

Chapter-1

Introduction

In this chapter, I have sketch the background of the study (population, social, cultural, geographical and rituals etc), statement of the problem. Here, I present general and specific objectives of my study. Every study does have their own limitations and importance, so my study has also some limitations and importance as well, which I also explain here. Last but not the least; I also describe the organization of the chapter in this unit.

Background of the study

The largest ethnic group of the Terai settled in Nepal everywhere from east to west is the Tharu. The total population of Tharu according to 1991 census was 1.19 million in country. This constituted 6.5% of the total population of Nepal. The recent population census of 2001 records a total of 15, 33,879, Tharu population in Nepal, which is 6.75% of the country's total population (CBS, 2001). As is evident, the proportion of Tharu in the country seems to have gone up by 0.25% between 1991 and 2001.

In terms of the total population by caste/ethnic groups, Hill Brahmins, Chetri's and Magars are only the groups that have had larger population than that of the Tharus in the country. That means Tharus are the fourth largest ethnic groups spread across from the Koshi in the east to Karnali in the west and also some parts of the inner Terai a sin Chitwan and Dang. They speak Prakrit, Bhojpuri and Maghdi mixed language.

Tharu are laborious ethnic groups. They work for day and night even though they are poor, but they were landlord and kings of Terai (Krauskopff, 2000). They are one of the oldest indigenous Terai ethnic groups. It has still controversial saying on their origin. A number of writers have expressed their opinion differently about the origin of Tharu. Some said that they are from

Rajput Indian. Other argued that they are descendants of to Rajput women, who were sent to safer place to get rid of being victimized from their enemy. Such saying is very common in the rural area.

The Tharu are innocent, shy and relatively timid people. Some of the earliest settlements of Tharu were deep in the forest and isolated from other ethnic groups. Government activities in the past and still is to a lesser degree. They are often in debt. The produce grain is frequently used to brew alcoholic drinks. More active person from the hills will lend them money to purchase food and then continue to compound the interest. Eventually, the Hill man acquires the Tharu land and Tharus are now in the landless status. (Dhital, 2002)

Tharu are honest, meek and submissive, avoid schism and squabble, and even migrate from their village if they are given trouble. They don't trust government officials and run away from legal issues, as they do not trust the court. They believe in gaddi or santhagar, which is still in vogue in Tharu villages, but they now call it panchayat, process by which the elders sort out the problems.

Srivastav (1958) has defined the origin of Tharu on the basis of physiological construction and has placed them in a Mongoloid tribe. In the features, they posse's more or less oblique eyes, mostly brown or yellow brown complexion, very scanty and straight hair on the body and the face thin nose of medium size. While other feathers they resemble Nepalese more than the Austroliad or pre-Dravidian caste and Tribe.

Tharu are most deprived and ignored one. They have been living in a very low level of living. Almost all of the Tharu's households have been involving in agriculture since the very beginning of the lowland civilization. Majority of the Tharu are illiterate, poor and powerless. Tharu is one of the country's largest ethnic groups. They hold 6.5 percent of Nepal's population. They are indigenous to the Terai region where the vast majority is still located across 22

districts from east to west. Historically, the Tharu were feared by outsiders and the land, they inhabited, was infested with malaria to which the Tharu were said to have acquired some natural resistance. Consequently, they were left to develop in comparative isolation for many centuries. Recently, they have come into direct contact with neighboring communities. For the Tharu, this contact has brought disastrous results.

Agriculture is the main source of livelihood Tharu people. They keep animals like pig, cow, oxen, sheep and chicken. For animal husbandry, they collect fodder, clean animal sheds and graze animals. Due to the lack of source of livelihood, their living condition is deteriorating. Most of them are employed as unskilled wage labor and very little are paid. Besides that some are in jobs (government sector, private sector like working in hotels, cook and beer factories, junior teacher etc). The family size of Tharu is very large. They spend a lot of money on their unproductive activities like their traditional feasts and festivals. There is a correlation between poverty and living standard.

Tharus have their own cultures and languages. It is believed that long back in time, there was dense forest and a calamity of malaria in the Terai region. Tharus fought against wild animals and malaria and made the Terai land favorable for agriculture. After 1950's governments' rehabilitation of malaria hill people captured caused heavy immigration from hills to Terai and the fertile land of Terai. Now days, most of the Tharus are landless.

Tharus are those people who have been almost isolated and neglected by government. The neglected segment of society is facing many problems and becoming poorer and poorer day by day. The migrated people from hills (pahadiys) are highly influencing the life styles of Tharus. They are affected by transportation, education, migration and modernization and see many changes in their economic and socio-cultural life. But, now days most of them have their own land and the literacy rate is increased. They understand and speak Nepali as well as their own Tharu language.

Tharu village is cluster of several families, related to each other by affined consanguine relationship and all the time with other by religious and economic ties. Tharu community or village can be related by blood and marriage relationship. Such multiple relationships can be regarded as the strength of group and regarded as the strength of co-operative live through mutual obligation. (Gurung, 1990)

The Tharu community has its own rituals, tradition and festivals. These have been hand over the new generation and some which they borrowed from other communities in recent year. Modernization is one of the major factors of the socio-cultural change. Westernization is the adoption of culture patterns characteristic of western society change in non-western society include the predominance of the nuclear family. Due to the infiltration of people from at direction prosperous community began to grow and people as the different background of languages. Culture and ethnicity begin to develop here a common life style with a common language and culture. The process of nepalization in the Terai began with setting of hill people in that region.

Tharu have changed their traditional way of life and modified their life style. They have faced many problems in the new setting. An attempt has been made here to see the change of Tharu culture and society. The term socio-cultural change is used in a broad sense to study family, marriage, economy, culture and festivals and closely related other.

The Tharu group in Chitwan was small enough and territorially concentrated enough to define itself on the basis of a kinship network and face to face interaction. Chitwan's Tharu are a group historically structured as an endogamous unit, they are aware of the boundaries of this unit which is for the most part congruent with territory, i.e. the Chitwan. Chitwan's Tharu identity is thus a received one. Its contours, in terms of relations of kinship between villages and household are fairly well known. Chitwan Tharu has their own

way of performing life cycle rituals. Specially, they perform Birth, Marriage and Death ceremony. Some people are also performing the Hair-cutting ceremony as well, but they do not take it like Dang Tharu. They take it easily. Today, due to the migration of hill people in this area and other factors affected their way of life. It is undergoing to change. That means it is not like past.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of the study was to investigate the urban way of life of the Tharu and document the major ritual changes that have occurred by the factor of the economic, political, social, cultural, migration, religious, technology, physical facilities (transportation, communication, irrigation, etc) and the process of this change were urbanization, industrialization, sanskritization, nepalization, hinduzation and modernization etc.

Attempts have been made to cover changes from their traditional life style and modification of their attitude towards themselves and their present life style. Tharu are traditionally agriculture depended ethnic group, whose whole life activities, modes of thinking and behaving was shaped by it, the changes considerably affects their overall outlook. Rituals always undergoing changes because they are easy to imitate, when people like other's rituals, they adapt them. Old rituals gradually disappear and new rituals move into take their place. We passed through several significant events time to time. Tharu also adapt the Hindu Birth to death ritual. This adaptation effect positive and negative both change in their life.

The study will help to understand not only the Chitwan's Tharu, but also helps to understand the problems they have faced in new setting in the process of urbanization, industrialization, sanskritization, nepalization, hinduzation and modernization etc.

My research was focused on the following questions:

- What are the present rituals of Tharu?
- Are they performing the birth, marriage and death ritual, which they perform past?
- What are the major factors that were responsible for changes on rituals of Tharu?
- Are modernization, westernization, urbanization etc are responsible for these changes?
- What impact has this changes made on their life style?
- Either it makes positive or negative impact on their life?

Objectives of the study

The general objective of this study's to elaborate about changing patterns of rituals in Tharu community; in specific:

1. To know the rituals of Tharu.
2. To analyze the changing patterns of rituals of Tharu.
3. To find out causes of the changes.

1.4 Limitation of the study

Every study/research does have its own limitation and this study/research was no expectation either. The limitation of the study/research area as follow:

- This study was conducted as a case study of one village, for the partial fulfillment of the master degree requirement in Anthropology. Therefore, it is not feasible for detailed intensive research due to the lack of sufficient resources collection with such short span time.
- This study was only one ward of Sharadanagar village, which is in Chitwan district. The study was centralized over the changing patterns of rituals of Tharu.

- Data for the study were collected with limited tools such as case study, interview, questionnaire and observation.

1.5 Importance of study

The proposed of study was an academic study to be undertaking as a requirement for the Master's degree of Anthropology from Tribhuvan University in Nepal. The study intends investigate changing patterns of ritual.

This study may help as supplement sources of information about ritual of Tharu community and the causes that make the changes. The study might be helpful to the researcher's scholars and students for further investigation in to the Tharu's ritual.

