

CHAPTER – ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Study Context

Nepal is a multilingual, multi-cultural and multiethnic country. The way of life, dress, language, socio-economic and cultural identities of the people are apparently different followed by geographical variations. Therefore, each group of people have their own identities; they do activities according to their own cultural practices and other numerous characteristics.

Geographically, the country can be divided into three broad regions stretching from the east to the west. On the high Himalayan region snow covers all the year round; the hill consists of Mahabharat and Churiya ranges and the Terai is plain and is supposed to be a granary of food grains.

The Himilayan region, which is to the north of the Mahabharat range is largely an Archic Wasteland and have been a marginal area for human settlement. Sherpas and Lamas generally known as Bhotiyas, are the dwellers of this region. The population is still sparse and the main economic activities are barter, trade, pastoralism and shifting cultivation practice.

The Hill region also known as mid land lies between the Mahabharat and the Himalayan range. It is a sub-tropical belt and has been the traditional population zone, where Brahmins, Chhetries as well as occupational caste groups and Newars, Rais, Limbus, Gurungs, Magars, Tamangs, Sarkis, Kami, etc. inhabited in this region. Subsistence agriculture is the basis for the hill economy.

As the people of Nepal mentioned above live in different physical conditions, naturally, they have developed, in course of time different

types of customs and manners. Their food habits vary from region to region. They differ from one another in language. They differ tribe-wise and place-wise. For instance, the Newars of Kathmandu valley differ from the Newars of the rest of country in their culture, language and so on.

It is necessary to identify the community to which Dalit groups belong to caste system; and refers to an occupationally segregated, hierarchically and ritually discriminatory social system based on heredity of an individual or group of individuals. They are economically exploited, politically voiceless, socially humiliated and treated as “Untouchables”. In essence, the victim of caste-based discrimination and untouchability can be considered as Dalits. The Dalits have been placed at the bottom in the Hindu caste system. The major Dalit caste groups in the Hills are Damai, Kami, Sarki, etc. while such caste groups in the Terai are Musahar, Chamar, Sarki, Dusadh, etc. In the Kathmandu valley, the major Dalit castes include Podhey and Chyame.

The Sarkis are medium in stature, dark skinned, have long and loosely kept hair mostly unplanted, and the most peculiar feature is their strange glass-like eyes. Sarkis occupy the rank of untouchable, according to the Hindu caste system. They are Hindu and their traditional occupation is leatherwork especially to make shoes. Although they are minority in number, they can be found all over the Hill. They belong to Sudras, an occupational caste.

The Sarkis are concentrated more in districts like Kaski, Baglung, Magdyi, Parbat, Shyanja, Tanahun, Gorkha, Dhading and Gulmi. The total population of the Sarki people in Nepal is 318989 (1.40%) where the total number of male is 169065 and female is 149924. (CBS: 2001)

The Sarkis are considered the lowest untouchable caste groups of Nepal. They were not allowed to fetch water from the public taps. They

have separate taps for their own use or have to go to the nearby stream to fetch water in the past.

In Terai Chamar is also called for Sarki and the hillside they are called Sarki and Mizar (Mahato). When they response called are Indo-Aryan and they are migrated from India.

Making a variety of shoes from the leather is their traditional caste occupation. In addition, grave-digging and cremating dead bodies are also considered their traditional occupations. These are their main source of earning a livelihood.

This research study tries to give an socio - economical picture of Sarkis (Chamar) of Hemja VDC of Kaski district. It also tries to give social, cultural and economical changes that have occurred in Sarkis of that area.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Nepal is one of the poorest countries of the world. According to the national statistics, 38 percent people are below absolute poverty line (CBS, 2001). In this condition, there are such castes, tribes and ethnic groups, who are bounded to give up their traditional occupation because they could not meet their basic needs (food, clothing, shelter etc) by doing their traditional occupation in the changing condition.

Development programmes implemented by governmental and non-governmental agencies could not reach to the backward and poor communities.

Sarki people belong to one of the poorest and backward caste in Nepal. Although their traditional work is making shoes and they are giving up their traditional occupation as cremating the dead bodies and grave-digging because they can not fulfill their basic needs by their traditional occupation.

In this context, from Sociological/Anthropological point of view, it is important to find out the main causes for the changes in the Sarkis. On the other hand their economic condition is still changing as compared the past. It is to be studied why such condition is prevailing.

Therefore, the problem of the study is to understand to what extent Sarki society in Kaski (Hemja) has been changed. The study also seeks to study to what extent Sarki's social organization, clans, family and marriage system changed and to what extent Sarkis have been sanskritised. Attempt has been made to study their present economic condition, occupational composition and the present situation of their traditional occupation. It has also attempted to find out their new sources of livelihood and how they have been benefited from the development activities in Nepal. So, the main problem of the present study is to seek answers of the above mentioned questions.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to find out the changing socio-economic status of the Sarki community of Hemja in Kaski district in the context of changing Nepalese society.

The specific objectives of the study are:

- a) to analyze the present socio-economic status of the Sarki community.
- b) to provide ethnographic study of the Sarki community.

1.4 Conceptual Framework

In this study, the status of the Sarki community is defined and measured by selecting socio-economic and demographic indicators such as education, occupation, religion, residence, income, health, type of family, etc. All of these indicators are independent variables.

Analysis of this study is based on the conceptual framework to how the socio-economic variables affect on the status of the Sarki community. The figure below tries to show the impact of independent socio-economic variables on status of the Sarki community as a dependent variable.

1.5 Rationale of the Study

The socio-economic status of a community shows the living condition of people in that community. With the great changes in the field of technology, communication, transportation, education and their interaction with different cultural groups, they must have undergone certain changes. Similarly, urbanization, modernization, acculturation, enculturation, migration and population size have surely affected the socio-economic condition of any society. Thus, the Sarki community is also affected by these factors and is going to change in its subsistence economy, changing occupational composition, changing social and

cultural patterns and life style. It has also tried to examine their success or failure in the changing circumstances. The information derived from this study will be useful for development plans and programs and for further study of the Sarki community. Thus, the finding of this study will be useful to understand the changing socio-economic status of the Sarki community in Nepal.

1.6 Organization of the Study

This dissertation has been divided into six chapters and some preliminaries containing approval sheet, acknowledgement, table of content, abbreviation list of tables and figures, maps, photographs, etc. The first chapter describes the background, statement of the problem, objectives, rationale, limitation and organization of the study. The second chapter deals with the literature review including theoretical perspective while third chapter deals with methodology of the study with sub chapter like research design, universe of sampling, data collection and nature of data. The fourth chapter deals with the general feature of study area and fifth chapter describes the socio economic status of Sarki. Chapter six includes summary, conclusion and recommendation. The bibliography and appendices are given at the end of the dissertation.

CHAPTER – TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Focusing Sarki community and their socio-economic status, this chapter discusses the relevant literature available on different aspects of the Sarkis such as social discrimination, low paid occupation, their involvement in development activities and their overall status in the society. This chapter deals with general overview, it also reviews ethnographic studies on untouchables related to books of foreign writers and Nepali writers.

Keeping this in mind literature has been reviewed for the above mentioned purpose in this study. The detail about the reviewed literature is stated below:

2.1 General Overview

Different sociologists/Anthropologists both indigenous and foreign have carried out various ethnographic studies in Nepal. Among them, Bista is that indigenous pioneer scholar, who has given a lot of contribution in the field of ethnographic study. His book “The people of Nepal” is one of the master-piece of literature on ethnography. He has described about a lot of ethnic groups in this book.

Similarly, "Sabai Jatko Phoolbari" is another book of Dor Bahadur Bista, in which he describes the ethnography of different people.

Lionel Caplan (1970) has studied a village of eastern Nepal where he studied the changing relation between members of indigenous tribes, the Limbus and the high caste Hindu groups of Brahmins.

Gurung, Ganeshman's (1989), "Chepang", has given a detail ethnographic picture about Chepang, a minority group of Nepal in his book. He has traced a continuity and change about Chepang regarding

their social, ecological, economical, religious, family, and marriage and kinship systems.

Regmi, Rishi Keshav's (1991) "The Dhimals", has given an anthropological study of a Nepalese ethnic group of Dhimial. In this book different aspects of Dhimals, such as economic organization and socialization, social hierarchy, religion and festivals, village political organization, phases of life, etc. are described in detail.

Singh (1997) has given a well ethno biological description of Raute, a nomadic tribe of Nepal.

Regmi, Murari Prasad (1990), in his book "The Gurung", has prepared a cross-cultural study of a Nepalese ethnic group. He has described about the bravery and glorious culture of Gurung.

Subba (1995) has given a detail account of Limbu culture and religion in very interesting way. Several aspects of culture and religion of Limbus are focused in the book.

Holmberg (1996) has described about myth, ritual and exchange among Nepal's Tamang very nicely.

Nepali, Gopal Shing (1965) in his book "The Newars", has given an ethno sociological study of the Newars, a Himalayan community of Nepal. The book has given a well ethnography of Newars.

The above mentioned scholars have tried to give ethnographic pictures of different ethnic groups of Nepal. But very few works have done on untouchable castes.

