

# CHAPTER - I

## INTRODUCTION

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

This is a study of cobblers on economic changes and impacts of Dalit people in Lekhnath municipality ward no. 13 Khudi Khola of Kaski District. This village is situated on the east-south part of Pokhara Headquarters of Kaski District. It is also locally known as Dalit basti and Khudi Khola of the Lekhnath Municipality. This village is heterogeneous in terms of caste and ethnic composition. There are Sarki, Kami, Damai, Sonar, Ghatri, Sanyasi and Brahmin. Nepal is a multi-ethnic, multi-culture and multi-linguistic country. So, we can find syncretism of various cultures, languages, religions and castes. It is a model of mosaic society, in the real sense; Nepal is a garden of all castes and ethnic groups. It is very diverse in its geographic conditions and more complex in its social structure.

#### **1.1.1 Caste System in Nepal**

The social system of Nepal is based on caste system. The people of Nepal are socially segmented along the lines of caste, sub-caste and ethnic, sub-ethnic groups. The society has a very structured and complicated hierarchy based on Hindu religion defined by different norms and values for each caste and sub-caste.

The caste system is based on the principle of pollution and purity. According to Hindu Vedas, the social system consists of four Varnas — Brahmin, Kshetriya, Vishay and Sudra — and thirty six castes. This segmental division of Hindu society is based on the principle of stratification which ranks the groups relatively superior or inferior to one another.

Under the stratified caste system of Nepal, Brahmin and Kshetriyas are regarded as Tagadhari or sacred thread bearers; they are called high castes in hill caste group. Among the Tagadhari too, Brahmins are at the topmost ladder of caste hierarchy. The third position in the caste is Matwali who use liquor; all the ethnic groups including Newar, Gurung are under this group. The last or the fourth ladder in the caste hierarchy has been occupied by the so called untouchable's viz. Sarki, Damai, Kami and other backward groups. The occupational caste groups are found to be living almost all over the country; incorporated in the caste system of

hierarchy as Pani Nachalne or Chhoi Chhito Halnu Parne that means untouchable caste (Sharma 2004).

People from high caste and ruling class went on oppressing Shudras to show their superiority and establish their domination in the society. They believed that if they touched one of the lower-caste, they would be contaminated and would need to go through clearing rituals. Inhuman and anti-social ban was imposed on entering temples, receiving education, listening to high caste peoples, teachings, worshipping, rejoicing fairs and festivals like other social practices.

Caste-based division of activity reaches back to the Aryan invention that began before 1500 B.C. But the legal sanction was provided for caste based division only in the 14th century. Jayasthiti Malla, Ram Shaha, Prithwi Narayan Shaha, Janga Bahadur Rana provided legal approval to the caste system in this century (Bista, 1991). Unequal distribution of resources and exploitative relation of production have compelled most Dalits to live landless and homeless. The problem of Untouchability is the barrier for them to improve their economic condition. Though caste discrimination is Punishable, it is prevalent in Nepalese society even today but in lesser degree. Though the concept of caste is deeply rooted in the mind of the people, they are trying to abolish caste discrimination realizing its negative effect for their upliftment.

### **1.1.2 Untouchability**

The term 'Dalit' is derived from Sanskrit word 'Dal' which means 'to split, break crack' and so on? When used as an adjective, it means 'spit, broken, burst, destroyed and crushed'. The Dalits form the lowest caste in the Hindu caste hierarchy. Dalit refers to members from an untouchable 'lower' caste. The upper caste group has created an image of Dalit who is unchanging, uneducated and untouchable. This process of imagination is again the part of the power relation between Dalit and non-Dalit community (Gurubacharya, 2001).

Dalits are also commonly known as "untouchables". Since Dalits perform menial tasks, traditional societies consider them "unclean". Higher castes are thus required to avoid close contact with Dalits, leading to a generation's old segregation of society. The National Dalit Commission defines Dalits as those communities who, by virtue of caste-based discrimination and untouchability, are most backward in the social, economic, educational, political and religious spheres and are deprived of human dignity and social justice (N. D. C 2006).

The Ignored, Oppressed and Dalit Group's Welfare Development Committee has identified 23 different Dalit communities—Damai, Kami, Sarki, Lohar, Kasai, Badi, Kusule, Chyme, Dhobe, Dusadh, Batar, Musahar, Sattar, Sunar, Gaine, Kuche, Chamar, Paswan, Tatma, Khatbe, Santhal and Halkhor (Bhattachan 2003). We can divide Dalit caste into different groupings in accordance with the type of work the groups are limited to. For example, communities engaged in tailoring or playing musical instruments, communities involved in washing clothes or in making clay pots, working with metal will be given different family names.

Three major occupational castes: Kami, Damai and Sarki are traditionally artisans. These castes have their own occupation. Especially Kami are skilled in ironwork. They make agricultural tools, utensils and weapon for home. The other Dalit caste, Damais is the tailor; they sew and mend the clothes of the village people. In a traditional system, Damais are the ones who create a very exciting and pleasant atmosphere by playing traditional musical instruments (Panche baja). Lastly, the Sarkis are the leather worker; they make and repair the shoes and other leather goods. These people are the only Hindus that eat dead cows (carcasses) (Dahal, 2002).

The overall Dalit conditions are very miserable in Nepal. They are not only socially backward but also economically, educationally and politically vulnerable. In general, a Dalit is characterized as illiterate, unemployed, landless, poor, ignorant, exploited, unhygienic and ignored by rest of the society. The basic pillars of human rights like dignity and equality are becoming dream for Dalits in Nepal. All state organs are being puppets of the dominant castes only. The political leader's more use Dalits as vote bank.

Untouchability is a serious problem as well as caste system from which our society is suffering from discrimination in different sectors in daily life. It imposes certain restrictions on the untouchables that stand on the way of their social, economic and political development. The practice of untouchability is a stigma attached to the Hindu society. It has its roots deep down in our social and religious system.

### **1.1.3 Caste/Ethnic Disparities in Nepalese Society**

About 12.9% of the whole population constitutes the service castes (so called untouchables) who are assigned the traditional hard jobs and unclean works like cleaning dirty places, making shoes, wiping out the dirty things and removing dead animals (NDC 2006).

These occupied works result hurtful degradation and subject to humiliation and discrimination. Dalits are therefore becoming victims from entering into the temples, participating with social rituals and mainstreaming with state development. They also are depriving to have the share of distribution of state facilities. They are largely excluded from Nepal's army, administrative, diplomatic and political structures.

The caste-based discrimination to Dalits is found not only from Hindu caste and indigeneous Nationalities but also equally observed within Dalits even today (NPC 2002). Bhattachan et.al.(2002) listed total of 205 existing practices of caste-based discrimination. Some of these important forms of discrimination are: (a) denial of entry into the house, hotel/ restaurant, temple etc, (b) wearing the sacred thread is not permitted; worship conducted by Dalit is not acceptable, (c)access to common resources such as using the water tap, pond etc is denied, (d) denial to practise in public activities or entry into public places such as religious function, government function etc, (e) forced labour or exploitative use of their labour such as that under Bali-Ghare, Haliya System, and bonded labour system or using them to carry the dead animal.

The ongoing discrimination of Dalits in Nepali society proves a major obstacle to the overall human development in the country. Deep-rooted beliefs to the impurity of Dalits have been difficult to transform. Recurring incidents of discrimination at public water taps, tea - shops and temples are daily occurrences. Dalits are subject to hurtful discrimination, segregation, and exclusion from public institutions or denied free access to public facilities and opportunities provided by the government.

As a "Disadvantaged Group's to refer to those social groups who are socially oppressed, suppressed, exploited and dominated by 'Bahunbadi' rulers and their Bahun ideology of 'Brahminism'. Such groups are as follow; (a) Nationalities or indigeneous ethnic groups have become victim from the last thousands of years especially in the area of their language, religion and culture, (b) Dalits have been victims of untouchability from last thousands of years from the so called high caste groups (Bhattachan 2003). As a segment of Dalit groups, Cobblers are also socially, economically, religiously, politically and educationally marginalized.

The caste system has been illegal in Nepal for about forty five years by the new Civil Code but it continues to shape people's lives. The constitution has also provisioned that no person shall, on the basis of caste, be discriminated against as untouchable, be denied access to

any public place or be deprived of the use of public facilities. Any contravention of this provision shall be punishable by law. The government has formed Marginalized, Oppressed and Dalit Welfare Development Committee in 2054 to formulate, design and execute appropriate policy and programme for the socio-economic development of marginalized, oppressed and Dalit communities. The National Dalit commission has also been formed on 6 Chaitra 2058 (19 March 2002) for the same purpose.

## **1.2 Statement of the Research Problem**

Nepal is a complex caste based and multi-ethnic, multi-linguistics as well as multi-cultural country. Each and every caste group and ethnic groups has its own languages culture economic status and they have their own occupations. Every caste groups and its culture and occupations has its own important role in the national development process. But Dalits people where suffering from the caste based discriminations. They meet the live hood sufficiency. Dalits people are marginalized from various social and economical opportunities (Balikie et. al. 1980). The traditionally occupations of the Dalits people are the threatened and could not continue further because of industrial production and open market (Sharma-2001).

