

CHAPTER – I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Nepal has been a model of mosaic society, with over forty mutually unintelligible groups and further division by caste. It has been wealth of cultural diversity (Wake-1980:150). This cultural mosaic structure gives ethnic identification. People of such ethnic groups of every region has their own traditions, cultures and various ways of life.

The dalits are defined as the caste of people in Nepal who are categorized as untouchables in society. They live both in the Terai and in the Hilly area. The major dalit caste groups in the Terai are Chamar, Mushar, Khatwe, Tatma etc. while Kami, Damai, Sarki in the Hilly area. In the Kathmandu valley, the major Dalit caste groups are remained as Poda and Chame among Newar caste(CBS 2001).

From the early time, Nepal was the meeting ground of diverse ethnic groups different in languages, faiths, cultures, religions and customs. In terms of language, people of Nepal can be divided in to two major groups i.e. Tibeto-Burman and Indo-Aryan. The former group came from the north while the later from the South. As we talk about religions, Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim and other mixed religious groups also exist, however, Hinduism is Pre-dominant. According to this philosophy, Nepalese caste system is divided into four layers known as Brahmin, Kshatry, Baisya and Sudra. In this system, high castes are placed at the apex of the caste hierarchy while the lower castes on the low stratum. Later on, in the medieval period king Jayasthiti Malla sub divided those

who were not included in the then existing caste system into four castes on the basis of occupation (Sharma 1983).

In Hindu religion, Chamar and Sarkis have the same social and occupational status. Chamar is also called Mochhi. In 1991 sample of census, the Chamar was 1.01 percent in the total population. In sample population, Terai originated occupational caste was 32.33 percent of the total Terai originated people (Note: simply Terai is used instead of Terai originated people). Among 100 percent of the occupational caste of Terai, Chamar was 10.04 percent. The mother tongue of Chamar is Maithali, Bhojpuri and Abadhi (K.C. and Ulak 1992).

In India, Chamar and Sarkis both are classified into Harijan group. Traditionally, even in modern society, Chamar and Sarkis both are called untouchable castes. (Mahato 1993).

The Chamar is one of the 61 ethnic groups in Nepal. Their exact origin has not be confirmed yet, Chamar occupies the rank of untouchable. According to Hindu caste system, although they are minority in number they can be found all over the Terai. They are Sudras and their traditional occupation is leather work (ibid, 1993).

The word Chamar is derived from the Sanskrit "Charma Kara" which means "leather worker." In the ancient (Rig Vedic) time, the leather worker does not seem to have been an object of opprobrium and, indeed his services were of at most importance to the warriors of those days. In the ancient Indian epic, the Mahabharat, the Chamar was the makers of shields, breast plates, and body armor, as well as of drums and various parts of chariots (LYNCH-1969).

This study is concerned with the Chamars. Chamars are Indo Aryan and they migrated from India. About the Chamars, Ghurye (1969) writes, "Chamar or chambhar the name of the leather working caste is derivated from a Sanskrit word meaning worker in leather." We can also say that the word Chamar has been taken from the word "Charmaker". Chamar means leather and kar means worker in Hindu religion, Chamar and Sarki have the same social and occupational status (mahato 1993) but Sarkis mainly live in mountains and Chamars live in Terai and inner Terai.

Change is a universal continuous phenomenon which is found in all societies at all time (Pathak-2003). Every objects of the world, either it is physical or non-physical, can not remain constant ever and ever with the cycle of time. It has the tendency of skipping the past form and heading towards novelty. So human society and culture also cannot remain apart from it. With the flow of time it goes on bunging newness in the old traditional structure. The attitude, belief, tradition, folkways, norms values etc. which were prevalent in the past are vanished, and in place of it new belief and systems are emerged. The devastation of oldness, and the emergence of newness is in fact a universal truth. Any society of the world either it is primitive or modern, which is today's society, was not the same in the past and can not remain similar in the future as well. Hence, the process of change is closely associated with human society and culture. Through the forms, directions of change may differ, it continuously takes place in all time.

In today's changing structure of the world, where worldwide fraternal relations have been growing and within our own nation where upper and lower caste people's social, cultural, assimilation, languages, religious, rituals, ceremonies, norms and values are developing, and in

their regard to have dependency on it are its positive aspects. Consequently, it helps to progress the society which are under the clutches of conservations, and also it helps to develop the consciousness in the society. So, the racial feelings within themselves get minimize by which the nation never had to face the problem of colonial and the regional war. Therefore, in this changing world's, context, the race Chamar should be introduced, which is very much essential as well.

But today, the way ethnic groups are imitating customs and life style of others or getting fascinated towards others' culture may seem profitable for some short span of time, but it may create an identity crisis in long term development. Especially, the youngers are fascinated towards acculturation, but in future it may hamper in the development of their whole community.

Through Nepal is small in terms of territory, but it is considered to be very rich in regard with ethic groups. On this basis, the idea is rooted. If the very trend continues for some more times, then the day will come when Chamar has to face a great loss which will ultimately hamper the whole nation. On this very regard, the Chamar community and government have to think seriously.

This study is an attempt to observe socio-cultural changes among the Chamars, a traditional occupational group, leather working in Nepal. This study tries to give an ethnographic picture of Chamar in Hanumannagar (pra. ma)VDC of Siraha district and tries to give social and cultural changes that have occurred in Chamars of that area. The changes are viewed by observing their life cycle, ceremonies feast and festivals, dressing pattern, cultural practices, making shoes and selling

leather, sources of income and healing practice, education, public awareness, housing pattern, and occupation in the past and at present.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The definition of socio-cultural change is controversial in many sociological and anthropological works. In the context of the present work, the term socio-cultural change is used in a broad sense that it encompasses the way of life, thinking, occupation, traditions, customs, norms and values, religion and other aspects of the particular group of people or the society. For the present study, socio-cultural changes have been studied in terms of family marriage and other aspects closely related with this aspects in Hanumannagar (pra.ma) VDC of Siraha district. There are various untouchable groups. Among them, Chamar is the oldest inhabitant with its own tradition and culture. From the ancient period, they have developed their own customs, art, morals, belief, socio-economic institutions but yet, their access to economical, education and political powers are limited. Nepali mainstream political, social and cultural life is dominated by high caste of Hindu groups (Hofer 1976). Untouchables efforts to find jobs are also often hampered by their lack of kinship of social connection with caste people in positions of authority.

The profession of each caste, living in Terai region is agriculture. Every caste and community have owned their own traditional occupations. Our caste system has regarded Chamar caste as low and untouchable caste other untouchable castes here are Dom, Mushar, Dushad, Kalwar etc. whose social position is equal to that of Chamar. However it has been reformed to some extent. So, it is not necessary to do the act like “Choi chitto”. Even after the untouchable castes like Chamar touch others as unlike. Chamar of this region earn their livelihood

through the wages they get from the people of higher castes. It is through their labour, they come in contact with other castes (Koirala -2060 B.S.).

Professionally, Chamars are engaged in agriculture, labour, leather products like making shoes, sell, the animal skins, play music in various festivals and so on. Similarly they work in the fields of farmers. Because of the frequent contact with other castes, they assume that their rite and rituals have been modified. As their forefathers, they still worship their own gods and goddesses in the same way (Ghurye 1974). They prefer to be called Hindu. Besides their own gods and goddess, they too, worship Hindu Gods and Goddess like, Ganesh, Shiva, Bishnu, Laxmi, Durga and so on. However, their method of worship differs. The social system does not favour them. It is because of this unfavourable system. They are socially, economically and culturally backward. They inhabit in slum area. They unlike wanderers, live in a permanent place, so extensive research should be made on this case (Koirala 2060 B.S.).

The investigation made on the term etymology of the term Chamar says "This caste is engaged in skinning and is accustomed to eat flesh of dead quadruped, so they are called Chamar" (ibid 2060 B.S.).

The present study tries to provide an ethnographic description of the Chamar community of Hanumannagar (pra.ma) VDC based on the ethnographic field work. It also reveals the changes in the socio-cultural life of Chamar people. The tradition social organizations of Chamar particularly marriage, family, kinship, religion, village polity, economics have gradually been changing in accordance with the time, place and situation. I argue that the influence of high caste people access to modern education and process of modernization are the main factors of the socio and cultural change in the Chamar society. However, the Chamar people

have still preserved some of their tradition customs and at the same time adopted part of the modern culture.

Due to continuous interaction with other groups, they have been losing their own social and cultural identity. They have lost their own socio-cultural identification. The socio-cultural and economic condition of Chamars, in Nepal, is seriously thinkable. Likewise the Chamars at Hanumannager (pra.ma) VDC of Siraha district are suffering the same problem. Socio-cultural and economic condition of Chamar community have been deteriorating day by day. Therefore, a study of socio-cultural and economic status of Chamar is very essential as it may shed light on socio-culture and economic backwardness of this untouchable caste.

In Nepal, Chamars live in the Terai districts of Nepal. Not much is known about them in Nepal. It will not known if no study is made about them in this country. The national census is silent about them. Most probably, like many other castes or social groups, they have been included in the population lumped together under the unspecified column. Even though they are spread over several districts, their number is small.

Due to modernization and economic condition, Chamars have changed their traditional pattern of life by considering this fact, this study focuses on the following research problems:

- a) What are their socio-culture status?
- b) What are their major occupation?
- c) What are the existing problems among them?
- d) To find out their socio-culture practices and impact of change at present.
- e) To trace out the history and culture of Chamars.

- f) To find out the livelihood strategies of the Chamars in the past and at present.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Every work is purposeful, so, every work is done with certain objectives. Generally, objectives are of two kinds: General objective and specific objective. General objective of the study is the socio-cultural change of Chamar community of Hanumannagar (Pra.ma) VDC. But specific objective are different, which are as follows:

-) To find out the socio-cultural condition of the Chamars at Hanumannagar (Pra.ma) VDC of Siraha.
-) To analyze the socio-cultural change in the various aspects of Chamars with the emphasis on marriage, family, occupation etc.
-) To find out the responsible factors of socio-cultural changes in Chamar people.

1.4 Rational of the Study

The socio-cultural status of a community shows the living condition of people in that community with the great change in the field of technology, communication, transportation, education and their interaction with other different cultural groups. They must have undergone certain changes. Similarly, urbanization, modernization , acculturation, shanskritization, invention, discovery, innovation, diffusion, westernization, assimilation, revolution, migration and population size have surely affected the socio-cultural condition of any society. Thus, Chamars are also affected by these factors and are going to be changed in their subsistence economy, occupational composition socio-cultural patterns and life style of the Chamars.

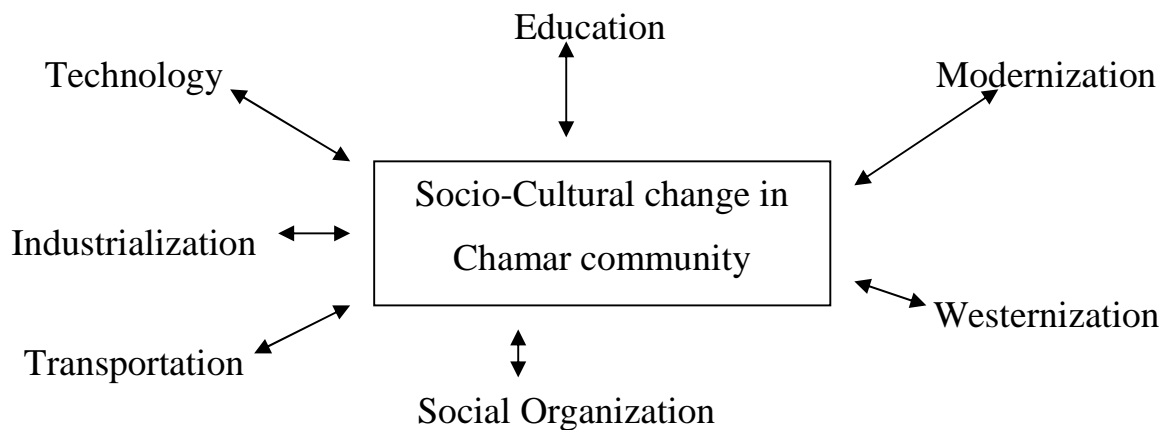
A lot of social study has been carried out about the people of Mountain and Hilly side. But very few numbers of ethnographical studies have been conducted about the Terai people such as Chamar, Mushar, Dom etc. So, limited research are found which are relating to those societies. Chamars are rich in terms of their traditional culture. But now due to contact with other groups and influence of modernization, their culture is gradually vanishing. There are more ethnographic studies in Nepal especially, on Magars, Gurungs, Tamang, Sherpas, Rais, Limbus, Tharus etc. but the Chamars community is the least studied social group in Nepal and no sociological/anthropological study has been made on this community so far. So, the present study fills this gap in the field of ethnographic study of Nepal especially, in terai. Thus this study will be supplementary source of information to understand the socio-cultural life of Chamar. Also it is thought to be helpful to learn economic, socio and cultural characteristics of the Chamar community of Hanumannagar (pra.ma) VDC. This study is an attempt towards that direction and I hope this study may be helpful theoretically as a literature to the forth coming researchers and those who are interested to accumulate knowledge of this ethnic group.

1.5 Conceptual Framework

The term socio and cultural change has been dealt separately by some sociologist and Anthropologist (Sachdeva and Bhusan 1980, Malinowki 1980:55). But in my opinion that the term socio-cultural change is so broad that it encompasses the way of life, custom, traditions, occupations, language, religion and several other aspects of the people of a particular society. Because of the close affinity over lapping between two, socio and cultural aspects will be deemed synonymous for the

present study. Hence, the socio-cultural changes have been studied in terms of family, polity, religion, economy, dress pattern, food habits and so on. It can be said that the Chamars are backward people. They have been neglected in all aspect of social life. Economically, they are very poor. They are called backward and undeveloped people who have less change in every aspect of social life. But now due to the improvement of socio, cultural influence of other high caste people, they are under-going some changes. The traditional social organization of Chamar particularly marriage, family, kinship, religion, polity, economy etc. are gradually changing in accordance with the time, place and situation. However, still the Chamar people have preserved some of their traditional customs at the same time adopted parts of the modern culture too. Influence of high caste, education and modernization therefore is the main process of social cultural change observable in the Chamar society.

The level of socio-cultural change is influenced by economic status, education, frequent interaction with the people of other community and changes in occupation etc. Here change is viewed historically. Therefore the study has focused on historical factors, socio-cultural factor, modernization. Keeping the fact in the mind, I have developed and applied following conceptual framework.



CHAPTER – II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature review is very important part of the social research because it provides a guideline to the researcher. This chapter deals more or less about some basic parameters of pertinent literature of theoretical implications and study topic concern book reviews by different scholars. To illustrate the present study, topic under the several theoretical evaluations unfold the various and critical roots to find out socio-cultural change among Chamar people.

2.1 Ethnographic Studies on Untouchables

As the definition given by Dr. D.N. Majumder, the untouchable castes are those who suffer from various social and political disabilities. Many of which are traditionally prescribed and socially enforced by higher castes. One important and rather more dangerous legality of caste system is untouchability. It is the serious problem in which our society is a sinking down. It is a system, which has invited unworth for social reformers and should be legally abolished. So, many steps have been taken to end this system from society but so far all efforts in this regard have not yield desirable results. There are few studies been made on untouchable caste of Nepal.

In Nepal, the untouchable caste includes the Kami, Damai, Sarki (cobbler) in the entire Mountain and Hilly regions, it includes Pode, Chyame, Kusle and Halhule in the Newar communities of the Kathmandu valley. In the Terai it includes Dum, Teli, Chamar, Mushar and a number of local tribes. Apart from this Hilly tribes like Gaine, Kami, Badi and a

number of local small tribes are also regarded as untouchable as Sorokin has pointed out all paramently organized societies are stratified. Most societies of the world have had their type of what the world calls "The lowly" the roman had their plebians, the British their Villains; the Americans their Negroes. So the Hindus have "Untouchabilities". (Rao 1999).

There are very few studies 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 untouchable caste of Nepal. A research prepared by Sharma, Chhetri and Rana (1994) entitled "A modest study of the current socio-economic situation of the lower status caste and tribal communities in Nepal" is a book in which all types of problems of untouchables are given well. In this book, caste based discrimination and related matters are given well.

Similarly, Gautam and Thapa's (1994) books "Tribal Ethnography of Nepal (Vol. I & II) are also books of ethnography. These books have traced about some untouchable castes of Nepal. Badi, Dom, Gaine, Kami, Mushar, Sarki etc untouchable castes are tries to be described in this books.

Bista (1996) in his book "People of Nepal" has given some account of untouchables. He has put them in occupational castes and has given a few descriptions of some Terai untouchable castes.