Seeing the trend of ethnographic studies of Nepal, it can be said that Terai people and untouchable castes are too much neglected by the researchers.

2.2 Ethnographic Studies on Untouchables

Only a few studies have been made on untouchable castes of Nepal. Untouchables are very poor and too much exploited by the higher castes. They are also neglected by both indigenous and foreign researchers.

We can hardly find a single book written on a single untouchable caste of Nepal. Dor Bahadur Bista's (1996) , "People of Nepal", has given some account of untouchables. He has put them in occupational castes and has given a few descriptions of some untouchable castes.

Similarly, Rajesh Gautam and Ashok Thapa's (1994) books Tribal Ethnography (Vol I & II), have traced about some untouchable castes of Nepal. Badi, Dom, Gaine, Kami, Musahar Sarki(Chamar), etc. are untouchable castes which are described in these books.

A research prepared by Khagendra Sharma, Mrs. Gyanu Chhetrai and Miss Sita Rana (1994) entitled "A modest study of the current socioeconomic situation of the lowest status caste and tribal communities in Nepal", talks about caste based discriminations and related matters.

Some heart touching types of discriminations based on caste are given in the book. For example, one is given below.

“An untouchable teacher in Kailali was sent away from his village school to Dangadi on deputation because he ordered students of higher caste and untouchable caste to sit together in the luncheon provided under the Nutrition Food Program. The school inspectors were satisfied with his teaching quality, but the headmaster, a Brahmin, who did not accept this value, influenced the District Education Officer against the teacher. Later, the luncheon program itself was dropped.” (Sharma, Chhetri and Rana: 1994)

The above example shows that there is so much discrimination against the untouchable, so study should be done about them. But

unfortunately, this has not happened. Unless their real situation is carried out, the exploitation and discrimination on untouchable remains for ever.

Some foreign writers have tried to write about untouchable caste but they all are not ethnographic studies. Caplan (1972), is an example which is a study of about a social change in a Hindu village of western Nepal. Similarly, Macdonald (1975) has written a book in which he has written about some untouchable castes.

Some glimpses of untouchables are given in the book of Madhu Sudan Sharma (1980), Asok K. Thapa (1956), Asok K. Thapa (1963), Madhu Sudan Sharma (1982) and Dor Bahadur Bista (1974). Although, special books are not available, except some dissertations of master's degree of T.U.

Mr. Amber Bahadur Thapa (2008) has prepared dissertation on "Socio-Economic Status of the Sarki Community" on Kaski district. Mrs. Gyanu Chhetri (1985) has prepared a thesis on "Gaine, singing people of Nepal". This is divined in Kaski district. Ashok K. Thapa (1995) has also written on the same caste group of Dang District. Similarly, Subedi (1995) has written on Badi, an untouchable caste whose traditional profession is prostitution.

Sah (2005) has prepared a dissertation on "Chamar" a leather working people of Nepal and Yadav (2005) has also written on the "Musahar" a cat eating people of Nepal.

2.3 The Sarki Community

It has been already mentioned that there are very few sociological and anthropological studies on the untouchable (Dalit) castes in our country. Sociologists and anthropologists have not done sufficient studies about the Sarki community.

Prof. Bista(1996), a renowned anthropologist is also silent in the study about the Sarki community. In his book "People of Nepal" he has just said "Chamar have charged of dirty and menial works in the community and eat dog, cat, horse. The Chamar plays drums in the wedding band."

Similarly, the four volumes of "Mechi Dekhi Mahakali Samma (1974)" Bista is also unable to give a detail information about the Sarki community. His books state that "Maithil, Brahmin, Rajput, Kayastha, Baniya, Teli, Kalwar, Dom, Chamar, Mushalman, etc. had come in Saptari from southern states of India many centuries ago. Yadav, Koiri, Sudi, Tharu, Musahar, Kurmi etc. speak Maithili language. Amat, Hajam, Gwar, Teli, Sudi, Chamar, Sarki, Halkhor, etc. are Maithil Thars".

Govt. of Nepal (2002), stated the Sarkis are considered the lowest untouchable caste groups of Nepal. If any member of the high caste Hindu group is ever touched accidentally by them, he/she must purify either by sprinkling "gold water" or taking bath in the pond as well. Even today, Sarkis are not allowed to fetch water either from the private or public tap some-where else. They have separate tap, tube-wells for their own use or go to the nearby stream to fetch water.

Making shoes from the leather and ploughing are their traditional caste occupations. In addition, grave-digging and cremating dead bodies are also considered their traditional occupation. For many centuries, these Sarki lived as slaves and untouchables in Hindu society, so they have lost many of their traditional customs and cultures and are seen to have undergone a drastic metamorphosis. Sarkis are still considered untouchables and accordingly are found to do all the dirty, lowly works like cremating corpses, even today.

In Hindu caste system, there is a diversity of economic status and ritual status, but these are interrelated. So that all priests are scared and

leather workers are untouchable. Every individual has status in the occupational framework of the community. The caste system defines cluster of such status and one particular cluster is imposed on all individual members of each particular caste. Sarkis are lowest ranking untouchable in the study area, where they live. They have low social status, as Nepal is hierarchical country. Brahmin, Thakuri and Chhetri are higher caste people who are supposed to allow Sarki in to their house or accept food (cooked), tea, glass of water from them. Also marriage with Sarki is prohibited as King Prithivi Narayan Shah divided Nepali caste into four groups called Brahamin, Chhetri, Vaisya, and Sudra. According to religiousn saying Brahamin is born from mouth, Chhetri from arms, Vaisya from thigh, Sudra from feet. Hence, they are untouchable. The orthodox high caste Nepalese attitude generally is that untouchables are nothing but service caste, who is supposed to work for them. The Sarki's sole purpose on the earth is to make shoes.

CHAPTER – THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research methodology that is used to collect and analyze qualitative and quantitative data in the study. The chapter is further divided into many subjects such as site selection, research design, nature and sources of data, sampling procedure and techniques/instruments of data collection, reliability, and method of data analysis.

3.1 Study Site Description and Rationale for the Selection of the Study Site

The study site has been selected purposively Hemja VDC of Kaski district. The Hemja VDC is situated to the north-west of the district headquarter of Kaski and it lies 2 km far from center of Pokhara sub metropolish. The total population of Kaski district is 380,527(male: 194,069, femal 186,458). The total population of the Sarki of Kaski District is 8635 (male: 4404, female: 4231). Among them the Dalits of Kaski district are 57036 according to CBS: 2001. The total population of Hemja VDC is 8702. Among them Sarki population of the VDC is 368 (male: 192, female: 176). Dalit (untouchable cast) population of Hemja VDC consists of Kami, Damai , Gaine,Teli, Koire and Unidentified Dalit and the population of these castes is 389, 150, 54, 8, 6 & 115 respectively.

This study site is underdeveloped area where Dalit groups have no any position in society. Majority of them have the least position in the society. Many castes are living here such as Brahmin, Chhetri, Newar, Magar, Gurug, Tamang, Kami, Damai, Ghatri, Thakali, Rai, Sherpa,

Muslim, Gaine, etc. A little modernization impact is seen here. Some development activities are seen for the Sarkis at the present.

The population of the study site is homogeneous. This study is very useful to provide the knowledge about ethnographic, social, cultural and economic aspects of the Sarki community at the present and past.

3.2 Research Design

This study is based on descriptive as well as exploratory research design which is considered an appropriate and the best way of analysis. This study is exploratory because it makes an attempt to explore the process of the socio-economic study site. It is descriptive because it is attempt to describe natural condition of the study site and the socio-economic status of the Sarki community.

3.3 Nature and Sources of Data

This study is based on the consideration of primary as well as secondary data. Primary data were collected through field survey. Similarly, secondary data were collected through published and unpublished materials such as research articles, related books, CBS and district profile.

3.4 Census Survey

The nature of the population is homogeneous and small. Here are only 38 households of Sarkis in this VDC. So, census method is applied and data were taken from all 38 households.

3.5 Data Collection Techniques/Instruments

Data collection is the most important part for getting reliable information. The techniques/instruments of data collection are used as follows:

Techniques: <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Interview➤ Participant Observation➤ Interview with Key Informants	Schedule: <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Questionnaire➤ Checklist➤ Schedule➤ Interview guide
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Instrument:

- Questionnaire

The questionnaires are both structured and unstructured type. Personal information is taken from structured questionnaire and qualitative information from unstructured questionnaire.

Techniques:

- Participant Observation

Participant observation is the basic sociological/anthropological tool for the data collection methods. This method is used by the researcher to set the information by observing the dress pattern, food habits, settlement, ceremonies, talking style, behavior, etc.

- Interview with Key Informants

It is used to collect data about the history of their culture and tradition of the past and the present.

Key informants are the important source of acquiring real data. The persons who have detail knowledge/information about the related site and about related study group. They are president of VDC, secretaries, social workers, president of Dalit community and local educationist.

3.6 Reliability

Reliability of this research study cannot be claimed in absolute terms. To minimize possible errors like under counting, over counting and false reporting by respondents, certain measurements are used.

