982). It is because of their altruism that females can favor the weakest members of society.

Tamang society is also influenced by patriarchal ideology, and men dominate it. They considered the woman who violated the boundaries of gender roles to be evil in Tamang. They look at such women with suspicion and accuse them of being witches when necessary. Thus, the woman must remain womanly to prevent herself from being called a witch. I quote the following incident from Dolalghat, where Lingsha Tamang was accused of being a witch

by her relative. They accused her of having a spell cast upon the perpetrator. Talking to Lingsha about the incident, I understand that *mata* has a role in blaming her witch. The survivor says that the perpetrator went to visit *mata* at Sanga (on the border of Kavrepalanchok and Bhaktapur) to cure her illness. The *mata* said that she was spoiled (*bigar*) by a woman close to her and gave some hints. Then the perpetrator suspects Lingsha. The survivor describes the incidents in this way:

We were close to each other before the incident happened. Being from a simple family, we both helped each other. Since her husband is my maternal uncle's son, she is a daughter-in-law in a relationship. She knows very well that my husband is straightforward and would not flirt with anyone. My husband is not angry with anyone in the market and does not shout. My husband says, Don't be angry, shout, or yell at anyone, and say the same thing to everyone. This happened shortly after my husband came from abroad. Since my sons are small and my husband is not reluctant, the perpetrator easily suspected me of being a witch. This is the main reason she listened to *mata* and doubted me when there was no one else in the village. Apart from me, there were many other relatives and acquaintances in the village, but the men in them were not as straightforward as in my family. She made this accusation against me because she saw a straight man in my family.

When I talked with the survivor's husband, I found him straightforward. From the way he spoke and the way he talked to me, I realized he was a good man. Although Lingsha has a lot of wealth at present, there was no such arrogance with her husband, and he was busy with work. Lingsha currently has a hotel business, and her husband is also involved in it. Now Lingsha's sons have grown up, and they are simple people like their father. Therefore, my observations prove that the men in Lingsha's family are simple. Taking advantage of this straightforwardness, the perpetrator accused her of being a witch.

In another incident from Patichaur, Dhawa Lamini was accused of being a witch by her *jethani*. The survivor's husband is straightforward and often used to going out of the house for work. The survivor's son has also been working in Kathmandu from an early age, so men in her house are rare. So most of the time, the survivor and her two young daughters are at home. Dhawa says;

There is a big age difference between me and my husband. This is because I am his third wife. He married me because he liked me. I never expected my husband to be such a simple person. He had a habit of believing whatever others said and not flirting with others. My son is as simple as his father, and he has no habit of shouting at anyone. My *jethaju* and his wife used to hate me because the men in my house are simple. This would not have happened if they had been a little harsh and reactive. I don't know what they did to my husband, but at the time of the incident, my husband didn't have a good relationship with me either. I don't even know why my husband didn't talk to me. But I think, as far as my husband is concerned, they must have kept my husband under their control by different means.

I observed that, with such an accusation, if anyone speaks in favor of the accused, the perpetrator also beats him. Because of this fear, people deliberately keep quiet. Incidents of witchcraft accusations are on the rise, even as men do not speak out. Therefore, men must present their manhood or the gender role expected by society, which discourages such witchcraft accusations at all. The above incidents clarify that if there is no active or aggressive man in the family, then such family women become the primary target for accusations of witchcraft in society. In a patriarchal society like Tamang, men have a higher social value than women. Speaking from the perspective of a man has a greater impact than that of a woman. No matter if the family is poor but the man of that family treats all the members of the family equally and speaks to support the woman and respect her value, then such a family has good respect in society and women can be prevented from the accusation.

As mentioned earlier, Tamang also has a tradition of getting married early. Immediately after the marriage, the boy goes abroad, and in the family, relatives and neighbors closely monitor his wife. They watch whom she talks to, what she eats, how she wears, where she goes, whom she talks to on the phone, who comes to the house, and so on. Society has treated her like this because she is not with her husband. Anyway, relatives and neighbors are trying to find out her mistake. My observation is that if she had her husband with her, her relatives and neighbors would not have done so. So it is also a plight for a Tamang woman to be accused of witchcraft, as her husband has to go out of the house for work.

I quote this incident from Aampcharu, where Choden Syngtan was accused of being a witch by her *jethani* on the pretext of her cattle not giving milk and a spell cast on her. When Choden's daughter was one year old, her husband went abroad for work. Until then, there was

no quarrel between her and her *jethani*. Some time after her husband went abroad, *jethani* started harassing her on various pretexts. In this way, there was a confrontation between them, and gradually they became distant from each other. Her *jethani* was born and married in the same place, and she had a strong network. After Choden's husband went abroad, taking advantage of the fact that Choden had no one to help her, *jethani* fought with her. Survivor says;

My husband usually stays abroad and only comes home once a year on vacation. When he comes home, his friends also come home and have fun. Relatives and neighbors also come home to meet and talk with him. My *jethani* also stays quiet when my husband comes home. But when my husband goes back, I find it difficult to stay here. Even if I go somewhere, my *jethani* looks after me. If a boy comes to the house, she looks at it with suspicion. Even if I get home late at night, she talks. So it is very difficult for me to live at home without my husband.

According to her, in the Tamang family, men have a higher status than women, due to the presence of men as the protectors of the family. Therefore, in Tamang, it is important to have men in the family to prevent witchcraft accusations and other quarrels too. If the men in the house are courageous and active, then others cannot commit such acts of violence against women.

They have targeted most women for witchcraft in Tamang society who are economically independent, socially independent, or in a dominant role. To have such qualities in a woman is considered manly, which is not easily accepted in society. There is a belief in our Nepali society that it is not good for *pothi basnu*, and if this is the case, then it is considered a sign of bad luck, and it is customary to take the hen to the yard and cut it. Such a belief is not limited to animals but also exists in humans. The Tamang also have this belief that if a woman is ahead of a man, they cannot accept it easily. And somewhere they try to embarrass that woman, and one example is to make such a woman a big disgrace and disappointment by accusing her of being a witch.

I quote an incident from Kharelthok, where Lasang Tamang was accused of being a witch by her neighbor, who charged her with killing chickens and goats and making her sick with her witchcraft power. Lasang was married in the village where she was born and was her husband's second wife. Her husband's first wife brought her to the house, and she left.

Because of this, she raised six children on behalf of herself and her husband's first wife. She had to suffer a lot to raise her children. The children grew up and got married, and she lived with them. And one day her husband died suddenly, and in the days that followed, she had to endure the oppression of her neighbors. And they quarreled with her, even over a small matter. Lasang narrates her experience like this:

After my sister left home, I brought up her two sons and my four children with great sorrow. Since I also got married at a young age, I had to take on such a big responsibility soon. I begged no one, and I told no one that it hurt me. My relatives and neighbors watched me raise so many children. Along with my grief, my children also grew up, and gradually they started getting married. One son got a government job; the other two are abroad; and the remaining sons work in Kathmandu. Since my husband has also passed away, most of the time my daughter-in-law is at home. People my son's age are now unemployed in the village. But I did well for all my sons and daughters. Today, they visit me from time to time, treat me to medicine, and sometimes bring me to their place. My neighbors were very disappointed and jealous when they saw my happiness after the sorrow. And they try to argue with me, even over small things.

It is clear from her statement that if we cannot keep a woman under control, people will get angry with her. Society wants to see women as womanly. If any woman shows manliness, she will become the eye-catcher of a man. Everyone looks down at her. Such a woman is being made all alone. Even in this incident, I saw the survivor as a brave and fearless woman. She raised her sons and daughters without others' help, and she made them great people by educating them. Of course, it is good to be jealous of others when the people around you are good. But here the negative thought took place and I flirted with her. Seeing Lasang as good and prosperous in society, it took her as a threat. Even after happiness, Lasang did not mix with anyone like before and did not ask for help because she was self-sufficient. Family and money were all in her possession.

Her *jethaju* could not bear her progress and started flirting with another woman against her. As they struggled over small issues, it took a turn for the worse, and one day her neighbor fulfilled *jethaju's* wish by accusing Lasang of being a witch. Lasang did not give up, and with the help of her son and daughter-in-law, she went to complain about the police and punished the perpetrators. She has not been called a witch since the incident was reported. The reason

women suffer more than men in witch accusations is that they are uneducated, unemployed, and poor. Most of them cannot seek legal advice to represent them in civil cases against their accusers or to take other means to protect themselves in the event of abuse. They don't even understand the existing laws against witch accusations.

In this way, the practice of accusing witches is not only limited to the same caste or ethnicity, but it applies to the same gender too. It is also a matter of power, where women accuse women and men accuse men only of witches or wizards. Because of the power structure, there were no cases of women accusing men or men accusing women of witchcraft. Therefore, the practice of power structure in relation to accusations of witches was also found to be more active within the same gender. As Parson (1991) said, social values have also affected it. Although Tamang society is patriarchal, it is not uncommon for men to accuse women of heinous crimes, such as witch accusations. Although men control and exploit women, they do not accuse them of being witches. This must have been because of social values and social fears, which are not easily accepted by society.

Analyzing the cases studied, all the incidents except one have occurred within the same gender. The incidence of witch accusations is higher among women than among men. It is natural to ask why there are more cases of witchcraft accusations among women than men. As the women are engaging in household chores, they are very close to each other and understand each other very well. As far as men are concerned, the fact that men are mostly out of the house and nowadays most of them are abroad has also reduced such incidents among men. Because of their gender, women are more interested in others than men. This is also natural because women have to run the house.

In a patriarchal society, people thought women should have babies, raise children, manage household life, and model for their husbands. When women stepped outside their prescribed roles, they became targets. And even when men faced accusations of witchcraft, it was typically because they were associated with accused women. I quote the incident from Sotel Danda where Chewang Yonjan was accused of being a wizard by his cousin's brother.

Chewang has been taking care of his *fufu* (father's sister), who is a single woman. She declared she would give all her property to him after her death. Because of this, the survivor's cousin's brother was angry with him. As they are the children of the same grandfather, the perpetrator has also claimed the property of the *fufu*. After she refused to talk about this, a

dispute started between them. This is the reason there used to be quarrels between them from time to time. The survivor says that:

On that day, as on other days, I was walking in front of the perpetrator's house. Suddenly, he came out and stopped me. He said that his middle son has become ill because of my *fufu*. He even said that my *fufu* was a witch and that his son was sick because of her witchcraft power. He used to accuse my *fufu* of being a witch, but this time I could not bear it and protested. And there was a fight between us. He immediately entered the house and brought a gun from inside, pointed it at my forehead, and called me a wizard. The villagers watched the fight between us and scolded him, and he removed his gun from me. Seeing his behavior, the villagers insisted they should report the incident to the police, and the incident was registered and he was arrested.

Following this statement, I understand that there was a fight between them for a long time. In particular, there has been a quarrel over Chewang's *fufu*. Since she is old and staying at home, villagers, including the perpetrator, suspect her of being a witch. And from time to time, there were fights over this issue. Chewang was silent until the perpetrator accused his *fufu* of being a witch, but when the perpetrator even accused him of being a *boksa*, a big fight broke out. The villagers are also interested in accusing the man of being a *Boksa* and have encouraged him to register the incident.

Looking at this witch-hunting incident, pre-existing anger and revenge motivate one. Here I quote another incident from Aagretar where Pasang Moktan was accused of being a *boksa* by his *bhatija* (brother's son). The survivor's wife is working as a female community health volunteer in the village. As in the case described earlier, there is a misunderstanding between *bombo* and female community health volunteers in this case as well. *Bombo* was also indirectly angry with the survivors's wives about this incident, and he was waiting for an opportunity to accuse her.

Meanwhile, one day, some girls' students from a school in the village started shaking their bodies, and all the people were scared. Among them was the daughter of the perpetrator. After a while, everything became normal, and the students returned home. But a few days after returning home, the perpetrator's daughter started trembling again, and he showed it to the *bombo*. The *bombo* was said to be worshiped for this, and it was worshiped accordingly.

During this *pooja*, the perpetrator's daughter uttered the name of the survivor and said that he made her ill. Taking advantage of the opportunity, *bombo* questioned the goodwill of the survivor and his wife in the village. The villagers then looked at the survivor and his wife with suspicion. However, the survivor reported the incident to the police and proved his innocence, leaving no trace of his or his wife's dignity. The survivor briefly says this about the incident:

I was walking through the village, informing all the members of the mother's group about their regular monthly meeting. As my wife is a female community health volunteer, she conducts this meeting. When I reached the perpetrator's house, he insulted me and started arguing with me. He blamed me for a *boksa* without thinking and charged me with a spell cast on his daughter. And he asked me to take the *mantra* from his daughter's body. As the quarrel between us escalated, he went to the house, brought a digging bar, and tried to hit me. The villagers did not come in the middle of our fight, and after some time, my wife also arrived. We jointly fought with him. When my wife started shouting, the perpetrator told her that 'you are also a witch'. In this way, he accused both of us of being witches and wizards. Villagers then tried to settle in the village, but he refused to realize his mistake. And I lodged a complaint with the police.