Nepal is heterogeneous society. Different caste and religious groups live together in this society. There are inequalities among these castes and occupation groups. Untouchables' access to economic, educational and political power is limited. Their socio-economic and cultural life is dominated by high caste Hindu groups. Cobber is one of the untouchable and occupational castes, inhabitant of all over Nepal, especially in Hillside. Their mother tongue is Nepali and religion is Hindu (Bista 1992).

Cobblers were able to subsist with the help of traditional occupation which is called leather working such as hiding the skin of dead animals and making the leather goods like bags, shoes, belt and other agricultural material. They have no other regular income sources for subsistence. At present, their traditional occupation is insufficient for subsistence, then cobbler also practices agriculture wage labouring, mason, carpentry etc. The main reasons behind leaving the traditional occupation are incapability to compete in the market, lack of raw materials, and lack of modern technical knowledge in new generation etc. Due course of time, change is taking place after a level of awareness caused by the factors of politicalization, industrialization, modernization and westernization. Earlier, Fatalistic attitude and government's indifference

dragged them to remain backward. But the picture is different now. Most of them are changing day by day, as change is the law of life and process of change cannot be checked (Caplan 1972).

After the restoration of democracy, many people have raised voice for the self-identity and awareness breaking the traditional thinking related to caste and occupation. In this context, it is important to find out the main causes of socio-economic change of cobbler. The present study attempt the following questions related with researcher's subject:

- What types of changes are occurring in the cobber community?
- What are their major occupations?
- Why are they changing their traditional occupation?
- How is their present socio-economic status?
- What are the existing problems among them?
- What is the entire discrimination of the cobber people?

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The general objective of this study is to trace out the socio- economic changes of the cobblers. The specific objectives of the present study are these:

- To find out socio-economic status of cobblers within the period of past three decades.
- To identify the trends of socio-economic change in the cobbler community during that time.
- To find out the causes of that change.

### **1.4 Rational of the Study**

The socio-economic status of a country shows the living condition of people in that country. The present study is an attempt to investigate the present socio-economic condition of cobblers of khudi khola village and also their socio-economic change within the period of past three decades.

Since any research work or study has not yet been conducted about cobbler community of khudi village, this study might be useful to those people who will be interested to study cobbler's socio-economic aspects. Since it is for the partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of M.A. in Sociology, it is very useful for the researcher. This study may also help to enhance the research skill of the researcher in such social researches.

### **1.5 Organization of the Study**

The thesis has been divided in to six chapters. The first chapter discusses the background, statement of problem, objectives of the study, rational of the study and organization of the study. The second chapter describes the literature review of the Dalit community and the previous studies on the socio-economic status of Dalit community. The third chapter deals with the research methodology which is used to prepare this project work. The fourth chapter deals with the general introduction of the study area and respondents socio-economic status. The fifth chapter presents the analysis of the data which was collected during the field and deals with the major achievements and problems faced by the Dalit (cobbler) community in the context of economic changes. The six OR last chapter conclude and summary of the this study.

## **CHAPTER - II**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

#### **2.1 Perspectives Use for the Interpretation Attempts towards Changes and Development.**

Socio-economic means relating to or concerned with interaction of socio-economic factors. The term socio-economic status means, "In a system of social stratification, it refers to a combination of various social and economic indexes of rank which are used in research studies. The term is often used to deal with stratification in a society without the need for the assumption that there are distinct social classes" (Koirala, 1996). Socio-economic status of a person is shaped by the change and development in that society. Change and development are used to say almost synonymous, as interrelated, inter-connected as well as universal process. The literal meaning of change is substitution of one thing for another. Darendorf looked as change rather than equilibrium, conflict than order, how the parts of society contribute to change rather than stability and conflict and coercion rather than normative constraint (Beteille, 1996).

According to Ghurye (1969) complete acceptance of the system in its broad outlines by the groups making up that system and their social and economic inter-dependence in the village not only prevented the exclusivist organization of the groups from splitting up the system into independent units, but created a harmony in civic life of course, this harmony was not the harmony of parts that are equally valued, but of units which are rigorously subordinated to one another. He also states that the nature of many of the occupations is such that through from a broad point of view each may be regarded as distinct, yet on closer scrutiny it presents differences which are sufficient to distinguish one aspect of it from another. Thus, through leather-working may be regarded as one occupation by the society, the followers of that occupation may distinguish different branches of leather-working as shoe-making, sandal-making, or oilcan-making. Such detailed distinctions within an occupation have been thought to be adequate to designate the group of members following the particular branch of the occupation by the name of that branch. Sub-caste within many of the occupational castes bear names derived from the special branches of the occupations.

Social change means a change in the system of social relationships. Social change refers to a process responsive to many types' changes; to changes in the man-made conditions of life, to changes in the attitudes and beliefs of men and to the changes that go beyond the human control to the biological and physical nature of things. Human beings keep on creating new social environment. Among the prominent cyclic theorists argued that all civilization rise and fall but he saw this cycle in terms of challenge and response to the environment. Governments, markets, NGOs, and community can imitate change by the way of diffusion, technology, acculturation, developmental policy etc. (Bhattchan, 2003). The change is related with modernization and it can be taken as comprehensive process of social change and societal development. It is also a process of social change whereby less-developed societies acquire characteristics common to developed societies. According to Rostow, to modernize less developed countries, some stages must be passed which are: the traditional society, the pre-take off stage, take off, the road to maturity, and the society of mass-consumption with the help of economy and technology from well-developed countries (Rostow, 1952). Sociologists and Economists explained that underdeveloped countries could be developed or modernized by copying the development strategies, economy, technology of the developed countries; A.G. Frank developed a theory as a critique of modernization theory and analyzed the process of underdevelopment and dependency. He stressed the economic, social and political change. He defined "Development as the transformation of one type into the other. The relation of imperialism and domination trapped poorer nation at the bottom of the global economy. Capitalism produces wealth and further development in the core countries, it creates poverty and underdeveloped in the satellites (Frank 1997). Long term penetration of foreign capital, market, technology as well as policy hinders a country's chance of economic development, domestic production and local technology. Dependency model was selected to analyze the impact of market penetration upon cobbler people's social, cultural and economic sectors.

Barth (1956) analyzed the relations between ethnic groups in North Pakistan, he tried to show that the economic and political organization of neighbouring ethnic groups could be understood in terms of niche occupied that three neighbouring groups (Patagans, Gujars and Kohitanis) reflected adjust to the habitat occupied by each as well as changing over time between three groups, while two groups with greater military strength could drive the other one to a different area and force it is to adjust to different set of resources. He provided on excellent

analysis of the cyclical shift between pastoralist and agriculture populations trump to farming on the basis of the success or failure of pastoral activities and the three appears to be a new exodus from pastoral societies in the direction of farming communities.

Frank (1997) argues that under development is not original or traditional and that neither the past nor the present of underdeveloped countries resembles in any important respect the past of the new developed countries the new developed countries were never underdeveloped but many have been underdeveloped, Frank identifies these contradictions with characterized capitalist development. They are the expropriation of economic from the many and its appropriation by the few. So, Frank's fundamental argument is development and under development are the two opposite sides of the same coin.

Livelihood activities followed by individual household and model of inter-household relation occurred in this process are highly influenced by the interest and activities of state. Kham Magar started to reduce their cattle number because of government policy to increase the taxes in the grazing land of the west. Many causes that are responsible to change various economic strategies of Kham Magar are Government policy, Indian market penetration—which is also called globalization and Lack of grazing land because of the population pressure (Dr. Tripathi, 2002). Kham Magar people were compelled to change their trade system from barter to monetary system as well as trade area after the control of China over Lhasa. Tourism and westernization are often credited with having transformed Sherpa life across a range of dimension from agriculture and pastorals to religious practices (Berreman, 1967).

Historically, Dalits have been practicing their traditional caste occupation and selling it to their clients to make a living. For example, Kamis not only make new agricultural tools and household utensils such as sickles, knives, axes, hoes, spades, plough tips, and nails but also repair them when needed. The Sarkis are leatherworkers who make shoes and other products from the skin of dead animals such as cattle and water buffalos. The various services of Dalits are supplied in the context of an ongoing relationship between a client and craftsman or a system also known as patron-client relationship. The service of craftsman to clients (clients are mostly the so-called high caste Hindu groups) are known by different names in different parts of Nepal such as *BALI GHARE PRATHA* (Eastern Nepal) or *KHALO-PRATHA* (Western Nepal) and *KHAN SYSTEM* (in the Terai) (National Dalit Strategy Report, 2002: 41-42).

Bhattachan (2002) found that only 19 percent of the Dalits reported that they are involved in traditional caste based occupation. Mainly, the Damais are involved in their traditional activity. But, decreasing involvement in caste based occupation is mainly due to the fact that, for example, blacksmiths are hard bit by the availability of factory-produced farm implements, Damais by the availability of readymade clothes, and Sarkis by the availability of cheap footwear (Sharma et al. 1994:52). They conclude that all the people changing their occupations and their work/job. All people are allowed to choose their occupation and use their skills.