-) The instrument is pre-tested and necessary modification is done.
-) Questionnaire is written in simple Nepali language.
-) Researcher himself has completed all forms and checked and rechecked.
-) Editing of the entire data is done very carefully to maintain data accuracy.
-) Different methods of checking reliability like text-retest method of the information obtained are computed.

3.7 Method of Data Analysis

Most of the collected data of the research study are analyzed descriptively and statistical methods are also applied where necessary. So, different statistical as well as logical tools are used to analyze data in this study.

3.8 Limitations of the Study

Since the study is conducted in Hemja VDC of Kaski District, the result obtained can not be generalized for the lowest caste groups of the entire country due to vast difference in the cultural, social and anthropological aspects.

CHAPTER – FOUR

THE SETTING

4.1 Location

Kaski district belongs to Gandaki zone, Western part of Nepal bordered by adjoining districts Manang and Lamjung to the North, Tanahun and Shyanja to the South, Lamjung and Tanahun to the East and Prapat lies to its West. The district is located between 28⁰ 06' to 28⁰ 36' north latitude and 83⁰ 40' to 84⁰ 12' east longitude. Its elevation from the sea level ranges from 450 to 7939 meters. The total area of the district is 2017 sq. km. There are forty three village development committees, one sub metropolitan city and one municipality city.

4.2 Climate

Kaski district lies in hill area which has sub tropical and moderate climate. The maximum recorded temperature is 31⁰C in the month of May and June, and the minimum recorded temperature is 6⁰C in the month of January. Rainfall, mostly from South-east monsoon starts from the end of May and lasts for three or four months till August and sometimes till September in accordance with extent of monsoon. Study area receives approximately 2100 mm to 2400 mm rainfall annually. It is one of the highest rainfall intensity district of Nepal.

4.3 Natural Resources

Generally land, forest and water are important natural resources of Nepal. Most of the people of the study area depend upon the subsistence production.

4.3.1 Land

Land is one of the most utilized natural resources in the study area. Since most of the natural resources are inseparable (not separable) from the land, it is the basic resource of the people of the study area.

Type and quality of soil are major concerns of farmers and they invest a great deal of labor to maintain and enhance it. Land is generally classified as “Bari” (dry cultivated land) and “Khet” (paddy cultivated land) on the basis of types of crop cultivated and irrigation facilities.

4.3.2 Forest

Forest is an important natural resource of Nepal. The forest resources are protected and utilized by the villagers (permanent residents) under Community Forestry Programme. The Sarki community is also involved in the use and conservation of forest. The study area is far away about 2 - 3 km. from the community forest. Therefore, it can be counted as a main natural resource of the study area.

4.3.3 Water Resource

Seti river crosses Kaski district and it is originated from the Higher Himalayan Range. In the study area, Seti River is one of the perennial river. Yamdi Khola and other spring are the main sources of the drinking water and irrigation at the project area. Three water supply systems are in use in the project area. Whole of the villagers are benefited from the healthy & sufficient water. The Sarki community is also equally benefited from the natural resources.

4.4 Settlement Pattern and House Structure

Settlement is also an indication of the ethnic compactness of the different communities in Nepal. The settlements of Sarkis are situated in

the core area of the village. They are living in groups. All the Sarki houses are situated in three Toles and houses are built closely.

Though the settlements of Sarkis in Kaski are in compact in nature and most of the houses are build closely but the clustering of houses have no any particular direction as other ethnic groups. Due to population increase in the settlement areas, it is now going to be insufficient for the construction of new houses.

In the study area, the houses of Sarkis are made up of mud mortar and galvanized sheet roof slopping toward two sides. The houses are found to be only one floor. Pens are made to tame pigs or other animals which lie near the houses of Sarkis. The sizes of the houses are small and narrow because of poverty

4.5 Population/Ethnic Composition

The population of Kaski district is 380,527 among them male is 194,069 and female is 186, 458. The Brahmin, Chhetri, Newar, Gurung, Magar, Kami, Damai, Gaine, etc are large in number. These are the dominant castes of the district. Detail population of Kaski district are given below in Table No: 4.2.

The table No 4.1 shows that Brahmin, Chhetri, Newar, Magar, Gurug, Kami, Damai, Sarki etc. are 40.43%, 27.96%, 5.45%, 4.59%, 3.32%, 4.47%, 1.72%, 4.23% respectively of the total population of the VDC. Detail population of the VDC is given below in Table: 4.1.

Table 4.1**Distribution of Ethnic Composition of Hemja VDC**

S. No	Caste	Population	%
1	Brahmin	3518	40.43
2	Chhetri	2433	27.96
3	Gurung	289	3.32
4	Gharti\Bhujel	117	1.34
5	Sarki	368	4.23
6	Tamang	205	2.36
7	Yadav	6	0.07
8	Newar	474	5.45
9	Magar	399	4.59
10	Sanyasi	51	0.59
11	Rai	9	0.10
12	Kami	389	4.47
13	Thakali	29	0.33
14	Gaine	54	0.62
15	Unidetified Dalit	105	1.21
16	Unidetified Caste	9	0.10
17	Teli	8	0.09
18	Damai/Dholi	150	1.72
19	Koiri	6	0.07
20	Sherpa	7	0.08
21	Muslim	60	0.69
22	Others	16	0.18
	Total	8702	100

Sources: District Profile of Kaski, 2010

Table 4.2**Distribution of Ethnic Composition of Kaski District**

S.N.	Ethnic Group	Population	Percentage
1	Brahmin	115142	30.26
2.	Chhetri	56399	14.82
3.	Gurung	69044	18.14
4.	Gharti\Bhujel	4794	1.26
5.	Sarki	8635	2.27
6.	Tamang	10287	2.70
7.	Sonar	4493	1.18
8.	Newar	20105	5.28
9.	Magar	23509	6.18
10.	Muslim	2590	0.68
11.	Rai	1815	0.48
12.	Kami	26293	6.91
13.	Thakali	1965	0.52
14.	Thakuri	4831	1.27
15.	Unidetified Dalit	5017	1.32
16.	Unidetified Caste	1478	0.39
17.	Gaine	451	0.12
18.	Damai/Dholi	14874	3.91
19.	Kumal	1766	0.46
20.	Sanyasi	3736	0.98
21.	Sherpa	504	0.13
22.	Tharu	804	0.21
23.	Others	1995	0.52
	Total Population	380527	100.00

Sources: CBS, 2001

4.5.1 Religion, Language and Dialects

The study area is more religious. Hinduism is the religion followed by different ethnic/caste groups. However, they follow their different cultural practices. The Table No. 4.3 shows the composition of population by religion as Hinduism (81.71%), Buddhism (15.88%) and Muslim (0.69%). Population distributions by Religion is given in Table No: 4.3.

Generally, Nepali is the main language in the study area. However, different castes of this area use their own native language/dialects in their households.

Table 4.3

Distribution of Population by Their Religion of Kaski District

Religion	Population	Percentage
Hinduism	310946	81.71
Buddhism	60435	15.88
Islam	2620	0.69
Kirat	160	0.04
Jain	36	0.01
Christianity	3016	0.79
Sikh	82	0.02
Bahai	5	0.00
Others	3227	0.85
Total	380527	100.00

Sources: CBS, 2001

4.5.2 Occupation

The table 5.6 shows that agriculture is the major occupation of the study area. A vast majority of the people have to supplement in wage labour or agriculture works. Most of the youngers went to gulf countries. Details of occupations of the Sarkis are given below in Table 5.6.

4.5.3 Dalits and Ethnic Groups composition of Nepal

The Table No. 4.4 shows that Dalits belong to only 12% among the total population of the country. There are only 16 castes who belong to Dalits whereas Ethnic group includes 45 castes.

Table 4.4
Distribution of Dalits and Ethnic Groups by Their population of Nepal

Caste	Number of the population	Percentage
Ethnic Groups	8460041	37%
Dalits	2829494	12%
Others	11861888	51%

Source: CBS, 2001

4.5.4 Caste-wise Dalit Population of Nepal

The Table 4.5 shows that among Dalits Kami, Damai, Sarki, Chamar, Musahar, Dushad, Sonar, Lohar, Khatwe and Batar are large in number but Chidimar, Dom, Gaine, Badi and Halkhor are small in number. Detail data of the caste wise Dalit are given below Table 4.5.

Table 4.5**Distribution of Caste-wise Dalit Population of Nepal**

S.N.	Caste	Number of the Population
1	Kami	895954
2	Damai	390305
3	Sarki	318989
4	Chamar	269661
5	Musahar	172434
6	Dushad	158525
7	Sonar	145088
8	Lohar	82637
9	Tatma	76512
10	Khatwe	74972
11	Batar	35839
12	Chidimar	12296
13	Dom	8931
14	Gaine	5887
15	Badi	4442
16	Halkhor	3621
17	Others	173401
	Total	2829494

Source: CBS, 2001

4.6 Caste Hierarchy in the Study Area

Caste hierarchy is quite unique in Hindu society of Nepal. In general, Nepalese society is based on caste hierarchy where people are divided into different caste groups. The caste structure of the society is characterized by hierarchy on system of subordination held together by

relation of superiority and inferiority at the apex of which are Brahmins and at the lowest rank are Sudras.