Looking at this incident, *bombo* seems to have accused the survivor of being a *boksa* for his selfish ends. *Bombo* seems to have tried to make his family look bad in the village to protect his profession. The survivor's wife proved to be a challenge for *Bombo*, and he seems to have been brilliant in this incident. So in this incident, *bombo* has tried to prove the survivor's wife and her husband as witches through the perpetrator. Thus, during their fight, the perpetrator did not call the survivor's wife a direct witch because she also had a good influence in the village. Because of this fear, the perpetrator first accused her husband of being *boksa* and then her as a *boksi*. Here, if *bombo* had directly called the survivor's wife a witch, she would have discussed the matter in the village, and *bombo* would have proved to be a scoundrel. As a result, he used the perpetrator.

Based on these incidents, we can say that the incident of the witch accusation will also have been influenced by gender. Here too, women have accused women of being witches, while men have accused men of being wizards. This study did not find any cases where women

accused men and men accused women. Therefore, the subject of this witch accusation is also related to gender.

6.5 Conclusion

Social networks and power have a huge influence on witch accusations in Tamang. Those who have a strong social network and have power in society have a high social reputation in Tamang. Because of this, he is proud of his social power and networks, and with no bother, he uses them to despise the weak people in the community. And if he or any member of his family gets sick or has any misfortune, he accuses the weak person. This chapter concludes that incidents of witch accusations have happened in families with low social networks and power. I divided the chapter into intra-ethnic feuds and gender-based accusations. There are various causes under the intra-ethnic feuds that make the accusation of witches. Similarly, the most remarkable matter is that this accusation is practiced only within the same sex, which is described under gender-based accusations.

Observations conclude that property not only provides social networks and power in the Tamang but also needs to engage with relatives and the villagers. This strengthens them. If a person has the qualities of staying at home most of the time, not talking to others often, and not sharing his sorrows and happiness with others, then he will not be treated humanely and will be kept away from society. Such a person is suspected of being primarily a witch. As Weber (1978) said, it is because of these strong people in society that they always accuse the weak person of being a witch in Tamang. Thus, in Tamang society, the tradition of accusing witches because of such powerful people continues to this day. Marx & Engles (1943) have also emphasized this, and as there is a huge gap between the powerful and the powerless in Tamang society, the incidence of witch accusations is increasing day by day. They well respected the powerful man in society and got support always.

Talking about the social network and power, different castes cannot accuse each other of being witches. They have a limitation that does not allow them to accuse a person of another caste as a witch. The study proves that all the incidents of witch accusations took place within the same caste. This is because people of one caste lack knowledge and experience about the social relations and power of people of another caste. Thus, a one-caste person is also afraid of accusing people of other castes, so he does not do it.

Gender has also had a big impact on social networks and the power of witch accusations. Like in caste, here also, witch accusations are limited to the same gender. Tamang looks at women and men from different perspectives based on their social structure, social networks, and power. In Tamang society, men consider themselves to be in a high position, which is why it is not good to accuse and fight with women. Similarly, women are considered physically and mentally weaker than men, so no woman can accuse a man. For these reasons, women accuse women and men accuse men of being witches. As Foucault (1980) said, power is not brought from anywhere; we create it in our society. Our environment, culture, and behavior determine who has how much power, and that determines the accusation of the witch.

Before concluding this chapter, it is important to say that the relationship between the families has a strong foundation. After that, one has to keep in touch with his relatives, neighbors, and villagers from time to time in order to prevent accusations of witchcraft. If there is a quarrel in the family and there is no good relationship between husband and wife, other people hate it, and a woman from such a family is suspected of being a witch. As Parson (1991) said, society also has a role in making a person powerful, or it is the society that makes him powerful. He argues that power is the same for everyone and that social things make someone more powerful than others. This study fully supports his assertion and emphasizes the need to live as a social being in society. Only then can man live with dignity.

In a nutshell, power and social networks highly influence the incidents of witch accusations, and even in this context, witch accusations are only leveled and practiced in intra-caste or ethnic groups. It is observed as easy as accusing each other of witchcraft between the same caste and ethnic group, but it has not been easy to accuse different castes and groups.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION & KNOWLEDGE CONTRIBUTION

7.1 Introduction

This final chapter presents the summary of the findings, conclusion, and knowledge contribution of the study. The chapter mainly comprises of three sections. The first section discusses the major findings, methodological reflection, literature review, and organizes them toward reaching a conclusion. The second section highlights the conclusion, and the third section explains about the knowledge contribution of the study. Application of various sociological theories on witch accusation has helped to make the subject more meaningful. Two schools of thought have appeared here. The first is essentialism, while the second is social constructivism. According to essentialists, witchcraft is linked to a person's heredity and biological environment, while social constructivists say it originated in their society. It has nothing to do with heredity or the biological environment. This study strongly supports the views and philosophy of social constructivists about witch accusations and has concluded by presenting reliable arguments that the practice of witch accusations is being constructed and practiced in the relevant society itself.

7.2 Summary

As mentioned in the annual report by Nepal Police Headquarters, and the Women, Children and Senior Citizen Services Directorate (WCSCSD), for five years (2011 to 2016), the highest number of cases of witch accusations were registered in Kavrepalanchok district. Therefore, this district was chosen for the study. Analyzing these cases, I found that most cases of witch accusations occurred in the Tamang community and based on this, this study focuses on the Tamang community of Kavrepalanchok district.

Though the subject of witch accusation is a highly sensitive issue, a qualitative research approach has been adopted to gain the subjective assessment of attitudes, opinions, and practices related to witch accusation in the Tamang community. The research was done under the exploratory descriptive study design, and common qualitative research tools, such as interviews and observations were used. For the information processing and analysis, a systematic way of analyzing qualitative information, i.e., information reduction, information display, and drawing and verifying conclusions was made. I collected the qualitative

information in the research through primary and secondary methods of information collection. This research enclosed fifteen cases of witch accusations scattered throughout the district. Though research is highly sensitive as it deals with the potential fear of stigmatization, the anonymity and privacy of those who took part in the research process were respected and kept confidential for protecting their individual rights.

While reviewing the literature, I found that various national and foreign scholars have studied the issue of witch accusation from their respective views and levels. The news related to the witch accusations in various national media from time to time has also given a lot of inspiration and support to study this subject. Many scholars have studied the phenomenon of witch accusations as a form of violence against women. Despite this reality, this study has added a new dimension to the subject of witch accusations by trying to look at it from a social constructivist perspective. Therefore, by using various sociological theories, the phenomenon of witch accusations has been investigated and analyzed from a social constructivist point of view, and it has been possible to prove that this type of phenomenon is created and practiced in society itself.

Influenced by the social constructivist perspective, this study has observed that three social institutions handle the occurrence of witch accusations in the Tamang. I categorize them into two themes and explain them accordingly. Witch exists as a social and cultural reality of everyday life in the Tamang community. It is endowed with a power of coercion, by which the individual behaviors are controlled. Research questions helped to discover that the accusation of witches in the Tamang community is socially constructed.

The primary social institution responsible for witch accusations is the close social structure composed of kinship, relatives, and neighbors, where such accusations predominantly occur. This study observes that there were no cases with unknown and distant people in the Tamang community. Indeed, it is a common understanding that the closer individuals are to each other, the more intimately acquainted they become with each other's strengths and weaknesses. Thus, it is common that there exists some minor misunderstandings between these relationships because they have different interactions going on in their everyday life in Tamang community. I found it to be true that, when they know everything about each other, they may like or despise each other as well. Thus, accusations are usually preceded by conflict or the emergence of strains in their interpersonal relationships. As a result, when a

person experiences sickness or misfortune in the Tamang community, the person with whom relations are strained becomes the prime suspect.

In this way, I observed that *bombo* and *mata*, who are in the village or outside the village, have a direct or indirect role in accusing witches within the close relationship. Since the Tamang community holds them in high esteem, the members of the community cannot deny what they say. Sometimes when *bombo* and *mata* cannot cure the sick person, then they blame others by providing some indications. The perpetrator then suspects a person with whom he had a conflict or a strain in interpersonal relationships. Actually, matching the indications given by *bombo* or *mata* is just a coincidence, but because of Tamang people's trust upon *bombo* and *mata*, the perpetrator believes it to be true and accuses the poor and helpless women in the village. Because of this truth, in every Tamang village, there must be a *bombo* or *mata* and the witch as well.

The second social institution discovered to be responsible for witch accusations in Tamang community is the social network and the significant important role it plays in all areas of their social life. Besides this, I have found that gender roles are equally important in the matter of witch accusations. An individual from the Tamang community, who has a good social network, is considered to be superior and strong in the society and can accuse poor and helpless people of being a witch. Thus, power is the ability to exercise one's will over others. In most of the cases of witch accusations, the powerful target the weaker, the rich target the poor, and the dishonest target the straight. The study reveals that most of the cases of witch accusations are exploited because of powerlessness. The power structure plays a major role here, even though this practice is limited to those of the same caste, gender, and religion. Similarly, people from a large group accuse people of a small group, and sometimes, it has been found that they accuse weak women of a witch out of a sense of revenge. When talking about power exploitation, some female community health volunteers were not spared from such accusations. Because they are considered as obstacles in the work of *bombo* and *mata*, directly or indirectly, they are accused of being witches.

Speaking of gender roles in witch accusations, men play an important role in the Tamang family. The study reveals that women from such families were accused of being a witch when the men were weak, gentle, and not violent. Incidents of witch accusation increased day by day because of the men's inability to fulfill their roles that society expects. This lowers the social value of women in the family and the society takes the woman lightly and she is more

likely to be accused of witch. Women who try to break out of prescribed gender roles are not exempt from being accused of witch. Therefore, the Tamang community cannot accept the virtue of a woman as a man or the virtue of a man as a woman.

Finally, it can be summarized that witches are the byproducts of the beliefs of witchcraft and the practices of witch accusations in the Tamang community. That is why the Tamang community believes that woman can pass their witchcraft power onto their daughter, who can also pass it onto their children in a never-ending cycle. They often subject persons accused of the witch to various forms of physical and mental indignities. Once they are accused, it is difficult for them to stay in the village for the rest of their life. However, the recent enactment of the law has helped to reduce the incidents of witch accusation to some extent. Despite this, the practice of accusing witches still exists in the Tamang community. Finally yet importantly, what I would like to say is that this study attempts to discover the social institutions within the social structure of this witch-accusing practice that prevails among the Tamang community. My explanation of the witch accusations in the Tamang community is obviously a milestone to be helpful to any scholars who will do research related to this topic in the future.

7.3 Conclusions

The first conclusion of the dissertation is that, the practice of accusing each other of witch is only limited within the close and familiar people composed of kin, relatives, and neighbors and not to the distant and unknown people.

Based on the analysis of the cases of witch accusation covered by this research, we can say that the practice of accusing each other of witch exists between close and familiar people in Tamang community. There are various types of household transactions between people who are acquaintances, and they know each other's shortcomings and weaknesses. In addition, when the household transactions between result in disputes, they quarrel. As this tussle grows bigger, it takes on a bigger form and even fights ensue and the strong person accuses the poor and weak person of being the witch. The practice of accusing each other of being a witch in this way seems to be common among the Tamang community. Since they do not have any dealings with distant and unknown people, they do not accuse them of being witch. They cannot do this because they even feel insecure when they accuse people who are far away and unknown to them as witches.

The statements of some well-known social scientists fully support this conclusion of the research. Pritchard (1937) suggests that people living at a distance from one another have insufficient social contacts to produce mutual hatred, whereas there is ample opportunity for friction among those whose homesteads and cultivations are close. Thus, witchcraft is selective and takes a toll on people between whom social bonds already exist. The next scholar, Hutton (2006) argues that a witch does harm to neighbors or kin, rather than strangers, and represents a threat to the individuals and the community. Max (1969) argues that wherever misfortune occurred, they foremost sought the witch among those neighbors with whom survivors had already been in problematic relationships before the misfortune occurred. Similarly, Macfarlane (1970) also argues that accusations of witchcraft were mostly made between people who not only came from the same village but even from the same part of the village and knew each other intimately and that the accusations were limited to the area of intense relationships between individuals. Therefore, the above arguments show that the practice of witch accusation happens only between close and familiar people.

Some external forces also have a direct or indirect role in accusing witches in the Tamang community. Especially in the Tamang community, there is *dhami* or *jhakri* whom they call as *bombo* in their language. Every Tamang village has at least one *bombo*, who is highly respected and is considered as the priest and one of the societal leaders of the community whose main job is to cure the people from diseases and to protect from various misfortunes. In the Tamang community, no one can deny what *bombo* says, and they have complete faith in what he says. When these *bombos* cannot heal the sick or get rid of some misfortune, they try to blame others. During this time, the *bombo* gives some sign to the patient or a member of the patient's family about some evil power within the close relationships. After hearing this from *bombo*, the patient's family suspects the poor and helpless woman near them of being a witch and starts monitoring her. Moreover, the patient's family gradually begins a quarrel with the woman even on small matters and finally accuses her of being a witch. In the Tamang community, I found that witches are accused, particularly among kinship, relatives, and neighbors. In this way, this research shows that there is a practice of accusing witches only between relatives and acquaintances, and since there is always a need for social relations between them in some form, the broken relationship between the perpetrator and the survivor of some incidents is slowly being established.