## **2.2 Review of the Previous Studies**

Caste system of Nepal was codified in the National Legal Code. The caste has been paraphrased in the code as Char Varna Chhatis Jaat (Four Varnas and Thirty-six castes) in which those who eat denial food (carcass) restricted by Brahmin and Chhetri are called Pani Nachalne Chhoichhito Halnu Parne (Muluki Ain 1910). Caste-based occupation was the major means of livelihood for Dalit population such as black smithing, leather working, tailoring etc. But it has been gradually disappearing over a year primarily due to three reasons, which are following: (a) They themselves think their occupation was of lower social prestige and demeaning socially, (b) Many young educated Dalit boys and girls don't like to follow their father's foot-steps, (c) They find difficulty in competing with the open market which is supplying various types of similar goods depending upon the needs of customers. So Dalit do variety of occupation to make a living. Primary occupation of the economically active Dalits labour force involve in agriculture, government or private services, non-farming wage earning such as farm-wage earning, business and other are respectively high to low proportion like-wise from high to low ecological region and sex (Dahal et.at.2002).

Sharma (2004) studies the socio-economic condition of and effect of the migration on the income level of cobbler migrant of Kathmandu town pinch at they are losing their trade due to the easily and low priced availability of readymade shoes.

Pokhrel (2010) stated that open economic and political system provides opportunities to the Kami people to come out from their traditional occupation. According to him, development process combined with declining traditional occupation, population growth in the village and opportunities for work elsewhere the main causes of social transformation among the Kami

people. His study shows that many Kami people of Melamchi Valley were involved urban skilled labor in Kathmandu.

Darnal (2002) says that Dalit are hard workers and rich in their skills. Almost all the Dalits have their own skill, art and technology. But due to the social hatred and negligence, occupational insecurity, caste discrimination and due to the lack of occupational guarantee, their skill and technology are on the verge of disappearance. He focuses to develop and expand their skill and technology and make this occupation more dignified.

Cobblers are incorporated in the traditional Hindu caste system of hierarchy as untouchable lowermost ritual status. According to the caste system, cobblers are one of the craftsmen among many other untouchables like Damai, Kami etc. whose major duty are to serve upper-caste by doing leatherwork, are not allowed to touch or consume food with high caste. Sharma (1994) says Sarki are prohibited to enter the temple, shop, upper caste's house etc. though they perform all social rituals as other upper caste's people. They use more liquor on the occasions of social ceremony. Although the traditional occupation of the Sarkis is leather work and shoe-making, they are totally diverted in agricultural work nowadays. They have also engaged in mason and carpentry works in some places. However, they are financially disadvantaged like other low caste people (Pokheral, 2010).

A.P Caplan (1972) made a study of the Priest and Cobblers (Brahmin and Sarki) In this study, she analyzed the socio-economic interrelationship between the backward and exploited community represented by the Cobbler and the people of higher caste represented by Brahmins and Chhetri. The village society throughout this area is highly stratified through the idiom of caste. The author focuses that the Brahmins who obtained the resources from their client, invested the surplus in loans and so become richer. The Sarkis people mostly go to India for seasonal work. The land reformation has not affected to cobblers in this area. In the same book she also describes the credit (loan) became a media for Brahmina to exploit the Sarkis.

So-called Brahmin and Chhetri people are still dominating caste and community members in school, office and public places. Using water tap, temple and well are not open for all castes even today. So-called lower caste people are facing the problem to sell milk, to run hotel and teashop at their own village. Nowadays, Dalit movement is active to abolish the caste discrimination which is deeply rooted in Nepalese society because of the Hindu myth.

The important factor in economic change throughout Nepal and India has been land reform designed to help oppressed people such as designed to help oppressed people such as untouchables. The implementation of these laws has coincided with new ways of making up cash grain deficits by means of other than borrowing and the drying up of credits consequent upon the new laws has not as yet too many difficulties. In some parts of India however, lower caste have lost their traditional credits facilities and have found no alternative way to make ends meets. Moreover, where they used to work land for the high caste, they have been depriving of their tenancies and so find their position much worse than before, the relation of Dalits caste groups to the other caste group is more or less hostile. Points out her book "Priest and Cobblers" as high caste control over resources is significantly larger than that of 'untouchable' which ultimately has load on the latter group either to migrate or to divest the property. Once they lose their land the need for food and cash grows further which make them dependent upon the high caste who are land owner and money lender of the village. They have to provide the labour service to get money in the absence of other opportunities in the area (Caplan, 1972).

The Priest and Cobblers P. Caplan state that the changing relations between high caste (particularly priest or Brahmins and untouchable caste Cobblers) in Hindu society. This book which is a monograph deals about socio-economic, political, cultural changes in broader spectrum. In this book Caplan has been shown the changing factors, like new methods of communication, such as road air fields, radio, telegraphs, educational facilities have been established a new system of Panchayats based on elected council has replaced the traditional autocracy a new constitution and a legal code.

## **CHAPTER - III**

### **RESEARCH METHODS**

#### **3.1 Rational of the Selection of the Study Area**

For this study, is a typical cobbler village called Sarki Gaun, which actually is a part or Ward No 13 of lekhnata municipality of kaski district, is selected. The village is located at the distance of 6 kilometer south of Pokhara the Headquarter of kaski district. Pokhara is a beautiful city of Nepal. It has been growing as city in size because of the slow urbanization process. The impact of urbanization and modernization process has the direct impact on cobbler village of lekhnath khudi because of its nearness to pokhara. So, this cobbler village is selected to find out and describe the changes of their life-style, social behavior and livelihood strategy. This area is selected also to explore the causes of that change in the study area.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

A research design is the arrangement of condition for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy and procedure. Both descriptive and exploratory research design strategies were in this research. With the help of descriptive research design, data is collect about cobblers' present socio-economic condition and described in comparison to their previous condition. Likewise the causes and pattern of change in their occupational socio-economic adaptation is explored during the course of the study.

#### **3.3 Nature and Sources of Data**

Both qualitative and quantitative data is used in the study. Different kinds of information about Cobblers were gathered and analyzed during the study. Required data will collect with the help of primary sources from the direc field visit—household survey, interview and observation. Secondary data for this study is collect from various types of relevant literatures such as books, journals, articles and other publications of different government and non-government organization such as Central Dalit Commission, CBS, Ministry of Population and Environment, DFID, UNDP etc.

### **3.4 Universe and Sampling**

Total households of Khudi Khola are the unit for this study. There are 102 households in the village. Only 35% i.e. 35 households were sampled for the study. To draw the sample from whole population, random sampling with the help of lottery method is follow after the preparation of total population list.

### **3.5 Techniques of Data Collection**

#### **3.5.1 Survey Questionnaire**

Structured questionnaire will be prepared on the basis of research objectives before going to field for data collection. On the basis of that schedule, Questionnaire is filling with the head of sampled household to collect the reliable data. With the help of this technique, different kinds of data about the cobblers' socio-economic aspects are collected.

#### **3.5.2 Observation**

Observation is one of the important techniques to collect various types of data at natural setting. The researcher had moved around the whole cobbler village to observe the life style and their condition in reality. He had examined their behavior and also checked the reliability of the information taking part in discussion with other caste people. Observation is also important to check the relevancy of information provided by the respondents.

#### **3.5.3 Key Informant Interview**

Key informants' interview was used to collect information about their history, overall aspect of village, educational status, various causes and constraints to change their traditional occupation and to collect information's that were not obtained from household level. Elder cobblers, educated people in the cobbler society, previous local political leader and teacher who have knowledge about their past and present socio-economic condition were selected as key informants. After the consult with village secretary and villagers, 14 key informants were selected and much information relevant to the study was gathered from them through unstructured interview and check list prepared for that purpose.

### **3.5.4 Household Survey**

A household survey by using interview schedule was used to obtain the required information. In first the purpose of getting information about the general information of a household in which family size, household economy, source of economy, occupation, income, land holding are interviewed.

### **3.6 Method of Data Presentation and Analysis**

The data collected from the field study is edited and coded in tabular form. All the qualitative and quantitative data is analyzed and interpreted. Simple statistical tools like average and percentage were used in relevant places to present the occupational, socio-economic condition of the cobblers in the study area. Qualitative data is analyzed descriptively.

### **3.7 Limitation of the Study**

This is a study of cobblers' socio-economic change within the period of past three decades. This study covers only Khudi khola one ward of Lekhanath municipality. The generalization derived from this study is not be equally applicable to the other dalit basti and may not cover the whole situation of the nation.

## CHAPTER - IV

### SOCIO-ECONOMIC ASPECT OF THE STUDY AREA

#### 4.1 Introduction of the Study Area

##### 4.1.1 Location: Khudi Khola village of lekhnath Municipality, Kaski District

Kaski is located in western Development region of Nepal. It is situated between 28°13' - 28°21' North latitude and 84°45' - 84°54' east longitudes. The study area is in the south part of this district. It is of the rectangular shape. Altitude range of khudi khola is between 600 and 1000 m. The boundary of the study area limits upto Begnas and deurali VDC to the East, Dulaigauda and Khariranitar to the South, pokhara municipality to the West and Rakhi VDC to the North. The particular study area of khuidikhaola is cobbler village, which is typically called Sarki gaun, or ward no.13. It lies to the East of this area towards the border of Begnas lake.

##### 4.1.2 Vegetation and Wild-Life of Study Area

Almost 35% of land of the study area is covered with forest. Most of this forestland is covered with natural vegetation. The main tree species of the study area are Sal (*Shorea robusta*), Chilaune (*Schima-wauichi*), Katus (*Castanopsis Indica*), Paiyun (*Prunus cerasoides*), Box myrtle/Kafal (*Myricanagi Thumb*), Lapsi (*Spondias acuminata*) etc. Some tree species found in farmland are Bamboo (*Artocarpus lakucha*), Khaniu (*Fiscus Cunia*) Bar and Pipal (*Fiscus Religiosa*) etc. These species of tree are used for wood, timber, and grass according to their nature.