Under this caste system, a large number of people in Nepal, that is about 12% of the total population of Nepal (census: 2001) are classified as untouchable or Sudra.

Our caste system is characterized by social inequality and rigid system of astrictive hierarchy. The whole caste system is based on the principle of pollution and purity. This principle is the main rule of our society. The relationship between people and their behavior towards each other are governed by Hindu norms and values. Untouchability is the main characteristics of Hindu caste system.

Although the caste based discrimination has been legally abolished since 1963 with the promulgation of “New Civil Code” (Naya Muluki Ain). It still exists as an important reference point for all individuals and constituents, the fundamental social structure of Nepalese society. Majority of the untouchables are accepting the discriminatory practice in rural areas and they believe that it is God made. Traditional caste-based discrimination is the main factor responsible for the social and economical backwardness of the untouchable or other tribal communities in Nepal. They lag far behind the higher caste people.

As generally in Nepal, the castes of the study area are ranked according to a scale of ritual purity and pollution. The system of ranking draws heavily on ideas which are parts of Hinduism. A symbolic basics for this system is the application of a localized version of Hindu concept of purity and pollution.

Brahmins rank highest in the system because they are the priestly caste, as a member of high Varna, they wear Janai (sacred thread) which is a symbol of their ritual purity and a mark of their spiritual second birth.

Chhetris are next in hierarchy to Brahmins and are member of warrior order of the Varna system and they also wear Janai (sacred thread).

Gurungs, Magars, Newars, Rais etc. are lower in caste hierarchy than Chhetries. They are not allowed to wear “Janai” but they are touchable castes. They are the member of “Vaishya" in the Varna system.

The Sarkis, Damai, Kami, Gaine, etc. are the lowest in caste order and rank in untouchables (Achhut). They are the member of Sudra in the Varna system. Sarki is one of the occupational castes of Sudra.

CHAPTER- FIVE

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter consists of the main part of the study. It tends to focus on the analysis and discussion of empirical data obtained from the field survey. Demographic features of the study area, socio-cultural life and economy of the people are analyzed in detail. The interpretation to the facts are tried to relate with immediate socio-economic condition of the study area.

5.1 Demographic Characteristics

5.1.1 Distribution of Surveyed Population by Age and Sex

The age and sex structure of the population is also an important variable in this study. Respondents were asked about their age and their children's age, then divided into five categories.

Table 5.1
Distribution of the Surveyed Population by their Age and Sex

Age Groups	No of the Population		Total	Percentage
	Male	Female		
0-5	34	42	76	20.65
6-14	48	45	93	25.27
15-39	74	60	134	36.41
40-59	23	22	45	12.23
60 over	14	6	20	5.44
Total	193	175	368	100

Source: Field Survey, 2010

Instead of standard age grouping (0-5, 6-14, 15-39, 40-59, 60 over), Five age groups have been broken down with 0 to 5 years being the non school going children, 6 to 14 school going age, 15 to 39 years the most active productive age, 40 to 59 years the less and non-fertile but economically still active age and the 60 over as dependent elderly people.

From the census as shown in the table No. 5.1, among the total population 368, there are 175 (47.55%) male and 193 (52.45%) female and the sex ratio is 90.67. The economically most active and potential group (15 to 39) occupies the greatest portion of the population, i.e. 134 (36.41%) out of the total population (368). Children, since six years of age, start to join household chores. Their contribution is specially to look after small children and help to domestic works. In really, they become economically active since that age, though it is not recognized often. Regarding this fact, the large part of the population (i.e. about 94.56%) comes under this category that is age between 6 to 59 years. In the Sarki community, the number of age group (15 to 39) is the highest. The number of age group (60 over) is the smallest of all (i.e. 5.44%), 61 (45.92%) of the total population are aged below 15, i.e. under the category of the children. There is no significant difference between numbers of males and females.

5.1.2 Dependency Burden

The dependency ratio is generally used as a common demographic indicator to measure the economic implication of the age structure. The population in the range (15 to 60 year, which is quite optional for the study area) is considered to be earning members and those below fifteen and above sixty age group are dependents. However, the population considered as dependent also participates in household and other activities outside the home too. But the matter of fact is that they are not

generally considered as the working manpower in term of economic sense.

Among the total population about 48.64% belongs to 15 to 59 years of age. Thus, the majority of the population belongs to adult age group, i.e. 15 to 60. On the whole, an important aspect of this scenario is that the burden of dependents on adult active members is small. Leaving other groups in the Sarki community old dependency is very low, but child dependency is greater than old dependency (see Table No. 5.1).

5.2 Socio-Cultural Characteristics of the Sarki under Study

5.2.1 Family

In the Sarki community, it is found that they are patrilineal families. Their descendants are traced through the line of father i.e. to sons and not the mother like other patrilineal community, the male Sarki is the functional head of the family and outer activities. After the death of the family head, his position is taken by his eldest son. The household head is Sarki female who is a widow.

In the Sarki community, family property is commonly shared and managed. When the family breaks up, the property is equally divided among brothers. There is no any rigid rule of family separation. According to respondents the causes for the break down of the joint are many: conflict between two brothers, conflict between a mother-in-law and daughter-in-laws, conflict among brother's wives, etc.

While asking about the main reason of family separation, most of the respondents' response is simple, that is they want to live with the income which they earn. It means that because of the lack of the sufficient income sources, physical labour and skill of person are the major means for livelihood. So, after marriage a person wants to live separately from his parents.

5.2.1.1 Distribution of the Sarki Community on the Basis of Family Type

Among the total 38 households of the Sarkis in the study area, basically two types of family, nuclear and joint have been found from observation. The family type of Sarkis is shown in the table No. 5.2 below.

Table 5.2
Distribution of the Sarki Community by Their Family Type

House hold	Joint family	Nuclear family	Total
No. of HHs	9	29	38
Percentage	23.68	76.31	100

Source: Field Survey, 2010

Above table shows that out of 38 households, only 9 are joint and 29 (76.31%) are nuclear. It shows that the joint family system is under going change gradually. The Sarki community of the study area prefers to live in nuclear family.

The average family size of Sarki is 9.7 which is greater than the national average of 5.44 (CBS: 2001). It is so, because the trend of joint family system is common in the Sarki community.

5.2.2 Marriage

Marriage is socially recognized institution for having legitimate sexual relationship between a man and a woman for the protection, upbringing maintenance and socialization of the children through establishing a family. It is a strong institution in Hindu society and perhaps every other society. According to social rule and regulations and their belief system, types and forms of marriage varies widely. In the Sarki community, especially three types of marriage systems are in practice.

1. Magi Bibah (Arranged Marriage)
2. Jari Bibah (Payment of Compensation)
3. Inter-caste Marriage.
4. Prem/Love Marriage or Elope Marriage

5.2.2.1 Magi Bibah (Arranged Marriage/Traditional Type of Marriage)

In the arranged marriage system among Sarkis, the initiative is supposed to take place from the bridegroom's side or bride's side both. Generally, the son of the house allies a marriageable, age i.e over eighteen. Their parents and their relatives at once set to work to find a suitable bride for him from Sarki caste, A "Lami" or "Aguwa" intermediary from the boys side, pay the visit to the perspective bride's parents taking with him a bottle of Raski (home made liquor) as parent and formally ask the daughter's hand for the boy.

In paying this formal visit the Lami to the perspective bride's parents for the second time those of the bridegrooms are always accompanied by Lami, their close relatives or leading men of their own village with five bottle of Raski, one Mana rice grain and some meet of pig, later acting as witnesses of the marriage contract. If the parents are accepted by the girl's parents in happy mood, it is assumed that the proposal is favorable/received and girl's father walks seven step towards boy's home and tell, "Mero Chhori Tapailai Diye" (I gave my daughter to you). Now a days, they are becoming more advance and they do not use Raski on the fixed day of wedding. Marriage with one's mother's brother's daughter with one's father's sister's daughter is also permissible.

The bridegroom with their family, relatives, neighbours and villagers called Janti proceed toward bride's house generally in the

evening time playing their traditional instruments called "Panche Baja". Before reaching in the bride's house the Janti are welcomed by the family of the bride which is called "Janti Parsine". Marriage rituals are performed at the bride's residence and the marriage feast is hosted by the bride's party. The marriage rituals are the same as higher caste. The wedding ceremony is performed at the bridegroom's residence. Vermilion (Sindur), Pote (string threaded with colorful fine glass bits worn by a married woman), glass-bangles, bindi and bodices and sari are the marriage symbols for women. They practice monogamy but polygamy is also allowed. Some clothes and utensils are given to the bride as dowry and cash, different kinds of assets are given to the bridegroom as dowry.

On the occasion of wedding ceremony the Janti (member of a marriage procession) are enjoying by taking domestic wine and eating feast. They invite higher caste neighbors in wedding ceremony and arrange separate feast for them cooking by Barmins and Chhetri.

The Janti returns to bridegroom's home with bride on that day. On this happy occasion in the groom's home, all their kins and neighbours are invited to a feast. The wedding process is the same as higher caste of Barmins and Chhetri.

