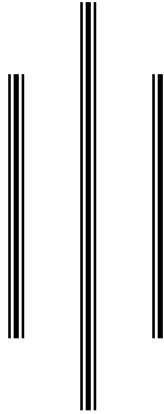


SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITION OF CHAMAR COMMUNITY

(A Case Study of Bishunpurwa VDC-5 in Bara District)



A Project Report

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CHAPTER – ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 General Background

The origin of Chamar, or chambhar, is derived from a Sanskrit word meaning working in leather- we can also say that the word “Chamar” has taken from the word “Chamakar”, ‘Chamar’, means leather and ‘Kar’ means worker. So, the ‘Chamar’ is derived from the word ‘Charmakar’. Chamars are also called “Mochi”. Nowadays, they are known as “Ram” also. Their mother tongue (language) is “Maithili” (Adhikari, 2002).

Chamar occupy, in 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 ‘Sudra’ and their traditional occupation is leather work.

Similarly, the Nepal Dalit Commission has classified Dalit as follows;

- Bishowkarma (kami)	Sarki	Badi
- Darai (Damai)	Gaine	Kapali
- Chamar	Khadki	Deacle
- Tamata	Kutche	Butcher
- Khate	Musahar	Dushad
- Dom	Dhobi	Halkhar
- Bantar	Kattna	

Source: (NDC, 2064)

In India, Chamar and Sarki, both are classified into Harijan groups. Traditionally, even in modern society, Chamar and Sarki both are called untouchable caste. Indian government & some extent Nepalese

government have taken many steps to uplift the status of Chamar and Sarki caste (Mahato, 1993).

Chamar is the caste or Harijan. So they might have different demographic pattern to other caste of Nepal. Thus, this study tries to give socio-economic condition of Chamar of Bishunpurwa VDC. in Bara district. It also tries to give social, cultural and economical changes that have occurred in Chamars of that area.

1.2 Statement of Problems

Nepal is one of the poorest countries of the world. According to the life expectancy survey (2060 – 61) 30.8 percent people are below absolute poverty line (CBS, 2062 B.S.). In this condition, there are such castes, tribes and ethnic groups, who bounded to their traditional occupation because they could not meet their basic needs (food, clothing, shelter etc.) by doing their traditional occupation in the changing condition.

Chamar social life and socio-economic status is still under the smoke of cloud. So, the question is how deeply these social trends affected their daily livelihood and what change it has brought to their socio-economic status. This research is attempts to focus on the various aspects of their socio-economic life of the Chamar community of Bishunpurwa VDC-5 in Bara district. So, it has its own importance.

Among the various caste/ethnic groups, Chamar is one of the indigenous groups of Nepal. They are found mainly in Terai region. Chamars are poorest and backward caste people in Nepal. They are born in poverty, live in poverty and die in poverty. Although their traditional work is leather work, they are giving up their traditional occupation because they can not fulfill their basic needs by their traditional occupation. Very few and only seldom they take part in leather work. They are engaged in

waged labour, some of them are engaged in agricultural sector also. But they have not sufficient income to fulfill the needs to survival. To get food they work very hard. They have weak economy. They are facing with illiteracy, malnutrition, high infant mortality, maternal mortality and poor health.

Various ethnographic studies have been undertaken in Nepal. Some studies have focused on demographic socio-economic and cultural change in Nepalese people (Bista, 1967). However, studies about Chamar at Bishunpurwa VDC of Bara district have not yet undertaken.

Due to continuous interaction with other groups, they have been losing their own social and cultural identity. The economic, social and cultural condition of Chamars in Nepal is seriously thinkable. Likewise, the Chamars at Bishunpurwa VDC-5 of Bara district are also suffering the same problem.

Therefore, a study of ethnographic of Chamar is very essential as it may throw light on socio-economic backwardness of these ethnic groups.

The important question is in spite of the government efforts to uplift the living condition of rural people especially minority group like Chamar, they are not joined the main stream of national development.

Due to modernization and urbanization Chamars have changed their traditional pattern of life. By considering this fact, this study focuses the following research problems.