There are several species of mammal, birds, reptiles, and amphibians in the study area. Among the mammals' leopard, deer, jungle cat, jackal etc are found. Likewise, more than 55 species of birds were recorded from the area. According to the local people, various kinds of snakes, lizards, frogs and toads are also found there.

##### 4.1.3 Development Infrastructure

khudikhola is located at the distance of 16 kilometer south of pokhara municipaly, the headquarter of kaski district. Though it is not very far from district headquarter, there are not many development infrastructures in the village. One agricultural road has been built in the village recently.

There are one primary school, one lower secondary school, one secondary school and one higher- secondary school in the village. The literacy rate of the Village is higher than national literacy rate. There is the facility of electricity and telecommunication. There is sub-health post, post office and one club of the village has established an information center to aware the village people. Clothes, utensils and household necessities can be bought from the local market.

## 4.2 Social Profile of the Study Area

### 4.2.1 Population and Castes group of Khudikhola

In khudikhola village, various caste/ ethnic groups like Brahmin, Chhetri, Sarki, Kami, Damai, Sonar, Sanyasi, Ghatri/ Bhujel are inhabited. Total population of this village is 2628 of which male are 1230 and female are 1398. But 321 or 12.21% is the total cobbler population of this village of which 151 are male and 170 are female (CBS 2012).

The Caste/ ethnic composition of this village is shown in table 1.

**Table 1: Caste/ ethnic Composition of khudikhola**

<b>Caste/Ethnic Groups</b>	<b>Total Population</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Brahmin- Hill	1735	66.02
Sarki	321	12.21
Kami	179	6.81
Damai	125	4.76
Chhetri	116	4.41
Sonar	63	2.40
Sanyasi	43	1.64
Ghatri/Bhujel	16	0.61
Unidentified Dalit	13	0.49
Others	7	0.27
Total	2628	100

Source: CBS, 2012.

Table 1 show that the highest number of caste/ethnic group is of Brahmin (1735) and the least is of Ghatri/ Bhujel (16). Second highest number of caste / ethnic groups is of Sarki (321) which is the interest of the researcher but the field survey- 2012 disclosed that the total number of Sarki of khudikhola is 665.

The development of any society depends on its active and healthy population. Out of 100 households, 282 cobblers of the selected 35 households are presented in the following Table - 2 according to their age and sex composition.

**Table 2: Age and Sex Composition of Cobblers under Study**

Age groups (in yrs)	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
0-5	7	33.33	14	66.67	21	7.45
6-15	30	42.86	40	57.14	70	24.89
16-30	41	51.25	39	48.75	80	28.37
31-45	33	49.25	34	50.75	67	23.76
46-60	17	47.22	19	52.78	36	12.76
61 & above	4	50.00	4	50.00	8	2.84
Total	132	46.81	150	53.19	282	100
<b>Economically active population (16-60 yrs)= 183 (64. 89%)</b>						
<b>Dependent population (15 &lt;yrs and 60&gt; =99 (35.11%)</b>						

**Source: Field Survey, 2012**

The sex ratio denotes that the number of female population (53.19%) is higher than the number of male population (46.81%). The table also reveals that economically active cobbler population in the study area is 64.89% and dependent population is 35.11% in that area.

#### **4.2.2. Cobbler's Educational Status**

Education is considered as the fundamental requirement for social development. It provides new vision, skill and increases social status. So, education is very important in the society to uplift one's standard of living. One of the barriers for social development in Nepal is

the low level of education status. Table 3 shows the educational status of cobblers in the study area.

**Table 3: Educational Status of Cobblers under Study**

Particulars	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage
Illiterate	66	50.00	77	51.33	143	50.71
Primary level	40	30.30	50	33.33	90	31.91
Lower Secondary Level	12	9.09	13	8.67	25	8.86
secondary Level	10	7.57	9	6.00	19	6.74
Higher Secondary level and above	4	3.03	1	0.67	5	1.77
Total	132	100	150	100	282	100

Source: Field Survey, 2012

From the above table, we can find that more cobbler people in the study area are illiterate. Only 49.29% cobblers are literate whereas 50.71% are illiterate. The rate of female illiteracy is higher than the rate of male illiteracy. Half of the male cobblers are literate but only 48.68% female cobblers can read and write. The table shows that male involvement ratio is higher than female in secondary and higher secondary level and above. In primary and lower secondary level, the number of female is higher than the number of male. Table 3 shows that only 5 cobbler people have passed S.L.C. examination while other have left further study because they have to engage in economic activities for their daily livelihood. Their profession also is the main cause of educational set back as their occupation does not require any qualification. When they reach at the age of 14/15 and become economically active, they leave school and are engaged in agriculture labour work.

### 4.2.3 Marital Status

Marriage is an institution, which admits men and women to family life. It is stable relationship in which a man and woman are socially permitted to have children, the right to have children implying the right to sexual relations. Marriage is the more or less durable connection between male and female lasting beyond the mere act of propagation till after the birth of offspring (Bhusan and Sachdev, 1995). Marriage maintains the social structure, gives continuity to the society, and helps to sustain social development. In cobbler society, arrange marriage (Magi Biwaha) is most common that is arranged by the family head. But nowadays some of them are also attracted to love marriage. Inter-caste marriage is prohibited among them. The age between 18 to 24 is regarded the most suitable for marriage. Table 4 shows the marriage system of cobblers in the study area.

**Table 4: Types of Marriage Adopted by Cobblers in Study Area**

S.N.	Types of Marriage	No	Percentage
1	Arrange	90	85.71
2	Love	15	14.29
3	Inter caste	0	0
4	Total	105	100

Source: Field Survey, 2012

From the above table we can find that 85.71% cobbler people have done arrange marriage whereas only 14.29% cobblers are attracted to love -marriage. Inter caste marriage could not be found in the study area.

In the marriage ceremony the relatives help by lending money, purchasing dowry for bride and by preparing foods. Cobblers arrange marriage is performed according to Hindu tradition like Brahmin and Chhetri people. Nowadays, they have left the child marriage but dowry system is gradually increasing in the arrange marriage. People told that they used to consume more liquor (alcohol) in the marriage ceremony in the past. In the ceremonies they were

intoxicated and quarrelled with each other without any reason. The member of liquor user in the village is decreasing now because only a few households prepare liquor in their home. As a result, there is no quarrel in the social function nowadays.

#### 4.2.4 Family System

Family is group of persons united by the ties of marriage, blood and adoption constituting a single household interacting and inter-communication with each other in their respective social roles of husband and wife, mother and father, son and daughter, brother and sister creating common culture. Family is the most elementary form of society. Family structure might be different but it can be found in any society; so it is an universal social institution. It fulfils various needs of human beings i.e. physical, emotional, social and economic needs. There are two types of family-nuclear and joint. The following table shows the family type of the respondents.

**Tables 5: Family Type of the Cobblers under Study**

S.N.	Types of Family	HHs	Percentage
1	Nuclear	25	71.43
2	Joint	10	28.57
	Total	35	100

Source: Field Survey, 2012

The table shows that most of the households are nuclear families. Out of 35 selected households, 25 (71.43%) are nuclear families whereas 10 (28.57%) are under the joint family system. The trend of nuclear family system is increasing in cobbler community nowadays as compared to past time. They prefer to live in nuclear family because of the family dispute, growing awareness, increasing rate of service holders, business work. The main reason of breakdown of the joint family is perhaps the economic factor.

#### 4.2.5 Water Supply and Sanitation

Safe drinking water is the most necessary thing for healthy life. However, cobbler community in the study area is facing the problem of hygienic drinking water facility. They use

traditional dug well and springs for drinking water. One drinking water scheme has been completed in the cobbler village but it is also insufficient to fulfil their demand. There are only 5 taps for drinking water in the whole village.

The sanitation status of cobbler community is not satisfactory. Though all the household have toilet in their house, they do not keep their house neat and clean. They throw household waste products surrounding by the house, which makes their house environment dirty.

#### **4.2.6 Political Participation**

Thirty years ago, cobblers were completely unaware of politics. They had not known the importance of political system and the voting right. They had not known about the power of politics. But after the restoration of democracy, their political consciousness and their participation and representation in municipality and Ward level has been increased. The vice-chairman of the municipality and the Ward Chairman with other 3 persons were elected in the local election 2054. After the establishment of primary school in their own village, their access has been reached in School Management Committee's member from their caste. They have formed a Dalit Committee, which conducts different kinds of awareness Programmes against caste discrimination. They are affiliating in their own caste institution namely Samudayik Utthan Sewa Samiti. One community based organization for saving and credit purpose and for development has also been formed in their village. Though cobblers in the study area have not reached in the high political post, their involvement and participation in politics has been increasing during the past thirty years.

#### **4.2.7 Social Position and Practices**

Khudikhola is Hindu-dominated community. Its social norms, values, culture and other behaviors are based on the Hindu ideology. Due to the caste of Hindu-based ideological activities, it has caste-based activities, hierarchy and untouchable practices. Untouchability is one of the main disadvantage issues for the cobblers as they are deprived from specific jobs such as priest, milk trade, teashops and hotels in upper caste village. Upper caste people do not accept water and cooked food from them. Untouchability has restricted the cobblers to participate in social programme, which is open to upper caste. In the same way, cobblers have to keep outside the door of upper caste's house; they are prohibited to enter into their house.