In Dashain festival, in the first year of the marriage the bride should bring some part of goat with front leg and Raksi (domestic wine) to her parent's home (Maiti) during Tika and give her some money and other gifts. The detail data of the marriage system is given below in Table No: 5.3.

5.2.2.2 Jari Bibah (Payment of Compensation)

The Sarki community practices and accepts polygamy one after another or simultaneously. A man can marry another woman if he dislikes his first wife and keeps more than one wife but if a woman dislikes her

first husband, she elopes with other man. Her previous husband cannot compel her to live with him rather he can claim an expenditure he made while marrying her, from her new husband. This cost paid by a man to his wife's previous husband, is called Jari. The cost of Jari may comprise cash. Modernization influences Sarki community so Jari Bibah system is going to disappear today. During the study there is no any case of Jari Bibaha system in study area. The detail data of the marriage system are given below in Table 5.3.

5.2.2.3 Inter-Caste Marriage

In the past, if someone married other caste person, he would be out of the caste. Water and other things touched were not accepted by others. If the rule breaker wanted to enter in the caste, he had to be whipped and also he had to pay some money, decided by the community members as compensation.

Nowadays, especially after 2046 B.S., the situation has been changed a lot. Education, mass communication, state law, close interaction with other caste people, etc. are playing a vital role in minimizing the caste based discrimination. The detail data of the marriage system are given below in Table 5.3.

5.2.2.4 Prem / Love Marriage or Elope Marriage

Love marriage is common and popular among the new generations. In love marriage, the process is lengthy. When a boy and a girl like each other they marry without the prior commencement of their parents. In the Sarki community people who got married through love or elopement, have the same social value and prestige. It means there is no any devaluation of such type of marriage in the society. The detail data of the marriage system is given below in Table 5.3.

5.2.2.5 Remarriage of Women

In the past, remarriage of a woman was not considered as a good practice. But in untouchable castes, it was existing since a long time. In the Sarki community it was not allowed in the past but now it is being practiced. Today if a Sarki woman's husband leaves her or dies, she can set marriage with another man. But the social status of the remarried woman is not better than once married woman. The detail data of the marriage system is given below in Table 5.3.

5.2.2.6 Divorce/Separation

According to the Hindu Sanskar (Culture), the marriage is sacrament and sacred union. It does not dissolve easily. The man and his wife are supposed to be found to each other even after the death of either of them. Therefore, whatever the situation exists, they have to compromise and readjust with each other. But now-a-day this view has been undergoing change.

When there is no good relationship between wife and husband, they get divorced. Although social opinion is against the divorce, it continues to exist in every society.

In Brahmin's and Chhetri's family, the social status of a divorced woman is not good. She is considered as a bad woman.

Marriage bond in Sarki community can be dissolved in two ways, firstly by resorting to regular divorce procedure and secondly wife's running away with her lover. Under the system of formal divorce, both the parties mutually agree to break the marriage bond by signing the divorce papers called Chhod-Patra. But none of the parties can affect a divorce by his or her own unilateral decision. But the second method has given enough liberty to the woman to dissolve marriage. When a women is dissatisfied with her husband, she picks up a new lover and runs away

to live with him. This method is more prevalent among Sarkis. No any such case is found in the study area during field study. The detail data of the marriage system is given below in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3
Marriage System of the Sarki's Community

Marriage Type	Number	Percentage
Arrange Marriage	38	80.85
Love Marriage	6	12.76
Inter-caste Marriage	3	6.39
Jari Bibah	-	-
Remarriage	-	-
Divorce	-	-
Total	47	100

Source: Field Survey, 2010

5.2.3 Rites of Passage of the Sarki Community

Everybody's life passes through different stages in different periods. In every stage, he/she performs different ritual ceremonies. Rites of birth, marriage (which is already mentioned) and death are the main rites of passage in Hinduism and these are called Sanskar. The word "Sanskar" means religious purification rites and ceremonies for sanctifying the body, mind and intellect of an individual so that he/she may become a full-fledged member of the community. These Sanskars also create an awareness of social status and privileges of the individuals.

The styles of the performance of rites of passage are different in every community. Therefore, their ways of performing rituals and some elaboration of these rituals and institutions are necessary to know. And it is also necessary to know how these are helpful in the community. And

on the other hand, it should be necessary to know to what extent they are preserving or changing their traditional rituals, which are maintaining the social structure of a society. The Sarkis are also found performing these Sanskars according to their own culture.

5.2.3.1 Birth Rite

Birth is the universal fact of human life. When a man and a woman get married, they are socially permitted to have sexual relations. After the conjugal life, they give birth to children and their social life starts.

Among the Sarkis, when the members of the family know that one has become pregnant they begin to prepare for the day of delivery. They start to collect more chickens for feeding the mother after delivery. During pregnancy, no special care of mother is taken. With regard to food, there are not set rules. The pregnant woman is required to eat enough rice, meat, pulses, green vegetables, milk, ghee, etc. But because of poverty, they could not get special type of diet.

In matter of sexual intercourse, no ritual restriction exists during the period of pregnancy. According to key informants a man may continue to cohabit with his wife till the delivery time.

During the time of delivery, they take help of a woman called Sudeni (a local woman, who knows something about delivery, but not about special health care) and who gives birth to a baby is called Sutkeri and her family and clan members observe birth pollution for 9 days.

5.2.3.2 Chhaithi (Sixth Day Ceremony)

Chhaithi is performed on the sixth day after the birth of the child. This ritual is performed believing God writes the fate of the child on that day. At the same time (ninth day of birth/the name giving ceremony (Nwaran) is celebrated. The name of newly born baby is given by

relatives of the baby. The purification from birth pollution is also done on the same day.

5.2.3.3 Nwaran / Name Giving Ceremony

On the ninth day after the birth, a ceremony organizes which is "Nwaran". In this day, the Jwain (son in law) and Vanij (sister's son) and their family relatives are served. A priest called East Devta uses Sun Pani (water touch to gold), the Gaut (cow's urine), Sisam Tell (oil), Jau (barly) worship and sprinkle the mother, baby, family members as well as house, after which she is fully at liberty to resume social intercourse with her neighbors. There is no any especial principle for giving the names to children. On the occasion of Nwaran ceremony the relatives enjoys domestic wine and feast.

On this occasion the newly born baby's toe is sunk in blood of pig. This is done because the evil eye can't touch the baby.

5.2.3.4 Pasni (Bhat Khuwai / First Feeding)

There is no classical rule for any rituals in the Sarki community. A baby is given food after 5-6 months of his/her birth. There is no special day law function for the purpose. The baby itself can decide when to start eating.

5.2.3.5 Murtuary or Death Rites

When a person dies, the dead body is cremated in any area or at the side of the river called Seti River by sons and other relatives. At that time, the dead body is tied with yellow cloth. All the relatives and close neighbors participate in the funeral procession. If the dead person is old or adult, he/she is burned but if the dead person is a baby or child, he/she is buried. The burning process of corpse is initiated by his/her sons,

relatives and neighbors too, and by finishing the burning process all the participants of the funeral procession take bath in Seti River.

Family members and clan members associated with deceased are also ritually polluted. No Pooja (Worship) or any religious function can be performed during polluted period (11 days). Death pollution, in Sarki community, is purified by son-in-law (Jwain) or Nephew (Bhanja) on eleventh day of death. On the eleventh day of death, the sons and male clan relatives shave their head and cut their nails.

On the purification ceremony (11th day of death), the family gives a feast to the members who participated in funeral procession on that day. Before eating the salt on that day, the purification is employed.

The higher caste people don't participate in funeral procession as they may be the neighbors.

5.2.4 Festivals

Nepalese people celebrate various festivals according to their culture and tradition. They worship various Gods and Goddesses and enjoy themselves by eating, drinking and dancing. So it can be said that Nepalese people know how to live in pleasure. The festivals which Nepalese people celebrate are associated with one or other of the divinities, held sacred either in the Hindu, Buddhist or Muslim theology.

Sarkis of the study area celebrate festivals as other Hindu do. Dashain, Laxmi Pooja (Deepawali), Maghe Sakranti, Chaite Dashain etc are main festivals of the Sarkis of the study area. The ways of their celebrating is given briefly as below.

5.2.4.1 Dashain

Dashain is the greatest festival of Hindu. The Sarki community also celebrates it. Dashain is celebrated for two weeks, in which different

kinds of religious tasks are performed. In preparation of Dashain, every house is ceremonially cleaned with animal (Cow, Ox) dung and fresh for the visit of Goddess Durga and long waited return of distant and nearby family members.

On the occasion of Dashain, they buy new clothes (Dresses) and eat delicious food with meat and taking domestic wine. At Dasami they put on Tika, Prasad by respective persons (elders) of their relatives.

5.2.4.2 Laxmi Pooja (Deepawali or Tihar)

Another festival of the Sarkis as other Hindus is Deepawali which is also known as Tihar. This is celebrated for five days. Goddess of wealth, Laxmi, is worshipped on this festival, especially on the third day of Tihar which is known as Laxmi Pooja. On this day, lamp is lit on every window, door, courtyard and wall to please Laxmi, who loves light.

5.2.4.3 Maghe Sakranti

The first day of Magh is celebrated as Maghe Sakranti. On the occasion, they eat Ghee, Chaku, Tarul and other delicious food. They also enjoy drinking domestic wine.