The above example shows that there are so much discrimination against the untouchables and study should be done about them. But

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

Hofer (1976) has studied about the Nepalese code of 1854, in which caste hierarchy system was imposed by Janga Bahadur Rana, better institutionalized in strict sense to which even untouchable people's shadow remained polluted and impure so that upper caste people lived far from body and shadow contact with untouchable people. He also mentions that among the untouchable groups too.

According to D.B. Sagar (2001), under the statement of Janautthan Pratishtan on the occasion of "World Conference Against Racism 2001 (WCAR), gives the description about division of Nepalese Society into blacks i.e. the touchable and untouchable dichotomy, in which the touchable group not only dominate and discriminate but also suppresses, deprives, oppresses against dalits, in the name of caste hierarchy, purity and impurity. He also blames the government which enables to do something more than anything in order to tranquility and relevant identity of similar culture background people through the implementation of certain commitments of conglomerate prospective.

Although, special books are not available, but some dissertations of Master Degree of T.U. have been written regarding it. Some dissertation on untouchables, Chhetri (1985) has prepared these on "Gaine", a singing people of Nepal and Shrestha (1987) in which he has written on the same caste groups. These two are limited in Kaski district but Thapa (1995) has written on Gaine of Dang district. Similarly, Subedi (1995) has written on "Badi", an untouchable caste whose traditional profession is in prostitution. Similarly, Navaraj Subedi (1998) has also studied about Chamar people who are the untouchable caste in the Terai region.

Rajendra Prasad Koirala (2060 B.S.) also studied about Chamar people and their socio and economic status in Saptari district.

Some foreign writers have tried to write about untouchable caste but they all are not ethnographic study. Caplan's (1972) "Priest and Cobbler" is an example of the study of social change in a Hindu village of Western Nepal. Moreover, Caplan highlights the changing patterns of social life with conflicts among them. MacDonald (1975) has written a book "Essay on the Ethnography of Nepal and South Asia" in which he has written about some untouchable caste.

In the same way, "Human Rights Year" Book (1993) gives some inventory notes about the untouchables i.e. Sarki (cobblers), Kami (Bishowkarma), Damai (Tailors), Gyne (Singing gypsies), Badi (Nomadic people), Kumal (Clay pottery producers), Dhobis (Laundry communities), Chamar and Poday (Untouchables of Newar communities) and their present conditions with historical backgrounds. It further provides knowledge about the areas they live/inhabit in.

Some glimpses of untouchable are given in the books entitled "Nepali Jana Jivan (198)" of Sharma, "Mero Nepal Brahman" (1956) of Thapa "Gandakika Susheli" of Thapa (1963) Nepali Samaj Eak Adhyan (1982) of Sharma and four volumes of "Mechi dekhi Mahakali Samma" (1974) etc.

There are different opinions regarding the origin of untouchability. According to Manu, the Hindu law, it gives practice of pratiloma marriage was the caste for the origin of untouchability. Children born on such marriages were called "Chandals". The chandals were the progeny of the union of Brahmin female with a Shudra male.

2.2 Change

Change is the law of nature, which denotes difference in some period of time. What is today, shall be different from what would be tomorrow. The notion of change dates back to early human civilization in the beginning. Man had nomadic life and lived in jungle. Later on, man started to settle permanently and formed social group and community. The concept of nation, law, education, technology, religion etc developed in society. Every change led to a new circumstance which again in change led to a next. Such changes are continuing and continue forever (Pathak-2003).

Such changes were directed from various levels and in various ways. Some changes such as from the government levels, were planned and systematized for transformation of society, where as some others changes were unplanned and violent. (Pathak 2003).

Change is the law of nature. Nothing is static in this world. Now new generation can never be an exact replica of the old. Social structure is never static. It is changing from generation to generation. Change takes place due to various conditions and circumstances like, invention of various things, economic development, use of tools and techniques, education, cultural, diffusion etc. In the course of time, various changes have taken place in the field of earth, rocks, living creature and human itself.

Regarding change, Maclver and page write "If the condition of human life were unchanging, then might the social structure be unchanging also." But this condition is always unstable. There are primitive societies, which we think of as stationary. Partly, because we

know less about their past, partly because owing to limits of their control over nature, their relative seclusion, their smaller size and therefore greater homogeneity. The change that occur are slower and less determinant" (MacIver and page)

a) Social Change

Social change refers to alternations in the patterns of interaction or social behaviour among individuals and groups within a society (Dobey et al: 1973). Any modification in the social organization of society in any of its social institutions is called social change. Usually, social change refers to a significant change in a social behaviour or change in some larger social system rather than to minor change within a small group. This social change refers to change in the established pattern of social relationship. For example, change in family, marriage, religion and economic life. The term 'social change' is also used to indicate the change that takes place in human interactions and interrelations. In connection of social change, Mazumdar (1961) states "Social change may be defined as a new fashion or mode, either modifying or replacing the old in the life of the people or in the operation of a society". Davis (1931) mentions "Social change is meant only such alteration as occurred in social organization. That is structure and functions of society".

b) Cultural Change

Any change that takes place in the realm of culture can be called cultural change. Cultural change then, refers to the extinction of prescribed or proscribed ways of doing things, and their replacement by new standards, which are then maintained and transmitted. (Dobey et al: 1973) Culture is not static, it is dynamic. It also keeps changing for

examples invention and popularization of auto mobile, the addition of new words to our language, changing concept of property and morality, new forms of music, art or dance, new style in architecture and sculpture, new rules of grammar, the general trend towards sex equality and changing attitude towards dress pattern. Nearly, all important changes involve both socio-cultural material and non material aspects. Stuart (1955) wrote "The most hopeful approach to the concept of cultural change would seem to be, to regard the process as selectively accumulative in time and cyclical in character. Thus, according, to Stuart cultural change is both selectively accumulative and cyclical in character and cultural forms are as inescapable as they are in all living things.

According to Vasudeva (1976), the major processes of cultural change are imitation, assimilation, diffusion and acculturation for example, the people of the third world are quick to imitate external influences like dress and fashion of the western world. Diffusion is a process whereby a trait spreads from one culture to another through contact.

c) Socio-Cultural Change

On the basis of this theory, it may be concluded that social and cultural change refer to all the changes going on in the Chamars society. It is a change in the institutional and normative structure of society.

In the context of Nepal, many scholars and researchers have studied various caste/ethnic groups from different dimensions including socio-cultural change, but very few literary works are available about the Chamars. There are some literatures documented by Nepalese and foreign social scientists about other caste/ethnic groups or tribal groups and their

socio-cultural change which are reviewed as relevant literature providing some guidelines for the study.

The term 'cultural and social change' has been dealt separately by some sociologist and anthropologist but Prasai (1998) has the opinion that the term 'socio-cultural change' is so broad that it encompasses the way of life, customs, traditions, occupations language, religions and several other aspects of the people of a particular society. Because of the close affinity between social and cultural aspects, they are taken synonymously.

Modernization is one of the major factors of the socio-cultural change. Modernization depends on the involvement of technique, fresh invention, accelerated modes of production and rejuvenated standard of living. Modernizations are the result of technological changes. Some factors influencing social change advances in agricultural technologies, improved varieties of seeds, cattle, fertilizers, labours saving, mechanical devices, etc. Sanskritization is a process by which lower caste people imitate higher caste's way of life in order to obtain the privileges enjoyed by the latter. This system has however, been so popular in Nepal and they are accepted in different ways of life (Prasai-1998).

Srinivas (1992), as profounder of sanskritization theory, has analyzed the upward mobility of untouchable caste of south India with as in the direction of twice born castes. It was the first presentation as well as application of sanskritization process, used to observe the socio cultural change occurring among untouchables (coorgs) of South Asia.

Land and social change in Nepal are the study of the changing relation between members of an indigenous tribal population in

Himalayan region and the Hindus who have entered their region during the past two centuries, following its incorporation in to the kingdom of Nepal (Caplan 1985).

Indicators of socio-cultural change are change in social relation, status, role, institution, structure, customs, economy, education, perspective, attitude, fooding, clothing, physical development, religion and technological system. Justice factors of socio-cultural changes are biological, technological, cultural-geographical, economic, political, psychological and ideological (Acharya 2000).

P.M. Blaike, John Cameron and John David Seddon (1976) are some of the scholars who studied about the social changes and development. According to them, the early nineteenth century saw an improvement in communication and transportation based on the administration of the Hulak system of locally organized portage and the establishment of a series of staging posts managed by locals and operating under the supervision of administrative offices situated at strategic points along the trails.

Magars (Monogoloid) of Banyan Hill are accepting the Hindu values and changes are occurring gradually (Hitchcock 1966) in the same way. Haimendrof (1996) takes the case of non-Hindu groups of western Nepalese who have accepted caste concepts and he further states the distinction of adaptation and assimilation with other caste people. He also highlights more about the social structure of Thakali community and also mentions about ongoing social mobility among the Thakalis of western Nepal.

Lijima (1963) has taken Himalayan tribe “Tibeto-Burman” group who are being Hinduized by following the Hindu ways of life. Similarly, in 1977, he has presented the existence of socio-cultural change in Thakali, taking the case of local power holding with leadership position and social change pattern in them, along with on going changes in economy and ecology. Similarly, in 1982, he has also pointed out that Thakalis have brought changes in language by adopting Nepalese language.

Lee (1974) states the Limbus and Limbuan, Eastern Nepal, is in the process of sanskritization. They are mongoloid (Non-Hindu tribal groups) but to some extent, they have adopted various norms and values of Hindu culture, language, dress, acceptance of caste concept, use of Brahmin priest, worshipping the Hindu gods etc are considered as social change occurring among the Limbus.

Parajuli (1995) studied the socio cultural change in Bishwokarma of Dang and finds out that they have started to adopt new types of clothing which were restricted to the untouchables and were only common to elites of high castes to make use of Brahmin priest/sharmans to worship the temple in the vedic way with the use of vedic scriptures even struggling with the people of high castes and local government authorities. Similarly, they have started to enhance met-relationship with high caste people and start to behave in accordance with the kin relation.

Dahal (1975) has made an ethnographic study of social change among the Athapahariya Rais of Dhankuta. Rajure (1978) explored socio economic condition of Tharu of Dang, Deokhuri Rai (1982) reported the soio-economic status of loharang Rais of Pangma Panchayat Pyakuryal

(1982) evaluated the sociological condition of four Tharu villages in Chitwan district in his Ph.D. dissertation work.

R.R. Regmi (1991) has published a famous book "The Dhimals: Miraculous Migrants of Himala an Ethnographical Study of Nepalese Ethnic Groups" in which he has presented that how the Dhimals of today have changed the socio-cultural features and adopted the Brahman culture in all respects of their life including customs, birth, life ceremonies, death, ritual, tradition even sacrifices due to the influences and domination of high caste, the Brahmins and Chhetries of their locality.

In this way, MacIver and Page conclude that change is the law of nature. Human life is always changing, so naturally society is also changing.

According to Frank P. Hosken (1974), the Newars who still from the largest population group of the valley have a language and literature of their own and are the originators of the towns and cultures are a mixture of both population groups, Indo-Aryan and Mongolian. They are considered to be the original inhabitants of Kathmandu valley who have changed their appearance through inter caste marriage with indo-Aryan (Hosken 1974, 49).

According to Malinowski "Cultural change is the process by which existing order of a society, that is its social, spiritual and material civilization, is transformed from one type into another. Cultural change thus covers the more or less rapid processed of modification in the political constitution of a society, in its domestic institutions and its mode of territorial settlement in its material tools and their use and consumption of goods on which it's social, economy is based." In the widest sense of

the term, cultural change is the permanent factor of human civilization; it goes on everywhere and at all times." (Malinowski 1952).

In this way culture is a crucial and important social process. Any change in culture is bound to be reflected in the general structure of society.

Chhetri (1990) has highlighted the changes occurred in new migrant Thakalis, after migrating from rural areas, of Thakkhola to urban area of Pokhara town. The changes occurred along with the process of adaptation in which Hindu social norms, values and customs were followed by Thakalies from the host society of Pokhara valley.

In the context of Nepal, numerous scholars and researcher have studied various caste ethnic groups from different angles including social and cultural changes. But there are very few literatures available on the Chamar due to lack of prior researchers. Similarly, in identifying social and cultural changes occurred in Chamars, social scientists have not paid their proper attention.

2.3 The Chamar

Many theories have been put forth to explain the origin of the Chamar; none has been established. It has been suggested that they are the product of mixed caste marriages and are unpleasant and evil smelling. Occupation of leather tanning relegated them to the peripheries of respectable society or even that they are part of a race conquered by invading Aryans.

Lillingston (1913:351) quotes a proverb about the Chamars, who are supposed to be "dark in complexion," while the upper castes are supposed to be "fair in complexion."

Karia Brahman, gora Chamar,

Inke sath na utariye par.

If the Brahman be black, if the Chamar be fair,

Let the wise beware, if cross the river he dare.

The meaning is that a 'Fair-Skinned Chamar' is such a rarity that something must be wrong and an upper caste person ought to be on his guard. For the Jatavs, such a proverb is in the eyes of this writer, no more than an unfounded stereotype. (O.M. LYNCH 1969)

As a group, the Camar are not numerous in 'North India', but are found especially in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Bihar. The census of 1901, showed them to be numerically the largest group of castes in the former North-Western provinces and Oudh, while the Brahmins ranked second (India census commission 1902, 180-229). There are numerous castes (Jatis) of Camars, the census of 1891 listed 1,156 of them. The Jatavs are one of these castes or endogamous groups of Camars but they tend to consider themselves separate and higher than other camar castes (ibid 1969).

Mythical accounts of Camar origins match the ocean sands for number and variety. For example, there is the legend of the five brothers. While on a walk, five Brahman brothers come up on the carcass of a dead cow. Four of them walked on but the fifth stopped and pulled the carcass off the road. For this act his brothers excommunicated him and ever after it was his lot and that of his descendants, the Chamars, to remove

polluted and polluting dead cattle. (Crooke 1896: 170 quoted by O.M. LYNCH)

In Nepal, there have very few sociological and anthropological studies been made on untouchables castes. But almost, no sociological and anthropological research has been done by both native and foreign researchers about Chamars.

Bista (1996), a renowned anthropologist, is also silence in his book about Chamar. In his book "People of Nepal", he only says "Chamars have change of dirty and menial works in the community and eat any animal carcass. Except for that of a dog, cat or horse. The Chamars play drums in the wedding band."

Mahato's (1993) "Fertility Behaviour of Chamar Caste of Dhanusha" which is a dissertation has only drawn the fertility behaviour of Chamars but it has not given an ethnographic pictures of Chamars.

Babu Shev Yadav (2001) has tried in his M.A. dissertation about "Socio-Economic and Demographic impact on fertility, Gopalpur VDC" about the Chamar people on his dissertation. He writes: Among the caste groups, Chamar is one, which is untouchable unlike high class caste group. More than 90 percent people of this community, are below poverty line and they are landless. Chamar constitutes Mahara, Mochi, Ram and Raidas, sub groups. They speak Maithili, Bhojpuri and Abadhi as their own mother tongue. Traditional occupation of Chamar community is to throw out cattle dead bodies from the farmer house and play Band Baza in special ceremony, untouchable caste group of Chamar caste other groups as Sarkis have the same social and traditional occupation.

Rajendra Koirala (2060 B.S.) and Ranjana Upadhyay (2057) have also studied the socio-economic condition of Chamars. Thus, we cannot get a sufficient literature about Nepali Chamars. But there are some more literature written in Indian context. G.S. Ghurye (1960) has given some account about Chamar. He says in his book "Caste and Race in India" that the Chamar leather workers of Maratha Country have Ahir as one of their sub-caste. The Chamars of the central provinces have sub-caste named Kor Chamars who are said to be the descendants of alliance between Chamars and Koris and weavers (Ghurye 1939).

Similarly, the book has also shed some light of Chamars of Uttar-Pradesh, Bihar and Bangal (Ghurye 1969) which has also traced the context of vedic age, manusmriti and Rajatarangini about Chamar.

Hutton (1963) says in his book "Caste in India", the Chamars of Chattisgarh, though belonging to that exterior caste of leather workers whose touch is polluting to caste Hindus, are here cultivators tiling the land whose women have a great reputation locally for their handsome features.

Patwardhan (1973) in his book "Change Among Indian Harijans" says about Chamar's occupation and economic status. The Chamars are hereditarily leather workers; they work in leather, cut and dry skins, make shoes, sandles and water boots and also do tanning where a other population is not to be found. They are relatively well off economically and all related the highest in the ritual hierarchy among the Harijans.

The settlement of Chamars, Sherring (1974), says in his book "Hindu Tribes and Caste" vol. II Chamars from nearly one fourth of all

the inhabitants of Bilaspur, where they have been settled for so many centuries that they have no tradition of any other home."