Before, these *bombos* used to directly say that a certain woman is a witch, but now, because of the existing law, they do not do so and instead give some hints indirectly about the evil power. In addition, even though the cases of witch accusation are registered in the police, only the perpetrator is convicted and the *bombo* is exempted from conviction. The perpetrator also does not want to involve *bombo* in such a case because *bombo* is a respected person of the Tamang community. For this reason, even though there is a law regarding witch accusations, instead of decreasing, such incidents are increasing day by day in the Tamang community. Therefore, we can say that where there is a *bombo*, there must be a witch. In addition, this relationship between *bombo* and the witch is two sides of the same coin.

Pritchard (1937) also fully supports this conclusion. He argues that people living at a distance from one another have insufficient social contacts to produce mutual hatred, whereas there is ample opportunity for friction among those whose homesteads and cultivations are close. Thus, witch accusation is selective and takes a toll on people between whom social bonds already exist. Hutton (2006) also says that a witch does harm to neighbors or kin, rather than strangers, and represents a threat to the individuals and the community.

Secondly, the person with strong social networks and power always considers himself or herself as a powerful person in the society and whenever he or she gets ill or has misfortunes, then he or she suspects poor and helpless women as witches.

Another major reason for accusing each other of witch in the Tamang community is social networks and power. It implies the ability to impose one's will on others, which can manifest in many forms, and witch accusation is one of them. If a person has a strong social network and power, he thinks he is superior and strong and being able to oppress the powerless in the community. When such person faces some kind of misfortune or any member of his family falls ill, he suspects of being a witch someone weaker than him.

Weber (1978) defined social power as the ability to control others, events, or a resource and to make happen what one wants to happen despite obstacles, resistance, or opposition. He argues that power is the ability to exercise one's will over others. Foucault (1980) terms power as a complex network of acts of domination, submission, and resistance. Parson (1991) argues that power flows from a social system's potential to coordinate human activity and resources to accomplish goals. According to him, society also has a role in making a person powerful, or it is the society that makes him powerful. All these statements logically support

the findings of this research where the social network and power of an individual are also prominent in accusing each other of witch in the Tamang community.

People who live alone at home, do not mix in society, and talk little with neighbors are particularly appearing as powerless people in the Tamang community. Such people have little value in society and their social power is very low. People who have good conversations with their neighbors, sit with others in the village, drink alcohol and smoke, and take part in various social activities, seem to be powerful in Tamang society. Therefore, witch accusation in the Tamang community can be understood as a conflict between the powerful and the powerless. Thus, it is concluded that social power structure is also the reason for being accused of witch.

This study has revealed several aspects of social power influencing witch accusations within the Tamang community, including the vulnerability of migrant families to such accusations and the impact of class hierarchy on the incidence of witch accusations. Two types of class in the Tamang exist: twelve Tamang & eighteen *jaat*, where twelve Tamang is believed to be the pure descendant of Lord 'Maheshwar' (Vansitart, 1992) and are considered socially higher than the eighteen *jaat*. Thus, when talking about social power, there is a trend of accusing members of the same caste. This has also been proved in all the cases covered by this research where it was found that the accused belong to the same caste. Likewise, the fact that women accuse other women and men accuse other men of witchcraft and wizardry further underscores the influence of social power as a significant contributing factor in such accusations. Because of the strong social power, the *bombo* in the Tamang community accuses female health volunteers who work to raise public awareness in the health sector. The social power of the *bombo* in the Tamang community is definitely higher than that of the female community health volunteer because we consider the *bombo* as one of the societal leader and priest in Tamang community. Thus, because of the imbalance of social power, powerless people particularly end up being accused of being witch in the society.

Marx & Engels (1943) argues that within society, there exists a dynamic where one individual holds significant respect and power, while others may fear or defer to them. The power wielded by an individual can compel others to support their actions, regardless of whether those actions are perceived as good or bad. This is a society where power functions to influence others. In this context of witch accusation, the people of the village take the side of the powerful person or the perpetrator. They watch the incident closely and also watch the

inhuman activities done to the survivor, but they do not speak on behalf of the survivor or are afraid to speak. During such incidents, if any person speaks on behalf of the survivor, the perpetrator accuses him of being a witch or even beats him, so that no person is on the side of the survivor. This is how social power plays an important role in accusing innocent women of being witches. Thus, because of the fear of the powerful people in the society, the cases of witch accusations in the Tamang community are increasing instead of decreasing.

Because the Tamang community believes in patriarchal family, women are weaker than men from the point of view of social power, and for that reason, there is a higher incidence of witchcraft accusations against them. In addition, as Marx (1943) said, this social power is not brought from nowhere; our society creates it. Our environment, culture, and behavior play crucial roles in determining the distribution of power among individuals within a society. Therefore, society has a role in making a person powerful. Actually, power is the same for everyone and that social factors make someone more powerful than others.

Finally, the woman of such family is accused of witch, where the males are absent or the males are not aggressive. That is why the socially expected gender roles have highly influenced the practice of witch accusation.

Men play an important role in the Tamang community, which believes in a patriarchal society. A man has to perform the duty of not only husband and father but also mental and social leader. The people accuse the women from such families in the Tamang community, where the men are weak, straightforward, and not aggressive. The infrequent presence of men in households due to their busy work schedules can contribute to suspicions and accusations against women within these families, ultimately leading to an increase in incidents of witch accusations in the village. This phenomenon highlights the societal expectations placed on men and the consequences of their inability to fulfill these roles.

Fukuyama's (1998) opinion about the gender role fully supports this conclusion. He suggests that violence and coalition building are primarily the work of males. For him, males are by nature always aggressive and violent, always seeking a 'dominant' position in the status hierarchy, whereas females are emotionally attached, conciliatory and cooperative. According to his statement, the Tamang community views their men and women differently. In the Tamang community, which is influenced by the patriarchal ideology, this is also why women are often suspected and accused of witch. They consider the woman who violates the

boundaries of the gender roles as an evil. Thus, the woman must remain with the expected boundaries to prevent herself from being called a witch. Even if the family is poor, if the man of that family treats all the members of the family equally and speaks to support the woman and respects her value, such a family will have good respect in the society and the woman can be saved from being accused of a witch.

In the Tamang community, the practice of getting married at a young age is widespread and as men often go to the city for work or go abroad after marriage, the number of men in the family is low. So, the women of such families are highly suspected and accused of being witches by others. In this context, most of the accused women said that if the men of their families were not forced out of the house or were masculinized in the society, they would not have had to face such accusations. Therefore, when the men are not at home and the men at home are straight and not aggressive, the women have to be active, which is not preferred by Tamang society. Economically independent, socially independent and influential women are mostly targeted as witches in Tamang society. They accused such women of being a witch. Thus, it can be argued that a socially expected gender role played a major factor in accusing the witch.

Lorber (1994) argued that inequality is the core of gender itself: women and men were socially differentiated to justify treating them unequally. As a social institution, gender determines the distribution of power, privileges, and economic resources. The main point feminists have stressed about gender inequality is that it is not an individual matter, but is deeply ingrained in the structure of societies. Thus, in a patriarchal society like Tamang community, it is a common phenomenon to oppress women from all aspects. Agassi (1998) argued in his theories of gender inequalities that conventional women's work roles assign them the major responsibility for unpaid domestic and especially childcare work and thus handicap them in their occupational roles. From the above principles of gender inequality, it is understood that in the status quo, if this discrimination is not reduced or removed, women will always remain inferior to men. Because of this, women face majority of the accusations. Hence, it is evident that the tradition of accusing witches persists from the past to the present, and there is no certainty that it will cease to exist in the future.

7.4 Knowledge contribution

The tradition of accusing each other of being witches is not new in the Tamang community, which is one of the uneducated and backward communities in Nepal. During the study, it was

observed that in a visited village, every house had been subject to witch accusations, indicating the widespread prevalence of this tradition within the Tamang community. Although it is common to accuse each other, it has a great impact on the life of the accused. The study has also shown that not only the accused but also her family find it hard to live in society. Because of this, some of the accused have migrated from their old place to a new place where they feel comfortable and safe for themselves and their families.

When the participants were asked during the research, they neither saw the appearance or identity of the witch nor experienced the power of the witch. The unfounded belief that individuals are witches has resulted in unjust suffering for many impoverished women within the community. Thus, witch is not only the myth; it is the byproduct of belief and the practice of witchcraft.

Three things play a major role in any woman being accused of a witch. On the other hand, because of the mutual interaction of these three things, the word 'witch' is being falsely cultivated in the Tamang society. It is from the interaction between the survivor, the perpetrator and the *bombo* that the term 'witch' is born and is promoted by the society. The word witch was born from these social elements. The social construction theory (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) presents that human interaction contributes to the socially constructed nature of everyday reality.

The concept of self-fulfilling prophecy, which is a central element in modern sociological, political, and economic theory, is a process through which a belief or expectation affects the outcome of a situation or the way a person or group will behave. As Merton (1968) defined it, "self-fulfilling prophecy is, in the beginning, a false definition of the situation evoking a new behavior, which makes the originally false conception come true". Hence, the practice of witch accusations within the Tamang community can be viewed as an example of a 'self-fulfilling prophecy' emerging from social interactions and beliefs. Now we can say that the word 'witch' has emerged from the interaction of social elements and the society has to take responsibility for it. Therefore, society has to play a foremost role in reducing and removing such inhumane practices from its spaces. Moreover, it is easily possible if the society wants it. Although there is a law related to witch accusations, it is because of the society that it does not have much effect. Therefore, until the society changes, it can be said that heinous crimes like witch accusations will remain in the Tamang society.

If the qualitative and effective programs of various non-governmental organizations, government organizations and other related stakeholders engaged in social change and development work are implemented, the Tamang society will definitely change. As long as these organizations insist on changing their thoughts and beliefs, the practice of accusing each other of witchcraft among the Tamang community will decrease in the coming days and it will be completely eradicated in the future.

For the study and research related to this topic, I found that the scholars mostly focused on shaman, while this research focuses on witches, which is the first attempt made in this area. Thus, this research would be a milestone in its field. This research has found out how the society accuses an innocent person of being a witch and also identified other social matters related to it and explained it in simple and clear language. And whatever research gaps I found in this research, I have also fulfilled them. Therefore, this research has certainly made a great and invaluable contribution to witch accusations.

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Annex 1

Practices of Witch Accusation in Tamang Community in Kavrepalanchok District Interview Schedule (Accused Woman)

1. Can you tell me what accusation they made, when, why, and how?
तपाईंलाई कुन आरोप कहिले, किन र कसरी लगाईयो बताईदिनु हुन्छ ?
2. What could be the reason for making such an accusation against you? What do you think?
तपाईं माथि नै यस्तो आरोप लगाउनुको के कारण हुनसक्छ ? तपाईंलाई के लाग्छ ?
3. What was your old relationship with the perpetrator/family/person? What was their condition like?
पीडक/परिवार/व्यक्तिसंगतपाईंको पुरानो सम्बन्ध के कस्तो थियो ? उनीहरूको अवस्था के कस्ता थिए ?
4. What is the attitude of society towards you after the incident?
घटनापछि समाजले तपाईंलाई हेर्ने दृष्टिकोण कस्तो पाउनु हुन्छ ?
5. In your opinion, such an incident should be reported to the administration office?
तपाईंको विचारमा यस्तो घटना प्रशासन कार्यालयमा गई उजुरी दिनुपर्छ ?
- 5.1 Who assisted you in filing the complaint and what action it took against the perpetrator?
तपाईंले उजुरी गर्दा क-कस्ले सहयोग गरे र पीडक लाई कस्तो कारवाही भयो ?
- 5.2 Why didn't you go to the administrative office and lodge a complaint against the perpetrator?
तपाईंले के कति कारणले प्रशासन कार्यालयमा गई पिडक माथि उजुरी नगर्नुभएको हो ?
- 5.3 Why didn't you complain to the administration about the injustice done to you and admit that you are a witch?
आफूमाथि भएको अन्यायलाई किन प्रशासनमा उजुरी नदिई आफू बोक्सी हो भनी स्वीकानुभयो ?
6. If it weren't for that, you wouldn't be accused of being a witch?
के नहुँदो हो त तपाईंलाई बोक्सी आरोप लगाउने थिएन?
7. Do you think there is such a thing as witchcraft in society?
तपाईंको विचारमा, समाजमा “बोक्सी” भन्ने कुरा छ कि छैन ?
8. You knew you were a witch until the perpetrator accused you of being a witch?
तपाईंलाई पिडकले बोक्सी आरोप नलगाएसम्म आफू बोक्सी हो भन्ने कुरा थाहा थियो ?

9. In your opinion, the presence of bombo may be the main reason for accusing women of witchcraft?
तपाईंको विचारमा महिला माथि बोक्सी आरोप लगाउनुमा, बोम्बोको उपस्थिति नै प्रमुख कारण हुनसक्छ ?
10. Do you know or ever heard of a bombo in your area?
तपाईंले आफ्नो बस्तीमा कुनै बोम्बोलाई चिन्नु भएको वा सुन्नु भएको छ ?
11. What kinds of people are bombos?
कस्ता मान्छे बोम्बो हुन्छन् ?
12. Whether bombo was in favor of accusing you or not?
तपाईंलाई आरोपित गर्नेको साथमा बोम्बो थिए कि थिएनन् ?