1.6 Organization of the study

The present research study has been divided in to six chapters. The first chapter covers the background, statement of problem, objectives of the study, limitation of the study, importance of the study and organization of the study. The second chapters includes literature review, the literature review is divided in to theoretical review, origin of Tharu and life cycle rituals of Tharu. The third chapter presents the methodology of the study. In this chapter, it includes selection of research area, research design, sampling nature and sources of data and data collection techniques. The fourth chapter focuses on the study area and people origin, demographic situation, socio-cultural and economic characters are defined here. The fifth chapter identifies the life cycle and rituals change, which includes changes in birth, marriage, and death and find out the factors and processes of changes that was found out in the study area are social, economical, cultural, migration of hill people, technological changes and modernization, westernization, sanskritization, urbanization, etc. Sixth chapter consists of summary and conclusion.

Chapter– 2

Literature Review

To know about origin and history of the Tharu, their life cycle rituals and the factors and processes of ritual's Changes, I review some literatures. These make my knowledge broaden and sharpen about the Tharu. I present some literatures review in this chapter. This is given below:

2.1 Theoretical Review

An ethnic group is a distinct category of the population in a larger society whose culture is usually different from its own. The members of such a group are or fell themselves or are though to be, bound together by common ties of race or nationality or culture. The nature of an ethnic group's relationships with the society a whole, and with other groups in it, constitutes one of the main problems in describing and analyzing such societies (International encyclopedia of the social science, vol. 15).

By ethnic group we mean a cultural group which is not isolated and independent group or community but forms a part of wider social system within which it compels with similar other groups for a share in the fruit of political and economic activities (Brown and Srinivas, 1952 cited in Devkota).

Ethnic group is a 'human group' (other than kinship groups), which cherish a belief in their common origins of such a kind that it provides a basis for the creation of a community (Weber, 1968,'economy and society', cited in the social science encyclopedia).

Leach (1968) points out that rituals are aesthetic and communicative acts, conveying message about a society's value system to its member (Cited in Miller and Weitz, 1979).

Ritual is the demonstration of religious belief through performance of specific acts by members of a society. It is possible to describe and analyze the observable activities that constitute rituals (Miller and Weitz, 1979).

Rituals also depend on the status of a person. This depends on the money. One has and the virtues of the modesty on the part those who although have less money condescend to follow the rites in a smaller or more condensed way (Sakya, 1988).

Rituals, in fact, can be explained as the frame which preserve religion and exhibit it in the societies. All the rituals are not only based on scriptures but on usage too and are subject to change depending upon the religious requirements. Most of the rituals are performed without knowing their hidden meaning and the value of the prayer (Devkota, Sunil Kumar, 2002).

Ritual serves to remind the congregation just where each member stands in relation to every other and in relation to a larger system. It is necessary for our day-to-day affairs that we should have these occasional reminders, but it is also reassuring. It is reassurance perhaps that explains why, in the absence of scientific medicine, ritual forms of therapy are often strikingly successful (Sills, David L).

"Ritual" for an Anthropologist means "a category of standardized behavior (custom) in which the relationship between the means and the ends is not 'intrinsic'". (International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences 1960, Cited in Sakya)

Stuart (1955) wrote the most hopeful approach to the concept of cultural change would seem to be to regard the process as selectively accumulative in time and cyclical in character and cultural forms are as inescapable as they are in all living things on the basis of these theories it may be concluded that social and cultural change refers to all the changes going on in the Tharu society. It is

a change in the institutional and normative structure of society (Cited in Dhital).

When a society comes in contact with the external factors the sign of change are observed in it. Development is possible only through changes. A change is not the matter to occur over night. It is also not easy to bring about changes in human concepts, beliefs and mentality. For this, years and years of efforts may be needed. Some change may occur automatically. But so far concept is concerned; there is the need of changes in different aspects by different factors (Sharma: 1985).

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

Culture is constantly undergoing change in occurring to environment and due to this transformation, it is constantly being adapted to external force but once it is developed, the influence of natural environment begins to decrease. Beside, the various aspects of culture are also undergoing development and some internal adaptation among them consequently being necessitated (Kumar, 1997).

Technology discloses man's mode of dealing with nature and the process of production by which they sustain their life and thereby lays bare the mode of formation of social relations and of mental conception that flow from them (Marx, cited in Prabhakar Pandit, 2000).

Tharu have also spread in different urban places of Nepal to adjust them in new and challenging environment of rapidly developing Nepal, by assimilating their culture, tradition and way of life. The migration of Tharu to non-Tharu habitants such as Kathmandu is also increasing with the hope of new and better life style (Gurung, 1990).

In terms of sanskritization, hiinduization and nepalization, when used in the Nepalese context change are virtually interchangeable. They all describe much the same process, predicated on the adoption of the symbols of high Hinduism, although nepalization includes as well the use of a common language as the basis of integration (Guneratne, Upali, Arjun, 1994:39).

Sanskritization totally failed while talking about the Tharu, because sanskritization is characterized as the process of assimilating "low" caste Hindu and tribal groups into the tradition of higher caste by making them acquire some of the accepted norms of Hindu culture and religion, but instead Tharu were pulled down the higher social order (Bista, 1991:36, cited in Subodh singh, 2000:22).

The term sanskritization is coined by M.N. Srinivas to analyze the process of social change in India. This concept was originally used by him in his work 'Religion and society among the coorgs of south India' (1952) to describe the process by which a lower caste of non- Hindu group adopts the ideology or parts of ideology of Hinduism in order to raise its status by imitating the attitudes, beliefs and social behaviors of the higher ranking groups, such as the acceptance and avoidance of certain eating habits, the employments of Brahmans to perform rituals on their behalf and worship of deities in the Hindu phantom (Parajuli, 1995).

Indigenous people like the Tharu dominated the entire western region until quite recently, when the hill people began to move down. Most of these indigenous people practice shamanistic religious traditions privately, while

acceptation Hinduism in public, especially in attending festivals. It needs to be noted that the Tharu were brought under the fold of Hinduism very recently (Singh, Subodh Kumar 2000:29).

Westernization is the adoption of cultural pattern; characteristic of western societies includes the predominance of nuclear family, the rising status of women and growth of market economy, as well as changes in values, attitudes and beliefs (Das, 1997).

Modernization is one of the major factors of socio-cultural changes. It depends on the involvement of techniques, fresh invention accelerated modes of production and rejuvenated standard of living. It is the consequences of technological changes. Some factors impressing on social changes are advance in agricultural technology, improved variety of seeds, cattle, and fertilizers and labors saving mechanical devices. Sanskritization is a process by which lower caste people imitate higher caste's way of living in order to obtain the pilgrimage enjoyed by the latter. This system however, has been so popular in Nepal and they have accepted in different ways of life (Prasain, 1998).

2.2 The origin and history of Tharu

A completion of the various historical and ethno-historical sources fails to produce a clear and unambiguous picture of the origin and history of the Tharu. To come right to the point: The Tharu in Chitwan portrays themselves as "without a history" the conventional answer to my question where they came from was:

"We've always been here. We are not from the hills and not from the Katmandu valley. Maybe we come from the south".

(Boker, Ulrike Muller, 1999:62)

One of the largest groups of people living in the Terai is identified by one generic term 'Tharu'. The traditional territory of the Tharu called Tharuwan or

Tharuwot. It consists of the forested land along the southern base of the Shivalikh (Siwalik) mountain range and a few miles into the Terai itself (Bista, 1972:118).

Most of them knew of the existence of Tharu groups in India and in other regions of Nepal but they were quick to point out that the Indian Tharu were "different": they were Rajputs, wore the sacred thread, did not eat sails and thus were "higher". The Danauras Tharu (Dan-Deukhuri district) too were said to be higher status than the Chitwan Tharu. Highest of all, however, were the Rana Tharu. (Kachanpur district and Naini Tal) (Boker, 1999:62)

The Tharu are probably among the oldest groups to inhabit the Terai. They usually live very close to the heavily forested regions. A great number of the villages of Tharu are founded in small clearing in the middle of the forest itself. Most of the large compact Tharu settlements are found in tropical malarial areas, infested with wild animals such as elephants, rhinoceros, bears, tigers and poisonous snakes (Bista, 1972:118).

Indeed, Tharu are one of the major ethnic groups in the Terai region and one of the more underdeveloped groups in Nepal. Their history is a story of extreme deprivation, enormous hardship and blatant class exploitation. Because of the physical and social isolation from development activities in the region and from cultural contacts with other people, their superstitious, backwardness and timidity were reinforced. As people, they are generally illiterate and unschooled; they lack awareness about their right and privileges. The gaps between them and non-Tharu are very wide (Pyakural, 1982).

The Tharu basically have a joint-extended type of family, where parents, unless aunts married sons & their children all live together because of the population pressure & increasing poverty bigger families are gradually being split into smaller units often the reason for a separation of two brothers is rooted in tension and conflict among Tharu families separation of households results

from management problem. Smaller land holdings and big families do not fit together very well. (Pyakurel, 1982)

According to the Pyakurel, "Tharu are by tradition peasant farmers. Some of them are rich farmers and few in the eastern Terai have successfully taken up business. But a great majority of them, they are very hard-working tenant cultivator. Most of the Tharu in Dan-Deukhuri have been greatly elicited by ruthless Zamindars, landless and revenue agents. They are virtually slaves in the hands of Zamindars, sold and bought at will since most of them are landless share-cropping peasants; they have to rely entirely to the mercy of the Zamindars. Every year they are buried deeper and deeper in the debt until eventually they are sold to other Zamindars trying to cultivate new area of land.