5.2.4.4 Chaite Dashain (Small Dashain)

This festival is celebrated in Chaitra/ Baishakh. Baishakh Purnima is the main day for this festival. They welcome the New Year and farewell the past year. On this day, elder people give blessings by sprinkling fresh water on the head to those relatives who are younger in relation as well as in age. They celebrate this festival happily and hopefully to get happiness. They cook rice, pulse, vegetables, curd, meat etc.

5.2.4.5 Tij

Tij is the greatest festival of Hindu women. The Sarki women also celebrate it. On this auspicious occasion, the Maiti (Parent's house) invites the sisters and daughters at their home. They come one or two days for Tij. The right followed by Tij is celebrated by the women by eating varieties of delicious dishes which is called Dhar.

On the day of Tij they are fasting and worship the God for their husband's long life. In this occasion they enjoy by singing and dancing.

5.2.5 Food Habits

Every community has its own food habits. Though the Sarkis have no any distinct food habits, they usually take two principal meals. The first is taken at about nine o'clock and the second after the sun set. Though they prefer to eat rice but their food items may be any-things (rice, wheat, etc.) because their food items depend on what they get from their occupation.

Sarkis are non-vegetarians. They keep pigs mainly and hens, goat, and buffalo for income and meat. When their relatives or guests visit their home, rice and chicken are cooked. The Sarki of the study area used to eat beef but not nowadays. Dead body of cow and ox were used as meat and they sold its skin or they make shoes from that leather few years ago, but new generations do not eat dead bodies now-a-days. Smoking cigarette (mostly non filter) and drinking wine along with meat (pig's and buffalo's) is a common habit among the Sarki community.

5.2.6 Dress and Ornaments

Shirt, paint, short, t-shirt and shoes are worn by young male Sarkis. Blouse, maxi, sarees are worn by married women and mini scorts, T-shirt, maxi, suruwal are worn by unmarried girls. Because of the poverty, the

quality of clothes and ornaments are always low. The female Sarkis wear earrings, phuli, tilhari, etc. which are made of brass, silver, aluminum and plastics. There is no any specific dress in the Sarkis community.

5.2.7 Education

Education is an essential factor for accelerating the development of any community. If people are educated, their living standard also improves. Thus, education plays a vital role in developing knowledge and skill of the people.

In the past, the Dalits did not send their children to school. Before the establishment of democracy in 2007 B.S, no Dalits were given a chance to enter the school education. Therefore, the majority of the Dalits and lower castes are still far behind in the field of education.

Hence, the Sarkis are Dalit (backward and depressed) caste. They were deprived of education before the promulgation of New Civil Code 2021 B.S. They lag behind in the field of education. Even today, most of the children join school and parents like to send their children to school.

Table 5.4

Educational Status of the Sarki Community

Educational Status	No. of the Respondents	Percentage
Literate	73	19.83
Primary Level	75	20.38
Lower Secondary Level	110	29.89
Secondary Level	35	9.51
Higher Level	10	2.72
Illiterate	65	17.67
Total	368	100

Source: Field Survey, 2010

The above table shows that 17.67% of the Sarkis are illiterate and only 19.83% are literate. Similarly, the respondents who have got primary, lower secondary and secondary and Higher level (Above SLC) education are 20.38 percent, 29.89 percent, 9.51 percent and 2.72 percent respectively. Among the respondents, most of the female respondents are illiterate. In the study area the entire children go to school but most of the students run off their study after SLC. The main causes of their school dropout is their poverty.

Table 5.5
Educational Status of the Children

Age Group (6-14)	No. of the school going children	No. of the not school going child	Total
Total / Percentage	86 (92.47)	7 (8.33)	93 (100)

Source: Field Survey, 2010

The above table reveals that the no. school going children of age group (6-14) is 93. Among them 92.47 percent of the children are school going children in different level (Primary, lower secondary and secondary), which is satisfactory. Most of the parents are aware towards education.

5.2.8 Language

The language of the Sarkis at the study area is Nepali. They have no native language. Nepali language is common language of the Sarki community.

5.2.9 Religion

Religion is a part of culture. Each and every community of the world does have its own religious tradition. The religion of every ethnic group is interwoven with their religious processes.

The Sarkis of the study area have strongly said that they are Hindu. They worship Hindu Gods and Goddesses like Laxmi, Sita, Ram, Krishna, Vishnu, Durga, Kali, etc. Also they worship Kalika, Bhager and Dokhala specially.

5.2.10 Changes in Socio-Cultural Life of the Sarki Community

Change is universal fact, so socio-cultural life of the Sarkis is being changed gradually. In the past, the Sarkis used to live in joint family, but the joint family system is now being declined at the study area. Only 9 families out of 38 families live in joint family. Rest of all i.e. 29 families live in nuclear family. The detail distribution of the Sarki community by their family type is given above in Table 5.2.

The cause of breaking joint family system is mainly economic. During the field work, it was asked them why they liked to live in nuclear family. They replied that they liked to live in nuclear family because they liked to live with the income which they earned. They do not like to give their income to others. Similarly, marriage system is also changing. In the past, early marriage (child marriage) was in practice but now it is not practised.

Murtuary or death rite is also changing. Nowadays, the Sarkis of the study area prefer to burning rather than burying because higher castes have burned the dead bodies which, they copy in their culture (acculturation process). Celebrating different festivals is a characteristic of Nepalese people. Sarkis also celebrate different festivals, but the celebrating style is changing. Nowadays, the Sarkis of the study area are

too much affected by the neighboring castes. They celebrate Dashain, Deepawali, Chhatha, Maghe Sakranti, Holi, etc.

Dressing pattern and ornaments are also changing. In real, more changes can be seen in dressing pattern in Sarki community of the study area. It is very difficult to identify the Sarkis both male and female at the study area seeing their dresses. They now wear same as upper castes. Shirt, Pant, Jacket are popular among male Sarkis. Sari, Blouse, are popular among married females and Surwal, Kurta, Shirt, T-shirt and Maxi are popular among unmarried females.

Ornaments are simple although they do not wear traditional types of ornaments. Female Sarkis wear Tilhari, Mangalsutra, Ring, Earring, Bindi, Nail polish, Cosmetic powder, Bangles as ornaments.

Educational status of the Sarkis is being changed at the study areas. School enrollment is being started. Now, the parents like to send their children to school.

Change in the study areas can also be seen on the religion. Now, their ways of worshipping of Gods and Deities has become quite flexible. They do not follow their religion more rigidly. Although they are still Hindu religious, but changes can be seen in performance. Young Sarkis are not interested in worship of Gods and Deities.

5.3 Economic Life of the Sarki Community

5.3.1 Traditional Occupation

It is already mentioned that traditionally speaking, the Sarkis are associated with cremating dead bodies and making shoes from the leather and plougher as hereditary occupation. But the situation has changed a lot. The Sarkis are related with leaving making shoes and cremating dead bodies now. The young generation leaving their traditional profession most of the people works daily wages about skilled labour (i.e. carpentry,

mason, etc.) and few of the younger people are going to foreign countries (gulf countries) for better economic value.

5.3.2 Occupation Status

In absence of occupation and sufficient income sources, people can not meet their daily needs and demands for the family. Occupational status plays vital role in the promotion of individual and community's status. The following table gives the occupational status of the Sarkis.

Table 5.6
Distribution of the Population by Their Occupation

S.N.	Occupation	No. of the population	Percentage
1	Agriculture & Household	55	27.65
2	Skilled Labour	43	21.61
3	Service in Nepal	8	4.03
4	Foreign Country	23	11.55
5	Wage Labour	48	24.12
6	Traditional Works	6	3.01
7	Driver & Helper	16	8.03
	Total	199	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2010

The above table shows that the main occupation of the Sarkis is agriculture which occupies the highest number (i.e. 27.65%). In the above table the traditional occupation is the least of the population engaged. Only 3.01% of the total population are involved in it. In the Sarki community they are involved in various sectors as shown in above table. They are trying to develop themselves economically and socially in the society.

5.3.3 Land Holding

In an agrarian economy, the extent of ownership of land is the main indicator of relative economic status of people. The following table gives the land holding pattern of the Sarkis.

Table 5.7
Land Holding Pattern of the Sarkis

S.N.	Size of Land (in Ropani)	HHs No.	Percentage
1	<2 Ropanis	20	52.64
2	<5 Ropanis	9	23.68
3	<8 Ropanis	4	10.52
4	<10 Ropanis	3	7.89
5	Above 10 Ropanis	2	5.27
7	Landless (completely)	-	0
	Total		100

Source: Field Survey, 2010

The above table shows that all of the of the Sarkis are landholder among 38 households 20 households (52.64%) have less than 2 ropanis land and 9 households (23.68%) have less than 5 ropanis. This data represents that the Sarki community goes under the poverty. Only 2 households (5.27%) have more than 10 ropanis land.