Annex 2

Practices of Witch Accusation in Tamang Community in Kavrepalanchok District Interview Schedule (Perpetrator)

1. Disasters and the sick in the village are said to be due to witchcraft. How do you feel about that?
गाउँघरमा हुने विपत्ति र बिरामीहरु बोक्सीले गर्दा भन्छन्, यसप्रति तपाईंलाई कस्तो लाग्छ?
2. How does bombo detect witchcraft, you know?
बोम्बोले कसरी बोक्सी पत्ता लगाउँछन्, तपाईंलाई थाहा होला?
3. Is there any case in your family where bombo has cured the disease?
तपाईंको परिवारमा बोम्बोले रोगको उपचार गरेको कुनै घटना छ?
4. Is there really an example of a witch being tortured to cure a disease?
के साँच्चै बोक्सीलाई यातना दिएको खण्डमा रोगको उपचार भएको उदारण छ?
5. Are most of the women in the village witches?
के गाउँघरमा प्राय महिला नै बोक्सी हुन्छन्?
6. Why did the woman remain silent while being tortured on the charge of witchcraft?
बोक्सी आरोपमा यातना दिँदा महिलाले किन चुपचाप रहेका होलान्?
7. Why didn't the villagers speak in favor of the accused woman during the torture?
यातनाको बेला आरोपित महिलाको साथमा गाउँका मानिसहरु किन नबोलेका होलान्?
8. Can an accused woman really be a witch?
के आरोपित महिला साँच्चै बोक्सी नै हुनसक्छ?
9. Have you heard of witchcraft?
तपाईंले बोक्सीको बारेमा सुन्नु भएको छ?
10. What was your old relationship with the survivor?
पीडित महिला सित तपाईंको पुरानो सम्बन्ध के कस्तो थियो ?
(Related-unrelated, transacted - no transaction, old anger - no old anger)
(नाता सम्बन्ध भएको-नाता सम्बन्ध नभएको, लेनदेन कारोबार भएको-लेनदेन कारोबार नभएको, पुरानो रिस भएको-पुरानो रिस नभएको)

Annex 3

Practices of Witch Accusation in Tamang Community in Kavrepalanchok

District Interview Schedule (Shaman/Bombo)

1. What kind of disease do people come to you for treatment?
कस्ता खालका रोगको उपचारका लागि मानिसहरु तपाईं कहाँ आउने गर्दछन् ?
2. What kind of people comes more?
कस्ता व्यक्ति बढी आउँछन् ?
(Women-men, rich-poor, urban-rural, educated-uneducated, related-unrelated, good family relationships-bad family relationships, sick-healthy, personal problems-family problems, age group, caste/ethnic etc.)
(महिला-पुरुष, धनी-गरिव, शहर-गाउँ, शिक्षित-अशिक्षित, नाता भएको-नाता नभएको, पारिवारिक सम्बन्ध राम्रो-पारिवारिक सम्बन्ध बिग्रिएको, रोगी-निरोगी, व्यक्तिगत समस्या-पारिवारिक समस्या, उमेर समूह, जाति आदि)
3. Where did you learn the treatment method?
उपचार विधि तपाईंले कहाँबाट सिक्नुभयो ?
5. What is your view on witchcraft? How witches are born or become?
“बोक्सीप्रथा” को बारेमा तपाईंको के दृष्टिकोण छ ? बोक्सीहरु कसरी जन्मन्छन् वा बन्छन् ?
5. What kind of women are accused of witchcraft?
कस्ता महिलालाई बोक्सीको आरोप लगाईन्छ ?
(Rich-poor, urban-rural, private house-living in rent, relatives are jealous-relatives are not jealous, educated-uneducated, good family relationships-bad family relationships, youth-elderly, singly-family, bombo has no interest-bombo has no interest, caste/ethnic, age etc.)
(धनी-गरिव, शहर-गाउँ, निजी घर-भाडामा बस्ने, आफन्तले दाह गरेको-आफन्तले दाह नगरेको, शिक्षित-अशिक्षित, पारिवारिक सम्बन्ध राम्रो-पारिवारिक सम्बन्ध बिग्रिएको, जवान-वृद्ध, एकल-पारिवारिक, धामीको स्वार्थ भएको-धामीको स्वार्थ नभएको, जात, उमेर आदि)
6. What is the connection between magic, sorcery, and witchcraft?
जादु, टुनामुना र बोक्सी बीच केही सम्बन्ध छ ?
7. Is there any example of a woman from a civilized and prosperous family being a witch?
के सभ्य र सम्पन्न परिवारका महिला बोक्सी भएको कुनै उदाहरण छ ?
8. In the absence of Dhami Jhakri, witchcraft can exist?
के धामीभाँक्री नभएको अवस्थामा बोक्सीको अस्तित्व रहन सक्छ ?
9. How can the general public understand the relationship between witch and witch-doctor?
बोक्सी र धामीभाँक्री बीचको सम्बन्धलाई सर्वसाधारणले कसरी बुझ्न सक्छन् ?

Annex 4

Practices of Witch Accusation in Tamang Community in Kavrepalanchok District Observation Check List

1. Bombo's method of treating patients
बोम्बोले बिरामीलाई गर्ने उपचार विधिको अवलोकन गर्ने ।
2. Cultural values, beliefs, and social beliefs related to witchcraft
बोक्सी आरोपित सम्बन्धित साँस्कृतिक मूल्य, मान्यता र सामाजिक विश्वासहरु
3. Various calamities caused by witchcraft
बोक्सीद्वारा हुने भनिएको विभिन्न विपत्तिहरु
4. Any special days, festivals, or gatherings organized by women accused of witchcraft
बोक्सी आरोपित महिलाहरुले आयोजना गर्ने कुनै विशेष दिन, पर्व वा जमघटहरु
5. Socio-economic status of a woman accused of witchcraft
बोक्सी आरोपित महिलाको सामाजिक आर्थिक अवस्था

Annex 5: Province wise witch accusations cases in Nepal (2068/69 to 2077/78 BS)

		2068/69	2069/70	2070/71	2071/72	2072/73	2073/74	2074/75	2075/76	2076/77	2077/78	Total
1	Koshi Province											
	Total	9	1	4	4	9	7	7	6	7	3	57
2	Madhesh Province											
	Total	15	11	20	19	8	10	16	21	17	25	162
3	Bagmati Province											
	Total	4	2	11	13	10	1	5	5	1	13	65
4	Gandaki Province											
	Total	0	5	1	2	0		5	1	4	2	20
5	Lumbini Province											
	Total	5	7	3	3	2	4	10	6	1	9	50
6	Karnali Province											
	Total	1	1	0	1	1	2	1	4	2	4	18
7	Sudurpashchim Province											
	Total	1	1	0	0	0	0	4	3	2	4	15
	Grand Total	35	28	39	43	30	24	48	46	34	60	387

Source: Nepal Police (2021)

Note: Districts have been recategorised according to the respective province.

Annex 6: Cases of witch accusation in Kavrepalanchok

S.N	Accused date	Name of the survivor (<i>anonymized</i>)	Age	Sex
1	2070/01/10	Dawa Lamini, Patichour, Timal Pokhari Narayansthan – 2	42	Female
2	2070/08/25	Dolma Waiba, Patharchok, Dadagaun – 8 (Present in Lapche Sirutar)	42	Female
3	2071/08/23	Lasang Tamang , Kharelthok -3	62	Female
4	2071/09/18	Lingsha Tamang, Dolaghat – 2	36	Female
5	2071/11/17	Palmo Tamang, Panauti – 4	40	Female
6	2071/11/19	Mardin Tamang, Panauti – 2	67	Female
7	2071/12/17	Sampelma Tamang, Khattar, Panchakhal – 7	46	Female
8	2071/12/19	Chewang Yonjan, Sotel Danda, Gokule – 7	47	Male
9	2071/12/26	Rama Thapa, Raviopi – 7	52	Female
10	2072/01/06	Yangchen Lama, Darimbot, Kashikhanda – 15	68	Female
11	2072/05/20	Choden Syangtan Chapkhar, Panauti – 4	25	Female
12	2073/06/14	Pasang Moktan and Kanchimaya Moktan Aagretar, Foksingtar – 3	54	Male
13	2073/08/26	Shanti Pariyar, Sano Banthali – 7	32	Female
14	2073/10/09	Dechen Tamang, Tinghare, Devitar – 5	30	Female
15	2073/10/23	Sandholma Lama Lamatol, Birtadeurali – 2	62	Female

Source: Field study, 2016

Annex 7: Revisit dates

S.N	Name of the survivor (<i>anonymized</i>)	First visit	Second visit	Third visit
1	Dawa Lamini, Patichour, Timal Pokhari Narayansthan – 2	2074/07/10	2075/2/11 to 13	2075/05/10 to 12
2	Dolma Waiba, Patharchok, Dadagaun – 8 (Present in Lapche Sirutar)	2074/07/10		2075/07/11 to 13
3	Lasang Tamang , Kharelthok -3	2074/06/19	2074/09/28 to 30	2075/04/2 to 4
4	Lingsha Tamang, Dolaghat – 2	2074/06/19	2074/12/9 to 11	2075/06/6 to 7
5	Palmo Tamang, Panauti – 4	2074/06/03	2074/09/14 to 16	2075/04/21 to 22
6	Mardin Tamang, Panauti – 2	passed away		
7	Sampelma Tamang, Khattar, Panchakhal – 7	2074/01/23	2074/10/3 to 6	2075/06/4 to 5
8	Chewang Yonjan, Soktel Danda, Gokule – 7	2074/07/06		2075/07/13 to 14
9	Rama Thapa, Raviopi – 7	2074/05/24	2074/08/23 to 24	2075/03/11 to 12
10	Yangchen Lama, Darimbot, Kashikhanda – 15	2074/06/27	2075/1/15 to 18	2075/05/13 to 14 (Passed away)
11	Choden Syangtan Chapkhar, Panauti – 4	2074/05/23	2074/11/24 to 26	2075/04/20 to 21
12	Pasang Moktan and Kanchimaya Moktan Aagretar, Foksingtar – 3	2074/07/07		2075/07/16 to 18
13	Shanti Pariyar, Sano Banthali – 7	Death case		
14	Dechen Tamang, Tinghare, Devitar – 5	2074/05/09	2074/08/22 to 23	2075/03/8 to 10
15	Sandholma Lama Lamatol, Birtadeurali – 2	2074/06/20	2074/11/3 to 5	2075/05/2 to 7

Source: Field study, 2018

Annex 8: Population share and literacy rate for major caste/ethnic groups

S.N	Caste/Ethnic group	Population share (%)	Literacy rate
1	Chhetri	16.05	45.10
2	Brahman (H)	12.92	61.60
3	Magar	7.24	39.20
4	Tharu	6.46	27.60
5	Newar	5.63	60.10
6	Tamang	5.51	27.70
7	Kami	5.21	25.90
8	Yadav/Ahir	4.14	26.30
9	Muslim	3.53	22.20
10	Rai	2.84	44.50
11	Gurung	2.43	46.90
12	Damain	1.99	28.00
13	Thakuri	1.62	46.90
14	Limbu	1.61	46.80
15	Sarki	1.49	24.10
16	Teli	1.36	36.30
17	Kushwaha	1.11	28.40
18	Chamar	1.10	10.10

Source: CBS (1993), Table 26

Annex 9: Newsmedia (2012 – 2016)

Annapurna post, 1 July 2013, Beat the old man as a witch
Gorkhapatra daily, 19 December 2012, Once a witch, now a doctor
Gorkhapatra daily, 4 June 2013, Woman beaten for being a witch
Kantipur daily, 22 September 2012, Complaint against beating on witch accusations
Kantipur daily, 25 September 2012, Arrested family who beat up on witchcraft charges
Kantipur daily, 14 October 2012, A couple was beaten up on witchcraft charges
Kantipur daily, 13 November 2012, Seven injured in dispute over witch accusations
Kantipur daily, 2 January 2013, Women were beaten on witchcraft charges
Kantipur daily, 8 January 2013, The killer of Degani was sentenced to life imprisonment
Kantipur daily, 7 February 2013, Rights activists were beaten on witchcraft charges
Kantipur daily, 6 April 2013, Barbaric torture on witch accusations
Kantipur daily, 21 April 2013, A witch-making society
Kantipur daily, 23 April 2013, Witchcraft: Causes and Remedies
Kantipur daily, 2 May 2013, Harassment by calling sister-in-law a witch in marriage
Kantipur daily, 14 June 2013, Beating on witch accusations
Kantipur daily, 8 July 2013, The girl was beaten on the accusation of witchcraft
Kantipur daily, 23 July 2013, Abused as a witch
Kantipur daily, 17 August 2013, Beaten to death on charges of witchcraft
Kantipur daily, 25 August 2013, Torture on witchcraft charges
Kantipur daily, 12 Sept 2013, *Dhami/ Jhakri's* commitment not to accuse witches
Kantipur daily, 25 Oct 2013, Four families social ostracism after torture
Kantipur daily, 13 Dec 2013, Beaten unconscious on accusation of witchcraft
Kantipur daily, 14 Dec 2013, A case has been registered against the accuser
Kantipur daily, 27 Dec 2013, Sister-in-law killed on witchcraft charges
Kantipur daily, 16 Jan 2014, Evicted from the house on the accusation of witchcraft
Kantipur daily, 26 July 2016, Beating on witch accusations
Kantipur daily, 11 Aug 2016, Witch amulet making is rewarded
Nagarik news, 28 April 2014, The practice of 'witches' is still there
Naya patrika, 3 August 2013, Wife tortured on witch accusation in Kathmandu
Naya Patrika, 27 Aug 2016, A woman died after being hit with a wooden piece
Nepal Samacharpatra, 17 December 2012, The couple could not go home