About their physical features, the same writer writes "They possess active and well set figures, are more brown than black in colour and are less marked in features than the easy and higher classes (Sherring 1974).

Sinha (1982) says that the Chamars, the tanner caste of Shudra origin, were found in all parts of Chotanagpur. By virtue of their occupations, habits and traditional descent, they stood to the rank at the very bottom of the Hindu social system and even the non-Aryan tribes, who were admitted in to the Hindu community were promoted over their heads. They eat beef, pork, fowl and many other impure things all unclean to an average Hindu, they were treated as untouchables, they were employed in tanning leather, making shoes and saddlery and grooming horses. Their female folk were the midwives of the region and they attended at childbirth.

Denisonross (1975) has studied about the Chamar. In his famous book "Caste in India", he writes "The Chamars who abandon the degrading occupation of leather craft for weaving, became Julan Chamars, pending the time when they may be considered Julanas by full rights. Some chuhras who give up the occupation of sweepers are transformed in to murallis."

Lynch (1969) has studied the status of Chamars. He says "The status of Chamar has become factory owner (Karoobar) or craftsman (Karigar) in the market system and again Chamar has become plaintiff versus defendant in the courts; the status of untouchable has become scheduled caste in the various institutions set up under the government's

"Protective Discrimination" policy; and the newly assumed status of voter has also become party member in the political party system of India (Lynch 1969).

Investigation made by O.M. Lynch (1979) concluded that among different caste in area of India, a caste called "Charmakar" has occupied a special status that deals with the leather works which is against Hinduism. Beside, Hindu religion's prevailing caste system, they established then ruling political party called republic party of India. "This attempt to uplift caste system has been sanskritization."

Sherring (1974) says the Chamar works and trade in leather. "The caste is very numerous in Northern India, where it numbers several millions of people. They are industrious race but from their connection with leather, they are obnoxious to the pure Hindu castes. Their origin is obscure but there is good reason for believing that they have sprung from the intermingling of Hindus with aboriginal tribes. In northern India many are employed in agriculture. In Bombay, as elsewhere, the caste has six subdivisions, which differ however, from those existing in other parts of country.

- a. Saltangor
- b. Marathi Chamar
- c. Paradosh Pardes
- d. Halal Bhakt
- e. Dabali
- f. Woji

This above mentioned literature has given various types of description about different ethnic/caste groups. All of them are not

ethnographic, but for this study, they are important because they have given much useful knowledge directly and indirectly. Therefore, the researcher has felt a great value of this literature during the preparation of this dissertation.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents a discussion on the research methodology. This chapter is further divided into many sub-sections such as rational of selection of the study area, research design, nature and sources of data, universe of the study, techniques of data collection, data analysis and interpretation.

3.1 Rational of Selection of the Study Area

This study is conducted in Hanumannagar (Pra.ma) VDC which is located in Siraha district. Hanumannagar (Pra.ma) VDC lies at the northern part of the District headquarters.

There are few ethnographic studies that have been carried out about the Terai people such as the Chamar, Dom etc. So very limited research finding are available related to the society. Hanumannagar (Pra. Ma) VDC is predominantly inhabited by the Chamar people. Hence, the present study aims to fulfill the gap in the field of sociology/Anthropology. I am familiar with the local customs and cultures of village people. So, I think that a rural area is the better place for me to do my research work. The condition of people in rural areas as well as the socio-cultural condition and change of the Chamar are included. They have been forgetting their culture, customs due to educational backwardness, poverty etc. Terai untouchable castes such as Chamar, Mushar, Dom, Dushad etc have changed their socio-cultural status. I have already spent a large part of my life in the Hanumannagar (Pra.ma) VDC where I was born and raised. Due to the familiarity with

their culture, custom and language, I chose this VDC and census respondents of study area provided me with all necessary help to get information in all aspect of their life. Thus field research in Hanumannagar (Pra.ma) VDC provided me unique opportunity to apply my skill and perspectives. I hope that the research might provide something for concerned planner and policy makers and curious researcher in the future.

3.2 Research Design

This study is based on ethnographic research. This study is exploratory because it makes an attempt to explore the process of socio-cultural change of the Chamars people of the study area. It is also descriptive because it has attempted to describe the natural condition of the area, the socio-cultural process and change in various spheres with an emphasis on marriage, family, kinship, occupation, life cycle ceremony, dress pattern etc. of the Chamar people of the study.

3.3 Nature and Sources of Data

Both primary and secondary data has been used in this study. Primary data has been collected from field work through interview, observation questionnaire etc. Secondary data has been taken from previous studies, published and unpublished documents from related literature, the government's documents, different libraries and institutions. Both qualitative as well as quantitative data have been used.

3.4 Universe of the Study

This universe of the study is based on Hanumannagar (Pra. Ma) VDC. The VDC consists of 9 (Nine) wards. There are altogether 39

households of Chamar. My study, regarding all these Chamar households was based on census method. After all, I have interrogated all the "household head" through "interview Schedule", thus to accumulate useful information.

3.5 Techniques of Data Collection

We know that the successful result of any study depends upon its techniques which are used for data collection. Hence for study, the data collection techniques are most important tools to obtain reliable information. This study studies field work method and the techniques like interview schedule, observation key informant interview, group discussion for data collection.

3.5.1 Interview Schedule

Interview schedule is the important and reliable techniques of data collection. The interview schedule consists both structured and unstructured type in nature. Structured type of interview schedule is that type of schedule whose structure does not change in any condition and time. This type of interview schedule is more useful to acquire quantitative information. likewise, unstructured interview schedule is that type of interview schedule whose structure is not fixed and it can be changed if necessary. This type of schedule is used to acquire qualitative data. Interview schedule techniques of data collection are used to get the information about the personal identification i.e. family, age, sex. The interview schedule has been filled by the dissertant himself by the head of the household.

3.5.2 Key Informant Interview

In addition, to the interview schedule with some key informants I have also conducted to get some additional information. The informants are the eldest respondents, political party workers, teachers, journalist and other knowledgeable persons in Hanumannagar (pra.ma.) VDC. Information obtained from the unstructured interview schedule is about the changes faced by the Chamar people.

3.5.3 Observation

Observation is one of the essential research tools in sociology/anthropology. The information on method of different working activities of daily life styles is collected by means of observation, this method of data collection is used by researcher to supplement more information acquired from questionnaire method and to observe the settlement pattern, life ceremony system, dress and ornament pattern, occupation, food habit, feast and festival. This long interaction with the community provides the researcher with abundant knowledge about Chamar community.

3.5.4 Group Discussion

Group discussions were made with groups of respondents. One group included old and adult generation and other one included younger generation discussion mainly forced on to find out their past and present socio-cultural condition and change the notion of type of discussion also prone to enlarge. They are facing sort or problems then and now, after changes of socio-cultural conditions and traditions within community under this method. The discussion were held in focus groups facilitated by the researcher as well as focus was made on (informal) group

discussion too. These discussions were held within groups heterogeneous in age, sex, educational status and social class. In addition to informal meetings like ritual ceremonies, working in groups and evening chats were entertained as important sources of information.

3.5.5 Household Survey

Basically, household survey was conducted to obtain quantitative data such as population characteristics, age and sex composition, education status, land holding size social position etc. It helps to researcher the familiarize with communities and further can make easy to detail interview.

3.6 Data Analysis and Interpretation

The presentation and analysis of information and data collection through interview, household survey questionnaire and field survey have been done in both descriptive and analytical ways. After completing the field survey data collected during field visit period were edited and tabulated as per the need of report mirror. Moreover, in order to make the report more precise, maps, figures and charts have been enclosed with this dissertation. Similarly, chapters and sub-chapters have also been divided.

3.7 Limitation of the Study

As in any research work, the determination of its boundary is essential. Similarly, the boundary of the subject matter that is to be studied in any research work must be determined. The limitation refers to the depth of study of that subject.

To make the research fruitful, we must pre-determine the matters that should be included and excluded. Our questionnaire must be designed in the way that it must be capable of including factual events and genuine data. In order to make the research more systematic, I have determined the criteria of the research in the following way:

- a. This study was conducted as a case study of a small area with the primary objectives of the partial fulfillment of the master's degree required in sociology. Therefore, detailed research is not possible.
- b. This study has been aimed at focusing on socio-cultural change. The term socio-cultural change is very vague and touches various aspects, but this study only focuses on the major aspects, like, family, marriage, religion, life cycle, occupation, ceremony, dress pattern, festival etc.
- c. This study is a purposeful case study of one untouchable ethnic group/caste named Chamar. It does not include other ethnic groups (i.e. Magar, Newar etc) and other untouchable castes (i.e. Sarki, Damai, Dom, Tatma etc.)
- d. The present study adopts a traditional field work method, and data were collected through self-observation. It lacks quantitative techniques.
- e. It was not possible to include in the study, all the Chamars scattered all over the country. Thus, the size of the population under the study is very small. Only household heads were selected as respondents and the study has focused only on the changing socio-cultural status of Chamars in Siraha district Hanumannagar (Pra.Ma) VDC.

CHAPTER IV

THE SETTING

4.1 Physical Profile

Nepal is divided into 5 development regions with 14 zones and 75 districts. There are 3915 VDCs and 58 Municipalities. Among them Siraha district is located in Sagarmatha zone. Siraha lies mainly in the Terai regions with part of the district lies between Saptari in the East and Dhanusha in the west as well as Udayapur and Sindhuli in the north and Darbhanga (India) district of India in the South. It covers an area which stretches within the latitude of 86.27° and 46.6° and the longitude of 26.33° and 26.55° north. The altitude of the district ranges from 150 meter to 350 meter. It's area is about 1188 square km. The district has sub-tropical type of climate. The temperature here range from $5-10^{\circ}\text{c}$ minimum to $40-46^{\circ}\text{c}$ maximum. The annual rainfall in between 1300 and 1500 mm and most of it comes within the period from June through September. The population census is 2001 records a total population is 5,69880 of which 292679 (51.36%) are male and 277201 (48.64%) are female (CBS, 2002). Lahan and Siraha are the two municipalities of this district headquarter, located at Siraha municipality in the Southern part.

The Hanumannagar (Pra.ma) VDC lies $26^{\circ} 40'$ to $26^{\circ}42'$ north latitude and $86^{\circ}13'$ to $86^{\circ} 16'$ east latitude covering an area of 8.53 square km adjoining Arnama VDC in east, Sarswor and Belha in west Thalha Katti and Laxmipur VDC in South and Thenghi VDC and Siraha municipality in north. The VDC is situated 4 kilometers north side from Siraha. The population census is 2001 records a total population is 6100 of which 3069 (50.31%) are male and 3031 (49.69%) are female. The

total population of Chamar in this VDC is 58. But as per household census taken in November – December 2006 during my field work. There are 238 Chamars in Hanumannagar (Pra.ma) VDC of which 117 were male and 121 were female (Field Survey 2006). There are 7 ponds. Among three ponds were public, three ponds are owned privately. All the ponds are used for fishery. There are one canal from Chure river named as Chandra Canal which has been made for irrigation purpose. The irrigation capacity of this canal is for 1250 Hecter land, but it is not so useful, because in the rainy season, it is overflowed and during the time of other farming, seasons there is no water in the canal. Therefore, from this canal no villagers are benefited.

4.2 Population Composition

According to the district profile prepared in 2004 by the Oxfam and NLA, there are 1054 households in Hanumannagar (Pra.ma) VDC. The total population of this VDC is 6100, 369 (50.31%) are males and 3031 (49.68) are females. The sex ratio is 0.980. Age structure of the population is presented in table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Age Structure of the Population of Hanumannager (Pra. Ma) VDC

Age group	Number	Percent
0-4	836	13.70
5-9	966	15.84
10-14	661	10.84
15-19	424	6.95
20-24	519	8.51
25-29	488	8
30-34	470	7.70
35-39	385	6.31
40-44	321	5.26
45-49	262	4.30
50-54	221	3.62
55-59	170	2.79
60+	377	6.18
Total	6100	100.00%

Source: Oxfam and NLA 2004

Age structure of the population as given in table 4.1 shows that population of the age group of 0-14 years constitutes 13.70 percent of the total population people of 15-59 years are 53.44 percent and those of 60 years and above age are 6.18 percent. Population of the age group of 15-59 years is defined and 60 years and above are defined as dependents (Census – 2001). Dependency ratio of the population is presented in table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Dependency ratio of Population of Hanumannagar (Pra.ma) VDC

Age group (in years)	Population	Percentage
0-14	2463	40.38
15-59	3260	53.44
60+	377	6.18
Total	6100	100.00

Source: Oxfam and NLA 2004

The child dependency ratio of the population is 40.38 percent, while old age dependency ratio is 6.18 percent the overall dependency ratio of the population is 46.56 percent. The VDC is highly heterogeneous in terms of caste/ethnic composition. More than 25 caste ethnic groups are residing in the VDC. They are Kewat, Mallah, Dhanuk, Teli, Hilly Brahmans etc. The people of the study area speak Maithali as their mother tongue and Hindi, Nepali as the secondary language. People in the Hanumannagar (Pra. Ma) VDC are found to be affiliated with Hindu and Muslim religions. Composition of the VDC population by caste/ethnicity is given in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Caste/ Ethnicity Composition of Hanumannagar (Pra.Ma) VDC Population

Caste	Number	Percent
Kewat	1664	27.28
Dalit	1359	22.28
Mallah	493	8.08
Dhanuk	363	5.95
Tharu	337	5.52
Teli	225	3.69
Brahmins (Hilly)	161	2.64
Sudi	88	1.44
Halwai	55	0.90
Koiri	39	0.64
Hajam	37	0.60
Muslim	31	0.51
Others	1248	20.47
Total	6100	100.00

Source: Oxfam and NLA 2004

Above table shows that Kewat constitute the major position (27.28%) of the total VDC population. Next the Dalit constitute 22.28 percent. The Dalits include Chamar, Dom, Mushar, Dushad, Paswan,

Tatma; Khatwe, Halkor, Kayastha, Rajput, Gharti, Majhi and others are relatively small numbers.

4.3 Age and Sex Structure of the Chamar

It refers to the age of the respondents and their family. Table no. 4.4 shows that out of the total Chamar households the children population.

Table 4.4 Age and Sex Structure of Chamar population in Hanumannagar (Pra.ma) VDC

Age group (in year)	Male	Percent	Female	Percent	Total	Percent
0-4	14	11.97	8	6.61	22	9.24
5-9	13	11.11	12	9.92	25	10.51
10-14	7	5.98	19	15.70	26	10.93
15-19	7	5.98	13	10.74	20	8.40
20-24	18	15.38	14	11.57	32	13.45
25-29	9	7.70	12	9.92	21	8.82
30-34	7	5.98	10	8.26	17	7.14
35-39	11	9.40	10	8.26	21	8.82
40-44	8	6.84	5	4.13	13	5.46
45-49	5	4.27	4	3.31	9	3.78
50-54	5	4.27	4	3.31	9	3.78
55-59	3	2.56	2	1.65	5	2.10
60-64	4	3.42	4	3.31	8	3.36
65+	6	5.13	4	3.31	10	4.20
Total	117	100.00	121	100.00	238	100.00

Source: Field Survey 2009

Table 4.4 indicates that out of the total Chamar households, the children population (The age group 0-4) comprise of 9.24 percent, the age group 5-9 are 10.51 percent, the age group 10-14 are 10.93 percent the age group 15-59 are 8.40 percent and 65 above are only 4.20 percent

from that it can be said that the majority of Chamar people are the age group of 20-24, 0-4, 5-9 years. According to the population book grade 9 and 10 written by Dr. Bal Krishna Ranjit, the active population are the age group of 15-59 years. According to this statement the active population is higher than passive population (children population and old population) on the study area.

4.4 Marital Status of Chamar People

Marriage is also one of the oldest as well as universal, social institutions. Marriage is a type of institution which admits men and women in family life. It is stable relationship in which a man and women are socially permitted to have children (Bhusan and Sachadewa 1986)

Cox (1993) says that marriage have been defined by the statistical commission of the U.N.O. as "the legal union of persons of opposite sex. The legality of the union may be established by the civil, religions or other means as recognized by the laws of each country (Cox 1993). Therefore, it is known that marital status means to come in sexual union through the marriage between two opposite sex, i.e. male and female and begin a new life as a couple. The marital status of the population of Chamar in Hanumannagar (pra.ma) VDC is shown in the table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Marital Status of Chamar Population

Marital Status	Male	Percent	Female	Percent
Never married	38	32.48	40	33.06
Married	72	61.54	78	64.46
Widow/widower	7	5.98	3	2.48
Total	117	100.00	121	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2009

Table 4.5 shows that the number of never married female population in Chamar is higher than the male. In Nepal caste system normally, people practice isogamy marriage to continue their caste purity (Sharma 1977). This Practice also found among the Chamar peoples. However, some members of the community have practical exogamy marriage too. Data in table 4.5 show that the number of married female is more than males because 6 males of this community have two wives. This indicates that both exogamy and polygamy marriage have been practiced.