Guneratne (1994) studied of the Tharu class and conclude that The Tharu groups came increasingly into contact with each other as forests were cleared and networks of communication established continue to reproduce themselves as societies and moral communities distinct from one another, the elites began to reconstitute themselves as new sub- unite of social reproduction. They established marriage ties with their class fellows in other groups and then came to share symbolic founds best on a common education and assimilation to Nepalese culture and their material culture and style of consumption began to diverge from that of the poorer status within their local societies.

For various socio-religious purpose, Chitwan Tharu has been using Brahamin priests of hill origin in addition to their own priest "Guruwa" and rarely found using Brahamin of Indian origin. This suggests that the Chitwan Tharu origin is purely Nepali (Pyakurel, 1982).

Though the people in Terai speak different language of their own such as Maithali, Bhojpuri, Rajbanshi and Tharu depending on what ethnic group belong to Hindis widely understood and spoken among the Terai people Hindis is in a way their lingua Franca (Shrestha D.B. and C.B. Singh, 1987).

In 1991, 76% Chitwan's employed population was engaged a agriculture (HMG, 1993). In the case of Tharu population virtually everyone who has some form of employment depends directly or indirectly upon agriculture. The spectrum of farm employment support laborers to persons holding down side jobs, all the way to small-to-large-scale farm since most Tharu only very unwillingly live separated from their family & community, they prefer an employment in their own village. The carrier and spatial mobility typical of Nepal's other population groups is unlikable for the Tharu, hardly and Tharu would see any economic alternative to agricultural, regardless of whether he has his own land or works someone else's "Agriculture is existence". (Mulle-Boker-, 1999)

2.3 Life cycle rituals of Tharu

The life cycles ceremonies possess specific, protective and purificatory purposed and are essential for keeping continuing and strengthening the relations of mutual harmony, peace and dependence between the individuals and whole community. (Gurung, Ganeshman, 1989)

Rites of birth, marriage and death are the main rites of passage. In Hinduism, these are called the "Samaskaras". The word "Samaskaras" means religious purificatory rites and ceremonies for sanctifying the body, mind and intellect of an individual so that he/she becomes full-fledge member of the community. (Dhakal, 1985 cited in Gurung)

2.3.1 Birth ritual

The birth of a child is regarded as a special occasion but like the other community. Tharu also expect and prefer male child as a new family members. The mother is confined in a room during and after the birth of a new infant for four or five days. The infant and mother purified through **Ghatwa Kasuina** ceremony in which both have to take bath. This ceremony purified the mother

and is accepted in family to participate in the household chores. There is no tradition for naming ceremony. The parents can name the child from the fifth day of birth until the age of eighteen month. The name is usually derived from the name of day, week or site of the birth, events of festival which occurred or near the date of birth from rituals to protect from infantile death, from the physiognomy or attitude of the child or from the name of the place where the father was going at the time of the birth or the occupation in which he was engaged on the day the baby was born (Rajaurie, 1977).

Murbhawj is the first hair cutting among the Tharu of dang district of Nepal, he states that among the Tharu this ceremony is performed only for that male child whose birth is considered as a great event, bringing pleasure and happiness to the family. For example, the birth of first son, or the survival of a boy, immediately after several instances of infantile mortality. Rich Tharu, however, performs this ceremony for all of their male children.

Murbhawj is performed during the fourth or fifth year of the boy on any Monday or Wednesday of Falgun (February-March). In this ceremony first of all holy liquor is offered to all liquor accepting household deities. Then a maternal uncle or maternal uncle's cousin shave, or clips a bit of the boy's hair. If the man is expert, he can shave off the hair completely; otherwise this is left to an expert (barber).

A little prior to this performance, respected guests, especially members of the sister's families, father's sister's families, and the mahaton of the village, are invited in their honor. A pig, goat or a sheep is slaughtered for the feast in which plenty of homes made beer (Jad) and meat is served frequently. (Rajaure, 1982)

2.3.2 Marriage ritual

Tharu marriages are monogamous and patrilocal. Most marriages are early are arranged by the parents of the couple concerned and always take place within

the tribe. The marriage partner can be anybody within the tribe except members of the same exogamous gotra unit. There are small regional variations in the basic marriage patterns.

Among people of modest means there are also the practices of exchange marriage. The families concerned decide to exchange brides for their sons. By doing these both the families concerned can cut down the cost of gifts, presents, dowries and other expenses. (Bista, 1972:121)

Tharu practices monogamous and patrilocal marriage. Marriage always takes place among the caste and area arranged by their parents of the couple. Among Tharu of modest means, exchange system of marriage is practiced in which families exchange bridges for their sons. With the Tharu of Chitwan and some other places a young man has to work for 2-3 years in the family of the bride before he is entitled to have her as his wife in marriage. Among the Tharu of eastern part of Nepal it has been observed that the bride is sometime older than groom. There is a peculiar custom in their marriage system; the bride goes to the groom's house with a lamp and cup of poison. The poison is for committing suicide incase she falls into the hands of enemy on the way or later. This custom is of Rajput origin. (Majupuria, Indra, 2007:778)

Bista describes about marriage system of Tharu in his famous book "People of Nepal", 1972. In normal cases of marriage by arrangement among the eastern Tharu it is generally the girl's father who goes out in search of a match for his daughter. Among the western Tharu some relatives help the father to find a boy. In both cases the girl is usually older than boy. Sometimes a girl of 15 or 16 years of age is given to a boy 7 or 8 years old. The main consideration is the wealth and the social status of the families concerned. When the girl's father finds a suitable match he approaches the boy's father with his offer. He presents some money to the boy, which is kept until the boy's father pays returns visits to examine the girl. The boy's father can return the money and dismiss the proposal if he does not like he girl. Once the negotiations are complete and

both families agreed the girl's father goes to the boy's father's house where he received by the host and his friends and relatives. The girl's father put a tika mark of curd and rice on the forehead of the boy's father. Then one of the men elected for purpose stands up and asks the girl's father to make a formal announcement of engagement, where upon the girl's father stands up and makes the public announcement, mentioning the names of boy and girl and saying that he is proposing to give his daughter to the boy. Then he also mentions the name of the boy's father. The boy's father repeats the same procedure. Both of them return home after being entertained with food and drinks and having fixed the date of wedding.

On the day of the wedding the groom goes into the *deurhar*, god's room, of his own house and completes the rituals of worship under the direction of his family *guruva*, the priest. He also worships a dagger, which he holds in his hand throughout the period of the wedding until the bride is brought back home.

At the beginning of the wedding day, family *guruva* blesses some mustard oil in which some black dal cakes are then fried and distributed to the family members to eat. Then the groom proceeds with a party of 50 or 60 people to his bride's house proceed by a musical band of drums and pipes played by professional musicians. The people from village along the way offer food and drinks to the member of the processions. Those who accept the food and drinks are expected to make gifts of one or two rupees in returns according to the standard of food provided. Thus the procession takes a long time to get the bride's house. When they arrive at the village they go around the temples or shrines of that village before they go to the bride's house.

Entering the house of the bride, the groom is taken into the *deurhar* of the family where he is offered food and homebrewed beer. The groom sticks the dagger he has been carrying into the ground. After this he comes back to another part of the house where his friends are waiting to spend the night. In

the meanwhile the maidens of the village come to the house and sing. The songs consist of bad names and abuse addressed to the groom for taking their friend, the bride, away from among them.

The following morning the groom's party leaves for home. The groom is sometimes carried in a doli hammock. Two, three or four hours after the departure of the groom's party the bride is also carried to the groom's house, followed by a party of 40 or 50 people including a few women. The groom in the meantime waits outside his house, sometimes for several hours, because he cannot enter his house along without the bride. Her parents to take with her at the time she leaves their house give the bride. The cup of poison is given to the bride so that she can commit suicide in case she happens to fall into the hand of any enemy. This custom is attributed to their Rajput origin.

As soon as the bride arrives at house of the groom the female members of the family bring a pot full of glowing embers, a lamp, a water pot and some cottonseeds to the front of the main entrance of the house. They throw the rice over the bride and groom. The groom then vermillion powder over the dagger he has been holding and over the head of the bride before they enter the house. The heads of the bride and the groom are knocked against each other three times before they enter the house. Both the bride and groom enter the *deurhar* of the family, where the groom sticks his dagger into the ground. After this a short ritual of throwing rice grains and sprinkling water over alter of the deity is done. Then the bride goes and sits among the women of the house, to whom she spends the entire period of her stay till she returns to her parents the next day.