Nepali times, 3 Dec 2009, witch hunts
Republica, 18 February 2012, Widow beaten and burnt to death
Republica, 6 February 2013, Local thrash woman for witchcraft
Republica, 15 Aug 2013, One more arrest in Parvati murder case
Rajdhani daily, 30 August 2012, Attempted murder by burning on witch accusations
Rajdhani daily, 26 December 2012, not allowed to enter the village on the accusation
Rajdhani daily, 23 July 2013, made naked and fed excrement on accusations of witchcraft
The Himalayan, 11 March, 2018, PM directs action against those involved in abusing
The Himalayan, 8 July 2015, Witch doctors' convicted in Rautahat child's murder
The Himalayan, 21 December 2016, Speedy justice sought for Laxmi Pariyar's family
The Kathmandu Post, 26 July 2015, Boy murdered in suspected child sacrifice.
The Kathmandu Post, 18 April 2017, Elderly woman attacked on witchcraft charge
The Telegraph, 15 Feb 2010, witch hunts of low caste women in Nepal
Ujyaalo Online, 22 Mar 2012, A woman's eyes were gouged out on accusation

Annex 10: Websites

<https://www.onlinekhabar.com/2020/07/882593>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9KYBpJbxSu8>
<http://annapurnapost.com/news/128534>
<http://bbc.in/213hSXV>
<http://localnepaltoday.com/category/shamans-and-witchcraft-local-nepal/>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TwJBWkLqROg>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ac2poaDr6U>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DzgPfS59WCY>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9KYBpJbxSu8>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0zztKehdeUg>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XV8WnqBdwi4>
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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aTzXq1b-TIw>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tjNQoJKElv4>
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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zru8MZST-YM>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ErdpjhlqOvg>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KFJ6JA65idA>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pc2sQSBr5BU>
https://youtu.be/KdeQo13aC_E
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nuuN7R8lytI>
<https://www.facebook.com/1573798586215333/videos/1621828961412295/>
<https://pediaa.com/what-is-the-difference-between-kinship-and-descent/>
<https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/neighborhood/>

Annex 11: Case study and life history of the survivor

Case 1

Dechen Tamang, 30 years old, mother of two sons, and an inhabitant of Tinghare, Devitar VDC-5, Kavre district, was accused of being a witch by her husband's elder brother and his wife on 10/06/2073, charging her with killing their goats and having a spell cast upon them. Talking with Dechen about the incident, she explained it in her words this way:

I was working in my *bari* (dry field) removing weeds, and the perpetrator scolded me with vulgar words such as *randi*, *beshya*, and *bhalu* and then accused me of being a witch and attacked me. My husband was out of the house and immediately informed my brother. They came quickly to the village and talked with the perpetrators. Then my husband, my brother, and I went to the District Police Office in Dhulikhel and filed the case on 10/09/2073, and they were put in jail for 18 days and released on a bail amount of Rs 5,000 for *jethaju* and Rs 10,000 for *jethani*.

Dechen said that her father-in-law died in 2059 BS, and she was married in 2066 BS. After the death of her father-in-law, *jethaju* and *jethani* asked for property, which her mother-in-law did not agree to. Later, after she married, the property was divided into three parts: one part for her, one part for her *jethaju*, and one part for her mother-in-law. But her *Jethaju* was not satisfied with this. He wants to divide the property into two parts. Her *jethaju's* interest was to take their part and was on the side of not looking at their mother. This issue of property division became the main cause of anger between them. Then, *jethaju's* family was separated, and Dechen is living with her mother-in-law along with her kids. After that, there was very little communication between the two families.

Perpetrators were always looking for fights with Dechen when she was alone at home. But she never reacts to that. Dechen then purchased a couple of goats, grew some vegetables, and sold them nearby at the market. Her husband also gives her some money to run the household when he comes. Knowing that she had money, the perpetrators also asked for money, which she refused to give. Because of these

various waves of anger, the perpetrators started accusing Dekchen of being a witch after the death of their mother in 2070 BS. Dekchen's mother-in-law was also called a witch after her husband's death, and now she is blamed for it. It is a common practice and belief in Tamang that the mother-in-law gives her witch power to her nearest one, either her daughter-in-law or her daughter. Even Dekchen could not get away from such beliefs and accusations. And from time to time, when there was a fight between them, the perpetrators also accused Dekchen of being a witch. After they accused Dekchen of being a witch again and again, there was a big fight between them. The survivor reported the incident to the police, and they punished the perpetrator according to the law. Dekchen is not called a witch again after this incident.

Dechen's mother-in-law used to lend money to the villagers at some interest rate. She did so after the death of her husband in 2059 BS. This was not borne by *jethaju* and his wife. So, they encouraged the people who have taken loans from her to speak against her. As she was a widow, it was a good opportunity for them to accuse her of being a witch, which the villagers also believed. People were also interested in doing so, as they did not intend to return the loan amount to her.

Dechen said that she never believes in supernatural powers such as witches, witchcraft, or shamans. There are a few shamans in the village, but Dechen never visits them. She believes in her fortune and says that no one can change her fortune. So, she assured me that there was the role of a witch doctor in this incident because *jethaju* and his wife believe in such matters. She further says,

This incident happened because of *jethaju*'s relationship with bad people in the village and his belief in witches. These people saw me living alone with some property and became jealous of me. This is the third time that the case has been filed. In my first and second complaints, the police put them in prison for only 2 days. I think, with this punishment, perpetrators, along with other people in the village, seem to be a little worried and afraid to blame other women as witches.

After the incident, she was feeling insecure and uncomfortable, as the villager looked at her differently. Then, Dekchen did not want to stay in her village, and after consulting with her husband, she started living in a nearby town. She also raised her

children and kept them in school. She entrusts all her property in the village to a close person and goes to the village now and then. She says that when she goes to the village, Dekchen does not stay there and comes back to the city. She sews clothes here, and her husband often comes to the house. She says that she has no intention of returning to the village immediately because her faith in the village and the villagers has disappeared.

Case 2

Rama Thapa, 53 years old, is living with her husband in Raviopi 7, Kavrepalanchok district. She was married to her husband, who was from the same village. She could not give birth after it died. Her first child died at age two. So, the couple is living with no offspring. Her husband has four brothers, and he is the elder one. Because of the absence of a child, he was treated badly by his brothers.

They accused Rama of being a witch by her neighbor, who was brought to Raviopi by Rama's effort and interest. As her neighbor has rude behavior, she cannot adjust to the family and quarrels with her *sasu* and *sasura*. Then she doesn't have good relations with her *sasu* and *sasura*, whereas Rama has good relations with her *sasu* and *sasura*.

One day, Rama was working in her *bari* (dry land). She noticed that a few mature radishes were missing from there. Then she abused me about that. In the meantime, one woman blames this on the perpetrator. The perpetrator heard this talking, and she soon presented herself there and jumped upon Rama and fought with her. Rama says that the perpetrator tried to pull her hair, but she could not do so because other women protected her. During the fighting, they accused Rama of being a witch. This incident is being cleared by Rama in her own way.

During our fighting, the perpetrator used the word 'witch' to me, and she also said that I ate my child to flourish my witch power. Hearing this, I was deeply shocked and couldn't stop the tears in my eyes. Then, my *bhada buhari*, who is educated, had helped in preparing an application, registered with the Banepa police office, and referred to the women's cell at the District Police Office in Dhulikhel for further action. The police searched the perpetrator in her home. Perpetrator's relatives humbly requested and assured me not to face such an incident again and asked to withdraw the case and did so accordingly.

After this incident, the perpetrator felt uncomfortable and left the place, as the villagers had supported Rama. The perpetrator became along and felt uncomfortable there. She left all her property and occasionally comes to the village. At present, the survivor is living happily, and her few relatives support her. She expresses her feelings in this way:

I am living happily in the village. They invited us to various social activities like marriage ceremonies, *pujapath*, *sapthaha*, etc., but I cannot take part in them, and my husband sometimes goes. I had planted *tulsi* (a religious plant in Hinduism) here in my courtyard, which I worship every morning. However, the villagers have sympathy for me, but I never depend on them. I know '*gaule le baleko agoo matra tapcha nibheko agoo tapdaina*'. My brother and his family can reach me within ten minutes when I get sick. Sometimes, I used to play with my grandson, which made me happy and relieved me. Especially because my natal home is here and because of my fear of my brother, the villagers loved me in appearance, which I clearly understand. So instead, I stay away from them myself. The villager did not help the perpetrator because she was rude, had quarreled with her family, and was living alone.

Hearing and knowing all these matters, it really impressed me with the survivor's brother. I could not stop myself and tried to meet with him and went to his place at Scheer Memorial Hospital, Banepa. He has built a house in Chandeswori, Banepa, and lives there. We talked about Rama's issue when he said,

I had a lot of struggles after my father's death. My sister raised me, and then I joined the army. During that time, I knew the perpetrator's brother, who was also in the Army. Then we became *mitju*. Later, I knew the perpetrator was married to my village to support my sister. Unfortunately, what happened to my sister? I can't believe that. Anyway, my sister has no children, is always upset, and has various health problems too. After the earthquake in 2072 in Baishak, she lost her house and lived in a shed. I gave her a piece of land, and my *bhinaju* built a two-room house with the support of the earthquake relief fund and lived over there.

In this way, this incident became more interesting when the perpetrator was forced to leave the place. Because of her rude behavior and quarreling with anyone, no one liked her, and they forced her to leave the village on her own. I heard that even when the perpetrator sometimes comes to the village, she does not speak to anyone except a special person.

Case 3

Sampelma Tamang, 49 years old, is a mother of two, one son, and one daughter living in Khattar at Panchakhal, Ward No. 7, with her husband. Her brother-in-law accused her of being a witch on 2071/12/12 and she filed the case at a woman's cell in Dhulikhel. Then, the perpetrator was arrested, put into jail for 24 days, and released on bail of Rs. 10,000.

She shared the incident day in this way: on that day, I bought meat worth Rs. 1,000 and brought it to my home. My husband has three brothers, and they are living separately. My mother-in-law (who was a widow) is living with my younger brother (who later became a perpetrator). We don't have any conflicts with each other. I divided the meat into three parts and cooked accordingly. It was evening, and I had cooked the food and was ready to serve. I had taken a little alcohol that day. Suddenly, I was shivering in my body, and my younger *devar*, who also had drink, saw that situation and came out of his home and talked with my husband. He beat upon me in order to release the intrusion of the witch or devil from my body to bring me back to normal, which I could not bear, and I soon jumped upon him and beat him. I took *khukuri* in my hand to hit him, which my husband pulled out of my hand, cutting a little to my hand and bleeding over there. This incident happened at 8:00 p.m. on that day, and the next day I went to meet my *fufudidi* at Tamaghat Bazaar, taking my small son. There I explained the details of the incident to her, then she told me to meet with a WOREC Nepal representative and did so, and finally we decided to go to the women's cell in Dhulikhel and file the case, complaining that my *devar* accused me of being a witch and also attempted to kill me. He was arrested, taken to the Dhulikhel Police Office, and put into jail.

After a few months of incidents, Sampelma and her family left the place and went to Ratopahiro, Chandanimandan, Ward No. 4, Kavre, near her birthplace. Her husband is also working there. As a skilled mason, he seems to be busy constructing the houses around there. Both of her children are going to school near the village. The survivor's daughter is studying in grade eight, while the son is studying in grade three. I knew it from the villagers of the survivor's previous place; she sold her property over there. Later, the survivor's husband's *mailo bhai* was able to purchase and *transfer* that property in his own name. This made me so curious to talk to him and meet with him about the incident. Then I met the survivor's middle brother-in-law at the village and talked about the incident. He expresses his impressions about the incident in this way:

My *bhauju* Sampelma is a clever woman. She can easily please her husband. My brother had sold his property without consulting us. He doesn't need to leave the place, as the incident was not a big issue. My brother only listened to *bhauju* and did accordingly. *Bhauju* can please him at any cost, as she was my brother's third wife. Thus, my brother loves her a lot. I remember that sometimes my mother complains to my brother about *bhauju*, who goes out from home early in the morning and has come lately. But my brother simply tells my mother that he can't stop her and should follow her wherever she goes. In this way, my brother always defends and excuses her a lot. Because of that, it encouraged her to raise her hand toward her younger brother and complain about a false matter of women's cells. Anyway, I purchased my brother's property from others's hands in my name. However, I did not intend to capture his property instead of preserving my father's property. Now, if my brother wants to get it back, he has to pay the amount I paid.