4.5 Origin of Chamar People

Chamar is indo-Aryan with blackhue (skin) long faces and noses and were short in stature. Chamars migrated from India simrighat to Nepal about 130-200 years ago. The term "Chamar" or "chambhar" it self refers to people who work with leather. Chamar it is a term derivated from Sanskrit, the term is coined out of two Sanskrit terms. Charma (leather) and kaar (worker). Hence, "charmakar" became "Chamar" in Sanskrit in the passage of time. Likewise, they are also known as "Mochi". Recently, they are also known as via different titles like "Ram", "Mahara", "Harijan" etc. Ganeshi Mahara (47) during on interview, informed researcher that the community name is derivated from the Sanskrit work charmakara, meaning leather worker. He shared that Chamars migrated from India in particular Simrighat, to the study area some 130-170 years ago.

According to the Purans (Hindu religious scripture) the Chamar descended from the union of boatman and chandal women. The father of the caste was Nisadha (The offspring of a Brahmin father and Sudra mother) and the mother viadeha (Offspring of Vaisya father and a

Brahmin mothers) according to the Manu's dharmashastra (NNDSWO 2006).

During the fieldwork, the researcher heard an interesting tale about the origin of Chamar. All the seven key informants told him this tale. Once upon a time, five brothers of Brahmin (panch pandav) went to pilgrim they had rice and pulse to cook and clothes to sleep. One day, they had to walk through jungle. The jungle was big and they had to manage their breakfast in the jungle. They looked for water but could not get. At last they saw a pond. They decided to use the water of the pond but there was a carcass and to use the water for cooking. The youngest brother was told to take the carcass to a long distance. When the youngest brother came back throwing the carcass, he then told to take some firewood to cook. He too, took some firewood. After then, elder brothers told him to take a bath. He also went to take bath. During time of his the elder brothers cooked and ate their breakfast. When the youngest brother came, they told that he became a Chamar, since then, because he had touched the carcass of cow. They told him so and left him.

Hearing such unexpected thing, he became both sad and angry. He promised not to eat the things touched by any caste. In anger, he started to eat the carcass of cow. Since then the descendants of the youngest brother Chamars. The Chamars do not eat the food prepared by other caste (Dum, Mushar). Chamars used six major class names viz, Mochi, Ram, Harijan, Das, Ravidas, Mahara and Chamar. In the study area all Chamars say that they are Ram. In the question, what are your thar? They say only Mahara. But some key informants told that they are two thars of Chamars i.e. Rama and Harijan. In India, there are nine "Thars" or alternative names of Chamars. Among the alternative names assumed by this caste group

figure not only Ramdasia, Satnami and Raidasi but also Rohit, Rohidas, Rabidas, Ruidas, Ramnami and Rishi (Ghurye 1969).

4.6 Settlement pattern

The clustered Chamar settlement is separated from that of other castes in the Terai village. Generally, it is separated by a distance of an uninhabited area intending to prescribe commingling with them. This significance the "low" social position according to them.

The most striking feature of the Chamars settlement is its separateness, isolation or aloofness from the rest of the village as indicates above. Their locality is called "Chamartoli", literally locality of the Chamar. Their houses are clustered one family's house touching the roof of other family's house. The houses are built of the most inexpensive and easily available materials. Bamboo, hay, hay made rope or string etc are the only materials they need for making their houses. The wall is made up mud or bamboo sticks and straw or overlaid by mud. The roof of their house is made up of bamboo sticks and straw. They have small thatched roof houses. They build houses all around and have some area open in the middle called courtyard of *angan*. They prepare mat of straw to sleep and rest. The front side of the house has also a courtyard. The houses are scarcely ventilated i.e. windows are very rare. The houses are so the spaces are allocated for rearing goat, buffaloes, flowers and other domestic animals. They do not allocate special rooms for bed and kitchen. The spaces are multi-purpose. The same place is used for kitchen, dining and sleeping purposes. Thus, inside the whole houses there are dirty blocks of smoke.

4.7 Settlement of Present Condition of Housing Pattern

Particulars	No. of person	Percentage
Huts	36	92.31
Huts with tiled roof	2	5.13
Plastered with tiled roof	1	2.56
Tool	39	100.00

Source: Field survey 2009

The above table shows that most of the Chamar people of the study area are settled in huts 92.31 percent and 5.13 percent Chamar people live in huts with tiled roof. Only 2.56 percent people live in plastered with tile roof. They have walls (Tali in local language) plastered with cement. The earthen floor is scrubbed with thin coated mud and buffalo dung in most cases. It is not necessary to enter the courtyard through main entrance. There is a gap or small passage and between two households and children mostly use it.

4.8 Education

Education is a mirror which reflects every aspect of society. As education develops, other sectors develop automatically. Education as an important institution shows the way to make the advance society. It further helps to provide the changing attitudes and attributes from conventional one. It provides new vision, skill and improves one's social status. Thus, education is very important characteristics of the society.

The literacy rate of Chamar according to the 2001 census, is 18.9 percent. The male literacy rate is 27.9 percent where as literacy rate for females is 9 percent. (CBS 2002). The drop out rate among the children belonging to this community is learnt to be very high and is more so among the girls. There are very few girls who have completed secondary

level of education. Education is a main factor of socio cultural change in a society. In the Chamar community was introduced to modern education after 1980s only. But modern education was introduced in Nepal after the political revolution of 1950.

Table 4.7: Educational Status of the Chamar Community

Level	Male	Percent	Female	Percent	Total	Percent
Illiterate *	56	47.86	92	76.03	148	62.19
Literate *	45	38.46	18	14.88	63	26.47
Primary	2	1.71	6	4.96	8	3.36
Lower secondary	9	7.69	3	2.48	12	5.04
Secondary (SLC)	3	2.57	1	0.83	4	1.68
I.A. or above	2	1.71	1	0.83	3	1.26
Total	117	100.00	121	100.00	238	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2009

J) Only those individuals were calculated who were in the age of 6 year and above.

B) Literate means those individuals who have not introduced to school but are able to read and write.

Table 4.7 shows that the literacy rate in Chamar community is lower than the national average percentage. The literacy rate in Nepal is 54.1 percent (CBS 2001) whereas percent in Chamar community. The establishment of schools and adult education program plays vital role to increase the literacy rate in Chamar community. Education percentage of female is very low in comparison to male. This is the reason females are dominated by males here. Women are compelled for household works like cleaning cooking, feeding, cutting, child rearing and others. Besides this, parents also discriminate among their son and daughter. Son is sent

to school whereas daughter is made engaged in the household work. This type of behaviour is due to the lack of literacy. They have not understood the value of education. The Chamar people of Hanumannagar (pra.ma) VDC are very backward.

4.9 Family Structure

Family is group of person united by the ties of marriage, blood or adaptation, constitution of single household, interacting and inter-communicating with each other in their respective as father, son and daughter, brother and sister creating a common culture. It is also a group defined by a sex relationship sufficiently precise and up bringing to provide for the procreation and up bringing of children. Different scholars in their own view have defined the word 'family.'

The Chamar family is traditionally patriarchal and all of the characteristics of this kind of family system is maintained rather with firm rigidity. The wife after her marriage comes to live with her husband in his home. The father in the chief of the family who looks after both the family and property as supreme leader/head of the family. He is respected and obeyed. The children are known by the name of the family of their father.

There is no strict adherence to one or the other kind of family nuclear or extended. Both type of family are found in Chamar community. Some families have members two-three generations living together. Among the Chamars of the study area on the basis observation was made in the types of family that is given in the following table:

Table 4.8 Statement of Family Structure

Particular	No. of family	Percentage
Nuclear	21	53.86%
Joint	16	41.02%
Extended	2	5.12%
Total	39	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2009

The table 4.8 shows that out of 39 households, 53.84 percent of Chamars live in the nuclear family and 41.12 percent are in joint family and only 5.12 percent in extended family. The reasons behind breakdown of joint family in the study area is due to sowing of the seeds of conflict after marriage. The litigation leads to quarrels for the privacy is denied. So, they are separated after they get married.

a) Nuclear Family

A nuclear family is such type of family which consisting of married couple with or without their unmarried children. In nuclear family system, there is no economic cooperation between the family members. The nuclear family is always from control of the elders. Among the Chamar households, it was found that 53.86 percent of the families were nuclear. So the above table reflects that the Chamar people of Hanumannagar (Pra.ma) VDC prefer nuclear type of family system rather than the others types (see table no. 4.8)

b) Extended Family

Extended family not only consists of parents and children, brothers and step brother live on the common property, but sometimes, it may comprise of generations. In any case, so long as the extended family

holds together, its members are expected to contribute to support the whole family and receive from it as a share of the total product. In other words an extended family is a group of brothers families living together in which there is a sharing of residence, kitchen and property. In the Chamar community of the Hanumannagar (pra.ma) VDC, there are 5.12 percent of the families in extended family (see table no. 4.8) the data indicate that the majority of Chamar people do not prefer to live in extended family.

c) Joint Family

An jointed family consists of father mother and their married children living together. In other words, joint family is that family which consists of two or more nuclear families affiliated through an extension of the parent-child relationship rather than of the husband wife relationship. In the present study area, out of 39 households, 41.2 percent of the family are found to be an joint family which has been already shown above the table no. 4.8.

4.10 Occupation

Chamars are leather workers and labourers by tradition. Traditionally, their occupation is concerned with "leather work". They do the job of Sudeni (birth attendance) or midwife, to take care after delivery women to manage carcass of animals, to inform community people with musical instrument (Dhol) in several social and cultural occasions etc. Nowadays most of the Chamar people are also found to be engaged in agriculture directly or indirectly. Here, directly means engaged in own farm and indirectly means engaged in others' farms for subsistence.

Most of the landless or marginal land holding households work as wage labourers which can be found in the form of tenant, share cropper,

permanently hired labour e.g. ploughman hired for a year, contact labour (in cash or kind), semi attached labour tied with credit or casual wage labour. Some of the landless and marginal landholding households reported that they do cultivate some part of land on a share cropping basis on the land of highland holding household of Kamati Talma or Hilly Brahmin who usually live in Hill districts (Kathmandu) or elsewhere as government officials. The following table represents the distribution of Chamar people by main occupation.

Table 4.9 Primary Occupation of Chamar people of Hanumannagar (Pra.ma) VDC

S.N.	Occupation	No. of Household	Percentage
1.	Agriculture with livestock rearing	3	7.69
2.	Agriculture without livestock rearing	32	82.05
3.	Labour/abroad	2	5.13
4.	Leather worker	1	2.56
5.	Business	1	2.56
Total		39	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2009

The above table shows that percent of the total households and the kind of jobs they are engaged in. Among them 82.05 percent of the total households have performed agriculture without livestock rearing and 7.69 percent of the total household have livestock rearing. Most of the households do not have their own land for cultivation. They have been engaged in agriculture through wage labour or permanent labour as Haruwa. Only 5.13 percent people are engaged in other sector than agriculture for their main occupation. One household has been engaged in

business fully. Among them one household has been engaged in their traditional work (leather work) fully.

4.11 Types of Land and Landholding Pattern

The occupation pattern indicates that majority Chamar households depend on labour. Therefore, the size of farming land ownership are the main indicators of economic status of Chamar. The following table shows distribution of land of respondents.

Tale 4.10: Distribution of land holding by size in the area

S.N.	Area in kattha	No. of respondents	Percentage
1.	0-9 kattha	23	58.97
2.	10-19 kattha	1	2.56
3.	20+ kattha	1	2.56
4.	Landless	14	35.90
Total		39	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2009

The above table shows that out of 39 households, 58.97 percent have small size of farming land between 1-9 kattha, 2.56 percent have small size of farming land between 10-19 kattha. Only 2.56 percent have 20 kattha and above where 2.56 percent households are landless. In this way there is no satisfactory size of land owing in Chamar community of the study area. It illustrates that the majority of Chamar households are small size and holding. In this way, most of the people are landless which has made their life difficult.

4.12 Kinship

Human is social being. So they can't live without society. From cradle to death they are surrounded by a number of people some of them

are his relatives, some are friends while the others are his neighbours. Such relations exist in society either by blood or by marriage. The term was first coined by L.H. Morgan and no man clature for the broad two categories of kinships. Viz the classificatory and descriptive system of kinship terms. Under the classificatory system several people lineal as well as collateral and often even affinal, are all referred to by the same terms of designation. He classes them as similar such terms refer more to relationship rather than to kin. Against this, a descriptive term of designation describes the speaker's exact relation towards him/her whom he/she is referring to or addressing. Thus uncle is classificatory term but father is descriptive term. The desire of reproduction gives rise to two kinds of bonds. Firstly, there is bond between spouses and their relations on either sides and secondly, there is a bond between parents and their children of the parents. The first kind of bond which arises out of a socially or legally defined marital relationship is called an affinal relationship and the relations. So they are called affinal kin. The affinal kin are not connected to each other through blood, which is the case with relatives of the second kin enumerated above, who are called consanguineous kin. The relation based on blood ties is called consanguineous (same blood) kinship. Two types of kin groups, consanguineous and affinal are found in every human society. But Nepalese culture is unique because we can find more than two kin groups viz function and adaptation.

The Chamar society of Hanumannagar (pra.ma) VDC is also bounded by two types of kin groups i.e. Babu (consanguineous) Mai (affinal). Of the 39 households of Chamar one case of intercaste marriage with a Tharu girl was found who was left their parents. They give less

social reorganization but they did not boycott the marriage relationship. Through the Chamar has different clan name they use only Chamar.

Table 4.11: Kinship terminology use by Chamar people in Hanumannagar (pra.ma) VDC

<i>Babu</i> (Father)	<i>Bhansiya</i> (wife)
<i>Bhaiya</i> (Elder brother)	<i>Nanda</i> (Husband's sister)
<i>Bhai</i> (Brother)	<i>Mausi</i> (Mother's sister)
<i>Chotki Bhain</i> (Younger sister)	<i>Mama</i> (Maternal uncle)
<i>Badki Bahin</i> (Elder sister)	<i>Mami</i> (Maternal aunt)
<i>Dadi</i> (Grand mother)	<i>Sas</i> (Mother in law)
<i>Kaki</i> (Aunt)	<i>Beti</i> (Daughter)
<i>Bua</i> (Father's sister)	<i>Sasur</i> (Father in law)
<i>Baba</i> (Grandfather)	<i>Sar</i> (Brothers in law)
<i>Jamay</i> (Daughter-in-law)	<i>Bhaisur</i> (Husband's elder brother)
<i>Bhauji</i> (Elder brother's wife)	<i>Saiya</i> (Husband)

Source: Field Survey, 2009

In the context of their relationship, daughter – in – law ought not to show her face to father – in – law and brother – in – law. The wife should not utter the name of her husband. The newly married bride is not allowed to show her face, she should hide her face.

4.13 Food Sufficient

The poverty of people in any nation is determined by its level of food production and consumption. During study period, it was tried to find out whether the annual production of food grains was sufficient to meet the daily requirement for one year. The farming land is being

dividing and going in small pieces where as the population is growing rapidly. Following table shows the food sufficient (hand to mouth problem) of Chamar households in the study area.

Table 4.12: Condition of hand to mouth problem of Chamar community

S.N.	Condition	No. of household	Percentage
1.	Yes	4	10.26
2.	Not sufficient	35	89.74
Total		39	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2009

The table 4.10 shows that 35.90 percent households are landless and their food production is zero. 89.74 percent households are difficult to solve the hand to mouth problem. Only 10.26 percent households easily solve the hand to mouth problem.

It was also observed that the food deficient households compensating their need by earning from wage, labour, loan borrowing and credit purchasing. Because of the lack of land, they suffer from the problem of hand to mouth. On the one hand, there is no excess land, and on the other hand they had to pay half the production to the land owner, which has caused much problem to them. Sometimes, the incidents like drought, flood etc. make their lives much miserable, and cause the problem of hand to mouth.

4.14 Dowry System

Dowry system reveals as a cultural practice of Hindu traditional society initiated throughout the Nepalese society as well as Indian society. Practicing of dowry system as wealthy elite person can presented

or endowed dowry that ornament, expensive jewellery, money, land and other properties to bride daughter on the occasion of marriage ceremony. Dowry adds to the social prestige and status because excess of wealth can be given bride daughter, to maintain the social prestige. Since, a daughter is given birth traditionally she inherits the dowry as her mother originated. Impact of dowry descended since long century ago, Commenced by feudal lords, kings, elite etc. to give her daughter pleasure and bright future. Later it developed as dowry system; it should be followed on compulsory basis in Hindi society wishing on the helpful and pleasure life of couples (bridegrooms) at the same time, a women in Hindi society, could not inherit the father's property so she must be given the dowry from the father's side.