5.3.4 Food Sufficiency

Table 5.8

Distribution of the Households by their Food Sufficiency

No. of the HHs	Below 3 months	4-6 months	Food sufficiency	Total (HHs)
	18	15	5	38
Percentage (%)	47.36	39.47	13.16	100

Source: Field Survey, 2010

The above table shows that among the total households of Sarkis, 18(47.36%) households can provide food for less than 3 months and 15(39.47%) households provide food for less than 6 months to their families from their own agricultural production. Out of the total 38 households only 5 (13.16%) households have sufficient agricultural production. Thus, it is clear that the Sarkis can't survive only on their own agricultural production.

5.3.5 Livestock Holding

Livestock is also an important source of income of rural people. It supports the farming activities. The importance of domestic animals is not limited only to economic aspects. Some animals are socio-culturally and religiously important in Hindu society.

In the Sarki community, they tame different types of domestic animals but in very few numbers. The number of domestic animals and birds that they keep with them is given in the table.

Table 5.9
Livestock Keeping in the Sarki Community

S.N	Livestock	Number
1	Cow	8
2	Ox	6
3	Buffalo	40
4	Goat	80
5	Pig	35
6	Chicken	200
	Total	369

Source: Field Survey, 2010

The above table shows that the number of livestock per household is limited. Three different types of domesticated animals are tamed only for domestic consumption but not for commercial purpose. The cow and buffalo are kept for dung and milk.

The number of domestic animals is not large because from the observation, it is found that there is no forest nearby for cattle rising. Some respondents explain that for cattle rising, the limited landholding is a severe constraint. It is also found that livestock products like milk and ghee will not be bought in market from untouchable people like them. So, Sarkis do not like to tame domestic animals in large scale.

Thus, it appears that the animal husbandry to some extent is directly influenced by the limited landholding and untouchable caste.

5.3.6 Status of Indebtedness

Table 5.10

Distribution of the HHs by Indebtedness

No. of the HHs	Formal sector	Informal sector	No Indebted
3			
30			
5			
Total = 38 (100%)	7.89%	78.95%	13.16%

Source: Field Survey, 2010

The above table shows that most of the Sarkis are indebted. Only 5 households (13.16%) are free from indebtedness. Out of the total 38 households, only 30 households (78.95%) are indebted from informal sector; (local upper caste people) whose rate of interest is very high (i.e. 36% to 60%) but the SFDA's rate is 16% to 18%. Only 3 households (7.89%) are indebted from formal sectors. Most of the Sarkis have taken the loan for purchasing pigs, food, clothes and building home.

5.4 Preference on Health Care

The National Health Policy is adopted in order to bring about improvement in the health conditions of the people of Nepal. The primary objective of the National Health Policy is to extend the primary health care system to the rural people so that they can get benefit from modern medical facilities and trained health care providers.

Health care system of a society is influenced by the various factors e.g. cultural practices and belief, income, education, accessibility, awareness and attitude. The respondents of the Sarkis community are asked about their preferences in health care services and information is put here in the Table 5.11 below.

Table 5.11
Distribution of the Population of the Sarkis by their Preference on
Health Care

Health Services Providers					
	Traditional Healer	Medical	Clinic/Private Nursing Home	Govt. Health Institutions	Total
No. of the Respondents	25	20	35	60	140
Percentage (%)	17.85	14.28	25.0	42.87	100

Source: Field Survey, 2010

The above table shows that out of the 140 respondents, most of them (i.e. 51.87%) go to government health institutions, which is followed by 17.85 % who go to traditional healers for health care. Similarly, 14.28 and 25.0 percent of the total respondents go to medical, clinic and private nursing home for health care respectively.

It is concluded that due to poverty and lack of health care knowledge (awareness), they don't get proper health care from these health care providers.

5.5 Attitude towards Getting Citizenship and Doing Vital Registration

All the people of the country have the right to get their citizenship to be a real citizen of the country. Citizenship is a real certificate of the citizen of the country which plays vital role in daily activities as well as academic and administrative fields. All the people of the country have the responsibility to register their marriage, birth of children, death of

family members in V.D.C. All the people get citizenship on the basis of kinship on the study area.

5.6 Access/Approach in the Political Participation and the Local Resource Management

Political aspect is one of the most important parts of the social life of human being which is inseparable with man/woman directly or indirectly. Similarly, all the people of the society have the right and responsibility to handle and manage the local resources (i.e. school management committee, public works/affairs).

Table 5.12

Distribution of the Population by their Political Participation

	Polling in Election	Member of a party	Candidate in Election	Number Participation
No. of Participation	165	35	6	14

Source: Field Survey, 2010

Table 5.13

Distribution of Population by their Approach in Local Resource Management

	School Management Communities	Public work/ Affairs	No. Approach
No. of the Participation	6	22	32

Source: Field Survey, 2010

The above table 5.12 (a) and (b) show that out of the total 368 population, 165 (i.e. 44.83%) people have participated in polling in the election. and only 35 persons have concerned with different political parties. But 14 persons get ticket for election of local bodies although, only 6 people win the election.

Similarly, out of the total population of Sarki, only 32 person (i.e. 8.69%) have got approach in local resource management and 44 respondents (i.e. 73.33) have no approach in any local resource management. But no respondent has approach in school management committee.

5.7 Relation of the Sarkis with Other Caste People

According to Hindu caste system, the Sarki caste belongs to untouchable. So, they can not get all social opportunities in the Hindu society. None of the clean castes get food or water from them and avoid physical contact where possible. But the constitution of Nepal 2021B.S. and 2047 B.S. theoretically forbade caste based discrimination in Nepal.

However, there can be found a satisfactory relationship between the Sarkis and other castes. The other castes people have necessity to come in close contact with the Sarkis for various reasons.

In the democratic system a single vote is also valuable for election. So many political parties are in close contact with the Sarkis in the election period. In this way, the relation is being nearer and nearer with other caste people in the study area.

5.8 Social Status of the Sarkis in Society

The Sarki community belongs to Hindu religion. But they are untouchable. The high caste people do not take food and water from them.

But after 2046, the situation has changed a lot. The feeling of untouchable among young generation is being limited (reduced). Although the position of the Sarkis in caste hierarchy is still low, the feeling of untouchability is not rigid as it was in the past. Therefore, it can be said that the social status of the Sarkis in the society is gradually improving.

5.9 Contemporary Adaptation Problems of the Sarki Community

Feeling of untouchability is not rigid as it was in the past in the society, but the Sarkis are still facing adaptation problems. First of all, they are Sudras and their traditional occupations are ploughing, grave-digging, cremating dead bodies and making shoes which are known as the dirty works.

In the Sarki community “drinking wine” and “quarrelling” among themselves are very common. During the field work, the researcher also observed their quarrels many times. For their such type of behaviors, other caste people hate them.

In this way, other caste people do not like to give them equal status as themselves. Therefore, “adaptation” is being difficult for them in the society. Good education and awareness generating programmers are very essential for them.

5.10 Reaction against Social Exclusion

Generally, social exclusion means discrimination among different castes concerning with activities which are directly or indirectly associated with a society. The Sarkis themselves considered that social exclusion is our problem in the ways of improving and enhancing their life style. The reactions of the Sarkis against social exclusions are:

- a) Social exclusion should be changed
- b) Government should take policy against social exclusion.
- c) Government should give more rights to minority groups of Dalits in different fields.

5.11 Efforts of the NGOs/INGOs and Government

There are different types of NGOs/INGOs which are working to improve and enhance the lifestyle of Dalits, but there is not seen any positive sign of the improvement of the Sarkis lifestyle. Gradually, social awareness is improving and enhancing among the Sarkis of the study area.

CHAPTER – SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

6.1 Summary

The purpose of the study is to find out the socio-economic status of the Sarki community in Hemja VDC of Kaski District. It is found from the study that certain changes have occurred in the socio-cultural life as well as in economic life of the Sarki community.

To fulfill the objectives of this study, field work was carried out in Hemja VDC of Kaski district for about one month. The data of the Sarkis were collected through observation, interview, key informants, etc. from the field. Data are intended to cover various aspects of the Sarki community. The summary of the findings are given below.

The Sarkis are considered a low caste and so-called untouchable community in the study site by higher caste, and is the victim of caste-based discrimination. Traditionally, they have been treated inhumanely as untouchables in the society. The level of education in the study area is satisfactory. 64% people are found literate and only 36% were found illiterate. The percentage of male literacy is 51% whereas female literacy is 49%, which shows that males are more literate than females. Although agriculture is the main source of livelihood in the study area, shoe and madal making, wage labour, ploughing, job, carpentry, and business are the other alternative occupations followed by the Sarkis in the study area. Primary crops grown in the study area are paddy, wheat, maize, millet, oilseeds, cereals and vegetables. The primary animals reared in the area are buffalo, cow/oxen, goats, hens and pigs. Among the total 38 households, majority of people are engaged in wage labour (24.12%), agriculture and household (27.65%) and traditional works (3.01%).

Among the total population of the Sarkis, the population of male is more than female. Out of the total population, the majority 193 (52.45%) belongs to male and only females are 175 (47.55%). The economically active age group (15-60 years) belongs to 134 (36.41%) of the total population. Comparatively, the burden of child is more than that of old aged persons. However, overall burden of dependents on working age group is not less.