The bride takes a bottle of liquor, a straw amt and pig's head when she goes back to her parent's house as presents to them from her husband's family. Her husband's family also goes to pay respect to her parents at some stage once the main activities of the marriage ceremony are over. This is called the *nata pherne* (the changing of the relationship). One of the ceremony is over the bride

goes back to her husband's house during festivals with a group of her own friends. During this period the bride keeps the gifts ornaments and clothes given to her both by her parents and her husband. If by any chance the groom falls ill on the day of wedding he can stay behind in his house and his dagger, which represents him throughout the wedding, is sent in his place (Bista, 1972:125).

Divorce is frequently among Tharu. There is no ceremony or rituals for divorce. If a woman move back with her parental family, the husband cannot legally force her to stay with him. Traditionally, the husband couldn't ask for a refund of the bride prize and repayment of some marriage expenses. A divorced Tharu women doesn't loose her ritual status unlike Brahmin and Chhetri women, although, some Tharu disapproved of a frequent divorcing women (Rajaure, 1988).

Among Chitwan Tharu, marriage bonds are common between members of all clan groups; marriage between close relatives is the only prohibition. Occasionally the knot will be joined with Tharu from Nawalparasi, but not with ones from Dang-Deukhuri or neighboring Parsa. I was also told that for some years it has now been possible to enter into marriage with other castes, with the exception of the "outcastes" and Muslims. Marriages are arranged, though there are also "love marriages" and "abduction marriages." Patrilocality is the custom. If a family is without son, the son-in-law is asked to move in. Polygamy enjoys high prestige among Tharu men. Most zamindars have more than one wife. Frequently they will marry young girls in old age. Tharu widows may remarry, but the children remain with the father's family. For this reason, widows prefer to marry their deceased husband's younger brother, even if he is already married. Divorce and remarriage are allowed, in contrast to orthodox Hindu groups. Here again, the children remain behind the family of the divorce (Muller-Boker, 1999; 65).

2.3.3 Death ritual

Almost all the Tharus living in the eastern district of Sarlahi, Mohottari, Saptari and Morang cremate their dead, while most of those in the middle and western districts of Chitwan, Dan-Deukhuri, Kailali and Kanchanpur, Banke and Bardiya bury them. Those who cremate take the corpse to a riverside, wash it clean with water and smear it with ghee before they burn it down to ashes. All Tharu villages in the west Terai has a common burial ground outside the village. They dig a hole a few feet deep in the ground and spread a piece of white cotton material at the bottom before they lower the dead of white cotton cloth and dearth. They bury men face down and women face up.

Death mourning is observed for three five, seven or as long as but not more than eleven days by the survivors of the family, according to their convenience. The mourners abstain from eating vegetables, oil, turmeric, meat and fish. At the end of the mourning period the family guruva gives mustard oil, blessed by him, which the mourner put on their heads. The guruva also completes the last funeral rite in the deurhar of the family. He invokes the family deity by meditation and recitation and the soul of the dead its family deity ever after. On the last day of mourning the family gives feast of boiled rice and dal to all the relatives and neighbors.

When an old member of a family dies the survivors throw all the articles belonging to that person outside the village. The belongings consist of earthen pots, pans, old clothes, wooden ponders, ladles, straw containers, dishes and boxes of woven can. (Bista, 1972:125)

Chapter-3

Research Methods

3.1 Selection of the study area

The Sharadanagar-6 of Chitwan district was selected for the study as the oldest indigenous people of the village. The economic condition of Tharu is miserable in comparison to other castes of Chitwan district. There was no sociological / Anthropological research about Tharu ritual's changes. So, I selected this area to study the changes of Tharu's ritual.

3.2 Research design

The research design of the study was include both exploratory and descriptive research. Descriptive design was adopted to describe the prevalent rituals of Tharus in the particular setting while exploratory research was conducted so as to asses the factors and process of change on the lives of Tharu.

3.3 Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling was carried out in the twenty-five households of Sharadanagar-6, of Chitwan district. In Sharadanagar, I found 38 household of Tharu among them; I selected 25 households used purposive sampling methods.

3.4 Data collection Techniques

For the data to be reliable and authentic, both qualitative and quantitative data from primary and secondary sources were collected using different collection tools. They are as follows:

3.4.1 Interview Schedule:

Semi-structured interview schedule was developed to be conducted with the people who are living there. Likewise, unstructured interview that was facilitating the research conducted.

3.4.2 Observation

Observation is useful tool in comprehending the life style and situation of the study area. It also validates the data collected through interview. The information on method of different working activities of daily lifestyle was collected by means of observation. The different methods of observation such as participant and non- participate were applied during the time of information collection which were family stays, household visits attending different group meeting, the cultural practices were observed by attending their cultural program. The types of settlement pattern, health and sanitation. Diseases were observed in the observation.

3.4.3 Key informant interview

It was undertaken in order to seek information on the factors and process of changing rituals of Tharu. Interview was taken to that informant who knows Tharu community from near. Among those, old Tharu people, teachers and migrants who were able to describe their tradition. Rituals along with their condition of early Tharu community were given preference in questionnaires.

3.4.4 Questionnaire

Close and open questionnaire were ask with respondents to get information about the rituals. This is given in annex.

3.4.5 Data Analysis:

Data collection was processed and tabulated towards the completion of the study. Although, quantitative analysis was undertaken, more focus was laid on the qualitative aspect.

Chapter-4

Area and People

4.1 Background

Professor Bista (1972) has stated that the Tharu are probably the oldest and the original inhabitants of the Tarai. A large number of Anthropologist and authors have tried to trace the origin of Tharus on the basis of Tharu dialect, physiognomy, dwelling places and historical links. But, such approaches have made more complication of the problem of origin, the result-There is not a single, widely acceptable explanation about the origin of Tharu –These theories about origin are only plausible and there is not a monolithic solution.

The Tharu of that area are endogenous in Chitwan district, they have own language and cultural practices. They are localizing in a particular area, from which it derives its name Chitaune Tharu. In my field study, I couldn't found the exact evidence about the origin of this ethnic group. But, most of the people said me that they are living this community from several centuries ago. So, they disagree with the view that they are migrating from other place like Rajasthan, Hills, Kathmandu valley etc. They have long history in that area. Now, cultural assimilation is started due to the migration o Hill people and Hindu caste people in this community.

4.2 Demographic Aspect

4.2.1 Population structure

According to the CBS 2001, Sharadanagar-6 has 55 households and total population of 314. Among which 149 were male and 165 were female. I found that now Tharu has 38 household and total populations of 183. Among which 89 were male and 94 were female. But I made a detailed study of only 25 households where 60 were male and 74 were female. This community was also not exceptional from the Nepali society in respect of son preference, which has

become the main reason of the growth of population structure of the studied area of Sharadanagar-6 was given in the Table-1.

Table-1 Population distribution by age and sex of the study area

SN	Age (Year)	Population			Percentage		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1.	0-15	14	15	29	23.33	20.27	21.64
2.	16-30	14	31	45	23.33	41.89	33.58
3.	31-45	20	17	37	33.33	22.97	27.61
4.	46-60	7	7	14	11.66	9.45	10.44
5.	60 Above	5	4	9	8.33	5.40	6.71
Total		60	74	134	100	100	100

Sources: Field study, 2008

The table gives the information about the number and percentage of different age and sex groups in the study area. During my field survey, I found that population of female were more than male. Mostly, 16-30 age group people were more than other age, which were 45(33.58 %), among them 14(23.33%) were male and 31(41.89%). And then 31-45 age group were nearly about that, means they were 37(27.61%) where 20 male and 17 female. 0-15 age people were little bit less than that (male-14+female-15=29). At last, 46-60 age groups (male-7+Female-7=14) were existed in this community. To sum up, in some age group percentage of male were large and in some female. But, totally population of female were more (i.e. 74) than that of male (i.e. 60).

4.2.2 Family structure

Family is a social institution and most important primary group in society. It is the simplest and most elementary form of society. It is the basic of all social groupings. It is the first and the immediate social environment to which a child is exposed. It is an outstanding primary group, because, it is the family that the child developed its basic attitude.

Further, of all the groups that affect the life of individuals in society none touches them too intimately or as continuously as does the family. From the moment of birth to the death the family exerts a constant influence. The family is the first group in which we find ourselves. It provides for the most enduring relationship in one form or other. Every one of us grows up in a family and every one of us too will be a member of one family or other.

There are two types of family based on number. Nuclear family is a small group composed of husband; wife and immature children which constitutes a unit apart from the rest of the community. Joint family is also known as undivided family. It normally consists of members who at least belong to three generations: Husband, wife, their married and unmarried children and their married as well as unmarried grand children. The joint family system constitutes the basic social institution in many traditional societies, particularly in eastern societies.

Sharadanagar-6 was a rural area of Bharatpur municipality. From my observation, I found that the average size of the family is 5.03 per family in the study area. I found minimum family size is of 2 members and maximum member size is of 12. In the past, the size of family was larger because they were totally based on agriculture production. Tharu family was an extended structure and remains so far a period of about 3 to 5 generations. The eldest member whose words are law heads the whole family unit. But, due to the migration of the Hill people in this community, impact modernization, development of Industries and gaining schooled knowledge, now days, most of the Tharu family's structure was nuclear type. The following Table shows the type of the study area.