Thirty years ago, caste-based activities, practices and Hindu-dominated social norms had been strictly followed every time and everywhere by upper caste (Non-Dalit) and lower caste (Dalit including cobbler). During that time, caste - based activities and social norms could be seen between Dalits and non-Dalit but within Dalit also. Both inter and intra caste untouchable practices were prevailing at that time. Dalit were severely dominated by non-Dalit. Though they paid money for food and drink, they were forced to wash glasses and plates in the hotels too. If they touched upper caste people, they would sprinkle water on their body to purify them. Each and every sectors like opportunities distribution (i.e. drinking water, forest, political participation), facilities distribution (i.e. health, education, training etc.) provided by government were totally captured by upper - caste group and the participation of cobbler people on above mentioned sectors was very low or not. Each and every decision- making process was controlled by upper-caste people. Total social programmes were run on the basis of the sense of touchables and untouchables. There were also bond and forced labour practices like Haliya system, free labour, dead animal body (Sino) eating.

There was also caste discrimination among Dalit like cobbler, blacksmith and tailor. Cobblers supposed themselves superior or of higher caste than blacksmith and tailor and they would not accept any food from them. But there could not be found power relationship among them like Dalit and non-Dalit.

Nowadays caste based activities and practices can be found in gradual changing process. Untouchability practices between Dalit and non Dalit is also going to disappear. They are very rare than 30 years ago. The access of cobbler participation to various sectors like opportunity distribution and government provided facilities as well as social programs run collectively is increasing year by year. Cobblers and Brahmins exchange labour during the cultivation time. Nowadays, both Brahmins and cobblers invite each other in marriage ceremonies. If Brahmins do not eat food they provide them fruits on the occasion. Cobblers try to follow the cultural practices performed by Brahmins. There can be seen drastic change within intra caste based practices too. Dalit are open to all sorts of behaviours among themselves except marriage.

Some causes are responsible for that drastic change in caste based activities and practices between Dalit and non-Dalit. Firstly, educational improvement in Dalit society; secondly, positive impact of NGOs and programmes to raise Dalit awareness in terms of caste based activities and

practices; thirdly, impact of means of transportation and communication like radio/TV programmes, newspapers, films, labour migration. Kin relationship is another cause for that change. According to key informants' interview, thirty years ago even their single kin member had not involved in education, formal and informal employment, business and political sectors. As a result, they had no access to various sectors like education, employment, business and politics because of the lack of various information about their involvement, qualification, duration, process, channel etc. Nowadays, cobbler's kin members are able to spread their access on various sectors. As a result, it made easier for cobblers to extent their access on education, wage labour, labour migration, politics etc. They accept labour migration, wage labour as a regular means of income for their better living. Not satisfactorily improved educational status and some of their hegemonic feeling of inferiority by birth are some of the barriers to change their social conditons structurally.

### **4.3 Economic Aspects**

#### **4.3.1 Occupation**

Occupation refers to a person's profession. It shows the income level of the person and livelihood status. Occupation helps to measure the well being of a community or individual person. The people of this village are involved in various types of occupation rather than agriculture only.

But the main occupation and the major source of income of cobbler in the study area is agriculture. Besides that, they are also involved in wage labouring, Haliya, private and government service, labour migration and carpentry/mason too. Some of them go to India for labour work in agriculture off-season. In that season, some people are engaged in carpentry/mason and some other work as porter. In an average, they earn Rs. 5000-100000 in a year.

As the main assets of khudikhola, farming is one of the main occupations. More than 85% people are involved in farming system. Generally, agricultural productions of this village are paddy, millet, maize, potato, wheat, barley etc. The traditional occupation of cobblers is leatherwork and they are known as leather profession worker. They used to make leather goods i.e. shoes, leather bags, slippers, belt, scabbard etc. But cobblers in the study area are not found

to be engaged in leather work profession now. Table 6 shows the major occupation status of cobbler community under study area.

**Table 6: Major Occupation of Cobbler Community by Household**

S.N.	Occupation	No. of HHs	Percentage
1	Agriculture	15	42.86
2	Wage Labouring in Foreign Countries	6	17.14
3	Farm and off farm Wage Labouring	5	14.28
4	Haliya	5	14.28
5	Carpentry/Mason	2	5.71
6	Service in government and private sectors	2	5.71
Total		35	100

Source: Field Survey, 2012

It is obvious from the table that cobblers have left their traditional occupation of leather work. Though all those occupations are not mutually exclusive, the major occupation of most of the cobbler households (42.86%) is agriculture. It is their major source of income. 11 households depend on wage labouring for their subsistence. The household number of foreign goers for earning money is higher than the number of spending farm and off farm wage labouring in the country. The number of households engaged in carpentry/mason and service in government and private sectors is equal (5.71%). Again 5 households earn their livelihood by ploughing others land in the haliya system.

### 4.3.2 Land Ownership and its Access

Land holding size is one of the key economic indicators to measure the well-being of the community or a person. The cobblers of the study area have always relied upon agricultural economic activity. Farming and working as an agricultural labour are their major source of income. Some of them have their own land but it is not so fertile. They measure their land in Hall system and classify into three types such as khet, Bari and Pakho on the basis of irrigation. Besides their own land, they take some land from upper caste people as Adhiya for earning a living. On the basis of land ownership, cobblers are classified into two types: land owned and landless. Land ownership status and types of land of cobbler village are shown in the following table.

**Table 7: Ownership Status and Types of Cobbler Land According to Sample Households**

Ownership status	Types of land		
	Khet	Bari	Pakho
Own Land Owners	4	13	5
Own Land Owner and *Tenancy Holder	7	14	-
Only Tenancy Holder	4	3	-
Landless	20	5	30
Total	35	35	35

Source: Field Survey, 2012

\* Tenancy means Adhiya system

Table 7 shows that their land ownership system is totally based on their owing process. Within land owned, own landholder and tenancy landholder are existent. Likewise, within landless, there are only tenancy holders and no land holders. Most of the cobbler households have no khet and Pakho. They have Bari which is unfertile land. 4 cobbler households have not even Bari.

Quantity of land variation is one of the main aspects to analyze their access to land, which is based on ownership status and types of land. Cobbler's access to land can be analyzed with the help of table 8 in terms of own land and Adhiya landholder.

**Table 8: Variation to Land Ownership Status of Sampled Households**

Quantity of Land in Hall	Ownership status According to sampled HHs					
	Own Ownership			Tenancy Holder		
	Khet	Bari	Pakho	Khet	Bari	Pakho
Less than 1	7	10	3	4	-	-
1.1-2	2	12	1	4	7	-
2.1-3	2	5	1	2	7	-
3.1-4	-	-	-	1	3	-
No land	24	8	30	24	18	35
Total	35	35	35	35	35	35

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Table 8 shows that there are wide variations to ownership status of land within cobblers. They have little access to khet rather than Bari because Bari is the symbol of their inheritance property, which is transformed from one generation to another. But in their community, khet is generally a symbol of property. So, they have no access to khet like Bari because of the high price of khet. If they are interested to buy khet, they have to purchase in a long distance from their village area. The table also shows that most of them have their access to land only less than 2 Hall because they have not a system to invest on land. Most of their monetary income is spent only in household management process. In this way, they are unable to increase their access to land either khet/Bari or Pakho.

There is also a tradition of taking Adhiya less than 3 hall and they own Adhiya especially Bari because it is very difficult for them to manage everything for planting rice in proper time.

Cobblers Adhiya taking system is based on their family structure. Large family can take more Adhiya land than the small family because of the availability labour force. Cobblers have no tradition and interest to take Adhiya Pakho because they can't get benefit from Pakho immediately and directly whenever they need.

### 4.3.3 Livestock Raising

Livestock rising is another occupation and a source of income of cobblers in the study area. They keep different types of animal and bird such as cow, buffalo, ox, pig, goat, hen etc as a support for agriculture and also for meat and money. Most of them keep cow and buffalo for milk purpose, ox for ploughing field and goat, hen and pig for meat. Livestock rising is for self-consumption as well as for sale. Table 9 shows the types, number and ownership of animal.

**Table 9: Livestock Types, Number and Ownership Status According to Sampled HHs**

Number of Animal	Ownership and Types of Animal According to Sampled Household													
	Own Animal							Adhiya Animal						
	Cow	Buffalo	Buffalo calf	Goat	Ox	Pig	Hen	Cow	Buffalo	Buffalo calf	Goat	Ox	Pig	Hen
1	4	19	5	5	6	2	4	2	9	8	6	2		
2	1	3	1	2		3	3							
3				2			2							
4							1							
No animal	30	13	29	26	29	30	25	33	26	27	29	33	35	35
Total	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35

Source: Field Survey, 2012.

Table 9 shows that most of the cobbler keeps buffalo in their home whether it is their own or Adhiya. But there is not the dairy system and their milk is not accepted by upper caste

people. So, they consume milk themselves. Cows are kept for generating ox rather than for milk. They keep more buffalo and buffalo calf adhiya than other animals. There is no tradition to keep pig and hen adhiya. Though most of the cobblers involve in livestock rising, they are only limited to keep only 1 or 2 animals. It shows that they are involved in livestock rising for their self-consumption and agricultural support rather than for business purpose.