In the context of Nepal, entire situation of practicing dowry system least diminishes. Theoretically, more people persist against the dowry system, but in practice only exceptional people have (followed) abandoned or given up. Neither intellectual educated person could given up this system nor implemented effective procedures against the conventional practice of dowry system. Mentioning about different sources including "media" yearly a number of girls have died committing suicide and homicide incident, because of bad influence of dowry system over backward and uneducated people. At this VDC, Chamars are also influenced by the de-facto practice of dowry system. In the community of Chamar marriage ceremony has been conducted as usual traditional way of Hinduism. So conventionally, dowry system is deep rooted among Chamar community pertinence of Hinduism. In their marriage customs, the bride's father has to pay utensils, clothes, watches, radio, cycle, furniture, television and the cash amount from 5,000 to 40,000 as a dowry. And the bride groom's family had to give sari, nose-ring, silver

ring, thesa etc to bride's family. In this way, the system of taking and giving dowry has been strongly rooted in Chamar community. This system has made the poor poorer and rich group richer.

4.15 Religion

Chamar community, followers of Hindu religion, the belief and rituals, are the two main component of religion everywhere. Nepal is a religious country from the very early period of time. So the Chamars too have strong belief in religion, but has been no record of conflict being motivated by religion. It is observed that freedom to choose religion is utilized, as there is one Christian family which has shifted their religion from Hinduism since 2005. These Christian Chamar families pray to Jesus before starting any work and before every meal. These people also worship the Jesus in their home.

When asked about the motives towards the shift of religion they answered that since they have prayed to Jesus, the illness of their children was cured that no doctors or could do.

Table 4.14: Distribution of religion of Chamar people

Religion	No. of Household	Total population	Percentage
Hindu	38	232	97.44
Christian	1	6	2.56
Total	39	238	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2009

The above table clearly shows that out of the total population of 238, 232 people are Hindu. 6 peoples are Christian. This would be 97.44

percent of the total population as Hindu and 2.56 percent of the total population as Christian.

4.16 Condition of Women/Status of Women

Due to patriarchal structure of Chamar society, it is male dominated and women are kept subordinate in a number of ways. Women are discriminated, disregarded, insulted controlled, exploited, and inflicted in violence within the family, at the work place in the society. There is no women's participation in social activities. Instead, they are engaged in household activities like child rearing and taking care of them. Like most of the caste of Nepal, Chamar caste people believe in giving more importance towards sons than daughters. Being male dominated society females are considered to be the inferior sex. While the husband goes out to work, generally, the wife stays at home doing various household works like washing, sweeping, digging, midwife (sudeni), looking after the house etc. Some females work at their small piece of land. So the females are seen doing more works than the males. But the males are the earning source for the family; they earn more than the females. The wife waits for her husband and only eats after her father and mother – in – law are fed. The marrying age for the females is 13-18 years while the males marrying age is 15-20. Some girls are seen marrying when they reach the age of 17. The girls parents are the main decision makers and choose the bridegroom. The people of this caste do not accept intercaste and widow marriage. However, one son of a family has done intercaste marriage. Their brides is from Tharu family. Still the parents are not willing to marry their daughter to other caste men because they have to give a big feast, to their society and also have to pay fine if they have an inter-caste marriage. This is the reason why they hesitate to

do inter caste marriage. In this society, the status of female is even worse, as they should not utter the name of their husband. In the absence of their husbands, the female has to carry out all the works including household works. Though the women earn money selling goods in market, the rights of that enclosure to buy deteriorates her health. At the same time, she lacks the economy to buy nutritious food. In this ways, living in dirty places and having less nutritious food has caused the position of women much inferior/backward in this society. Newly married women are prohibited to see an unknown person, they have to remain under curtain, and are not allowed to speak to men, who have made their life status very backward/low.

4.17 Social and political awareness

No matter what, the caste based discrimination, still exists in various sectors but in the Hanumannagar (Pra.Ma.) VDC, the Chamar have a feeling that the discrimination is slowly fading away and say it is quite less than it used to be. There still is some discomfort for the Chamar while dealing with the higher caste people. Chamar families own small lands that yield crop only enough to sustain a family for three months. They mainly buy various food materials. The economic status of some are filled with debt and are in position of not being able to pay back their loan. There are only four people in this Chamar community who have passed S.L.C., many were forced to be school dropouts due to their poor economic conditions. Many of them hate their traditional work of shoe mending. The Chamar people still have to wash cups at various teashops; they have discrimination problems while fetching water from the same source. But since the Chamar had their own water source, they have no problem at all. Many Chamar families have more than one son, so they no

longer hope for daughters. The sons get more priority in the family. The Chamar people are away from the field of politics. They are not taking part in any political programs. Their voices are not given any platform and are far away from being heard. Most of the Chamars have lost their interest in politics as no party has ever done anything to improve their standards in the society.

In this V.D.C., till now only one Chamar woman has been the participant of election and has won the post of ward member. These people do not take much interest in politics as they do not have any time for it. The upper class people who are the leaders cheat them saying they will build road and do other development works. Looking this they hate politics. They only take part in election thinking that they will be able to earn money.

4.18 Major Findings of Social Condition

The Chamar community of Hanumannagar (Pra.Ma.) VDC inhabits a very thin population of Chamar people. The social condition of this community is low, as there are still some patches of superstitions that are clearly reflected. The conflict of using the same water source proves the fact that the sense of untouchability still exists. This has led the Chamar to build their own water source. Due to the low economic condition, the children have to drop out from schools and have to get engaged in other income generating activities to support the family. Some of the sons of the Chamar family are working currently in places like India, Saudi Arabia and Malaysia. These families took loan amounting one (1) lakh from various finance offices and send their sons for work overseas. Many say that the Chamar people do not get job according to their qualification. Thus, this have motivated many youngsters to work abroad. Not just the

sons but also a father is currently working in India and sends 2000 IC (3200 NC) monthly to his family. There are various dalit welfare organizations that work for the development of the dalit. One dalit boy is provided scholarship through one organization but it is not enough to improve their degrading economic condition. It seems there are no effective programs being carried out by both the government and the NGOs sides for the upliftment and the empowerment of this Chamar community. There are no job facilities available for the Chamar and thus do not have open participation in the society which is similar in the political field. There, people have a very negative impression on the political parties as none of them has ever fulfilled their promise to help the Chamar people. Now the Chamar community no longer cares whose party is in the running government. Poverty is the main boundary barrier towards development of the Chamar. No matter how low their economic condition is their sense of celebration is quite strong as the Chamar even take loans to celebrate various festivals. Many Chamar prefer to live in a nuclear family, women are more associated towards the household work and intermingle less in the society while the males work at fields and some even hold technical jobs while others work as labourers. Liquor has a very strong base in the Chamar community as this drink is widely consumed while celebrating every festival and even while worshipping gods. The illiteracy rate of this community is very high. Males literacy rate is higher than the female literacy rate. The Chamars feel that untouchability is unfair and that they are willing to fight to gain equality. They believe every citizen must be equal and that they should have the same rights and opportunity as the higher caste people get.

The political leaders gave false consolations of building roads, giving citizenship etc. But after they are elected, they forget these words.

Here due to the lack of proper distribution and citizenships, 3 to 4 old people have not got (Birdda Bhatta: old age allowance provided by the government). At present, Srijana Club with the help of micro finance programme is trying to eliminate poverty from this VDC. But the Chamar people of grassroot level are still deprived of this programme. In this programme, only the high class Chamar people are the participants. Those organizations believe that by lending money to poor people, their organization will look uplift their status. But this programme is not implemented in the grassroot level. Here, so many N.G.O.s are established related to Chamar people, but they do not carry out any programme for them. These NGOs only import money from the foreigners in the name of developing the life style of Chamar people. But in reality this is not true.

The Chamar people have their own traditional leaders known as maijan and jawar. They belonged to the same community and are responsible for settling disputers and making decisions on the community affairs. According to some locals, maijan covers 25.30 village and jawar covers 3-4 toles (locality). It is the eldest son who takes over if maijan dies and the ceremony called turban ceremony. He has to wear turban and a grand fest is organized inviting all the members of the community. The procedure of selection of jawar is learnt to be more or less the same as the maijan.

4.19 Culture Condition of Chamar People

Language

Maitili is the major language spoken by this community in the Hanumannagar (pra.ma) VDC. Hindi, Nepali and Bhojpuri have been

considered as their second language. For writing purposes, they use Devanagari script. Some of them are also found to speak Nepali (khas) language.

Food Habits

Most of the Chamar people belonging to the Chamar community are non-vegetarian who enjoy taking meat of pigeon, chicken and eggs. Both male and female members of the community consume liquor regularly. However, there are some vaishnavies among them who are strictly vegetarian and do not consume liquor. Their staple food consist of wheat, rice, pulses and vegetables of all kind. Mustard oil is the cooking medium. It is found that they mostly use aluminium and steel cooking utensil for cooking purpose.

Clothing (Ornaments)

The clothing of Hanumannagar (Pra.Ma) VDC Chamar is very simple. The dresses they wear resembled other caste/ethnic groups inhabiting region. The married man wears dhotee, kurta, singlet, trousers, shirts, vest etc. The women usually wears saree, saya and blouse while the young girls wear frock, chemise, kurta-surwal, shirts etc and boys of new generation wear trousers, shirts, pants, vests, towel etc. Some of the traditional ornaments worn by the Chamar women in the Hanumannagar (pra.ma) VDC are thansi (worn on the feet) kanda (worn on the feet), payal (worn on the feet), baj (bangle), payeth (worn on the arm), rupaiya char (garland of dollar), phuli (ear/nose rings) sindoor on forehead, ring on toe and some wear hasuli on their neck especially, made up of silver because of their poverty. The majority of ornaments are made of brass,

silver, aluminium and plastics. Nowadays, they use tilhari also. Most of the poor Chamar people are found on dirty and torn clothes.

Religion/Deities/God and Goddess

Religion seeks to interpret and control man's relations to the forces of his physical and social environment. These forces are thought to be under the control of some supernatural power. The attempt to interpret man's relations to these forces led to several forms of religion like superstition, animism, totemism, magic, ceremonialism and fetishism. A brief explanation of these forms is necessary in order to clarify the concept of religion.

Religion is a part of culture, each and every society of the world does have its own religious tradition. The religions of every ethnic group is interwoven with their cultural processes. Chamar people are rigid in their religious beliefs. G.S. Ghurye (1969) says "The Chamars of Bihar are more orthodox in the matter of religion than their eastern brethren, some of the having advanced so far in the direction as to employ Maithili Brahmins for the worship of the regular Hindu gods". Each and every part of their cultural activities is related to religious myths. Though Chamar people follow Hindu ways on their religion, the method of worshipping is different from that of Hindu's and they also worship their own type of god and goddesses. Some Chamars of this area are the followers of the Vaishnava sect of Hinduism. Such Chamars abstain from drink liquor and are strictly vegetarian. But other hindu Chamars consume liquor lavishly when they have some money. They have their own priests to perform rituals. They believe more on goddesses than the god for they think that goddesses are more powerful. They had their own family deities and village deities of the wider order. Kali, Bani, Bhagbati, Nandi, Goraiyya,

Lakeshowri, Raktamala, Meera (Mugo), Kuhelni, Gahil, Dharmaraj, Sittal, Toral Singh, Aadhaya, Banshibishar and Narsingh were some of the deities worshipped by them. Additionally, there are some individuals like Supan Bhagat Ram, Kanduk Rishi, Dagrín and Ravidas who are worshipped by the people belonging to this community. Besides it, they celebrate "Gharipooja". It is celebrated once a year. In the festival they make two wheat floured breads which they call "Rote". Moreover, they place five 'puries' in seven separate places equally along with pudding without sugar and after them to Bhagwati. Besides, they offer betel nut, paan, laddu etc [similarly, they worship "Divar baba" yearly. But they are not permitted to enter the very temple of Divar Baba.] They are forbidden to eat the "Prasad" till morning. But the Prasad can be taken only by the family members living within the family. Even the wedded daughters and sisters are deprived of it. It also can't be taken away from the roof of the house, the wedded sisters and daughters have meals prepared in a separate "chulo/stove" the green banana's leaves in which the Prasad is taken, are buried within their houses or houses boundary.

Festivals

From the beginning of human beings people started to celebrate various kinds of festival with great enthusiasm in slightly different ways and with varying degree of intensity, depending upon locality economic and social status, education, religions and family background and personal inclination (Anderson 1977: 16).

Nepalese people celebrate various festivals according to their culture and tradition. Almost all the festivals of Nepal are not only religious in character but also preserve in themselves a very fascinating picture of the great historical, cultural social as well as the economic

account of the people. Regarding the festivals of Nepal, Anderson writes "The Nepalese people say that some where everyday in the little Asiatic kingdom of Nepal there is a festival, and the gods have provided them with a perfect setting [Anderson 1977: 19].

Different castes of Nepal have different customs and traditions and celebrate festivals in their own style. Because of the miserable economic condition of Chamar they are unable to celebrate their festivals freely and in expensive manner rather they celebrate their festivals in a limited way according to their capacity. Chamar people perform various festivals. They called festival as *pawani* in their local terms. They take very much interest in their festivals. They celebrate various festivals according to their own ways. They are as follows:-

1. Fagu (Holi)

Holi is the festival of color. The festival observed with joy and gaiety in the Terai region of the country. The festival of Holi, named allegedly after the mythical demoness Holica, brings eight rowdy days in March, sometimes late February when men, women and children find themselves doused with sacred red powder or splashed with scarlet liquid.

The story told during Holi is that a fiendish demon named Holika was sister of a wicked, irreligious king, Hiranyakashaypu whose son the saintly prince Pralhad, had since boyhood been an ardent devotee of lord Bishnu. Despite the threats of his aunt and angry inter-diction of his father. At least, when all threats of punishment failed to shake Pralhads faith, the king ordered his son trampled to death by an elephant but when the prince advanced upon it chanting the sacred names of Bishnu, the great beast humbly knelt before him. Next the prince was hurled from a

rocky precipice, and again to a swollen river but each time he was saved for lord Krishna protects those who love him. At last, wicked aunt Holika, believing herself immune to death by fire, snatched the boy and leaped into a blazing furnace built especially for his destruction. The king rejoiced that his son had met his end and that Holika had performed self-immolation on his behalf. But lord Vishnu interceded again for when the flames died, Holika had perished and the unscathed prince was sitting among the members as if they were flowers in the forest. Now the antics of Holi festival are through to celebrate her extermination.

Some believe the traditional bonfires at holi commemorate the fiery death of Holika, while to others it symbolizes the burning of the mythological "old year". Since lord Brahma created the world on the day following Holi full moon.

Chamar people observe this festival as one of the most important festivals with the religious, significance of Holika's death on this particular day and celebrate this each year. During this festival Chamar people prepare special sweet dish *Malpuwa* (made from flour, sugar and milk) and also consume alcohol and enjoy a lot. Besides this, they also believe that this day is auspicious day for reunion of friendship. These Chamars enjoy "*peda*" and "*sarbat*" mixed with *Bhang* (an intoxicating stuff) many Chamars, in this festival drink a lot and are found lying on the way. All the young and aged Chamars together entertain themselves. They sing "Jogira sara ra ra" is question answer method. Beside them brother – in – laws and sister – in – laws play holi by splashing muddy liquid over each other. The head of the family put "tika" on all the members and also gives blessings some few years ago, they used to go door to door by singing "Jogira sara ra ra" and collecting cash and goods. But trend is in the way to extinction because

most of the youths have gone abroad for earning and many parents too have been in various cities of India like Punjab, Delhi and so on.

2. Chaat (*Chait*)

This festival is celebrated in Terai region every year in the month of October. *Chhat* begins with the worship of the setting sun. devotees do not consume meat, food etc. which has been salted and alcoholic beverage as they prepare for the evening worship. During this day men and women keep fasting. The worship still survives in the festival called *chat parwa*, the greatest festival of the Terai plains of Nepal. A festival which celebrates the power of the glorious sun.

A day before this festival is known as "*kharna*". And from two-three days before *kharna*, the regularly scrub and clean their surrounding. In the evening of *kharna*, they enjoy rice pudding made in molasses or treacle. The edges of the pool also is cleaned and scrubbed with cow dung, hence decorating with banana plants. Before the sunsets, Chamar take with them sugarcane, banana, coconut, Turmeric, radish, Thakuwa, Dhusuwa and other food as well as the colourful flowers which are abundant in this season to offer. After sunset all the Chamars take their prasads back to their own houses. Some of them worship god "*surya*" and others by chanting chants throughout the night.