Table-2 the Family types of the Study area

S.N.	Family type	Number	Percentage
1	Joint	10	40
2	Nuclear	15	60
	Total	25	100

Source: Field study, 2008

The table presents the information about household numbers who lived in joint and nuclear family. It shows that, most family lived in a nuclear family (60%) and then some lived in joined family (40%). But, in my study, I did not find any extended family. In past, most of Tharu live in extended and joined family because of their subsistence. This was based on agriculture. Now, knowledge of family planning, lack of much land (because of over population) and invention of other new income sources like job, business etc. they wanted to live in nuclear family. Now we can see that many joined family changing towards nuclear family.

4.2.3 Occupation of the study area

Most people of this area were involved in agriculture. Except from the agriculture, they have other jobs in this community. There were no any factories, so they have to go to other places of Nepal and Arabian country like Dubai, Qatar, Malaysia in search of the work. Thus, people of here do not face-to-face hand to mouth problem. However, at the same time they are also not very well off. Primary occupation of this area was agriculture, only some people aware involved in job, business and other occupations. For in detail refer Table 3.

Table-3 Occupation of the people of Sharadanagar (no. of people)

SN	Occupation	Primary	Secondary
1	Agriculture	49	12
2	Business	7	3
3	Government	2	-
4	Service in private sector	8	3
5	Labor	12	4
6	Any other	4(Abroad)	-

Sources: Field study, 2008

In current situation, economic condition of person places a vital role in a society. Every people want to be economically sound in order to establish high status and prestige in community. Here, most of the people's primary economic source was based on agriculture. Now days, people of the community were also engaged in traditional agro system. Few numbers of people were related to small petty business. Only 10 people, primary occupation was job, among them 2 were engaged in government sector and 8 were in private sector. In government sector, 2 people were teacher of lower secondary and in private sector; they were involved in low-level work. Except agriculture, people who did not have their own land and uneducated, their main income source were labor in other work (i.e. in farming, construction work, porter etc). Reason of little opportunity in one village and country, some people (4) were in Arabian country, Dubai, Qatar, Malaysia to earn money and fulfill their family subsistence.

4.3 Social Aspect

4.3.1 House type

The economic condition of the Tharu of the study area was poor. Most of them were under poverty line. They are maintaining their hand to mouth problem anyway. Their main economic was based on agriculture. So, they were living in joint family also. But, now impact of modernization, urbanization in the

community, Industrialization outside the community and influenced a lots by Hill people culture and tradition, they started to live in a nuclear family. Their life standard, we can see from their house structure as well. For in details refer Table 4.

Table-4 House Structures of study area.

S.N.	Categories of House	Households
1	Two stories brick house	3
2	One story brick house	6
3	Mud with Zink roof	11
4	Phush/khar and Khadi house	5
Total number of Households		25

Source: Field study, 2008

In old periods, their houses were made using aviable tools in the locality like wood, khar/khadi. Those types of houses had the ached roof, small windowpane, rooms were not separated. Now, they are building modern types of houses having one or two stories made of brick with necessary window and doors. I found most of the house was made by Mud and Zink roof and push/ Khadi house was also there in some number. Some have one or two stories house also, which was small in number compare to the mud and Zink house. These types of changes occurred there due to the modern technologies.

4.3.2 Decision-making

In this Tharu community, male and female both take part in discussion before deciding every major work. But, mostly elder male member of the family makes major decisions. Marriage system is similar to general system in other parts of the country. But, I found polygamy system in frequent of the Tharus community compared to the female, male were marry more than one wife because of child (male child), love, work etc.

4.3.3 Educational Aspect

Education is very important aspect of human life, which plays a significant role in the overall development of society. Most of the people of this study area were literate. Student enrollment was increasing day by day in the schools. Tharu of the study area were also sending their children to school. But they do not help and guide their children at home. Some children also look after the cattle and goats in afternoon. Tharu girls and boys were good in studies in the beginning. But as they reach class seven or eight, they failure increase because of the growing household responsibilities. Most of the girls marry on their early teen. So, they were few in higher education. (See Table 5)

Table-5 literacy rate of the study area

SN	Type	Population			Percentage		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	Literate	41	35	76	68	47	56
2	Illiterate	19	39	58	32	53	44
Total		60	74	134	100	100	100

Sources: Field survey, 2008

To carryout study, literacy rate of the Tharu in Saradanagar-6; the category as literate and illiterate where illiterate means who could not read and write and read only included and literate means who were in primary, lower secondary, secondary, intermediate and bachelor. I found that, literacy rate was good here. Most of the people were literate than illiterate where 56% were literate and only 44% were illiterate. However, among those literacy of male was high and illiteracy of female was high. This was really opposite to each other. That means literate male were 68% and 38% illiterate, but in female case 47% were literate and 53% were illiterate.

Table-6 Education Status of the study area

SN	Level	Population			Percentage		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1.	Primary	10	7	17	24.39	20	22.36
2.	Lower Secondary	8	8	16	19.51	22.85	21.05
3.	Secondary	9	12	21	20.95	34.28	27.66
4.	Intermediate	11	8	19	26.82	22.85	25
5.	Bachelor	3	-	3	7.31	-	3.94
Total		41	35	76	100	100	100

Sources: field survey, 2008

The table explains among the literate percentage of male were high than female. Most of the Tharu girls were well in primary and secondary level.. When the level of the education is increasing, the population was significantly decreased. Because of early marriage of female, work in household chores and other socio-cultural factors were responsible for the educational status of female. In this community, in bachelor level not a single female I found. Only 3 male were at the level of bachelor. Here, no one got masters' degree.

4.3.4 Health and Sanitation

Most of the people of Sharadanagar-6 were aware about health and sanitation. They clean their hand and utensils before and cooking and having meals. They regularly take bath and wash clothes. They were aware about clean drinking water and using toilets.

4.3.5 Language

Tharu of Sharadanagar-6 speaks both Tharu and nepali language. Tharu language fall under Indo-Aryan group the alphabet of this language was written as in Devnagari. The Tharu language was fourth largest of Nepal (census1991). It is the second largest language of Chitwan district and fourth largest language

of Sharadanagar VDC, 965 people speak this language in this VDC. But, the language was some how different from the other part of the country. All the Chitaune Tharus speak same type of Tharu language. The language which speaks here was alike with Bhojpuri language of Champaran of Bihar, North India.

4.3.6 Religion

Religion is a set of belief and practices (Ember and Ember). It is existed in every society and plays a vital role to maintaining social structure in a given society. Like each society, Tharu society of this VDC has bounded with various belief and practices, the main guidelines of Hindu religion.

Among 25 households of Tharu, only 3 households were Christian, other was Hindu. They worship Hindu god and goddesses (i.e. Shiva, Vishnu, Ram, Krishna, Laxmi, Durga, Sarsoti etc). Moreover, they perform all the birth, marriage, and death rituals according to the Hindu myth. They celebrate Hindu festivals like Dashin, Thihar, mage-Sakranti, Phagu-purnima, Chhaite-Dashin, Dasahara, Teej, etc. They adopted Christianity because of their poverty, healing from the sickness and other religious freedom.

4.3.7 Marital Status

Marriage is an important social institution. It is a union between a man and woman to keep a sexual relationship and to produce children. It maintains the social structure, gives continuity to the society and helps to sustain social development.

In Sharadanagar-6, marriages take place according to local rules and regulation mainly on their rituals. Both monogamy and Polygamy were practiced in Tharu community. The marriage situation of the study people was given in table-7.

Table-7 Distribution of Tharu population by marital status

SN	Marital Status	Population			Percentage		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	Unmarried (0-15Above,)	12	23	35	26.08	38.98	33.33
2	Married	32	32	64	69.56	54.23	60.95
3	Widow	-	4	4	0	6.77	3.80
4	Widower	2	-	2	4.34	0	1.90
	Total	46	59	105	100	100	100

Sources: Field study, 2008

According to the table it depicts the information about the marital status of people in that community. Where, most of the people were married (60.95%) and unmarried (33.33%). Then, I found 4 (3.80%) were widow and 2 (1.90%) were widower existed there.

4.4 Economic Aspect

4.4.1 Land holding pattern

In Tharu community, most of the people were involved in agriculture, but due to the lack of Khet (irrigated land) the crop yield was low. Even they were land Lord in the past, but now a day's most of the Tharu have small land. Some of the people have hand to mouth problem also.

4.4.2 Food situation

The main crops in the study area was paddy, wheat, maize etc. in accordance with the land holding pattern, there should be food sufficiency to some extent. Only the few families can meet food requirements around the year from their own land and its production. Few families have food sufficiency because most of the land they cultivated was situated in the lower facilities of irrigation.

4.4.3 Animal husbandry/ livestock

It was also one of the major occupations of the tharu. Animal like cattle, Buffalo, goats, pigs and other domestic animals are bred and kept for the different purposes such as domestic use for sale, plugging, daily products, transports etc. I found most families were rearing domestic animal like cow/ ox, buffalo, goats, chickens as income some sell animals and birds for the purpose of meat and some sell milk. Some were rearing animals for plugging purposes also.