Here, I talked with the perpetrators too, who are young and educated. Talking about the incident, the perpetrator assured me he never used the word '*boksi*' to refer to his *bhauju*. He said that he always respects her. There was no jealousy or conflict among the brothers, as they were living separately and doing their own jobs. The survivor's husband (an older brother) works as a mason, while the other two brothers are working on a poultry farm in the village. The survivor's husband has not spoken so much since his childhood. But the *mailo* and *kancho* (perpetrators) are cleverer

than him and are now the local-level activities of the Maoist political party. The perpetrator himself described the incident in his own way.

As a Tamang, taking alcohol is a common culture in our society. I told her not to drink too much, but she never listened to me. Villagers have backbitten her. I saw that *bhauju* was shaking her body, the children were crying, and my elder brother was looking at her. Then, I slabbed her to bring back her consciousness and took *khukuri* in her hand, which my brother was able to drag and save me. Suddenly, the next day, police came to my home and arrested me. The police took me to the district police office in Dhulikhel. My *bhauju* made a complaint that I accused her of being a witch and attempted to kill her, which was completely fake. Later, I knew one woman encouraged her and filed the case differently than something else.

Villagers did not express interest in this incident. However, the survivor left the place because of various reasons that I found. First, she was the third wife of her husband. The previous two wives had left and were living separately in different places. The first one, having one daughter from Kharelthok, is now living in Kathmandu, and the second one, having one son and one daughter, has been back to Anekot and is living with her mother. Both of them have not gotten the property yet. Thus, Sampelma cleverly convinced her husband to sell their property without informing his previous wives. Her husband did according to her plan and moved to Ratopairo (the present place of residence). Now, it seems to be difficult for her husband's other wives to get the property.

The second reason that I discovered is that Sampelma seemed to be worried during the interview. It was because of her guilt that she mentioned it in the case filing. However, the case has been settled, but she still worries about that. At the time of the interview with her, she finally admitted that she had made a big mistake and explained it like this:

I committed a big crime against my brother-in-law. Actually, I was furious and could not control myself. And I raised my hands to him. My brother-in-law was furious with me for not listening to him. He told me not to drink alcohol and not to go out late at night. I did not accept this from my brother-in-law,

because of which he dared to beat me during this incident. Since my husband is simple, he didn't respond, and my brother-in-law deliberately attacked me. I don't know about the complaint about the case and was not in the position of filing the case. But the WOREC Nepal representative inspired me and filed the case where I mentioned the fake matter. So, now I want to regret that mistake I unknowingly made.

They invited the survivor and her family to the perpetrator's marriage ceremony in Mangshir, 2074. All her family members went there and met with the perpetrator and his newlywed wife according to their custom. The survivors also met with other relatives. The relationship between these two families has been gradually improving, and even now they have a coming-and-going connection.

The survivor's mother-in-law has been paralyzed and is now living with the perpetrator. Because of this situation, the survivor is thinking about going back from her motherly place to the original place, where she has small land to remain.

Sampelma is now completely cured of her shaking body, particularly after drinking alcohol. She said that she went to many shamans in the village and was cured. However, she believes in shamans but does not believe in witches. She said:

I don't believe in witches, but others do, and witch doctors are considered the primary people who treat problems because of the evil spirit, evil eye, the intrusion of witches, and some misfortunes. Though these witchdoctors do not provide ample evidence against the witches, sometimes they indirectly point out the witch in the village that the perpetrators suspect is a poor and helpless woman. Every woman is the same as me; if I were blamed as a witch, then every woman would be the witch. In my case, my *devar* himself came and beat me to extract the witch or evil intrusion from my body. But if one is blamed as a witch, that will be very difficult to face and live in the village. Therefore, this tradition is really a big tragedy for women.

Case 4

Dhawa Lamini, 42, a resident of Timal, Pokhari Narayansthan-2, was alleged to be a witch by her *jethani's buhari* on 2070/01/10. Dhawa was the third wife of her husband, and the past two were chased by her *jethani*, who is always looking to capture in-laws on all property. Because of this, *jethani* does not provide food to her and always tries to fight when her husband is out of the house. Because her husband is simple, Dhawa is harassed by her *jethani*. Dhawa's son and daughter-in-law live in Kathmandu, and the two daughters in the house are also small, so she has to bear the harassment. Her *jethani* wants to chase her from home like before, but cannot do so. Thus, she used her daughter-in-law to accuse Dhawa of being a witch.

Dhawa has been working as a female community health volunteer (FCHV) for the last sixteen years. Her husband was a trekking guide and has now left that job and is living in the village. This incident happened when her husband was not present at home and her children were small. Dhawa's *jethani* always tells her not to provide the in-law's property, as Dhawa entered later into the family. On the pretext of this in-law's property, her *jethani* used to abuse and scold her from time to time. No matter how her *jethani* tortured and insulted her, Dhawa silently endured because she knew that her *jethani* was trying to get her out of that house. Dhawa's husband is simple and straight, and once the perpetrator sent him away to Kathmandu, which Dhawa didn't know about. And after 18 months, her husband returned to the village. Thus, even when her *jethani* tortured her mentally and physically, she did not leave the house. In this incident, the survivor had to suffer because of her husband's simplicity and obedience to what his sister-in-law said. The lack of masculinity of the survivor's husband also seems to encourage the perpetrator. But later, when the survivor's husband gradually understood the abuse it subjected him to, he also started speaking in favor of his wife. When talking about her life history, she explains:

My husband was a trekking guide. So he left me and went to his job after the six months of our marriage, and my *jethani* torched me in his absence at home. Once, when my son was in my womb (three months), she told me not to stay in the house and scolded me for leaving the place. She pulled my hair, beat me with her hands, and stuck me as well. I had a small kitchen garden where I planted chili. She threw out those chili plants and made a cow shed

there. Even I could not stop her from doing such an activity. My husband is simple and straight and does not react to his *daju* and *bhauju*. Sometimes, my *jethani* politely invites my husband and enjoys alcohol. They even told my husband not to live with me after having my son and elder daughter.

Though Dhawa often suffered much sadness and was tortured by her *jethani*, she is living in the village. She never accepted defeat from them. Both *sasu* and *sasura* are also living with her, *jethani*. Their all land is in the name of in-laws. The villagers were unofficially divided into two parts. Both survivors and perpetrators are using the land separately. Sometimes her *jethani* encroaches on Dhawa's land by making cowsheds and planting vegetables. Once, Dhawa was interested in producing *Bouddhichitta* (a religious plant) saplings but was afraid of using her land. Dhawa is afraid of *jethani* using her own land. Then she asked the villagers and got their support. Villager's assurance made her encouraged and started that business.

One day, Dhawa was going to the forest to collect the firewood. She had her elder daughter, who was just three months old. Suddenly, her *jethani*, accompanied by another woman, appeared and beat her. She doesn't have time to ask about that. Perpetrators pushed her into the bush and told her not to collect the firewood from the forest. Later, villagers saw her, protected her, and scolded the perpetrators. They gave the survivor some money for treatment. Dhawa's daughter was highly injured and cured after 15 days. After this incident, in the presence of the villagers, it was agreed between the two parties that from now on, *jethani* will never raise a hand against Dhawa and will not abuse her.

After the death of Dhawa's father-in-law in 2072 BS, her *jethani* took their mother-in-law to the *malpot* office, Dhulikhel, to transfer the in-law's property into hers. The officers over there were informed about *jethani's* plan and told her to transfer the land after the death of their mother-in-law. After every attempt by the perpetrator failed, she continued to torture Dhawa on various pretexts. And only since her *jethani* brought a daughter-in-law to the house has *she* called Dhawa a witch. Before the daughter-in-law was introduced to *jethani's* family, she could not accuse the survivor and used to beat her, deny her food, and scold her for small things. But only after *jethani* brought her daughter-in-law did she start accusing the survivor of being a witch. When the daughter-in-law was also with her, the courage of the perpetrator

increased, and she started harassing the survivor excessively. That's why *jethani's* daughter-in-law has a big role in calling Dhawa a witch. Dhawa remembers the incident and explains it in this way:

My elder daughter, 12 years old, went to search for firewood in the forest. She was caught by *jethani's* daughter-in-law and told not to take the firewood from the forest. She claimed that the forest was theirs. She told my daughter that '*your mother is a witch, so her teeth also fell down. Thus, she has to be fed with human excreta*'. Hearing this, my daughter left the collected firewood there and came back home with tears and told me everything. This made me angry and quarreled with them. I told them, '*If I have the bokshi mantra, then I will not have my children soon, and if I don't have it, then you will not have your children soon*'. Then I prayed to God to give me justice, and it was almost 11 o'clock at night as we were fighting; *jethani* told me, '*it also fed your mother with human excreta, so you must also feed your side*'. I conveyed this matter to my *maiti* (birthplace), and they told me not to quarrel with them and to stay calm and comfortable. Then, the next day, on 2070/10/01, I went to Kot-Timal with my husband to file the case, but the perpetrators were not present.

Some time after this incident, her *jethani* attacked her again, and this time Dhawa was alone at home. Her husband was out of town to take buff meat to celebrate Maghee Parba. Her daughter was removing the grass, and she was going towards her cowshed with a bunch of grass. Her son was in Kathmandu. So, Dhawa was alone too. She explained the incidents in this way:

It was around 5 o'clock in the evening. Suddenly, my *jethani's* daughter-in-law pulled my hair and said, '*lau bokshi aaipugyo*'. Both of them were holding me while *jethani's* son went toward his toilet and brought human excrement in a bottle and tried to put it in my mouth. My *sasu*, who was deaf, was observing this but could not react to it, and *sasura* was not present there. Luckily, one woman saw that and shouted for help. My elder daughter quickly picked out the mobile phone from my *polta* and called my mother. She arrived at 3 o'clock morning with a few *khukuris*. The next day, we filed the case in Dhulikhel. The perpetrators were arrested while my *jethani's* son was hiding

somewhere and could not find him. They were put in jail for 12 days and released on bail of Rs. 30,000.

Dhawa seems to be not satisfied with this punishment for the perpetrators. She says that the government did not justice as she expected. She asked me, '*Is it possible to beat people, feed with human feces, and pay money to be smart? Is this justice?*' She said that she was emotionally hurt and distressed and cried for seven days without taking food. Thus, punishment made for the perpetrators is not enough from the survivor's perspective. She told me that the police office seems like it's for the rich class because of her experience.

Talking with the survivor's *Jethani's* son, he has faith in witches and witch doctors. So he also seems to have helped in this incident to some extent. Especially when his wife started calling the survivor a witch. He also believed in it. Especially when his wife started calling the survivor a witch. He also believed in it. The fact that the survivor had lost a few teeth also gave them more evidence to accuse her of being a witch. I asked him about the question, i.e., why did the villagers not support the survivor during the incident? He said that.

Villagers could not support the survivor during the incident. The perpetrator will be highly emotional. So, if someone disturbs or provides support to the survivor, that will be harmful to them, and that person may be beaten. Young people also don't like to talk; instead, they take pictures and sit silently, watching the incident of torture with the survivor. And after some time, the quarrel between the survivor and the perpetrator ends itself, and everyone goes their own way. We, the Tamangs, are uneducated and consume alcohol a lot. We have faith in *dim/jhakris*, who also worship our *kuldebata* (clan god) as well. If someone gets sick, these *dhami/jhakri* cures. In our society, they accuse women of witchcraft more than men because we can torture a woman, control her, and finally make her commit witchcraft. And they could not eliminate this belief and practice among the Tamang community until we, the Tamangs, trusted in *dhami/jhakri*.

After this incident, Dhawa was in training for nine days. In this moment, one village woman who is close to her, *Jethani*, cut the hair of her younger daughter and a

neighbor's daughter and kept it with her. According to Tamang belief, this can only be done by the person having *jhakri bidhya*. So, the survivor says that woman may have a role in accusing her of being a witch. However, there are few male *dhami/jhakris* who only worship the gods through *dhup* and *acheta*. People with heart pain and vomiting mostly used to go to them. They usually blow the water as their medicine and give it to the patient for drinking. Sometime, patient cures and if not cured, they advise them to go to health post or hospital but never accused on others. Dhawa also goes to such *dhami/jhakris* when she has problems like heart pain and cattle sickness. She also uses veterinary medicine for her cattle.

After all, the villagers have a good deal with Dhawa. But the perpetrators and their close ones still blame Dhawa, a witch, to whom she never reacts. Sometimes, her *Jethani* hides her grandson from Dhawa's eye when she is passing through. Talking with the survivor's daughter, she said,

Now we are not afraid of the perpetrators. When they meet me, they talk to me. But the perpetrators do not speak with my mother and father and sometimes invite me and my sister to *bhoj*. My father was a trekking guide before, and now he is working as a mason. My *bhauju* (perpetrator) is working as a peon (helper) in my school, and her husband has opened a bike maintenance shop at Tar. I heard that he earns good money from there. This couple has been separated from their mother and is living in Tar. They fought with her and then separated. Today, both *Bhauju* and brother tell us to study well. However, our mother was blamed for being a witch in the village. My *bhauju* still says my mother is a witch in our absence.