The next morning everyone awakes early to worship the rising sun, people bath in holy rivers/pond and make offering of the water. After the prayers, the offerings known as *Prasad*. Men and women after the sun god with offerings of coconut, sugarcane, bananas and other food. After the prayers, the offerings known as *Prasad* or blessed food, are shared among themselves sent to relatives and friends. For being considered as

untouchable, Chamars scrub and clean the edges at the pool that is in distinct places which is unaccessed by other castes. Their worshipping place is away from other castes.

3. Chauth Chand:

This festival is also called *Ganesh Chauthi*. It literally means the fourth day of the lunar month of Shrawan (July). This particular day is also observed as the auspicious birth day of Ganes (lord of learning). The beginners start their first lesson on this auspicious occasion. On this festival it also throw pebbles of stone in the houses of their neighbours and steal something on the occasion. It is believed good to steal something on the occasion of this folk festival. A day after the celebration of this festival Chamars take various types Prasad like "*daal puri*" "sugar's laddu", "rice pudding" etc to, the relatives living in remote area they also distribute it to the neighbours and other close relatives too, invite neighbours for fooding.

4. Tihar (Dipawali)

The next festival celebrated by the Chamar is Tihar, which starts from "Kaag Tihar" and end after "Bhai Tika" on this occasion boes, spade, ploughing equipment, furniture, doors of the houses etc are cleaned and worshipped with oil, sindoor and flour. Houses *angan* and the surrounding area cleaned and decorated. Goddess of wealth laxmi is worshipped on this festival specially on the third day of Tihar which is known as Laxmi puja. On this day light is lit on window, door, courtyard and wall. It means to please Laxmi who loves light.

On the five day of Tihar crow, dog, cow, ox and brother are worshipped. On the first day rice and other food is given to crow. On the

second day the dog is worshipped and given varieties of menu. On the third day at morning cow is worshipped and at night goddess laxmi is worshipped. On the fourth day ox is worshipped on the fourth day of Tihar (*Govardan puja*), the young Chamar people get integrate with other youth and play "Deusi" (a type of group song and dance).

On the last day which is called Bhai tika (Brother's worship by sister). Sisters invite her elder/younger brothers to put tika on their forehead and offering betel and nuts into their hands. Sister cook meal rice, bread, meat, liquor and other variety of food and gives her brothers. The brother gives gift of cash and things to his sister.

5. *Jursital*

The festival is celebrated each year during second week of April. On this day, elder men and women give blessing by sprinkling fresh water on the head to those relatives who are younger in relation as well as in age. They invite relatives and enjoy the meal i.e. rice and lentils with vegetables. Specially cooked in oil (*Taruwa*) and celebrate this festival.

6. Maghe Sankranti

This festival is not directly related with a particular god and goddess. The occasion is celebrated on the first day of Nepali month of Magh (January). Though this day is regarded as the coldest day of the year, people rejoice this festival with cold bath at the confluence of rivers. The festival is celebrated with all kinds of feast. Chamar people celebrate this festival by preparing *laddu* (sweet dish) made from sesame seeds; sweet potatoes, *chaku* (a kind of hard molasses) and eat this with milk and yogurt. They also prepare *khichari* (a mixture of rice and lentils) for this festival. During this festival, Chamar people consume this variety of

food themselves as well as send these to their married daughters with the purpose of hearing the news of their daughter who are living far away from them.

7. Naga Panchami

This is devoted to the worship of the nags, the divine serpents. Pictures of the naag are stuck over the doorposts of all the houses in the morning as protective spells. The festival also known as the day of the snake gods falls during the monsoon rains on the fifth of the brightening lunar fortnight late in July or early August. Every mansion, hut, shop honours the serpent deities by displaying pictures of naags over the doorways and holding ceremonies of worship before them.

On this day, Chamar people used cow-dung to make model of serpent and display on the wall of their house and worship by offering flowers, incense, milk and apply paste of red powder and rice to the Naga's forehead. One of the important aspects of naga panchami is that if the snake gods are well fed and their images are widely displayed on this special day it is believed that the family will be blessed and protected from drought and famine, death from snake bite and disease, loss of possessions and calamity and the collapse of homes and buildings.

8. Rakhi

Rakhi is also called *Rachha-Bandhan* (Tie of protection). This monsoon festival is celebrated on the full moon day of Shrawan (July). In the whole Terai belt, one of the main features of this festival is that sisters bind rakhi round their brothers wrist for their good health and long life. This is not a festival of thread only but this is a festival of undying faith. Sister pray for their brother's life longevity. This festival symbolizes the

internal love between brothers and sisters. Rakhis are made of several colourful silken threads.

9. Dashain (*Dushara*)

Dashain is the greatest festival of Hindus. Chamar people also celebrate it with great respect. It takes some time in the month of September-October and is observed as national holiday.

Dashain is celebrated for two weeks, which is performed with different kinds of religious tasks. In preparation of Dashain, every house is ceremonially cleaned with cow dung decorated, painted and freshed for the visitation of goddess Durga and long awaited return of distant and near by family members.

The first day of Dashain is called Gatasthapana (which means the establishing of the holy water vessel) where the *kalas* representing goddess Durga place on the purified area. They bring some quantity of sand either from river or pond to germinate "*Jamara*" at a corner of room. The room is regularly cleaned and scrubbed till the day of Dashain (Dashara). "Laddu" is offered on the day of Saptami. Animals and birds like hegoat, pigeon are sacrificed on Asthami. Some well established Chamar even sacrifice the goat on Nawami. On the same day, they gather and enjoy is a large fair leaving their work. On the day of Dashain, the elders give blessings along with *Jamara* to the Junior. But they do not put "*tika*" on them like the people from mountain/Hilly region.

4.20 Rites of Passage of Chamars

Everybody's life passage through different stages in different periods. In every stage, he performs different ritual ceremonies. Rites of

birth, marriage and death are the main rites of passage in Hinduism and these are called *sanskar*. The word *sanskar* means religious purificatory rites and ceremonies for sanctifying the body, mind and intellect of an individual. So that he may become a full fledged member of the community.

The style of the performance of rites of passage are different in every society. Therefore, their ways of performing rituals and some celebrate of these rituals and institution are necessary to know how those are helpful in the substance of the society. And on the other hand it should be necessary to know to what extent are they preserving or changing their traditional rituals; which are maintaining the social structure of a society. The Chamars are also found performing these *sanskars* according to their own culture. Chamars had their own *pandit* (priest) to perform life cycle rites. If the priest dies his oldest son replaces him. In the case of Chamar's death the funeral rites is performed by the person called *Kantaha*.

Birth Rites

Birth is the universal fact of human life when a man and woman get married, they are socially permitted to have sexual relations after the conjugal life, they give birth to children and their social life start. During pregnancy, no special care of the mother is taken. With regard to food there are not set rules. The pregnant woman is required to eat enough rice but because of poverty, they could not get special type of diet.

Once a child is born, there is tradition of throwing *benga* (basket) behind the house. In addition a pair of shoes hung at the main entrance believing that it will ward off evil spirits. Nowadays people have started

to throw the pen instead of bengal wishing that their children would acquire good education in the future.

The mother, after giving birth to a child, is kept in a separate room and remains inside for six days. She is not allowed to perform any *pujas* (worshipping act) or touch anyone except her own child. A *man* who acts as a local version of the midwife, looks after the needs of birth the baby and the mother. Chamar un (Dagrin) handles all matters pertaining to delivering the baby, cutting the umbilical cord, stimulating the drop of the after birth or sathi, cleaning up the blood and filth which are by products of a birth, and cleaning the baby and the mother. From the day after the birth, the mother is given a broth of ginger mixed with a sugar like substance called *shakhhar* and other spices like bread, *ghee*, meat also. Till the fifth day, no rituals are performed, and then on the six day after the birth the mothers finger and toe nails are cut. Yellow color is applied on these digits and she is given a new set of clothes to change into or at least a *phariya* or *sari* like cloth. On this day the mother is permitted to eat rice and *Badhaura* (which is made of *shakkhar* ginger Aarbedic medicine etc) is necessary. It is from this six day that the mother is considered cleansed from birth pollution. *Chhatiyar* is performed on the six day. This is when the father of the child invites his younger and elder sister to clean the place where the child and mother had been confined with a mixture of dung and water. This day is also meant for naming the child. Traditionally, the name of the child is chosen from one of the marry deities they worship. When the child is 6 or 9 months old, there is a tradition of inviting the relatives of child's mother for a feast on the occasion a grand party is organized. And the villagers (from their own caste group) and kin groups are invited to see the face of the baby. All participants give blessing and good wishes to the father of the newly born

son and in return a party with sufficient local beer and local wine is given.

For *Muran* (hair cutting ceremony), there is no fixed date. Mostly people perform *muran* when the child is 1 or 3 years old. First the date for this ritual is fixed. Prior to the actual *muran*, they perform puja to their tutelary and other deities. Then the boy is placed on his mother's lap and his hair is cut by a barber. While hair is being cut, the mother makes sure that the locks do not fall to the ground by collecting them in the anchor tip of *sari* or *phariya*, spread out under the boy's head. The collected hair is taken and thrown into a large river if they are able to go there otherwise, they merely dump it into a nearby bamboo grove. The belief they have regarding the throwing of the cut locks into a river is that the boy's hair may grow like the river long and continuous. While the bamboo grove disposal means the hair will grow like the bamboo grove tall straight and thick. For this *muran*; a young hegoat/female goat is needed. The goat is slaughtered and cooked then a feast is given to the boy's kin, neighbours and acquaintances who are present in a majority for witnessing this ritual. Vegetarians are facilitated with rice, pulse and vegetables.

Marriage rites

Marriage is also one of the most universal and most important social institutions of human society when a boy and girl get married can enter the family life and they are socially as well as legally permitted to have a sexual relationship. Marriage gives legitimacy to bear children and raise them. Marriage is an institution that is universal to human society but its types and forms differ from place to place and from one ethnic group to another in accordance to the rules and regulations and beliefs system of

particular society. Theoretically speaking, two types of marriage system has been found existing in the world. These are:

- 1) Monogamy and
- 2) Polygamy $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{polygamy} \\ \text{Polyandry} \end{array} \right.$

In monogamy marriage system, there are one man and one woman. Under monogamy one man married one woman at a time. In polygamy marriage system, there are one person and many marriages. Polygamy may take to forms that is polygamy and polyandry. In polygamy system one man has two or more wives and in polyandry marriage system, one woman marries more than one man, or one wife and many husbands. In the Chamar society specially three types of marriage system are in practice.

- a) Arrange Marriage
- b) Love Marriage
- c) Intercaste Marriage (rarely)

a) Arrange Marriage

In the traditional marriage system among Chamars, the initiative is always supposed to take place from the girl's father, among the Chamar. Two or six people from the girl's side go the boys' house to sort out the matter and observe the potential groom. If the group considers the boy suitable for their relative the girl, then they say so and the boy's parents give the girl's folk a meal and then send them off. Only if accepted, the boy's family member go to see the girls Dowery and date of marriage are fixed when the boy's family members go to see the girl. In this process a

mediator or *aghuwa* (In Maithili language) plays a vital role in negotiations.

The boy also accompanies the group and should he like the girl, then this is expressed to the girl's family who give the boy's group a meal and then send them off. During these meetings, the presentation of clothes and money is performed but it is also two-way affair. The next step in this marriage procedure is to investigate whether there is any agnatic link between the families of the boy and girl in question. In the bygone days, the custom was to observe a gap of generations and thus many such matches had to be cancelled due to the ties in some of their generations which did not possess the generation interval. This became a hindrance for the Chamars, so they have reduced this period of four generation to a period of three generation for practical reasons.

The first day is started by singing songs which commences the marriage rites, these songs have themes expressing love, blessing for a bright future after the marriage and such on the second day at both houses a paste, composed of turmeric, oil and *pina* or filtrate of pressed oil is rubbed on the bodies of the prospective groom and the bride. This rubbing is done by the boy's sister (younger or elder) or his *Bhausi* (sister in law). After the rubbing is over, the prospective bride and groom are bathed by the same person who rubbed them. On the third day gram, aruwa or glutinous rice, mustard oil and *sindur* (vermillion) are mixed and taken to the nearby water source like the local tank, along with the boy. The same thing is done at the place where the girl lives and they have to bathe and after this, they have to perform worship by placing the items and mentioned in five small heaps near the water source. This ritual is *matkor*, during which the women sing devotional songs while encircling the boys or the girl as the group moves towards and returns

from the water sources. The fourth day is the actually day of the marriage also called *baarat jane* or day of the marriage processions movement. On the evening of this day the *baarat* moves towards bride's house generally at the evening time. At the time, the *baarat* plays its traditional band called Chamar baja. On this occasion various happy and sweet songs are sung, they also dance happily. Before reaching bride's house the participant of the procession are welcomed by the family of bride. After the welcome, the *Barat* take meal. The meal's standard depends on the economic condition of bride's parent.

The first rite is that of processing *tilak*. Away the *tilak* items presented to the groom, is *dhoti*, *kami*, *rumal* and other things that have been promised by the bride's family. This *tilak* is some what similar to a dowery. Now the couple is taken and seated at the *madva* is constructed in many different kinds of ways, by these Chamar folks. While some of them use a solid bamboo to make these structures others cut the bamboo into pieces and still others use rice flour with which they enclose on area which is the *madva* throughout of two dimensional nature.

When the couple is brought to the *madva* the groom presents clothes and ornaments to the bride and she wears them there symbolically. Now it is time for an *okhati* or wodeen mortar, to be brought forward to the *madva*. The fathers of the couple came and extract 5 grains of rice and five grains of paddy each from within the mortar. These they wrap in their clothes and knot this end. Those parent at this ritual try to observe who is faster in picking those grains and knotting them. Once this is over the rituals at the *madva* commence. At first, a branch of mango tree with leaves is brought and kept in a pot. A thread is used to measure the girl's height and then this thread is tie round the branch. It should be noted here that among the Chamar people, the mango

branch is considered as the key witness of the union. After this, two leaves of the branch are plucked off and on one is written the names of three generations of the groom's and similarly three generations of names of the bride's side on the other leaf. Then the leaf where the names of groom's three generations are written is tied to the bride's arm and the one with the names of three generations of the bride's is tied to the groom's arm.

The ritual is followed by the ritual called *sindoor dalne (halne)* where the groom and bride are considered really married. Here five of the bride's relatives screen the bride using a two meters long cloth preferably white. At this time, a bowl of curd each is placed in the hands of the bride and groom. Under these bowls are placed *dub*, paddy turmeric etc. five members from the groom's side take the curd bowl and all the items under it from the bride's hands and then they sprinkle and the bride five times. In this ritual, men and women from both sides are involved. Now the bride's head is anointed with oil and the groom now holding the sindur in his left hand and using a wooden spoon with his right hand pours sindur on the parting of hair of the bride. It is believed in the Chamar community that while applying this sindur none of it must drop on the ground, therefore a wooden bowl is placed under the bride's head to hold the sindur that falls off. This is the ritual that is commonly known as *sindur dalne* literally meaning pouring or putting of the *sindur* and it is done five times, repeated by the Chamar people the *baarat* is not allowed to observe this ritual.

Though the actual marriage is over, the *baarat* remains at the bride's house and returns only 3 days later. But now these days the procession return with the bride the next day. Prior to the *baarat* returning the groom's folks present betel nuts or *supari* to the female singers of the

bride's village and the bride's female relatives are also given the present of betel nuts and betel. The *baarat* return with the bride and she is made to stand directly in front of the main door of the groom's house. When she reaches there, a basket or *tokari* is placed in front of her on which a tortoise bone is placed and in front of her on which a tortoise bone is placed a hen is burnt. The heat of this fire is absorbed by someone's hand and then his heat is transferred to the bride's cheeks. Five balls of sweet rice or *khir* are thrown in five different directions. Now the bride is allowed to move forward, towards the main door, but she is again obstructed by the groom's sister and *bua* wash the feet of the couple and then take them into the house and place them in front of the *kuldewata*. Now the couple has to perform worship here and bow. It is only after this ritual is concluded that the Chamar marriage is considered really over.

After five to ten days of their marriage people from bride's side go to the groom's house. At the time they take with them, some foods and clothes for both bride and groom. Those people who came with the bride with "*Bhaar*" (gift), the bride returns back to her parent's house. This method is known as "*palo*" method. This bride returns to her home (bride groom's home) only after the completion of "*Din*" (*Din* refers to the method which allow the bride, to return back to her husband home). How long, the bride would stay in her parents home depends on their economic condition and the compromise between the two families. The duration of the *din* is one month to six-seven years. After the completion of these long stay, the day of "*Din*" is fixed or determined. For it, the bride's family manage various gifts for groom and his family. Taking the gifts, brother of bride along with other people, visit groom's family. They also have another ritual known as "*samdhi bhet*". Where the father of both bride and groom formally meet for the first time after the marriage.