The Sarki community is also affected by the changing value in other communities. Majority (76.11%) of the families are living in nuclear family. And most of the Sarkis prefer small size of family.

Poor economic condition, conflict between brothers, conflict between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law and conflict between wives of brothers are some reasons behind the disintegration of joint family. But main cause is economic aspect because many young Sarkis like to live in their own income and do not want to share with other family members.

Marriage is also an important institution in every society. An attempt has been made to describe various aspects of marriage among the Sarki community. There is a great change in marriage system. Majority of the Sarki don't want to marry their children in babyhood. Child marriage is not in practice now-a-days.

All kinds of occasions related to events between birth and death are called rites and the passages such as birth, chhaithi/nwaran, bhat khuwai (First feeding), and death are observed by the Sarkis according to their traditions and customs.

When a woman gives birth to a child, all members of the same clan group observe birth pollution for 9 days and death impurity is observed for 11 days. After the death, both funeral and cremation are found among them.

Traditional types of dresses and ornaments cannot be seen more among the young Sarkis. Many changes can be seen there. Shirt, pant, shoes and other clothes as upper caste are worn by the male Sarkis. And the female Sarkis wear saree blouse, maxi etc. as upper caste female. Ornaments are simple and made of brass, silver, aluminium and gold as per their economic condition.

Education can be considered as a key to all sorts of development. If education is not well improved and acquired, development seems quite difficult to achieve.

The general education status of the Sarkis of the study area is so different from national average. No one has got even Master's Degree education so far. But change can be seen towards the education. Most parents like to send their children to school today.

The Sarkis celebrate different festivals. They celebrate Dashain, Deepawali, Holli (Fuguwa), Chhatha Parva, Maghe Sakranti and Naga Panchami. The celebrating system is too much affected by other caste of the study area.

The Sarkis are Hindu. They worship Hindu Gods and Goddesses. They also worship their won Deities (i.e. Bhager and Dhokkahlo). Now-a-days, they are not as rigid as in the past. They do not take interest in worshipping Gods, Goddess and Deities.

Food is simple in the Sarki community. They eat mainly twice a day. Their delicious foods are rice, pulse, vegetables, meat and local raksi.

The traditional occupations of the Sarkis are ploughing, grave-digging, cremating dead bodies and making a variety of shoes from the leather. They have left grave-digging and cremating dead bodies making shoes and ploughing of the other's field. The young generations are leaving their traditional professions. Their main occupations are

agriculture and daily wage labor about skilled labour (i.e. carpentry, mason) and few of the younger people go to foreign countries (gulf countries) for better economic value. As the side occupation, they tame pigs, chicken, goat and buffalo for commercial purpose and domestic use.

The cattle are very limited due to the lack of forest and grazing land. It is also affected by caste-based discrimination. On the whole, it appears that the Sarki community of the study area lives in poverty.

6.2 Conclusion

Various socio-economic problems have made Sarkis of the study area poor and deprived. Their problems are rooted in the present condition of untouchability, caste-based discrimination and the decline of the importance of their traditional occupation.

Although economic aspect in life is considered to be most important, economic condition of Dalit (Sarki) is still found very weak, poor and miserable. Untouchability between lower caste and higher caste people is one of the hindrances for social and economic development of the Nepalese society. Due to the feeling of untouchability and discrimination, the people of higher caste do not want their social upliftment. They can't run teashop, hotel and other many business enterprises because of being untouchables. They are not appreciated although they do some important work. Instead, there may be conspiracy not to give them a chance to do any important work. Due to such practices, Sarki people are compelled to confine themselves into their own occupation, labour or remain jobless. So, social aspect is also one of the major of economic backwardness of Sarki people. For the economic backwardness of Sarki people, they themselves are responsible to some extent. Their tolerance and wise behaviors may help to improve their economic status in many affairs but, the conflict among themselves,

discrimination, humiliation for their own occupation, misunderstanding, consumption of alcohol, smoking, useless expenditure, lack of good sanitation, poor diet, etc. have made them poor and weak themselves.

Sarki people of selected study area have been found being involved in their traditional occupation for the products invented by modern science and technology. So, their occupation seems to fall down slowly. Their concept towards their own occupation is not positive and most of you feel hesitated to involve in their traditional occupation. According to youths in the study area, they are going far from their traditional occupation.

6.3 Recommendation

On the basis of the findings of this study some suggestions are made which will provide the issue that could advance the forthcoming studies. It is hoped that suggestions will initiate planner, policy makers and local development officers to design appropriate and effective policies and programs regarding the upliftment of Sarkis and their status within the household and local level. The major suggestions are as follows:

- The study area is victimized by high rate of people's unawareness due to which the Sarki's social awareness is lacking behind. So, the concerned authorities must introduce programs for raising awareness to the Sarkis.
- The major crops grown in this region is food crop. So, emphasis must be given to the cultivation of cash crops along with vegetable and fruit cultivation.
- Dalits especially the Sarkis need special concern for their livelihood and empowerment. So, skill development and cash

earning programmes should be launched in their community. Dalit empowerment programmes including the projects that help improve their traditional occupation of making shoe and madal will help improve the livelihood of some of the Sarkis of the study area.

- None of the Sarkis has achieved even higher secondary level education yet. It is due to their poor economic condition and unconsciousness. So, scholarship should be given to the Sarki children.
- Non-formal education programme should also be conducted and emphasized for educating both male and female adults along with school going children.
- Economically the Sarkis are very poor and living in absolute poverty. So, to improve their economic condition, they should be provided with skill development training or income generating programmes. Along with these training and programmes, they should be provided with appropriate credit facilities and access in market (market facilities).

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ANNEXE – I

Questionnaire for Household Survey

1. Introduction

Full Name of Interviewee:

Age (completed year): Sex:

VDC: Ward No.:

Tole/Village: Household No.:

2. Head of the Household

Name: Age (completed year):

Sex: Occupation:

Education:.....

3. What is your academic qualification?

- a) Literate b) Primary Level
c) Lower Secondary Level d) Secondary Level e) Illiterate

4. What is your occupation?

- a) Agriculture b) Government service
c) Business d) Others

5. Do you have children?

- a) Yes b) No

6. If yes, How many and in which age are they?

S.N.	Name of children	Sex	Age	Educational status

7. Type of family: (a) Nuclear b) Joint

8. How much land do you have?

Types of land	Total land	Cultivated own self	Rented in	Rented out
Khet				
Bari				

9. What do you grow on your land?

S.N	Major type of crops	Production (in mum)

10. Is the production sufficient to meet the annual food required for the family?
 a) Yes b) No
11. If no, what are the major sources of income which help you to manage family in the food deficit months?
 (a) (b) (c) (d)
12. What type of animals do you have?

S.N.	Types of animals	Number

13. What are the main source of cooking fuels?
 (a) (b) (c) (d)
14. What is your source of drinking water?
15. Status of indebttness
 (a) Formal sector (b) Informal sector
16. Are you following your caste-wise occupation?
 (a) Yes (b) No
17. If no, what was your past occupation?

18. Why did you change your previous occupation?

19. Do you smoke/drink?
 (a) Yes (b) No
20. Did you register marriage, birth of children and death of family members in governmental office?
 (a) Yes (b) No
21. If no, what are the reasons behind it?
 (a) (b) (c) (d)
22. What is your approach in local resource management?
 (a) In the management committee of school. (i) Yes (ii) No
 (b) Participation in local development works/affairs. (i) Yes (ii) No

23. Do you have approach in political participation?
 (a) Yes (b) No
24. If yes, in which political activities do you involve?
 (a) As a voter (b) As a candidate
 (c) As a general member of a party
 (d) As a active member of a party
25. Where do you go to take health service?
 (a) Traditional Healer (b) Medical
 (c) Clinic (d) Governmental Health Offices
26. Is social exclusion your problem?
 (a) Yes (b) No
27. What is your reaction about social exclusion?

28. Does your caste follow early marriage system?

29. If yes, what are the reasons doing early marriage?

30. Do you know about your place of origin?

ANNEXE – II

Checklist for Interview with Key Informants

1. Demographic features
 - History of settlement in the study area
 - History of the Sarki community(Ethno-historical data relating to their origin)
2. Socio-Cultural features
 - The food habits
 - Language
 - Life cycle ceremonies and their expenses.
3. Inter-Caste relationship
 - Between higher castes and Sarkis (Petro-client relationship)
 - Between untouchables.
4. Caste based discrimination and related matters.
 - Prevalence of caste-based discrimination
 - Area of discrimination
 - Attitude towards caste based discrimination
5. Changing trends of the Sarki community
 - Occupation
 - Education
 - Social relationship

ANNEXE – III

Questionnaire for Key Informants

1. Name:
2. Occupation: Education: Sex:
3. Please, say about the Sarki community:
Inter-caste relationship
Caste-based discrimination
4. How many Dalit children are studying in the school?
.....
5. Please, say suggestion to uplift their condition?
.....
6. Please, evaluate as whole.
.....
7. What are the main causes of backwardness?
.....
8. Have you seen any changes after 1990?
(a) (b)
(c) (d)
9. Did they want to change their traditional occupation?
(a) Yes (b) No
10. If yes, why?
(a) (b)
(c) (d)