Case 5

The next survivor is Lingsha Tamang, 36, from Dolalghat - 2. She is the mother of four children and lives with her husband. She has run two local restaurants in Dolalghat bazaar. They accused her of being a witch by her maternal uncle's daughter-in-law on 2071/09/18 charging of a spell cast upon her. The perpetrator often spits out and scolds Lingsha with ruthless words, including witchcraft, when they encounter each other on their way.

Lingsha started this business after her husband went to Saudi Arabia in 2068 BS and now her husband is back after three years of his stay. Her son looks at one restaurant, and another one is running by her. Since it was difficult for Linsha to work when her husband went abroad, she hired her brother (her maternal uncle's son), who was the perpetrator's husband, to work with her. The perpetrator said that after her husband started working there, he did not return to his home. He even did not pay for the expenses at home and left to see his family. Because of this, the perpetrator has gotten angry with the survivor. Thus, the gap between the perpetrator and her husband was gradually increasing. Because the perpetrator's husband stopped coming to his home, the perpetrator became angry and jealous of the survivor.

Talking about their past relationship, the survivor said that she had supported the perpetrator as she was her daughter-in-law. She handed over a small hotel to her. Perpetrator makes alcohol and sells it to her customers, and she also drinks. She could not run the hotel properly, and gradually that turned into a mess, and very few customers came. She blamed Lingsha for her hotel not running. After some time, the perpetrator left that hotel and went to Panchakhel for another business. She again opened a hotel there, and Lingsha supplied all the items to her. She again could not succeed there and again returned to the village and made alcohol with the support of Lingsha. The survivor describes the days before the incident like this:

Once, I had to take Rs. 1600 from her, and she presented me with five kilograms of sesame seeds and told me to keep them, and she suddenly trembled. Then she went to *mata (female shaman)* at Swoyambhu for this treatment, and since then she has been trying to be far from me, looks differently, and spits over me when we meet. Once, in a ceremony, she spit over me, and I was really annoyed and scolded her. She then told me that I was a *randi* and *bokshi*, and I went to the police office nearby and filed the complaint there. She was put in jail for a night and released the next day. We had signed a paper, and she promised not to tell me about a witch and to stop spitting over me. But, after it freed her, it did not change her behavior. She again spat out at me, and we had a fight, and she again blamed me as a witch. This time, the case was referred to Dhulikhel, and she was put in jail for eleven days and released on a bail amount of Rs. 28,000.

I observed that both the survivors and the perpetrators were of similar economic status in the village. They have their own fields and grow maize and millet. They were living together in good harmony. Later, Lingsha built a house in Dolalghat bazaar with her father's financial support. Her father was a wealthy and renowned person, whereas the perpetrator was betrayed by her father and brothers. Gradually, Lingsha's husband purchased an excavator and earned good money. All of her children were married and settled on their feet. So, these are some matters that made the perpetrator more jealous of her. Slowly, the perpetrator got a little sick and trembled. Lingsha took her to the hospital and provided medicine. Lingsha also asked her to go to a good hospital for better treatment. Instead of this, she went to meet with Mata in Swayambu without informing her. Since then, she has accused Lingsha of being a witch and behaves toward her differently.

The survivor says that the perpetrator has no manners to stay in front of others. She is uncivilized and does not know how to talk and behave with others. She used to smoke and drink alcohol. She is lazy and does not have an interest in working. So, she could not improve her economic status. Perpetrator's husband went abroad and back after his two-year stay. Then she made a gold chain and purchased a mobile that cost Rs. six thousand and used to walk through the village. She gives some money to the villagers as well. If someone asks her to work, she says, *'I do not need to work hard. My god will provide whatever I need'*. It was all because she trusted *mata's* words. Sometimes she also claims that her body is an intrusion by Sailung Mahadev and the World's Tallest Mahadev at Sanga. In this way, she was staying for two years doing nothing. The perpetrator wakes up in the morning, takes a bath, and worships the gods after being impressed by *mata*.

Lingsha said that it encouraged her to file the case with the District Police Office, Dhulikhel, because of her grandmother's desire. They also blamed her grandmother as a witch by the perpetrator, who died at 103 years old in 2073 BS. Lingsha explains her grandmother's saying in this way:

Your daughter-in-law often accuses you of being a witch, and you never attempt to file the case. If so, then there will be a big problem you will face soon. Your children were growing fast. They will be ready for marriage. If

people know they accused you of being a witch, then it will be an obstacle and make it difficult for their marriage. Thus, file the case in the district police office, where the perpetrator could be punished, and it will establish you yourself as freed from such an accusation. So, file the case as soon as possible and put her in jail at least for one day, which I am waiting to see with my eyes.

After the incident, both the survivor and perpetrator were invited to social activities in the village. It did not stigmatize them in society. Lingsha completely broke her relationship with the perpetrator. However, Lingsha speaks with the perpetrator's *sasura*, *jethaju*, and *jethani*. The perpetrator's children have also stopped speaking with Lingsha since last year. Today, the perpetrator is running a hotel and a cosmetic shop at Dolalghat bazaar. Sometimes the survivor and perpetrator meet on their way, but the perpetrator does not like previous activity toward Lingsha. The disease of shaking the body of the perpetrator has also been cured now. Talking about the existence of witches and witch doctors in the village, the survivor says:

Most of the Tamang are illiterate, and they are alcoholics and smokers. We believe in *jhakri* too. There are few *jhakris* in the village. People go to these *jhakris* when getting sick, such as vomiting because of the intrusion of *bhut* in the body, *runche*, headache, etc. These *jhakris* only worship *kuldevata* with '*dhup* and *acheta*' for the patient's cure, but they do not blame others as *mata* does. In our society, males never dominate females, but females dominate females, as I felt, and this type of witch accusation case should be filed with the police so that the perpetrator will be punished, which also helps in reducing such incidents in the village.

Case 6

The next survivor is Palmo Tamang, 43 years old, a mother of five daughters and one son who is living with her husband in Champkharka, Panauti Municipality Ward No. 4, Kavrepalanchok district. All of her daughters and sons were married. Her son left the home at 14 and is now 21 years old. Her husband sometimes goes out of the village with his friends for work. Palmo has four ropanies of *bari* (dry land), where

she grows potatoes and maize. Besides this, she makes alcohol at home and sells it to the market. There were a few goats with her. The area occupied by her home is too small, and because of this, there is an absence of toilets, and the family goes for open defecation. They accused her of being a witch by her relatives on 2071/10/14, charging her to shake their bodies and cast spells upon them. Palmo explains the incidents in this way:

I was sleeping with my younger daughter, Ganga, and it was around 9 p.m. when suddenly someone was knocking at my door and speaking to me to come out, and when I reached there, the villagers inside the room were coming out and pushing me into the room, where the shaking couple pronounced themselves '*seto baag*' for husband and '*mata*' for wife. Then, they bit my body for a long time and were bloody, and the perpetrator's elder brother, along with a few other villagers, broke the door and saved me. Then, my younger daughter, Ganga, went to her sister's home at Kushadevi for help, and it took me to Banepa Hospital for treatment, and I was living with my daughter in Kathmandu for one month. Then, feeling better, I went to the women's cell at Dhulikhel with my daughter and son-in-law and filed the case on 2071/11/17. There, we knew it should file the petition within 35 days of the incident. Six people involved in the incident, including a couple (my relative), were arrested, put into jail for 4 days, and released on a bail of Rs 10,000 each. The perpetrator paid all the expenses associated with my treatment as well.

In this area, people used to go visit witch doctors for their treatment. There are a few witch doctors in the village. Most witch doctors blame witches as the cause of illness and misfortune. The witch doctor even identifies the witch in their close relationship. God knows whether there is the existence of a witch, but people strongly believe in this matter. Sometimes people are cured, and sometimes they will not be cured; it all depends on their fortune as well. Sometimes a few people cannot be treated by medicine, and the method of the witch doctor works for them. In this village, most of the people whom the witch doctor told them about bewitched them; they easily guess Palmo. It is all because of her loneliness and the absence of males in the family. In order to meet the perpetrator of this incident, she explains their shakings and the process of treatment in this way:

I went to *mata* for my cure, and she told me that I was bewitched by a close neighborhood. *Mata* also told me the method of knowing a witch, which was like this: 'the person who first coughs and comes out for toilets among the households in the mid-night is most likely to be a witch'. Then a few people watched for a night, but unfortunately, we could not face such a moment. Villagers guess at Palmo but are unsuccessful. On an incident day, all the people from the neighborhood and village were present, but Palmo's family was not present, and people easily guessed she was a witch. We were unconscious during the shaking of our bodies, and the next day I knew I had told my husband to bite and kill Palmo, and he did accordingly. My husband also beat me. I don't know how I could do such work because we had a good relationship before this incident. At last, my brother-in-law entered and pulled the survivor from our attack. Now, we both were cured and freed of such shaking problems.

Every day, Palmo sometimes feels pain in her body, becomes annoyed, and shouts from her home, facing perpetrators. Several parts of her body were bitten, which can be easily seen. Now, she cannot carry the load and work as before. She said;

Neither I can do work nor can God take me. It is difficult for me to live with this painful body. I will be alone most of the time at home. My husband never asked me about my condition, and my son is not here. He is living in Bhaktapur with his wife and one daughter. He is a driver and works in a brick factory. I asked him to come home during our telephone conversation, but he refused to do so. He says that he came up to Panauti, and then he was not willing to go ahead towards the village and soon back to his place. In this way, my son tried to come home, but it was not possible for him. After consulting on this issue with many astrologists, they said that he would not like to come home. So, how long do I have to depend on my daughter? They are also busy with their family. I look well from an outer perspective, but I am completely broken. Even though it is difficult for me to stand and sit.

Palmo sometimes wakes up late in the morning, but no one looks at her. They unite the villagers with the perpetrator and do not care about her. She is feeling a kind of social stigma from the villager's behavior. Thus, her daughters asked her to live with

them, but she refused to do so. She feels that if she leaves the place, the villagers will make sure she is a witch. Palmo doesn't have the faith to depend on her husband and son at all. She is living in the village because of her daughter's support and her efforts. Her daughters look after her and often come to meet her. They have provided a set of utensils for making alcohol, from which she is raising herself. Besides this, she produces some potatoes and maize for food.

These days, if anybody in the village shakes their body, people blame Palmo. Once, a person with a shaking body was brought to her to remove an evil spirit from his body. It surprised Palmo at this, and she told the villagers to leave that person for a night and see him the next morning. Hearing this, the shaking person immediately woke up and went to his home. After the incident, it stigmatized her in society, as she explains:

After the incident, the villagers neglected me. I was not called for *aicho-paicho*, *melapat*, or even *hara-parma*. My husband does not care for me, and my son is not here. He was not coming to the village in the last Dashain as well. I am lonely living here. My husband is only for the name. Sometimes I am invited by a few people to ceremonies, and I attend the program, but I feel uneasy and uncomfortable because of their behavior toward me. I tried to get involved in social activities, but society did not provide such circumstances. The villagers isolated me. I was beaten by foot and hand and bitten by a mouth in my body. I was dead and again living after death. Last time, in the month of Falun, we had a *kulpuja* (family god) in the village. Every villager has to offer materials as a part of that ritual. My husband went there, taking the offering materials, but the villagers did not wish to accept that and send them back. One old person from the village disagreed with such activity but could not convince any more. My son, who is young, even could not speak against that because all the villagers, including the perpetrators, were united against my family.

Talking with the survivor about the witch, she also took her children to the witch doctor but did not accuse others of being witches. There are a few witch doctors in her village, but they did not identify the witch in the village. Here, Palmo was identified as a witch by the witch doctor from another village. Someone highly disappointed her with the accusation she made of witches and told her feeling this way.

How was I recognized as a witch among other women? I had a good relationship with the perpetrator before this incident. It was suddenly because of that witch doctor that the perpetrator went for their cure. I always have a challenge to face with the people in the village. They turn heads when they see me. It makes me embarrassed. But I can't do anything about them, and even I cannot react to them because I have to be here. If I am a witch, then it should be proven or be able to keep me in prison. The physical wounds in my body may recover after a while, but the pain in my heart never recovers. It is very difficult for me to leave the place. If I left here, the villagers would conform to me as a witch. Once accused of witchcraft, it is difficult to return to normal life, as in the past, neighbors and relatives still looked at me suspiciously.

The study revealed that they accused not only the women, but they also victimized the men. However, it exists, even though it is less likely to accuse men than women.

Case 7

Chewang Yonjan, 47, is the father of nine children and lives with his wife in Gokule Ward. No. 7 was accused of being a wizard by his cousin's brother on 2071/12/19 charging for a spell cast upon his son, making him sick. Chewang's *fufu* (father's sister), 76 years old, is an unmarried woman who is also living with him and is assured to give her property to him after her death, whereas the perpetrator also expects the same property as they were from the same grandfather. This matter made the perpetrator angrier and more jealous of Chewang, and he blamed him as a wizard.