#### 4.3.4 Food Sufficiency

Agricultural production of cobblers in the study area is very low and not sufficient for the whole year because they have only small size of land. If they have land, it is less fertile. Food grains is acquired from various sources like own land, adhiya land, haliya system etc. But that crop cannot fulfill their hand to mouth problem the whole year. The following table shows their food sufficiency condition in the study area.

**Table 10: Food Sufficiency Status of Cobbler**

Duration of Food Sufficiency in Months	No of Household	Percentage of Household
Less than 3 months	6	17.14
3.1-6	20	57.14
6.1-9	8	22.86
9.1 and over	1	2.86
Total	35	100

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Table 10 clearly shows food insufficiency in the cobbler village. Only one household in the village can subsist for 9/10 months by its produced crop. Acquired food grains by different sources are finished within 9 months. Most of the cobbler households are facing the problem of food insufficiency for 6 months. Main reasons of the food deficiency are low level of access to land, dependency on others' land and landlessness. They purchase crop from bazaar and from upper-caste people for the remaining mon

### 4.3.5 Wage Labour

Wage labour is also important means of occupation, which is performed by cobblers for their survival. They perform various works in daily wage when upper-caste people call them to do different things. They are called to make houses, huts, many repairing things, to make bamboo handicrafts, to construct various tools from wood like table, bench, chair, cupboard etc. and to cut firewood. Cobblers are also involved in short distance porter for which they acquire daily wages. Various works performed by Dalit and their wage system in Khudikhola can be presented with the help of table 11.

**Table 11: Wage Rate by Age and Sex of the Laborers by Various Tasks**

Age and Sex of Workers	Wage Rate, Types of Work						
	Plough Field	Maize, Millet Cultivate and Harvest	To Carry Paddy Bundle	Porter	To Carry Soil/Stone	Carpenter /Mason	To Chase Mule
Male	150-200	70-100	150-200	150-200	150-200	150-250	150-170
Female	-	70-100	100-150	100-150	100-150	-	-
Boy (13-15)	120-150	70-100	150-200	150-200	150-200	-	70-120
Girl (13-15)	-	70-100	100-150	100-150	100-150	-	-
Boy(9-12)	-	40-60	70-100	-	-	-	-
Girl (9-19)	-	40-60	50-70	-	-	-	-

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Table 11 shows the wide variation in wage system according to sex, age and type of work. Daily wage system for various works is different but wage rate of the study area is almost the same with above average table. Cobbler male, female and also their children upto 9 years old are involved in laborious works in wage system. They have to work more than 9 hours in a day.

Some of them are involved in carpentry/ mason because agricultural wage laboring is seasonal. Another type of wage labour, labour migration is increasing day by day which is discussed in the later chapter.

#### **4.3.6 Income and Expenditure Pattern of Cobbler**

Some cobblers of the study area earn satisfactorily from labour migration but there is no tradition to save much. Majority of the people (71.43%) in the study area invest most of their earning to purchase foodstuffs because food insufficiency is their major problem. It is the proof that most of the cobbler people are struggling for their hand to mouth problem. They have no money left to invest in productive thing. Because of the high price of consumable things, their expenditure is increasing day by day.

## CHAPTER - V

### SOCIO –ECONOMIC CHANGES OF COBBLER

#### 5.1 Upliftment in Social Status

Cobblers social status has been uplifted greatly now in comparison to their status thirty years ago. At that time whole cobbler village had no access to education properly because of their level of knowledge, available educational programs and condition of educational material. They were not aware about the importance of education, its objective and utility. As a result, they had no interest to admit their children to school education program. Rather they used to involve their children in farming. At that time only one primary school was established in Khudikhola village. After completing the primary level, students had to go to another village for lower secondary level education. Cobbler had to be involved in farming and other activities for their living. So, they had no time and money to admit their children in the distanced school.

It was very difficult for the cobblers to buy educational materials whenever needed. They had no regular income except leather work, wage labor, bamboo handicraft, Haliya system etc. There was no concept of labour migration for their income source as monthly wage. They had no access to land to fulfill their problem by the way of selling their products. To clarify more, the previous educational status of cobblers is presented in table 12 below categoring in terms of age and literacy condition to clarify more.

**Table 12 Classification of Sampled Household Head According to their Age and Education**

Age of Respondents	Number and Education Status of Respondent	
	Literate	Illiterate
30-45	6	3
46-60	2	18
60 and above		6
Total	8	27

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Table 12 shows that almost all cobblers were illiterate at previous time. Out of the total respondents, 26 are selected of 45 years and above. Within 26, only 2 are literate but 24 respondents are illiterate. According to key informants, literacy rate of cobbler in past time was

less than one percent. It was very difficult to find out well -literate people in the whole cobbler village. Almost all the cobblers had no capacity to sign properly whenever they need. Educational condition of cobbler had direct impact to their politics and health. They were unable to participate in political leadership for their own village. Upper caste group people had to perform political leadership in cobbler village because of the incapability of cobbler. Due to the lack of education and political awareness, practice of Sino-eating, sense of strong untouchables, polygamy marriage, child marriage, witch system etc. were existed. They would spend more money in alcohol drinking, card playing and other unproductive things.

Because of the lack of education and alcohol, there would be quarrel and fighting almost every time in the past. They would use vulgar words without any hesitation. They would not care for their physical and environmental neatness and cleanness. There could not be seen any toilet in the whole cobbler village thirty years ago. All the streets were covered with stool and one had to use mask and step carefully while going to cobbler village. One main reason of hating cobbler by upper caste people was their dirty nature and their dishonesty in every matter. As a result, it was easy for upper caste people to dominate them in the name of caste discrimination. The sense of untouchability was so strong that cobblers themselves had hegemonical feeling of their inferiority by birth. Even an old cobbler people had to greet 4/5 years old upper-caste child as a respected person. Upper-caste people would always use the language of order and command to them. Cobblers had to live in the world of domination and injustice because they had no courage to raise their voice against upper-caste people. It was their compulsion because they had to depend on upper-caste people for their subsistence. They had to work in the house of the upper-caste people as a slave only for food without any wage too. That miserable condition of the cobble people had thrown to the lowest rank of social status.

Thirty years ago in cobbler village, except primary level education, any other programme like awareness raising, skill development were not run by the help of government, NGOs and community as development runner. But in present situation, their educational status is gradually improving. They send their children to school and they have known the importance of education for their future. Beside the formal school programme, other various informal educational programmes for adult, women and children have been running with the help of SFD, DDC and other district level NGOs. Formal and informal education programs have direct impact in the behavior of cobbler people.

Nowadays cobbler people do not eat dead animal body (Sino). Because of their growing awareness, they do not believe in witch system. If someone becomes ill, they take him/her to hospital. They take some care for their health and environment by building toilet. They are also going to control their negative behaviour like alcohol drinking, card playing, quarrelling and fighting. They are discarding the use of vulgar words and are heading towards the road of honesty and commitment. The caste system is losing its strength because of their awareness against caste discrimination. The high caste people themselves are disobeying the caste taboos. Political change of 1990, political awareness because of the Maoist Revolution and the awareness of human right help them successfully to lessen the gap between themselves and the upper caste people.

Due to the formal and informal education, cobblers are able to develop partially political leadership at local level. They try to implement legal proclamation of the abolition of the caste discrimination in the grass-root level by organized different awareness programmes. In 2064, they had organizing co-feasting program in which Civil Society members Damannath Dhungana and Krishna Pahadi had participated. As a result of informal education, they are also changing their title name (Thar) like upper caste Brahmin and Chhetri such as Bohora, Bashyal, Pipla, Nepali etc. in place of sarki. They change their name to prevent their child from humiliation as a inferior caste called sarki.

There have been remarkable changes in the cobbler of the study area in course of time. Nowadays cobbler people go to the hospital, visit doctors and use modern medicines. They are conscious not to bear more children and are also aware of the contraceptives. Both upper and lower caste people participate collectively and actively in the development programme at the local level. Cobbler people are empowering themselves to gather different logic and to participate actively in any discussion or interacting programme and in decision-making process.

Cobblers have left the traditional dressing pattern. Instead of wearing laveda suruwal and coat, male start to wear shirt, pant, jacket and other clothes. Female also start to wear blouse, kurta, suruwal, maxi, sari and so on instead of wearing faria cholo. Most of them used to eat Dhindo (paste made by wheat, millet or maize flour with boiled water) in the past but it has been replaced by rice in the recent time. Some cobblers are attracted to religion and faith to God. They have made one temple in the center of the village and worship God in special occasion.

Many development activities, road, electricity, school, facility of media and telecommunication, modern technology, political awareness are the major mediums to change cobblers' social status. These facilities help them to adopt other amenities. At present, some cobbler households have TV and mobile and almost all the cobbler households have radio and cassette player. With the help of them, they could expand their knowledge in different sectors. Many imported things are boosted up by market. Formal and informal education programmes, various types of self-dependent training, awareness raising training, construction and reconstruction of road, drinking water project, people mobilization and participation in development work, social and forest management programme etc help cobblers to uplift their social status.