To sum up this unit, in my fieldwork study, I tried to know about the origin of the Tharu of this VDC, their Demographic aspects, Social and cultural aspect and Economic aspect. Here, I found some change as well, like Family structure, house types, literacy rate, education status, occupation, language, religion, food situation and land holding pattern. Some change has positive consequences (education, occupation, health and sanitation etc), but some have negative also i.e. land holding. There also many cause of this change; migration of hill people in this area was one of the main causes. Other is use of modern technology on agriculture and Physical facilities like transportation, communication, irrigation etc.

Chapter-5

Life Cycle Rituals and Change

Most of the Tharu is birth, marriage and death. They are similar to the past. They are undergoing change due to the many factors and processes of social change. In this chapter, I explained about this subject matter.

Every ethnic group reflects this Philosophy of life and death, human relation and activities, importance and expectation of human life in terms of religion and life cycle ceremonies. Such expectation and perception shapes the whole life activities of the individuals and communities. But, such ceremonial activities are not an exception to change and modification. Cultural contact and dominance of the majority groups gradually brings certain changes in minority groups.

The most important events of individuals are Birth, Hair-cutting, Marriage, and Death. Special ceremonies are conducted in such occasions in almost all communities. Tharu also have their own ceremonies, during Birth, Hair-cutting, Marriage and Death. These ceremonies in some part were considerably influenced by Hindu culture and many affluent Tharu use Hindu priests to perform the rites.

5.1 Birth Ritual

The birth of a child was regarded as a special occasion to the Tharu also like other people. Traditionally, when a child was born, the placenta was placed on a Naglo (bamboo tray for cleaning food grain) above cloth. Some people buried it under the oven. Both male and female children had performed the naming ceremony on 3rd, 5th, 7th or 9th day, according to their convenience. If there was nobody to work in house, then they perform it on 3rd or 5th day. But, nowadays adoption of Hindu naming system, the naming ceremony was performed after the

11th day from the birth (Key informant Sehera Mahato). According to the key informant Phulmaya Mahato, before the migration hill people there was not tradition about the birth pollution. After the cultural assimilation with Hindu people, now they were also kept mother and child in a confined room and at that time the mother would not participate in the household chores. The mother would not be allowed to touch any object except those who given to her purpose for ten days, which was called birth pollution. On the 11th day naming ceremony was held, where mother and child were purified. Now days, naming ceremony was performed by Brahmin priest. Similarly, their traditional naming system was not systematic, for example a child name was according to the day of birth, month i.e. if a child was born on Monday, and the child name was 'SOM'. But today due to the acculturation this type of naming system was changed and people gave the child name according to the Hindu god and goddess, according to the actor and actress for example Ram, Shyam, Hari, Sita etc.

Mani Ram Mahato said this Tharu community did not perform the Hair-cutting ceremony especially like Dang and Deukhuri Tharu. Generally, when child was 2 or 3 months or if parent bhakal then child was 5 years old, they cut their child hair. They cut hair by barber (Mardania). If they do not bhakal, they take it normally.

5.2 Marriage Ritual

Marriage bonds are common between all clan groups in Chitwan Tharus, but close relative was only prohibition. Traditionally, mainly there are two types marriages found among the Tharu people. One was Magi Biwaha (arrange marriage) Where all the relevant rituals were completed and other was Bhagi Biwaha (Elopement marriage- a marriage without the permission of parents). However, beside that in this community, many types of marriage likes polygamy, widow marriage, inter-caste marriage, jamani marriage, mis-match and early marriage, jari marriage, sister in law marriage.

"It involves the social sanction civil a religious ceremony authorizing two persons of opposite sex to engage in a sexual at consequent and correlated socio-economic with on another." (Majumdar and Madan)

5.2.1 Arrange Marriage

In the past, Magi biwaha (arrange marriage) was most popular among Tharu. At that time, small numbers of boy's relatives were to girl's house. Where left boy and girl to talk to each other and share their feeling about marriage, if both of them liked each other then the kalia (engagement) was held. At the moment girl's father mark the tika of curd and rice on the forehead of the boy's father and announced the engagement. After that, with in a one year, any day which was suitable and proper for the both party, the date of wedding was fixed. But, today this announcement by Brahmin priest according to the lagan because they adapt of Hindu cultural practices.

On the day of wedding, the groom went to his god's rum and prays before living the house. And then, family member of groom, close relatives and neighbors all proceed to bride's house. Mostly, old member and little number of people were gone in the bride's house. However, this system was changed today because of the facilities of transportation. That means large numbers of people were went in the janti. At that time, janti especially went on night, but now they mostly gone on the day because of the political instability and uncertainty of strike on the country. (According to Mansuria Mahato) When they arrived near in the bride's house, went nearer temple and they went in to the bride's house. After the arrival of janti, the bride's family welcomes them. And after that, their cultural worship was started. Especially bride used to wear white color dress. She said this was also changed in these days. Now they used to wear red blue (that means colorful dress). Among them dowry system was also popular. Mostly, they gave their daughter/ sister animal like cow, buffalo. However, this was changed and now adaptations of hill people culture, they also gave furniture, TV, bed, refrigerator etc, according to their economic

status. After the finishing of marriage ceremony, there was also grand feast (Dal, Bhat, and meat) and then boy's parties return their home with bride.

One of the old person (Nathuram) of the village said me that, when engagement was occurred and after that if girl was eloped with other boy. The boy's father pay price for the feast, which was held during the girl's house in the engagement time. That do not necessary whatever money spent on feast and how many people were participate but they must pay the amount not less than RS. 500. Today this type of system was not popular among them.

5.2.2 Love Marriage/ Elopement marriage

Love/ Elopement marriage was not popular at that past. People did not like that type of marriage although, some people got love marriage. If boy and girl were in love and their parents were not agreed in that case only this type of marriage was occurred. That means boy and girl were got marriage in elopement. However, this type of marriage was most popular among them because of education and adaptation of modern and western culture.

5.2.3 Polygamy

Polygamy enjoys high prestige among Tharu men. Most Zamidar have more than one wife. Frequently they got married with a young girl in old age and they also got marriage with other's wife. If they got married with other wife it was called jari Biwaha. Where, after the marriage this new husband has to pay Jari to the first husband of that woman.

5.2.4 Widow marriage

Widow marriage was also common on these people because they had to face with men power deficiency farms where malaria was not controlled. Tharu widows may remarry but the children remain with the father's family.

Widow marriage has also minimized in these days among these people. After the migration of hill people, they avoided most of their existing tradition about marriage. In the study area, I do not found a single case of widow marriage among the sampled household. Therefore, it was obvious that now days the Tharu people of this area were not interested towards widow marriage because they think if such type of marriage was done, pahadiyas will hates them. (According to Jayaram Mahato)

5.2.5 Mis- match Marriage and early marriage

Due to the fact that boys were married off at early age with girls in their mid-teen, there seem to be questions of love marriage and the concept also absent among these people in past which was called miss-match marriage.

Mis-match marriage and early marriage were not same and these types of marriage were not common among the migrated people. Therefore, by imitating, their tradition, Tharu of this study area ultimately adopted the new types of marriage, which was not prevalent, them in the past. In Tharu people of this village, mismatch match marriage was totally stopeed however; early marriage was not totally stopped.

5.2.6 Inter-caste Marriage

Traditionally, the Tharu people did not practice inter caste marriage if any person of their ethnic group did such type of marriage they would hate him.

But, now days, this tradition has slightly changed and this type of marriage has found to be taken place because cultural assimilation between different caste people inside and outside the village. Today they go outside the village (urban area) for the education and in search of the job. Migration of other caste and culture people to the village was another cause of cultural assimilation (inter-caste marriage).

5.2.7 Jamani Marriage

Jamani Biwaha in which parents of newly boy and girl from that separate family who could tie in marriage relation use to come into agreement, that they would marry their child when they would become physically ready.

This type of marriage was decided to totally minimize by boy and girl. So, this type of marriage has totally stopped among this group because of the education and migration of hill people. They thought that, these types of marriage were harmful in modern society.

5.2.8 Other types of Marriage

Some Tharu marry daughter with their Haruwa (Agricultural labor like slave). They did not marry far from their village. Most of them marry in their own neighbors. Some Tharu boys marry with their sister in-law after brother's death. Which was also changed in these day, they do not marry their daughter to the slave because of hill people felt they were low status. They also marry far from the village because of the facilities of transportation make them easy to move. Marriage with sister in law was also avoided because hill people hate them.