Chewang's sons and daughters were married, and most of them were in Japan, Qatar, and Malaysia. He said that the perpetrator often fights with his *fufu* over minor issues and blames her witch before blaming Chewang. After the perpetrator repeatedly accused his *fufu* of being a witch, Chewang also got angry and had a fight with the perpetrator over this matter. During the fight, the perpetrator also called him a wizard. A few days after the incident, the villager advised Chewang that he should report the incident to the police, and Chewang filed a complaint with the police. The perpetrator was arrested, put in jail for 4 days, and released on bail of Rs. 10,000. I knew they recognized the perpetrator as a murderer in the village before the fight with Chewang. He was put in jail at Sindhuli. He is a very angry person known in the village, and the

family is isolated in the village. It may make him aggressive and jealous of Chewang. Thus, villagers strongly support Chewang in complaining about the case. The survivor describes the incident as follows:

I was going through the perpetrator's home. Suddenly, he came out and told me to stop. He said, *'My second son (Mailo) is getting profound stomach pain because of your fufu's witch power. After I fight with your fufu, my son is getting this problem. She is a witch, and she casts spells upon my son, making him sick'*. Hearing this, I was highly shocked and argued with him. Then he entered his home, came back with a gun, put it on my forehead, and even accused me of being a wizard too. By this time, many people from the village had gathered, and they all cursed the perpetrator. And he got scared, and he took the gun away from my forehead.

Following the incident, the survivor's family is living in the village as usual. It does not stigmatize his family in society. Survivor's *fufu* does not go outside the home because she cannot walk here and there because of her old age. Now, she is receiving a single woman's allowance as well. They had no relationship for a few months, and later the perpetrator realized his mistake and spoke with the survivor. Talking about the existence of witch accusations in the village, a villager said:

It is common for women to be accused of witchcraft in this village. So far, they have accused about 27 houses of witchcraft. When a person accuses another person of being a witch, it is common for the person to accuse him of being a witch when he has the opportunity. In this way, the house left to be accused of witchcraft is the only culprit in this incident. However, after this incident last year, a village teacher also accused the survivor's wife of being a witch. In this way, no house is left for accusing witches in this village. Whenever people fight with each other, the term 'witch' simply and easily speaks out. Likewise, there is an understanding gap between old people and youth in the village. However, the youth believe in shamanism for their minor ailments but do not believe in so-called witches. Whereas adults and older people mostly believe in it.

Chewang says that there are a few witch doctors in the village. He goes to a witch doctor with minor ailments such as heart pain, body aches, fever, headaches, etc. This

witch doctor burns '*dhup*' with cow ghee. Someone cures with this, and someone else may not cure. If not cured, it will take the patient to Dhap and Gokule health posts. The survivor has never seen or had faith in the existence of a witch, but the perpetrator speaks out the word witch because of the influence of the witch doctor he went to cure his son.

Under this topic, I have attempted to highlight the existing tradition of witch accusations in Tamang by including the pain and experience of the survivors related to the incidents of witch accusations in their own words. A brief description of seven of the 15 cases studied is given here. Even a brief description of these incidents has helped us to understand easily what the incident of witch accusation is and how it happens. What is clear from these cases is that witch accusations usually happen within acquaintances and close relationships, and people with a good social reputation and power in society accuse weak people, especially women, of being witches. And once a woman is accused of being a witch, it is difficult for her and her family to live in that place, and some have left their place and settled in a new place. Similarly, it is understood that *bombo*, who lives in Tamang village with dignity, has direct or indirect support in such an incident. Therefore, the study has provided important achievements in understanding and analyzing the cases of witch accusations from a sociological point of view. A few of the life histories of the studied cases are as follows:

On 2072/05/17, Choden Syngtan, 27 years old and a mother of two children, was accused of being a witch by her *jethani*. They have accused her of putting a spell on her *jethani's* son that made him sick. A few months after Choden's marriage, her *jethaju's* family started living separately. Even though they separated the kitchen, they did not separate other property, and Choden started living with her mother-in-law. All the properties were in the name of her mother-in-law.

When Choden's daughter was 3 years old, her husband went to Qatar for work. When her husband was abroad, her *jethani* from time to time hurt her and scolded her. Even when Choden's mother came home to meet her, her *jethani* used to look suspiciously at Choden's mother. Her *jethani even did* not allow her to cut grass in her own *bari*. She is very hurt by *jethani's* harsh and quarrelsome behavior, and they forced her to

stay at home in any situation as the mother's home is far away. In addition, her husband was not at home, so they forced her to live a very difficult life.

Even if someone comes to her house, her *jethani* is suspicious and looks at her with a bad eye. If the villagers see her going somewhere for work, they look at her and try to put her in a bad situation. Because of this, even if she has to go somewhere, she has to hide and run away because of the fear of others seeing her. After they accused Choden of being a witch, her conjugal relatives also stopped coming, and her brother, who used to live nearby, also stopped coming. Anyone coming to Choden's house could not come to her house because her *jethani* said that the witch's relatives had come.

Since Choden's *jethani* was born and married in the same village, everyone supported her. For this reason, it was very difficult to live here in the village after being accused of being a witch. She had to face small to big challenges alone. Her husband was also abroad, so it was not possible for him to come to the village immediately. Her mother-in-law was also old, and she used to listen to whatever was said and say nothing.

After 3 years of staying abroad, her husband came back, and the villagers, including her *jethani*, started talking bad things about her. Her husband did not trust anyone and supported his wife. Seeing this, everyone got scared and stopped talking about her. Choden also told everything to her husband, and her husband assured her not to go abroad any more and started farming in the village.

Recently, the accusation against her is slowly fading, and the villagers have involved her in various works. But Choden does not speak with *Jethani*, and *jethani's* relatives still look at her with the same eyes as before. After her husband returned from abroad, they also divided the land and other property. Choden says that only the survivor knows how difficult and painful it is to live in society after being accused. But she feels she got some relief by registering the incident with the police. The perpetrator got some punishment, even if it wasn't as much as she wanted. She said that to solve the case of witch accusation in the village, it should go to the police and file a complaint, and by doing so, other women can be saved from being accused.

In another case from Darimbot, Kashikhanda-15, Kavrepalanchok, Yangchen Lama, 68 years old, lived with her husband, and they accused two sons of being witches on 2071/12/30 BS. Her sons were married, stayed in Bhaktapur with their family for their

work, and came home occasionally. The perpetrator accused her of being a witch many times, but only this time the survivor lodged a complaint with the police. As the survivor was old, she was thin, unable to walk around, and suffering from various ailments. Although she is weak for financial and material reasons, it seems very sad that they accused her of being a witch.

It is understood that the neighbor accused her of witchcraft out of a sense of revenge. When her husband was young, he had done things that caused pain to the perpetrator and other villagers. Her husband's strength won her over as a village ward member. Her neighborhood and village did not like this. Yangchen's family and neighbors used to quarrel over various issues. But now that they are old, they are not in a position to respond to the neighbors and villagers. So it forced them to listen to whatever they said. After they accused an old and disabled woman of being a witch, her family looked at her differently in the village.

The villagers stopped talking to her sons and stopped inviting her to various social activities in the village. Thus, her family had to live separately in the village for a long time. Even when she was sick, no one came to see her. If someone in the village gets sick or someone has to face misfortune, it is all blamed on her. Even if one's cattle do not give milk, she is blamed. Many times she said that she was not a witch, and people did not believe her. People ask her how she got such a thin body after drinking other people's blood. People tell her to throw away the witch's power. Calling her a witch is also because the perpetrator herself is a *dhami*. People easily believed what *dhami* said.

Currently, her sons are slowly trying to establish relations with the villagers. Even though her relationship with the perpetrator has not improved, her family has met most of the people in the village in social activities. This happened because of the efforts of the survivor's sons. If the situation in the village improves, the survivor's sons are thinking of living in the village by farming. The survivor's sons have also bought a small plot of land in the village where they grow rice and potatoes. They have also enrolled a few grandchildren of the survivor in the village school. Recently, since both the survivor and the perpetrator have died, this incident is gradually being resolved, and the village has accepted the family of the survivor. Even though people of the survivor's age are dying in the village and the new generation does not know

much about it, the living environment of the survivor's family is becoming comfortable in the village.

Even now, there are *dhami* in the village. People with stomach pain, headaches, and vomiting go to these *dhamis*. People believe it will cure a person possessed by an evil spirit, but if not cured, they suggest going to the nearest hospital after treatment. And sometimes they say it is because of witchcraft, and the culprit suspects witches in their vicinity.

GLOSSARY

<i>Achheta</i>	It is rice which is used in ritualistic observances.
<i>Aithan</i>	A person feel suffocation during the night and find himself full of sweat when he suddenly wake up and fears a lot.
<i>Amrit</i>	Syrup considered by Sikhs to be divine, and which they drink at religious observances including baptism.
<i>Ban Jhakri</i>	Original shaman
<i>Bhoot</i>	A ghost is the spirit of a dead person that someone believes they can see or feel.
<i>Bigar</i>	Harm the character of someone by being too lenient or indulgent.
<i>Bhote</i>	The term Bhote literally means inhabitant of Bhot, a Sanskrit term for the trans-Himalayan region of Nepal, or the Tibetan region. However, Bhote is also a generic term, often applied to people of Tibetan culture or Mongoloid phenotype. This pattern was especially prominent among the Tibeto-Nepalese population.
<i>Buhari</i>	Daughter-in-law
<i>Chaudi</i>	A woman having and practicing black magic, more harmful and powerful than boksi
<i>Chinta ceremony</i>	Shamanic healing rituals
<i>Devar</i>	Husband's younger brother
<i>Dhami/Jhakri</i>	A person who seeks to doctor and cure those who are believed to have been bewitched.
<i>Dhupbatti</i>	A thin wooden stick covered in a substance that is burned to produce a pleasant smell, especially as part of a religious ceremony.
<i>Dhyangro</i>	The dhy ngro is a frame drum played by the jhakri (shamans) of Nepal especially those of the Magars, the Kirati, and the Tamang - as well as by Tibetan Buddhist musicians. The dhy ngro may be either single - or double-headed. Double-headed drums are said to have a male side and a female side.
<i>Fufu</i>	Father's sister
<i>Goreto Bato</i>	Footpath

<i>Gumba</i>	Is a cultural site where one can visit it for mediation practice and also for learning about Buddhism. It is decorated with bright elaborate murals depicting stories from Buddha's life and myths related to the various deities which make up the religion.
<i>Guru</i>	A personal religious teacher and spiritual guide in Hinduism.
<i>Janjatis</i>	Hill and mountain ethnic groups of Tibeto-Burman language speakers
<i>Jethani</i>	Husband's elder brother's wife
<i>Khas/ Parbatiyas</i>	Khas people also called Khas Arya are an Indo-Aryan ethno-linguistic group native to the Indian subcontinent, what is now present-day Nepal and Indian states of Uttarakhand (Kumaon-Garhwal), Himanchal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir. The Khas people speak the Khas language.
<i>Kichkanya</i>	An evil spirit of a woman who possesses black magic and sucks blood out of people to death.
<i>Lagu or Lagan</i>	Denotes the host of thoroughly evil spirits which are the ghosts of the dead whose souls can not reach heaven. They are ghosts of people who died unnatural or violent deaths (accident, suicide, murder, etc.) or whose funeral rites were misperformed.
<i>Lato/Lati</i>	Deaf-and-dumb Person
<i>Mantra</i>	Mantra is a Sanskrit word or a group of words that can be understood as a prayer or petition to the Lord. One common Hindu mantra which has meaning is Om Namaha Shivaya. This mantra can be translated as I bow to Shiva.
<i>Mata</i>	A female shaman
<i>Matwalis</i>	Groups of 'enslavable' liquor consuming caste, called masine matawali
<i>Melapat</i>	Farming work in the village
<i>Muluki Ain</i>	The national code literally; nation's code is a single comprehensive code that includes criminal and civil code along with the code of procedures of Nepal.
<i>Phukne</i>	Short healing ceremony comprising mantra and removal of negative energy through passing hands over a patient.
<i>Polta</i>	Pocket
<i>Pooja</i>	Ritual ceremony

<i>Pret</i>	Phantom
<i>Sanatana dharma</i>	It refers to “the eternal law” which is universal. Basic moral codes are called sanatana dharma.
<i>Sanskritization</i>	It is a process where the lower castes have started imitating the habits of high castes, which included customs, rituals, ideology and way of the life in order to enhance their status.
<i>Shivaism</i>	The worship of the Hindu god Shiva.
<i>Sipahi</i>	A warrior is a fighter or soldier, especially one who in former time was very brave and experienced in fighting.
<i>Tantriks</i>	Doctrine of enlightenment as the realization of the oneness of one's self and the visible world; combines elements of Hinduism and paganism including magical and mystical elements like mantras and mudras and erotic rites; especially influential in Tibet.
<i>Thar</i>	Sub-caste
<i>Vaishnavism</i>	It is centered on the devotion of God Vishnu and his avatars.
<i>Vaidika Dharma</i>	It refers to the code of practice that is "based on the Vedas"