Some specific skills which helped cobblers' livelihood mechanism were leatherwork and bamboo handicraft. Cobblers used to acquire food grains and some cash from these skills. But they could not balance between their income and expenditure due to the lack of knowledge about the income, saving and investment at particular sector like education and any type of skill improvement and development. Being unable to compete with imported ready-made leather goods, local leather products were disappeared due to the lack of proper market, investment, publicity of their quality, utility at proper time. Some cobblers used extra time of morning and evening in making various types of bamboo handicrafts like doko, namlo, basket, bhakari etc. Cobblers are also called by upper caste people to make such bamboo handicrafts in wage. Some cobblers are involved in carpentry to make various types of wood products like bench, chair, table, box, cupboard etc for their own uses and business purpose. Mason is another skill to make new house, hut and also repair them. They use to perform mason work at neighbour, relatives and other caste groups in wage system.

Though these skills help cobbler people to sustain their livelihood, these skills are in the verge of disappearance. New generations have not learnt these skills and the number of those skill holders is decreasing. However, even at present situation, any programme has not been found to improve and make their skills systematic. If nobody thinks to preserve those specific skills of cobbler people, they will be disappeared like leatherwork.

## **5.2 Changes in Occupation**

### **5.2.1 Cobbling/Tanning and Bali system**

Cobbling/Tanning, a traditional occupation of cobblers on the basis of caste-based division of labour, was their major economic activity in past that guaranteed a regular source of income. They used to make different kinds of thing like shoes, bags, belt, scabbard etc according to the demand of the people living in the village and the surrounding areas. They also used to make agricultural materials such as Damla, Haluda, Naira, Lara etc from leather (skin) of dead animals like ox, cow, buffalo, goat etc. applying their skill which they had learnt from their parents and grandparents. They used to make leather product after refining or without refining on the basis of product quality and price. Within 60 households of cobbler village, almost 48 males of 40 households were involved in leather work directly but female and other males were indirectly involved in leather-related work such as refining, producing and trading system of leather.

After preparing various types of leather goods, they used to sell whole-sellers and retailers. Whole-sellers, who had purchased large amount of leather products at a single time, lived especially in town area. Leather products were also sold directly to customer in their own production place and walking around the village in monetary form as well as with crops. They moved place to place to repair old leather gods and to prepare new things at bazaar areas such as Damuali,parbat, Baglung, Pokhara, Citwan, Gorkha to collect money for their family management.

The charges of repairing services were paid in kind during the harvesting season. This unique system of patron-client relationship is known as Bali system in all over the hill region of Nepal. Bali system is an indigenous system of economic exchange within which kind wages are paid annually by the local settlers (generally Brahmin and chhetry) to the artisans for their year-long maintenance and repairing services. At the time of harvesting the paddy, members of the cobbler family used to visit every house of client to collect the amount of grain (generally about five Pathi) for their services. Besides this, other kinds of grain such as maize and wheat were also given to them.

In the past, by selling leather goods, Bali system and by practicing agriculture, cobbler people are subsisting themselves. Through the Bali system high caste landlords and low caste

artisans were dependent with each other. This type of traditional economic institution had strengthened the social and economic relationship between artisans and non-artisans.

Nowadays, even a single cobbler can't be found involving in their traditional work. Cobblers involve in various activities such as wage-labour, Haliya system and labour migration as alternative after the separation of their traditional leatherwork. The development of market because of the construction of various highways like Siddhartha highway, Pokhara Baglung/Beni highway, entrance of readymade imported things and their inability to compete with them and the entrance of Indian leather workers are some of the causes of the disappearance of local made leather products. Imported factory-made leather goods were more attractive, qualitative and cheaper than local products. Again, due to the lack of proper investment on leather refinement, availability and the production process, it was fallen in the ditch of the crisis. Because of the awareness of people by formal and informal education programmes, dead animal body began to be buried. As a result, scarcity of raw material (skin leather) was another problem for leather workers.

Similarly, agricultural leather materials such as Haluda, Naira, Damla, Lara etc. are also disappeared. They are replaced by plastic goods because plastic goods are more comfortable to use and carry, are attractive and clean and also are available every time and everywhere because of the urbanization process of pokhara. In this way, leatherwork of Khudikhola cobbler is totally disappeared and they are turned to other occupations at present time.

### **5.2.2. Haliya System**

It was also one of the main occupations of Khudikhola cobbler thirty years ago. In this occupation only male cobbler who is able to plough the field of upper caste people involves. Upper caste people, who employ cobbler as Hali, are called Bista. With the negotiation between Bista and Hali, cobbler people start to plough field from Dec/Jan every year. In the past, Hali must go regularly to Bista's house to plough the field and to help him whenever he is needed. Hali's family members were compelled to do everything of Bista's household without the expectation of wage. He could use them wherever they were in need. They had to perform the ordered work from morning to evening for food. Hali had to plough Bista's field during whole year to acquire food grains annually. Almost all cobblers male who were able to plough regularly at upper-caste households were involved in it to gain 2-3 Muries of paddy as a wage of whole

year at December. They acquire some rice as a bonus in special festivals, rituals and ceremonies and also one Mana (0.4kg) rice per day's ploughing .

At present, young cobbler do not want to be Hali. Only some aged cobbler male are involving in this system. Only five cobble households are adopting Haliya system as their occupation for their livelihood which is described in chapter 4 . Nowadays, cobbler people want to plough field in daily wage system. People who are involving in Haliya system only plough Bista's field but don't do other household works. Bista cannot use Hali's family members without any wage. Bista has to provide Rs.2000-5000 as debt to Hali without providing any interest when he accepts to plough his land. In course of time, Hali's wage (annual food grain) is also increasing. Bista again has to provide his oxen and other agricultural materials to cultivate Hali's own and Adhiya land without any cost. These are some of the changes taken place in Haliya system. But, recently, the government has declared the abolition of Haliya system with the concept that who cannot cultivate his field, he should leave that field. It is gradually disappearing with the attraction of other alternative occupations.

### **5.2.3. Salt Trade and Porter**

According to key informants, salt trade was one of the popular occupations of Khudikhola cobblers thirty years ago. Almost all male were involved in it to sustain their family living. They used to take some money from rich people to buy salt from the bazaar area like pokhara, damuali, khairanitar etc. Generally, they used to buy one Pathi salt in Rs 15-20 in cash and sometimes in credit and sell it in different prices according to the distance from the bazaar. They were able to save some money every day by salt tradition.

Other important occupation of cobbler at that time was porter. Cobbler male were involved in porter especially in the time of festivals and ceremonies. They used to get job when people from different parts of the country and from outside the country returned to their home. Due to the lack of motor able road, people had to hire porters to carry their goods and luggage from road area like Khairanitar, Dulaigauda, Pokhara to their village. Wage of the porter was based on the weight of load and the distance. They had also got porter work of tradable goods of shop from bazaar to the rural area. Cobblers used to carry shopkeeper's goods such as kerosene, salt, sugar, rice, oil, pipe, tin etc. from Pokhara and Damauali areas. Generally, they used to receive Rs. 10 per Dharni (a Dhani= 2.5 kg) in carrying from pokhara to Lekhnath.

Nowadays, neither salt trade nor porter can be found as occupation for their livelihood. After the use of mule as a means of transportation in that area and the construction of road, salt trade and porter disappeared. Vehicles are available to carry goods in comparatively cheaper price and in a short period. Hence, because of the mule and vehicles, porters are compelled to adopt alternative occupation like agriculture, wage labour, migration etc. to sustain them.

### **5.3. Wage Labouring**

Wage labouring is an important occupation of cobbler people in the study area. With the disappearance of leather work and salt trade and porter, the number of farm and off-farm wage labouring increases. In the past, cobbler people used to be involved only in local wage labouring but in course of time they are attracted to labour migration and also in abroad wage labouring. As local wage labourers, cobbler people in the study area are involving themselves in various agricultural activities like ploughing, digging field, cultivating and harvesting plants, carrying crops etc. They are also engaged in carpentry and mason activities which are described in the earlier chapter.

### **5.4 Labour Migration**

Labour migration of Parbat Dalits for monthly wage is involved in formal and informal sectors: eighty eight percent household people to India, 19% to third country especially Gulf (Malesia, Saudi Arab, Qatar etc.) countries and 4.7% in army and other formal employment in India to collect money annually as well as seasonable (SDF 2060). Labour migration is also a new occupation of Pipaltari cobbler. They are migrating to other parts of Nepal, India and third country as monthly wage employment. Within total population of sampled households, only 37 people of 25 households are labour migrants in different parts of Nepal and other countries as a service holder in private sector. Labour migrated country, number of household and number of people can be presented in table 13.

**Table 13: Labour Migration Structure of Sample Households**

Destination	No. of Migrant HHs	No. of Migrant People
Nepal	5	5
India	17	29
Third Country*	3	3
Total	25	37

Source: Field Survey, 2012

\* Third country includes Saudi Arab, Qatar, Malesia, and Dubai.

Table 13 shows that many cobbler people visit India as labour migrants. Generally, they save 2500 – 3000 Rs. per month in India of which they have to spend 2000-3000 Rs. for travel fare. Cobblers who go to third countries can save near about Rs. 8000 per month but they have to spend almost 100000 Rs. to go there. They collect that amount by pleading to rich people in 30-36% interest rate and they also have to provide various kinds of gifts as a means of respect to debt providers.

Because of the poor educational status, lack of skills and kin relationship, they have no access to various prestigious jobs within Nepal. All labour migrants to third countries are unskilled wage labourers. Due to the construction of motor able roads and the urbanization of Kusma, they use to consume various kinds of imported goods. When imported things penetrated in all cobbler village, their local product in insufficient to maintain their previous status. To solve that critical condition, they need more money and they are compelled to accept labour migration as a means of earning. Nowadays, cobblers are improving their economic status attached to wage labour and especially to labour migration.