Samdhi Bhet rite also exists in many other Nepalese cultural or racial group. In this rite, these fathers embrace each other, exchange clothes and each other to forgive each other if anything wrong happens.

From the above process it appear that such type of marriage is more expensive for them.

b) Love Marriage

This is another type of marriage system prevailing in the Chamar community. It was not a common and not found before. Only at present the young girls and boys are practicing love marriage. Such type of marriage take place when both the girl and boy like each other. It mainly found among the Chamar we can not afford former or traditional type of marriage. A feast to the community may be offered in this types of marriage previously, in this caste love marriage use to banned. Still at present, such type of marriage is not considered as a good one, although, it is acceptable by the society and children can inherit their father's property.

c) Intercaste Marriage

In the past a Chamar girl and boy both had to marry with his/her caste. It means that they were caste endogamy. The elder persons, even today have the conservative caste barrier rules even today. In the past, if someone married with other caste person, he would be out of the caste. Water and other things touched by him was not accepted by others. If the rule breaker wants to enter this caste, he had to be whipped and also he has to pay some money, decided by the community members, as the compensation.

In Chamar society there is slightly increasing trend in favour of the intercaste marriage from older to younger generation. From the in-depth observation, it was found that there were one Chamar boy who had got intercaste marriage. For sometimes, the couples conducting intercaste marriage were punished. But after that slowly it is accepted by the society. Still now, the old generations have a negative attitude towards love marriage. Now the parents of young generations take the intercaste marriage as granted.

Death rites

When a person dies the dead body is cremated in any selected area or at the side of the river called *kamala* by sons and other close relatives. At that time, the dead body is tied with white cloth called "*katro*". All the relatives and close neighbours participate in the funeral procession. If the dead person is older or adult, he/she is burned but if dead person is a baby or child he/she is buried. And one the death of Chamar, those who are able to cremate the corpse will cremate, and those how are unable to do so will bury it.

Initially a corpse is bathed and clothed in new cloths and then placed on a *khaat* of bed like structure constructed out of bamboo (green), tied at three points and then carried off towards the burial or cremation site. The funeral goers themselves dig the grave or construct the *pyre* (leg) , as the case may be, making the grave or *pyre* (leg) in a north-south direction and placing the corpse's head in the northern direction.

While removing the corpse from the house, an earthenware pot is also carried containing 5 Kaudi shells, oil barley grains, tulsi etc. While

taking the grave in the river, the women are not allowed to go with it. They take bath in the nearby river and return back at home. This pot must be carried by person who is to light the funeral *pyre*, meaning the person who lights the *daag batti* which is the fire lit on the corpse's mouth by placing some camphor on a copper coin, and is called the final farewell fire which sends the soul of the deceased into the here after. It is only then this that the same person lights the funeral pyre after walking round thrice. Prior to placing the corpse inside the grave, the five kaudi shells are placed in five different directions within the grave and the person goes round the grave five times with a lighted oil lamp in his hand. After this the corpse is placed in the grave. Now, fire is put on by a particular relatives of the dead person especially by his/her eldest or the youngest son and if he/she has no son, then a particular person selected by the consent of his/her family members. The wooden handles of the implements, used in the digging of the grave, are thrown away and then the funeral goers go to nearby stream river or pond or any water source and wash before they return home. *Panchakasma* is performed before giving the fire to the dead body. In this ritual, *Kiriyapuri* go round the body for five times.

The women of the house scrub the compound with mud, dung and water mixture as soon as the funeral moves out towards the cremation grounds and finish this job before the return of the funeral goers. After all the funeral goers return to the house of the deceased, a *Karchi* or utensil shaped like a semicircle live coals, stones and chilli are placed on the path and these must be circled from the left side to the right, five times for each item. After completing these rounds, each funeral goers must eat some of the chili and other only enter the dwelling *Kiriyapurti* is kept in a

separate room for twelve days. During those twelve days he is not permitted to take salt and meat.

First feast is held for the people who go to the funeral after three days of death. On the fourth day after cremation, a ritual called *Sarjhapi* takes place. On this day the *astu* (remains) are buried under the *tulsi* plant. On the seventh day or *satdhan* (*satkarma*) is performed by *Kriya putrid*. There is a belief that this ritual helps the soul of the dead to rest in peace. Milk pudding is fed on this occasion. It is called "*Dudh Muha*". There are many ritual for thirteen days. On the ninth day, *naukesh* is performed, this day *Kriyaputri* shaves his hair and cuts his nails. *Shraddha* is performed on the Eleventh day this day eleven *pindas* are made and offered. *Pitar pacchhan* performed on the twelve day. *Kriya putri* is purified on this day. *Kriya purti* has put on white piece of cloth around his neck. That cloth is known as "*Utri*". After removal of *utri*, *Kriya purti* bathed with water mixed with turmeric, *dubo* (a type of grass) and *sindoor*. On the last day (13th day) the family of the head person has to arrange a *Satyanarayn puja*. On this day *daar dakhina* (sort of remuneration) is provided to the *pandit*. The things being offered are cows, utensils, shoes etc. the common Chamar people offer the common things. Till thirteen days, the relatives of dead people are prohibit to take meat, but on the fourteenth and fifteenth days, they take meat collectively in a group. After a year the *Kriya putri* has to offer "*Pinda*" again on the name of his ancestors. It is called *Barkhi*, then all the rituals after death come to an end.

CHAPTER V

SOCIAL – CULTURAL CHANGE

As everybody knows that change is the law of nature what is today may not be tomorrow. This chapter aims to discuss on the change in socio-cultural life of the Chamar's of the study site. Particularly it focuses on the education, family system, marriage system, festivals, dress and ornaments occupation etc.

Change in family System

In the study area, according to some respondents, the Chamars used to live in joint family previously, (before 10/15 years). But at present, most of them prefer nuclear family rather than joint and extended family. It is because of their changing socio-economic condition and on the other hand in joint family they had to face many problem, especially by the daughter in law. This in – laws used to remain under the strict observation of the elders, also they had to do lots of household work at the sometime. There used to be always some mis-understanding between the brothers and in-laws. So, for all these reasons, the Chamar of today prefer nuclear family rather than others.

Joint and extended family are found only among those Chamar who are strong in their economic conditions. Such type of family system among the Chamars of Hanumannagar (pra.ma) VDC have becomes a traditional idea pattern of living. Now their concept regarding family system is heading towards the change. Imitating the trend of Brahman's and other castes they are slowly being interested in small family, when a youth girls get married, the couple departs from the joint family.

There are several causes for the above reasons. The main causes which are responsible for bringing nuclear family system into practice are as follows:

- a) Decreasing economic condition
- b) The trend system of residing separately after marriage.
- c) The tradition of living separately for happy life.
- d) Unequal love of father-in-law and mother-in-law to the daughter-in-law.
- e) Quarrels among the wives of married brothers.

Due to the afore mentioned causes, the system of joint family and extended family has been decreasing day by day and the system of nuclear family has been increasing.

In nuclear family system, the number of the family members is few. So they feel happiness in family life and prefer living in nuclear family. When a man gets married, after a few months, he starts to live separately taking his due parts of ancestral property. Therefore, because of all the above mentioned causes and reasons, the Chamar people of the study area prefer to live in nuclear type of family system so as to live happily. Of course few of the old people of the study area prefer to live joint family rather than an extended and nuclear because they said that in joint family, they can solve any big problem and can do lots of work with the group of the family members through which they can earn high yields of product of money. But the fact is that, today's Chamars preferring only the nuclear type of family system.

Change in Life Cycle Ceremonies

The Chamar people of this study area have adopted various new kind of cultural practices from birth to death rituals, which were not their old traditions. Such types of new cultural practices, which are accepted have been presented below in the section.

Change in Birth Ceremonies

Traditionally, when a child was born, his naming ceremony was held only after the third day of the birth. These day may be 3rd, 5th, 7th or 9th day but nowadays the naming ceremony is performed after the eleventh day from the birth. In the past, Chamars had their own priests to baptize their children; it was the mandatory system, the priests used to name the children on the basis of days children were born. Children born on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday were named '*Robia*', '*Somna*', '*Mangla*', '*Budhna*', '*Brihaspatiya*', '*Sukra*' and '*Sonia*' respectively. Likewise, '*Purnima*' born children were named '*purna*' and *Aunshi* born were '*chorba*'. But nowadays, it is not compulsory to call the priests. Children are either named by their parents or by the aged gentleman. Children now are given modern names like Jitendra, Dharendra, Deependra etc.

Change in Marriage Ceremonies

Previously, early marriage was the common system: girls and boys married while they were only 10-12 and 13-14 respectively. Moreover, boys families were given buffalo, calves, bicycle, dhoti, shirts as dowry Chamars had a ritual called "Din" that use to be performed long after marriage. Bridegroom's party being intoxicated often used to fight and quarrel to each other. Groom used to go in "*Kahar*" to bride's house

where they go by Jeep, Tractors and bicycle. Unlike in the past, cash dowery system prevails at present especially due to foreign employment. It has uplift the economic status of the Chamars.

Similarly, arrange marriage where marriage is fixed by both party's parents, now it not compulsory. Because of increasing social and educational awareness, love marriage too is now practiced. Intercaste marriage was the social offence; even they were excommunicated and fined, now it is improved or modified.

Change in Death Ceremony

As a death ritual "*chorjhhapi*" was ritualized on the third day of the death which now has almost be disappeared. Feast used to be organized for almost of the people of the community. Now only few selected relatives are invited in it. In this way the death ceremony of Chamar people came to an end. However, at present they don't spend much money like before. They perform ritual activities in a simple way.

Occupation and Change

Chamars are leather workers by tradition. Traditionally, the main occupation of these people is leather work and subsidiary occupation is labour. Most of the Chamar people in the study area are also found to be engaged in agriculture directly or indirectly. Here, directly means engaged in own farm and indirectly means engaged in other forms of subsistence.

Most of the landless or marginal land holding households work as wage labour which can be found in the form of tenant, share cropper,

permanently labour e.g., plough-man for the year, contract labour (in cash or kind), semi attached labour tied with credit or casual wage labour.

In the past, they did the work of mending shoes, throwing the dead body of cattle's and selling the cattles' skin in India. They used to play drama in the festivals like Dashain and Chhat. In return, they were given the goat's tail, tongue, *Thakuwa* and a little amount of meat. Their traditional occupation could not fulfill the economic problems, which made them abandon their traditional occupation. Especially the youngers have the sense of domination by the so-called upper class, this also made them to leave their occupation. Nowadays, they work in the wage system, go to foreign countries to fulfill their economic problems. The prime reason why they abandon their occupation is they have been outcasted in the society, they are not given to enter in shops and are economically dominated. Though almost many Chamars have left this occupation, two houses are still involved in this occupation due to lack of capitals. They continue the same work like mending shoe and selling skin. According to them, if the government provides the financial help, they too will abandon this occupation. In this way, the occupations of this group is seen to be changing. In the same way, the famous traditional work of housewife and baby-sitting is also seen to be changed. Instead of this traditional work, they too started working in the wage system.

Change in Educational Status

Mostly the aged Chamars are illiterate. In the past, due to excess economic problems, they did not sent their offsprings in school. The schools used to be very far, it took much time to reach there, which did not allow them to complete their household work. Hence, the maximum young and old people of this group is uneducated. Moreover, the girls

were banned going to other's house and were married in early age. So, they were much illiterate.

Nowadays, their parent send the boys to the school as the school is near. They think that the economic status determine in the dowery, which compels the boy to send to school. They also send their daughters to school understanding the value of education. Some people of this group send the boys to the boarding school, and some to the government school due to the lack of capitals. Some Chamars still donot send their offsprings to the school due to economic crisis. They question their children go to school, who will work for them? Though this group understand the importance of education, but they are not able to send their children to school because of economic crisis. But now the rate of literacy is increased, as more and more Chamars are sending their children in the academic institution.

Change in Cultural Activities

Dress ornament and food habit

The Chamar people dress up in a very simple way. The Chamar men generally wear Kamij (full shirt), Dhoti (loin cloth), soft towel, lungi etc. at present they have started wearing modern dresses like shirt, pant, coat and other desirable dresses. Likewise, young girls wearing kurta, sirt and other modern dress. Chamar people live in warmer place, their traditional dressing pattern help them to adopt with the environment exposing most part of the body to maintain body temperature. Since their contact with outer world, through education and social contact, their traditional patterns of dressing are gradually disappearing. Generally, young Chamar people prefer to wear modern dress such as pant, shirt,

coat according to their economic status and interest. Likewise, Chamar women also started wearing middi, kurta surwal in addition to this, young and educated Chamar girl prefers to wear modern dress like salwar, skirt etc.

Likewise, change also has come to some extent in the ornaments. Traditionally, the Chamar people use ornaments so much they used that were made up silver which are usually thick and heavy. Nowadays gold ornaments are being used by some well to do family, but the poor people use silver ornaments which are smaller and thinner in size. These people are not so much fond ornaments, but due to the influenced by other ethnic groups of the vicinity they began to adopt their traditional gradually.

The Chamar women are very simple. Previously, the married Chamar women worn a wide ornamented silver bangle *Thansi* (worn on the feet) *Payeth* (worn on the arms) *Rupai chhar* (garland of dollar), *Bangle* (worn on the arms). Such *Bangles* are broken of after the death of her husband and never worn even if she is married again. But today the Chamar women of the study area wear a small conch-shell bangles, as a sign of married and only few of them put *sindur* (vermillion). In the past, the female Chamars used to put the ornaments are *bangel* and *rupaichhar* but now this fundamental ornaments are changed. Previously they used to make body painting (godna) in their arms, hand but now it is changing. Instead they put necklace, nail polish and *mangal sutra* etc.

As paddy is the main cereal crop of this area, rice is the staple food for the Chamar. *Dal*, *Bhat*, *Roti*, *Saag* in the daily diet of the Chamar people. Whatever may be economic condition, they use salt, chilly and other kinds of spices in preparing their foods. In the past, mostly Chamar used to have meat and alcohol. They used to take the meat of cow, ox,

chicken, goat, sheep etc. but now due to economic causes, they abandon this activities and adopt Satnami religion. Their traditional meal is also changed with the changing time. Still few Chamars are continuing with their traditional meals like meat and alcohol.

Change in Dance, Song and Instruments

Dance and songs are the most important part of Chamar's socio-cultural life. The different varieties of songs and dances of Chamar people are not only their religious and recreational aspect but these activities also indicates their ancient modes of life. Usually, women do not take part in dances and the role of girls in dancing is fulfilled by the boys disguised as girls. But some females used to sing a song, after the sacrifice was made. Then they used to go near the Kamala river continuing their songs. But now this system is disappearing gradually. Most of their dances and songs are based on their traditional custom, regarding instruments, they use *Dhole*, *Sahanai*, *Digri* etc. At present the above mentioned musical instruments are not in used. Instead the Chamars used the modern musical instruments dances like *allah rudhal*, *jogira sararara* ----- and the plays are vanishing slowly. In its place now the recording dances are used.

According to the informants, the dance and songs of Chamars society are changing day-by-day due to the change in socio-cultural way of life. As each and every socio-cultural aspects of human society is dynamic in nature. Hence, the so-called Chamar socio-cultural aspects is also not statistic, it is found changing slowly and gradually.

Change in Religion and Activities

The Chamars are Hindus by their religion, they also worship their own type of god and goddess which are not included in Hindu religion. They worship ghosts e.g. "*Bhut*" "*Pret*" and making offering to them from their propitiation. They also believe in spell, and also in their own priest or sacred specialist who is known as *pandit*.

According to the informants Chamars are Hinduism but the impact of *Shaktaism*, *vaisnavism* have produced a curious blend in their religious uses. They believe in *witchcraft*, worship *shiva*, *Lalusardar*, *Durga*, *Bhagwati*. Beside this, they also worship Vishnu, Basil plant. The Chamar people believe that if they forgot to worship the home deities they would suffer from certain kinds of sorrows and disease. Most of the deities which they worship daily in the form of home deities are Hindu deities but the worshipping activities differ slightly from that of the Hindu. Chamar believes that worshipping of village deities is important not only for household of an individual but also for the whole villagers.

Nowadays the Chamar people do not worship their deities daily because of their poor economic condition. Similarly, their regular annual worshipping Bhagwati puja is not being worshipped now – a –days. So side by side they have cut down worshipping items needed for the worship. Their interest in religion is lacking mostly because the young people go to foreign countries and remaining had to look after economic resources. Christianity has attracted the attention of so many Chamars as it does not make the demarcation between caste system.