5.3 Death Ritual

Death is considered as one of the events of great significant among Tharu society as in other community. Tharu accepts the term of death with the belief of new life after death. Badiya Mahato said me that, traditionally, after death of person, body puts in bamboo frame, tied with a string and covered with clothes/katro (white/yellow clothe-bohari) and was taken to the river bank by malami (ghotoria). A deep pit dug in bank of river, the body was placed in it was filled. Rice was spread along the burial. After the burial all members of funeral party bath in the river. Now, they do not bury the death body but they burn it, because of adaptation of hill/Hindu culture. There was difference between married and unmarried person death ritual. Married person's Criya called 'kaj' and unmarried person's criya called 'khartel'. In khartel, the death

events completed within 5-7 days. But for married, it was completed on 12-13 days. If there were many sons, only eldest son for 'kora' (uteri) in father's death and youngest son for the mother's death. Other's brothers help him (kora) in different activities. But now, this system was also changed. Today, any son or all sons participate in kora because of migration of hill people. The person who lived in kora called criyaputri (kartahar). He lived in separate place and do not take salt. But other brother did not leave it. Today, this culture was changed due to the imitation of Hindu/Brahmins culture and all sons leave salt. At that time, criyaputri do not wear other color dress. But now they used to wear white dress in kora system. The purification was completed in the 12th day of male and 13th day of female. In this events, criyaputri went near the river, shaved their hair and beard by barber. And then made 7,8,18 pinda (made by rice) and worship it. At that time, they gave Jal (water) to the tree of bar and pipal for memories of their relatives. After that, returned in home, to turn in front of east, thrown water and Raksi (wine) in to the house. In the time of kora, the criyaputri cooked separate food by them self. They do not take food touched by others. In 12/13 days, ash of the fire which was used to cook food and remained would were thrown. After that, they take Gahut (urin of cow) to purify themselves and house. In that last day, they invite all their sisters, daughter, relatives, neighbor and malami on the feast. Where, sister/daughter brought goat for that feast. Natal home paid its price. But now days this culture was changed and they do not ate meat on the occasion of death feast because imitation of Hindu culture. And, it was also expensive to pay goat price to their sisters/daughter because of their low economic status.

After that, last day, if the mother dead, then son do not eat milk until one year or time of barakhi. The criyaputri remain in barakhi up to one year after death or Maghe Sakranti or Pitriaunsi (which was held on 16 sradda after Dashain). At the time of Barakhi, the hair cutting was prohibited. In the Barakhi leaving, they have to go bank of river or go to Devaghat and cut the hair and gives Tarpan. And then, every Pitriaunsi they gave Tarpan in the memory of their

pitri. During the initiation day, now they bring Brahmin priest. (According to Buddiram Mahato)

5.4 Factors and Processes of Change

Tharu is the main habitant of chitwan. They live here several years ago. They have their own culture, tradition, and value system of life, religion and rituals. But they are not similar to the past, some are already changed and some are going to change. The cause of this is to find out here. There are so many factors and social processes of these change like social, economic, cultural, migration, education, physical facilities, technology, political and modernization, westernization, Urbanization, industrialization, sanskritization, hinduization, nepalization, adaptation, acculturation, assimilation conflict are the process of change. To find ritual change of the tharu of my study area, I try to find out these factors and processes of change to some extend. This is explaining below.

5.4.1 Economic

There are various means of change in Tharu community, religious cultural, life cycle ceremony, polity, festival, economic standard, agricultural pattern and others. At first, I gave the example of economic standard. The poor economy condition has been one of the features for change in Tharu ritual because the poor people are was not able to effort much for the celebration; naturally they have to cut down the expenditure and so on. And at the same time the duration of the rituals has also been shorted for example naming ceremony on 3, 5, 7 days because of work, do no slaughter goat meat in the death ceremony because of also their economic status.

5.4.2 Migration

Secondly, contact with Hindu people has also encouraged change in the rituals of Tharu. Due to the contact with out side people there came change in their activities such as way of living, dress pattern, food habit, celebration of ritual

and pattern of observing the rituals. Previously, Tharu people of the study area were isolated. Hence, they have their unique type of way of life. But after the eradication of Malaria in Chitwan, hill people migrated here and influenced the way of life of Tharu people. We can say that the migration was one the major factor for ritual change. For example, in past bride wear white color dress but now imitation of migrated people they used to wear red, blue dresses. And in their death ceremony, criyaputri used to wear white color dress in these days.

5.4.3 Technology

Moreover, the development of technology, traditional culture of Tharu of the study area has been affected. At the same time, the musical instrument of the Tharu people which were used during the time of marriage ritual. In marriage, past they gave their sister/daughter animal like cow, buffalo, in the name of dowry. But today, they gave furniture, T.V., refrigerator etc.

5.4.4 Education

Education is an essential factor for development of society. It also helps to achieve upward mobility. Education brings consciousness and plays a vital role in development of knowledge and skill of people. Thus, educational became one of the sources of ritual changes. For example, bride price and child marriage system was changed due to the education in Tharu community.

5.4.5 Physical Facilities

Physical facilities were other major factors of this type of change. Due to the transportation facility they also started to go out side and started to practice different ways of life. For example, more janti went on the marriage because of the transportation facilities. By the facility of communication, they can gain the new knowledge of the activities of the other part of country. This also makes more probability of love marriage and inter-caste marriage in the Tharu community. Media affect their naming system of child.

5.4.6 Modernization

Many people of that area went to Bharatpur, Narayangard and other places for seeking the job and labor in factories, hotel, company etc. Some Tharu people of that area were involved in small business. They changed their life cycle rituals due to the process of modernization. For example, they changed their traditional naming ceremony and naming pattern i.e. they gave name of child according to actor and actress and other modern name, traditionally, arrange marriage was high prestigious among them ,but due to the adaptation of modern culture love marriage and inter-caste marriage was also popular among them.

5.4.7 Sanskritization and Hinduization

They left some tribal rituals and started to observe some Hindu rituals. For example, naming of child on 11th day and death ceremony on 13th days, naming their child according to the hindu god and goddess name, burn the dead body, which was the affect of Hindu cultural practices. Sanskritization and hinduization was one of the important processes of ritual change of that community.

5.4.8 Nepalization

Nepalization was one of the important factors for ritual change in Sharadanagar-6. The influence of Nepali language has gradually resulted in the lost of their Tharu language. According to the one old person of that village, most of the women of that community could not speak Nepali, but now most of them speak and understand Nepali language. By this process, it was easy to bring them in national mainstream.

5.4.9 Westernization

Due to the westernization, Tharu of the chitwan leave their native culture and fallow the western culture. Now, love marriage is most popular among the

young generation and they also get inter-caste marriage. They follow western naming pattern as well.

5.4.10 Urbanization and Industrialization

Development of the industry in the urban area, most of people of the rural area migrate there because of searching jobs. This impact on family structure and their life style also. Due to the impact of urbanization and industrialization, I found that now, they prefer love marriage and inter caste marriage. That was common among them.

Chapter-6

Summary and conclusion

6.1 Summary

According to the population census 2001, National Report shows the total population of Nepal is 231,151,423 (11,563,921 males and 11,587,502 females). Population of Tharu was 25, 33,897 (6.75%), this was the fourth largest population of Nepal.

Among 38 household of this community, I selected only 25 household using purposive sampling methods. For the authentic and reliable data I collected both qualitative and quantitative data from primary and secondary sources. Semi-structure and unstructured interview schedule was developed to facilitate the research. I applied various primary data collection method like Observation, Questionnaire (closes and opens both) and key informants interview technique in the study area. On the other hand, secondary data obtained from V.D.C, District, Region and Central level as well as Library, Published and Unpublished articles, documents, books, internet, CNAS, CEDA and CBS reports to collect my data. The nature of the data is predominantly qualitative.

I found total household number of the Tharu in this community was 38 among them 89 was male and 94 were female (total 183). But I made detail study of only 25 household in total population 134 where male were 60 and female were in 94.

Form my observation; I found that the average family size is 5.03 people per family in that area. Where minimum family size of 2 and maximum member size is of 12. They used to live in joint family initially, but after the migration of the hill people in that area they were influenced lots by their (hill people) traditions and culture. Now, they started to live in nuclear family.

People seemed to be busy all the season. During the cultivation and harvest seasons they are busy in fields and during off-seasons they are busy in labor, jobs and business etc. Animal husbandry was also another major occupation of the Tharu. They use to rear buffalo, goats, pigs, other domestic animals and birds.

Economic condition of the Tharu of that area was very poor which we can also see in their house type. Most of their houses were made by mud and Zink roof and phush/ khadi house, but small number in brick house. Mostly elder male member of family take the major decision. But both male and female take part in discussion before deciding major subjects' matters. Tharu of the study area were sending their children to school. The literacy rate of the Tharu male was 68% and female was 47% and average literacy rate was 56%. Most of the people of Sharadanagar-6 were aware about health and sanitation. They were aware about clean drinking water and using toilets.

Tharu language was fourth largest language in that area, but the language was some how different from the other part of the country. All the Chitaune Tharu speaks same type of language. Tharu practices their own traditional tribal religion i.e. worshipping number of spirits. But, their traditional worship method and deities are gradually in the process of modification due to the migration of the hill people and education. They adopted Hinduism and Christian culture and religion.