## CHAPTER – VI

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The syncretism of various cultures languages, religious and castes makes Nepalese society more complex in its social structure. The society has a very structured and complicated hierarchy based on Hindu religion defined by different norms and values for each caste and sub-caste. Under the stratified caste system, so called untouchables are regarded at the lowest ladder of caste hierarchy. Among them cobbler people are the basic concern of this study.

The study generally attempts to identify the socio-economic change of cobbler people within three decades. It also attempts to identify various causes responsible to bring that change. The study is based on primary sources of information such as observation, interview, as well as secondary sources of information.

The study area is a cobbler village of Khudikhola Village of Lekhnath municipality of Kaski district. It is situated in hilly area with 800-1000 m altitude from the sea level. Most of the forestland is covered with natural vegetation. There are several species of mammal, birds, reptiles and amphibians in the study area.

Total population of the study area is 2628, of which 321 (12.21%) are cobblers. Only 35% households from total 100 households are selected for the study by sample method. 64.89% of the cobbler population is economically active whereas only 35.11% is dependent.

Thirty years ago, total cobblers of this village were almost illiterate. They were unknown about the importance of education and were unaware about the political practices too. Due to the lack of education and political awareness various traditional concepts such as Sino eating, sense of Intra and Inter touchable, polygamy marriage, child marriage, witch system etc. were existed. They had spent more part of their income in unproductive thing as alcohol drinking. As a result, most of the time there were quarrels and fighting. They used to speak out dirty word sand were careless about their neatness and cleanness. There was not even a toilet in the whole village.

Even at present situation, cobblers' educational status is not so good but it is going to improve gradually. Now, they have understood the importance of education and send their children to school. Except formal school programme, various NGOs launch various educational programmes. But out of 35 selected households, total family members of 10 households are

totally illiterate. In the whole cobbler village, only 5 persons have passed SLC. But social and political awareness is remarkably increased among cobblers.

Due to the formal and informal educational impact, previously existed anti-social activities such as Sino eating, which system, polygamy marriage, child marriage, expenditure in unproductive sectors are going to disappear. Because of the awareness, increasing number of nuclear family and the decreasing rate of alcohol drinking, quarrellings and fighting are remarkably decreased. Nowadays, they are conscious about their physical health and environmental cleanness. All of them have built toilet in their house.

In the past, Intra and Inter caste based rules were followed strictly. Dalit were so hated and dominated by non-Dalit that they used to purify them by Chhito when they were touched by Dalit. But in course of time now caste discrimination is losing its grip slightly. Because of the government policy, Maoist revolution educational programmes and the changed behavior of cobblers, the gap of upper and lower caste is lessened down. Cobblers have formed Dalit Committee and organize different awareness programmes against caste discrimination. They have been extending their access in local decision making sectors too. They participate actively and collectively with upper-caste people in many village development activities.

Nowadays, cobblers are using many modern facilities such as transportation, electricity, telecommunication, and other media information. They can have higher education from their home. Some cobbler households have kept TV and mobile in their house and others have kept radio and cassette player. Those media of information and communication help greatly to expand their knowledge and access in different fields. Because of the urbanization of lekhnath municipality, many imported things are available in the village. As a result shirt pant, sari blouse, and Kurta Suruwal replace traditional costume daura suruwal and fariya cholo. In marriage ceremony, they begin to invite upper caste people too. But in arrange marriage, dowry system is going to increase.

One cannot uplift one's social status without any capability of economy. There has been great change in their economic sector too. Thirty years ago leatherwork was one of the main traditional occupations by which cobbler had acquired food grains and cash for their subsistence. They had produced leather goods like shoes, bags belts scabbards and some agricultural materials like Haluda Nairo Damla etc for business purpose. Bali system was also prevalent and

they used to have kind wage as food grains annually. But that all disappeared totally at present due to the lack of competitive capacity of local leather products with imported goods after the construction of different highways. Likewise, cobbler had earned some cash from salt trade and porter. But the appearance of mules and the vehicles totally replaced them. At present even a single people can't be found either as leather worker or as salt trader or as porter for their living.

In the past, many cobbler males were involved in Haliya system. They used to plough upper caste people's field annually to acquire food grains as the wage of the whole year. Hali and his other family members had to do other household works in the house of Bista without any wage. But nowadays, the number of Hali has been decreasing down. Bista cannot exploit the labour of Hali and his family members in household works without any wage. He should provide some debt without any interest should help to cultivate Hali's own and Adhiya land by providing agricultural materials out of cost and also should increase their annual wage in course of time. Within 35 selected households, 5 households are involving Haliya system now. Because of their attraction in wage labour and labour migration and the inferiority feeling of being Hali, Haliya system is being decreasing down.

Thirty year ago, almost all cobblers had no access on Khet; they would take Adhiya Khet of about one or two hall per family to produce paddy. They had some access on Bari of almost 1/2 hall per family to produce millet and maize. But they had no access and there was no tradition to take Adhiya Pakho. Nowadays their access on land increases. Educational impact to invest on land and the increasesment of their involvement in various informal sectors are main causes to increase their access to land.

Many cobblers are involved in wage labouring too. In the past, there were many people who were skillful in making many kinds of bamboo handicraft, wooden products, and mason work. But nowadays, the number of those skilled cobblers is decreasing because any progmmes are not launched to improve and develop those kinds of skills. Unskilled labour migration has become a new means of occupation at present situation. Nowadays, young cobblers want to migrate in other parts of Nepal, India and third countries as monthly wage employee. Within 35 selected households 37 people of 25 households are labour migrants. High percentage of labour migrants (78.38%) migrates in India. Nowadays attraction to Gulf countries as labour migrants is increasing. After the disappearance of traditional leather work and with the increasesment of their

expenditure because of the impact of modernization, cobbler people are compelled to migrate as wage labourer.

To sum up, the socio-economic condition of cobbler people has been improved within the period of thirty years because of the formal and informal awareness and education Programmes of government and NGOs, impact of modernization and urbanization, political revolution and changes, mass media and modern means of information and telecommunication, globalization etc. But their condition is not improved satisfactorily. In this context, recent inclusive policy of the government to bring Dalit in the mainstream of the nation by facilitating to increase their ability and access in various sectors can be a golden chance for cobbler people to uplift their socio-economic condition.

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**ANNEX**  
**Questionnaire**

1. HHs NO
2. Full name of respondent:
  - a) Sex:                      b) Age:                      c) Occupation:
  - d) Religion:              e) Education:              f) Marital Status:
3. Details about family members of the respondents:

S.N.	Full Name	Relation to Head	Age	Sex	Education	Occupation	Marital Status	Remark

**Social Characteristics**

1. Which type of family do you belong to?
  - a) Joint family              b) Nuclear family
2. How many members are in your family? .....
3. Which type of marriage have you done?
  - a) Love              b) Arrange              c) Inter caste
4. Which type of marriage have your son/daughter done?
  - a) Love              b) Arrange              c) Inter-caste
5. What is your opinion about inter-caste marriage?
6. In which sector is caste discrimination dominant?
  - a) School                      b) Temple                      c) Tap
  - d) Hotel/Tea Shop              e) not now
7. Do you have any skill in your family to earn money?
  - a) Yes                      b) No
8. If yes, which of the following skill do you have?
  - a) Leather work              b) Bamboo handicrafts              c) Carpenter

- d) Mason                      e) Others
9. Do government, NGO, market, community help by any kinds of training, orientation programme to improve and develop the skills?
- a) Yes                      b) No
10. If yes, what kinds of programme do they launch?
- a)
- b)
- c)

### **Occupational Characteristics**

1. What is your traditional Occupation?
- a) Leatherwork              b) Salt trade              c) Haliya
- d) Portery                      e) Others .....

2. Are you following your traditional Occupation?
- a) Yes                      b) No

If yes, why are you following your traditional occupation?

- a) Because it is our traditional occupation.
- b) Because of the lack of other job opportunities.
- c) More profitable than others
- d) Other .....

If no, could you please tell why did you change your traditional occupation?

- a) Because socially it has low value.
- b) Lack of the organized work
- c) Because economically it contributed very low profit.
- d) High competition
- e) Other.....

3. Which of the following occupation do you have to maintain your and your family life?
- a) Agriculture              b) Haliya System
- c) Wage labour              d) Job holding system
- e) Portery                      f) Leatherwork              g) Others .....



4. For what purpose have you got your animal?
  - a) For own use    b) for business    c) Both of above
5. How many members of your family are involved in income generation level?
  - a) Male                      b) Female
6. What is your major source of income?
  - a) Agriculture                      b) Livestock raising
  - c) Wage Labor                      d) Labour migration
  - e) Haliya System                      f) Other .....
7. What are the other sources of your income?
  - a) Agriculture                      b) Livestock raising
  - c) Wage Labour                      d) Labour migration
  - e) Haliya                      f) Other.....
8. How many months your production is sufficient to meet the food requirement of your family?
  - a) Less than 3 month    b) 3 month
  - c) 6 month                      d) Labour migration
  - e) Whole year                      f) Save
9. If the food is not sufficient, how do you manage?
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
10. Which is the main expenditure item of your family?
  - a) Food                      b) Clothing
  - c) Education                      d) Medicine
  - e) Transportation                      f) Other.....