Change in Village Polity

According to the information, it came to be known that the Chamar people do not participate to take much interest in political activities. From the political point of view, Kewat, Mallah, Hilly Brahman are the successful persons of this area. Some events of conflict between Chamar people and other groups are also noticed consequently. In the past, Chamar people were not given the chance to participate in politics. The so-called upper caste people did not allow them to involve in politics, who cause them to lag behind. If given, they were given the lower posts. They were prohibited to enter the hotels, houses and temples. They were even economically banned, were not given goods in shop, were prohibited to enter in temples when they rejected to throw carcass and play drums in different ceremonies.

At present, day has been a compromise between Chamars and the upper caste. So it can be said that there is not much domination now. The so-called upper caste people has the feeling of making Chamars involve in politics. Unlike in the past, they are now not prohibited to enter in temples, tea shops and public places. But particularly in *Divaharani puja* they are prohibited to enter the temples.

CHAPTER VI

FACTORS CAUSING CHANGE

In this VDC, due to some factors like socio and cultural contidion, we can see the changes in Chamars. In this chapter, an effort has been made to analyze the socio-cultural changes that are brought about by Economic factor, modernization, sanskritization, educational, Social organization and industrialization among the Chamars of Hanumannagar (Pra.Ma.) VDC.

Economic

There are various domains that have brought change in Chamar community of the study area: religious, culture, life cycle ceremony, occupation, policy and others. At first, we can given the example of economic standard. The poor economic condition has been one of the features for change in Chamar festivals because poor people are not able to offer much for the celebration, naturally they have to cut down the expenditure and so on. And at the same time, the duration of festivals has also been shorted. Except some important festivals like Ghari puja, Holi, Chhat, they do not observe other festivals for many days, but for only one day because of economic factors. Due to economic crisis in their traditional work, like mending shoes, playing musical instruments and throwing the carcass of dead animals, they are changing their occupation. So, due to economic cause, we view the social and cultural change in the people of this group.

Technology

Moreover, because of the development of technology, the traditional culture of Chamar of study area has been affected. At the same time, the musical instrument of Chamar people which were used during the time of festival have also undergone some significant changes. Previously, they only used Sahanai, Digri, Bhatiya but now they have started to use other musical band such as Drum, Bigul and so on. The new generation Chamar do not take interest up on the traditional dances. Instead they follow the modern Hindi, Bhojpuri and Nepali dances. In the past, they used to go a long distance for grinding rice and wheat. But now the facility is very nearby. Due to the rapid development of technology they do not make “Dangi” (an attempt made while harvesting crops) while harvesting wheat. In this way, there has come the changes in their social and cultural life.

Education

Education is an essential factor for development of society. It also helps to achieve upward mobility. Education brings consciousness and plays vital role in developing knowledge and skills of people. Due to lack of education, these Chamar people had ‘inferiority complex’; they themselves accepted that they belonged to the lowest stratum of the society. They embraced their ancestral profession of cleaning or throwing carcass. But due to current increasing awareness, all of them have abandoned this profession communely altogether. Since they have cultivated the notion that education extends awareness, increasing domestic job possibilities and eases foreign job opportunities, they have begun to send their children to school. In this way, education has modified their social and cultural condition.

Modernization

These people have also been changed in term of eating and dressing up habits. They have brought modification in their personality. This modification is the result of their visit to various national and foreign cities. In search of job, they have goes to various places like India, Quatar, Sudi Arabia etc. While returning back home, they bring with them different habits of eating and dressing up. Now, they no longer wear "Dhoti" and "Kurta", rather they wear shirts, pants, vests, goggles, jacket etc. In this way, they have been affected by modernization.

Social Organization

Different types of organization are present in that community. Such as political, social, government, and user group. VDC is responsible for changing their traditional judging system. Health post is another factor of change their traditional treatment system. Soial organization aware them about sanitation, drainage etc. Here, a club called Srijana Yuba Club has formed some credit groups. These groups lend some small loans to Chamars which has enabled them to uplift their economics status. Such loans are given to lame cattles like cow, buffaloes and goats, as well as for small commercial purpose. As a result, their social and cultural status have been improved.

Westernization

Westernization is another major factors of socio-cultural change of study area. Most of them have changed their traditional dress patterns and now they have started to wear modern types of dress like shirts, pants and goggles by male and wear saris, cholo by women and girls wear, kurta, shirt and frocks which are not their traditional dress.

Transportation

Due to lack of transportation, the marriage was arranged from the nearby villages among the relatives. Now because of transportation, marriage is arranged from the distant places too. Transportation has eased them to learn the culture of those distant people. Their contact with the people of different cultures have brought change and novelty in their culture.

Industrialization

In the past, their original profession was to clear or remove the carcasses from the road and community. Now, some brick industries have been set up. These industries have provided them novel type of employment that has helped them to solve their hand to mouth problem. Thus, the industrial development has changed their profession. Change in profession has brought change in their social and cultural sectors.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Summary

Nepal is the land of various caste, creeds and ethnic groups. The country is divided into three parts such as Mountain, Hilly and Terai. The inhabitants of each part have their own culture, tradition and language. The present study focus only on the Chamar of the Hanumannagar VDC (pra.ma) of Terai region.

Most of the anthropologists and sociologists, both foreign and Nepalese, have done many studies on other ethnic groups of the Himalayan and mountain region. But the ethnic group especially dalit groups of the Terai region such as Chamar has been neglected because of the unfavourable climatic, condition of the Terai region.

The basic objective of the present study is to provide short ethnography of the Chamar people of Hanumannagar (pra.ma) VDC and analyzes the socio-cultural change in the various sphere of Chamar people. It an emphasis on family, occupation, life cycle ceremony, economy, village polity, dress and food habit and to find out the factors and forces responsible for the change. So in order to fulfill the above objective, a census method has been adopted. Interview method have been used for the collection of primary data. Observation was made throughout the study and data has been analyzed descriptively.

Regarding the origin and history of Chamar, Chamar is Indo-Aryan with black long faces and noses and are short in structure. Chamars migrated from India Simrighat to Nepal about 130-200 years ago. The

term "Chamar" or "Chambhar" itself refers to people who work with leather. Chamar is a term derivated from Sanskrit, the term is coined out of two Sanskrit terms, "charma" (leather) and "kaar" (Worker). Hence, Charmakar became Chamar in Sanskrit in the passage of time. Likewise, they are also known as "Mochi". Recently, they are also known as via different titles like "Ram" "Harijan", Mahara" etc.

The present study has carried out in Hanumannagar (Pra. Ma) VDC where the total population of Chamar consists of 238 of which the male member consists of 117 and female 121. The other ethnic groups of the study area are the Kamti, Mallah, Tatma etc.

Chamars are rigid in their religious beliefs. Each and every part of their cultural activity is closely related with the religious myth. Though the Chamars are Hindu, they also worship their own type of god and goddess which are not found in Hindu religion. They worship their own god like Goraiya, Lakeshowri, Raktamala, Kuhelni, Gahil etc. They celebrate many festivals like Chhait, Holi, Rakhi, Nagpanchami, Jursital etc. They also perform various types of feast which shows their socio-cultural as well as religious life. Recently, there has been found significant change in the mode of celebration of feast and festivals.

Traditionally, Chamar people wear Dhoti and Kurta, soft towel (Gamcha) but now they have started wearing modern dresses and significant change has been observed in their food habits. Previously, they were unaware of education. Only in few places they were found to be educated but nowadays they have begun to send their children to school. Regarding the economic aspect of the Chamar, it can be said that they are agriculturist and supplement their agricultural subsistence economy by other activities like business, wage labour etc. There are

various households which is not sufficient for their subsistence, so they plough others land as tenants and some do wage labour. Due to the insufficient land, the Chamar of Hanumannagar (pra.ma) VDC have to lead a hard life.

The Chamar society has also been affected by the changing value in other societies. Majority 53.96 percent of the families are living in nuclear family. And most of the Chamars prefer small size of family. Poor economic condition, conflict between brothers, conflict between brother – in – law, daughter – in – law and conflict between wives of brothers are some reasons behind the break down of joint family. But main cause is economic because more young Chamar like to live in their own earns and do not want to give other.

Marriage is also an important institution in every society. An attempt has been made to describe various aspects of marriage among Chamar society. There is a great change in marriage system. Some of the Chamars do not want of follow traditional marriage system. Most of the young Chamars like love marriage. Because traditional type of marriage is expensive and due to the poverty, they can't afford such type of marriage. Therefore love marriage is being popular among Chamars. All kinds of occasions related to events between birth and death such as birth, chhaiti and death are observed by Chamars 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 10 or 12 days. If the first baby is son the chhaiti ritual is performed on the sixth day after the birth of the child. This process shows that the status of son is always higher among Chamars. The naming ceremony is performed after the eleventh day.

Death impurity is observed for 12 days. After the death, both burial and cremation are found among them. Head of the household or nephew is accepted to purify birth and death pollution.

But changes can be seen in these rites. Due to the poverty, chhaiti, chor jhhapi (death Ceremony) are being left to celebrate. The expenditure of death rite is also being reduced. Now only few selected relatives are invited in the feast.

Only 10.26 percent of the Chamars meet computly up to 12 months by their own production. Rest of the family can't meet up to 12 months. The large number of Chamars i.e. 89.74 percent do not complete their hand to mouth problem by their own production.

Conclusion

Every society undergoes changes whether we like or not. Change is a universal fact. Therefore, Nepali society is no exception to it. Nepal has undergone the rapid change since it opened its door to the countries in 1951 A.D. Several social and economic forces – exogenous as well as indigenious are simultaneously functionaing to bring out the change in the structure and function of Nepal are society and culture. This process of change is quite conspicuous in many caste/ethnic groups including the Chamars.

Chamars are in the rank of untouchable according to Hinu caste system. They are poor and illiterate. There are caste based discrimination against Chamars at the study area, but many changes can be seen in different aspects. We can see there some changes on caste based discriminations and some changes on their traditional organization or particularly family, life cycle, rites, festival, educational situation etc.

which are gradually changing in accordance with time. Family system has also changed a lot. Majority of the Chamars now prefer small size of family. Therefore, nuclear family system is being popular among them.

Traditional type of marriage is being declined among Chamars of Hanumannagar (pra.ma) VDC. Love marriage and inter-caste marriage are being popular. It is mainly because of their poor economic condition.

Economically speaking, the Chamars people at Hanumannagar (pra.ma) VDC live in absolute poverty. They have no sufficient land for cultivation. Majority of them can't produce their food requirements for more than 6 months. They depend on labour for their livelihood.

Caste based discrimination is also a responsible factor to make them unable to improve their economic condition. For example, a Chamar is not hired even as a peon in public offices, a Chamar can't start a hotel or tea-shop. Similarly, livestock product is not accepted from Chamars' because they are looked upon as untouchable.

The traditional social organization of Chamar particularly family, marriage, religion, village, polity etc. are gradually changing in accordance with the time, place and situation.

All the Chamars have shifted from their traditional leather work to other occupations such as agriculture, labour etc., but they are not able to improve their economic condition from these new type of occupations.

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APPENDIX-A

Interview Schedule

1. Place of Interview: VDC:
 District: Ward no.: Tole:.....
2. Name of Respondent/Household Head
 Religion: Age:..... Marital Status:.....

About the family members

S.N.	Full Name	Relation of head	Age	Sex	Education	Occupation		Marital Status
						Primary	Secondary	

3. What is your father's occupation?
 Primary..... Secondary
4. What was your occupation in the past?
 Primary..... Secondary
5. What is your occupation at the present?
 Primary..... Secondary
6. Is there any change in your occupation?
 Yes No
 If yes, what are the factors of changes
7. Are you happy with your primary occupation?
 Yes No
 If no give reason

8. Do you ever think to turn to your traditional occupation?

Yes No

9. What is your attitude towards your traditional occupation?

Positive Negative.....

10. Do you sufficiently solve the hand and mouth problem from present occupation?

Yes No

If no, what else do you do to solve your problems?

11. Do you have your own land?

If yes, how much land do you have?

Types of land	Area
Khet
Bari
Gharedi
Other

12. If you have no land what are the reason of loosing the land?

.....

13. What are the main crops do you grow in your field?

.....

14. Do you use receive loan?

Yes No

15. If yes from where do you receive loan?

a. Friends and relatives b. Neighbors c. NGO/INGO
d. Bank e. Office f. Others

16. What is your source of income?

a. Agriculture b. Animal husbandry c. Making shoe
d. Labour e. Others

17. What is the type of your house?

.....

18. Where is your origin place?

.....

19. Where did your ancestor come in the village?

.....

20. How many festivals do you celebrate in the year?

Baishak	Jestha	Ashad	Srawan	Bhadra	Ashwin	Kartik	Mangshir	Paush	Magh	Phalgun	Chaitra

21. Which is the greatest festival of a year?

.....

22. Is there any change on the feast and festivals of your community?

Yes No

If yes, what are the factors of change ?

.....

23. Which type of dress do you use?

.....

24. Is there any change in your traditional dress?

Yes No

If there any change on the food habit your community.

Yes No

If, yes, what are the factors of change?

.....
25. Which types of food you use to eat?

Is there any change on the food habit your community.

Yes

No

26. What types of song and dance do you perform?
.....

27. Do you find any change in songs and dances?

Yes

No

If yes, what are the factors of change?
.....

28. What was the family pattern in the past?

a. Nuclear

b. Joint

c. Extended

Now, what types of family pattern in the present?

a. Nuclear

b. Joint

c. Extended

29. Is there change in your family pattern?

Yes

No

If yes, what are the causes of changes the family?
.....

30. Do you want to educate your children?

Yes

No

If yes, why do you want to educate your children?

a. To make them literate.

b. To make their future better.

c. Because the school education free.

d. Because other's children are send to school.

e. Other's

31. Do you get any hinders to get education?

Yes

No

If yes, what are the hindrances to get education?

- a. Poverty
- b. Lack of awareness
- c. Others.....

32. In which type of school do your children read?

- a. Government
- b. Boarding
- c. Informal
- d. Others

33. Did you marry?

- Yes No

If yes, what types of marriage?

- a. Arrange
- b. Love
- c. Others.....

34. Do you accept inter caste marriage?

- Yes No

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

- Yes No

If that is not similar to the past what type of change do you found

.....

35. What are the causes of change in the marriage system?

.....

36. Was there any bride price system on the marriage system?

- Yes No

37. Is it control till now?

- Yes No

If it is yes, what are the reasons.....

If it is no, what are the reasons

38. Tell me something about kinship terminology

39. Is there change in the kinship terminology?

If yes, what are the causes of change of kinship terminology?

.....

40. How do you perform birth ceremony?

.....

41. Is there any changes on birth ceremonies activities?

Yes No

If yes, what are the causes of changers of birth ceremonies?.....
.....

42.How do you perform the death rites?

.....

43.Is there any change on the death pollution?

Yes No

If yes, what types of change do you food?
.....

44.What kind of the village political system is in existence on the chamar community?

.....

45.Is there any recent change in village political system?

Yes No

46.What is the political impacts in your socio-cultural field?

.....

47.What are the women's role in your community?

.....

48.Is there any discrimination between male and female in chamar people?

Yes No

If yes, what are the factors of discrimination?

Economic

Socio-cultural

Political

Others

49.Had NGO/INGO launched nay program before in your village?

.....

50. Is NGO/INGO launching any programme at present?

.....

51. What are its impacts in your socio-cultural field?

.....

52. Do you have latrine?

Yes

No

53. Do you go to temple

Yes

No

54. Which means of light do you have?

a. Electricity b. Kerosene c. Firewood d. Others.....

55. How do you collect drinking water?

a. Hand pipe b. Well c. Others.....

APPENDIX – B

Checklist for the interview with the key informants

- a. About the origin of Chamar People -Thar and Gotra in their Caste
- b. Advent of the people -Migration from where?
- c. About the family structure - Change in family Structure
- d. Marriage System
 - Endogamous, Exogamous
 - Arrange, love and forced marriage
 - Process of marriage

Do you practice cross cousin marriage?

What kind of changes have occurred in your marriage system?

- e. About the religion
 - Are you Hindu
 - God and Goddess
 - Have your own deities

What types of poojas are organized there about the village deities?

Is there any change in your religious performance?

- f. Festivals
 - How do you celebrate your festivals?
 - Is there any change in your festivals?
- g. About the Songs and Dance
 - Male and female dance
 - Male and female songs

Any change occurred in our dance and song?

- h. Dress pattern and food habits
 - Male and female dress pattern
 - Change in dress pattern
- Main food
- Change in food habits

- i. Life cycle ceremonies
 - Birth
 - Naming
 - Marriage

- Death Ceremonies

How do you perform these ceremonies?

- Change in life cycle ceremonies

j. Attitude toward the education

- Backward in education

- Change in educational attitude

k. Ethic relationship

l. Is there any project NGO/INGO active for the upliftment of community?

m. Please tell me your family God and Goddess?