Tharu social life of the study area has undergone some significant changes. The responsible factors to that changes were Economic, Migration, Education, Political, Technology, Physical facilities and the process of these changes were modernization, westernization, urbanization, industrialization, nepalization, sanskritization, hinduization etc, Which we can see in their life cycle rituals. The most important events of individuals were Birth, Marriage and Death. Specials ceremonies were conducted in such occasions in the Tharu communities.

They didn't perform the birth pollution in the past, but after the migration Hindu people of the hill in their community, they performed the Birth pollution. Previously they didn't perform the naming ceremony after 11 days and their naming system was also not systematic. They gave the name of their child according to the birthday, month, thiti for e.g. if the child was born on Tuesday the child name was mangal, but now a day due to the adaptation of Hindu culture and migration of the hill people in this area. They had left to give such types of name and would prefer to give common Hindu (Ram, Hari etc) name by Brahmin priest.

In the past, arrange marriage was highly prestigious among them. They also get some early marriage, miss-match marriage, love marriage, jari marriage, jamani marriage, polygamy marriage and widow marriage etc. Today due to the impact of modernization and influence of westernization love marriage and inter-caste marriage are most popular in that community. After the eradication of malaria in the Tarai, hill people migrate there, which effects in widow marriage, miss-match marriage, force marriage, and price marriage because this system was not popular among the Hindu people. In marriage system also change, previously the groom himself didn't go to bride house in the day of marriage, but this system was changed and now groom also went on the bride house. They also emphasized on the dowry system. In past, Bride wear white cloth but now influenced by Hindu people they wear especially red or other color like blue, green etc.

Death is great significant among the Tharu. There were variations on the day of the death pollution. If the male died purification on 12 days and for female it takes 13 days. In the past, they buried the dead body but after the migration of hill people now they burnt it. In the past only eldest son live in kora for father's death and youngest son for mother's death. He lived in separate place and did not take salt but now all sons on kora and all left it. At the time of kora they wear white cloth. In the past, they slaughtered goats in the purification day of

death pollution brought by sister or daughter, but now it was also changed and they didn't take meat in that day because of the impact of Hindu culture and their economic status as well.

During the Birth, Marriage and Death ceremony, today they bring Brahmin priest. As a consequence, Tharu people have adopted new types of cultural practices which were not prevalent among them in the

At last, we can say they perform birth, marriage and death ritual, but they are not similar to the past. There are modifications and there are so many factors and process of this change and modification. This change affects on the Tharu life both positively as well negatively.

6.2 Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be said that the indigenous people of this site, the Tharu has been subjected its changing situation, created mostly by migration of hill people in the Tarai. The rapid development of education, Physical facilities (transportation, mass media, water resources, electricity and health center) and establishment of new town and cities in almost all the Tarai areas has significantly influenced in the life style of the Tharu. They are accepting and adapting new cultural practices, which were not prevalent among them in the past. The exclusive Tharu communities are disappearing day by day in the Tarai regions because of over population in Tarai and few resources are the main causes which preferences Tharu to live in mix community. Moreover, after the migration of hill people into this area and development many things bring both positive and negative impacts among the Sharadanagar-6 Tharu, which we can see in their economic, political, social, cultural practices like festivals, life cycle rituals, religion etc.

The most important positive impact on the Tharu after the migration of the hill people is that of attraction towards the educational sector. They are becoming more educated than before. They also modified their religious system to adopt

Hindu cultural practices in the feast for example they avoid of liquor drinking and slaughter the goat on the death ceremony. They have adopted new technique and ideas about farming. They are attracted towards the new kind of occupations and their economic life seem to be quite changing after the migration of hill people.

However, overflow has challenged Tharu in many ways. They have been facing with new problems for subsistence due to the exploitation of natural resources, which was their niche. Most of the Tharu lost their land because of the migration of hill people. Not only their land, but also their cultural philosophy of life styles as guided by traditional religion are also loosing. Their socio- cultural life is heavily being dominated by Hindu culture. They are loosing self-confidence about their own traditions, language and beliefs. In one hand, their ethnic identity is gradually vanishing and of the other hand their feeling is slightly increasing.

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Questionnaire Schedule

Date:

1. District.....V.D.C/ Municipality.....

Ward noName of the Respondent.....

1.1 Age:

1.2 Sex:

a) Male

b) Female

1.3 Caste/Ethnicity:

1.4 Religion:

1.5 Marital Status:

1.6 Education Status:

a) Literate

b) Illiterate

1. Questionnaires regarding family pattern:

S N	Name	Relation with household head	Sex	Age	Marital status	Educati on	Occupation	
							Prima ry	Secon dary

Relation with Household Head	Sex	Marital status	Education	Occupation
01. Husband	01. Male	01. Married	01. Unable to read and write	01. Agriculture
02. Wife	02. Female	02. Unmarried	02. Read only	02. Business
03. Son		03. Divorce	03. Primary level	03. Government
04. Daughter		04. Separated	04. Lower secondary	04. Service private sector
05. Grand Daughter		05. Ever married	05. Secondary	05. labor
06. Grand Son		06. Any other	06. 10+2	06. Any other
07. Sister in law			07. B.A	
08. Daughter in law			08. M.A	
			09. Any other	

1. Where was your origin place?
2. When your ancestor did come in this village?
3. Do you have own farming land?
a) Yes b) No
4. How much land does have? (In Bigha and Kattha).
a) Khet b) Bari c) Landless
5. What are the major crops you cultivate in your land?
a) Paddy b) Wheat c) Maize
d) Mustarde) Other
6. What type of domestic animals are you rearing and in how many in numbers?

Types of Animal	Number
a. Cows/Oxen	
b. He-buffalo	
c. She-buffalo	
d. Goats	
e. Chicken	
f. Others	

7. What kinds of religion are practicing?

- a) Hindu
- b) Buddhism
- c) Christianity
- d) any other

8. What is your family type?

- a) Joint
- b) Nuclear
- c) Extended

9. Do you find any change in your family?

- a) Yes
- b) No

If yes, what types of change does it present?

10. What is the type of your house?

- a) Two stories brick house
- b) One story brick house
- c) Mud with zinc roof
- d) Phus (khar and khadi)

11. Who does the decision in household matter?

- a) Only by male
- b) Only by female
- c) By both male and female

12. When from the Pahadias started to come to your village?

13. What effects do you face from the other migrants?

14. Are you celebrating life cycle rituals? If Yes, what are

they.....
.....

15. How do you celebrate life cycle ceremony?

16. How do you celebrate the marriage ceremony on your community?

17. What type of marriage has on existing on your community?

18. Do you have polygamy system in Marriage? If yes, who do and why?

19. Is the marriage ceremony of your community similar to the past?

a) Yes b) No

20. If that is not similar to the past, what type of changes do you found?

21. Was there any bride-price system in the marriage on the past?

a) Yes b) No

22. Is it controlled now?

a) Yes b) No. If it is yes, what is the reason?

23. What is the most important factor of these changes?

24. Do you celebrate birth ceremony?

25. How do you perform birth ceremony?

26. Is there any change on birth ceremony activities?

a) Yes b) No

27. If there any changes on birth ceremony, what is the most important factor?

28. What types of changes are produced there?

29. Do you perform death rituals?

30. How do you perform the death rituals?

31. Do you have maintained the death pollution?

a) Yes b) No. If yes, what time does it take?

32. What do you do on the last day of the death pollution?

33. Is there any change on death pollution?

a) Yes b) No

34. If yes, what types of changes do you found?

35. What is the most important factor of these changes?

36. What types of death feast do you celebrate?

Annex-1

Key informant Questions

Name of the respondent.....

Age.....

Sex.....

1. Are you celebrating life cycle rituals? If Yes, what are they.....

.....

2. How do you celebrate life cycle ceremony?

3. Do you celebrate birth ceremony?

4. How do you perform birth ceremony?

5. Is there any change on birth ceremony activities?

a) Yes b) No

6. If there any changes on birth ceremony, what is the most important factor?

7. What types of changes are produced there?

8. How do you celebrate the marriage ceremony on your community?

9. What type of marriage has on existing on your community?

10. Do you have polygamy system in Marriage? If yes, who do and why?

11. Is the marriage ceremony of your community similar to the past?
a) Yes b) No
12. If that is not similar to the past, what type of changes do you found?
13. Was there any bride-price system in the marriage on the past?
a) Yes b) No
14. Is it controlled now?
a) Yes b) No. If it is yes, what is the reason?
15. What is the most important factor of these changes?
16. Do you perform death rituals?
17. How do you perform the death rituals?
18. Do you have maintained the death pollution?
a) Yes b) No. If yes, what time does it take?
19. What do you do on the last day of the death pollution?
20. Is there any change on death pollution?
a) Yes b) No
21. If yes, what types of changes do you found?
22. What is the most important factor of these changes?

Annex-2
Name of Key informants

Name	Age
1. Phul maya Mahato	45
2. Jaya Ram Chhaudhary	55
3. ManiRam Mahato	70
4. Sehera Mahato	45
5. Mansuria Mahato	63
6. Nathuramm Mahato	70
7. Badaiya Mahato	69
8. Budhiram Mahato	52