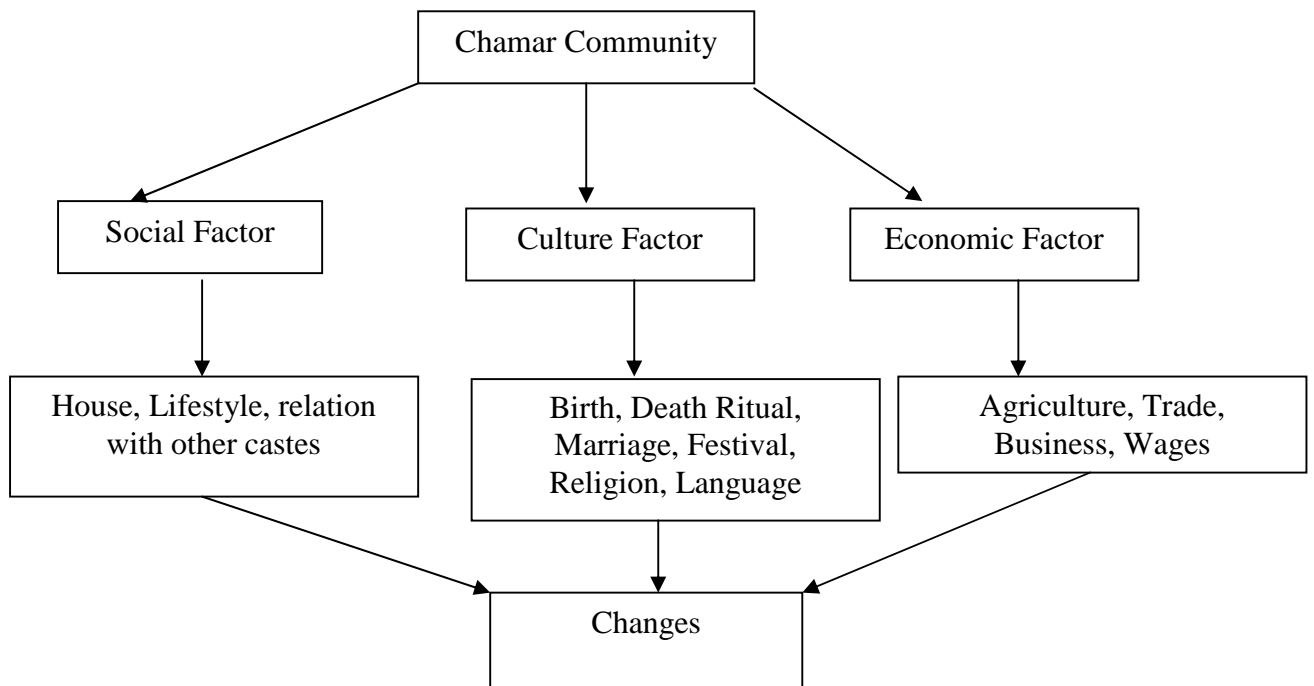
1. Present living condition of Chamar.
2. Economic condition of Chamar.
3. Social condition of Chamar .

1.3 Objective of the Study

The general objective of the study is to identify the socio-economic condition of Chamar people at Bishunpurwa VDC-5 of Bara district in the context of changing Nepalese society. The specific objectives are:-

- a) To study the socio-economic condition of Chamars.
- b) To identify the problems of Chamar community that stem from and lead to their perpetual backwardness in Nepalese society.
- c) To explore the cultural pattern of Chamars.
- d) To provide relevant recommendations to policy makers.

1.4 Conceptual Framework



1.5 Importance of the Study

All the Nepalese villages are affected by numerous problems including racial discrimination, unemployment, illiteracy, malnutrition, lack of

food, clothing and high magnitude of poverty of rural households poses serious problem both for the planners and the poor villagers.

Nepal is still facing the problem of narrowing the gap between haves and have-nots. Despite the efforts of the government to provide an equal share of benefits of its development activities to deprived sectors of the society, the primary needs that lies ahead is to help these communities by broadening their perception, raising their economic level and education level, to take part in the mainstream of national life with dignity and with a sense of belonging.

Thus, this study aims to present information about the socio-economic condition among Chamar community. The results of the study may also be useful for policy makers in relation to upliftment of socio-economic as well as other development programs in the region.

1.6 Scope and Limitation of the Study

Everything has its own limitation. This study also has research demarked with in a specific area is supposed to be scientific and systematical. Taking this fact into consideration the purpose of this undertaking is to study how the social change has affected the socio-economic status of Chamars. Chamar tribe is confined with in the limitation of this study area. Chamars here are the main actors.

The main aim of this study is to find out the socio-economic condition of Chamars in Bishunpurwa VDC-5. However, it is supposed that this study would be representation of the study relative to this area. It is also micro level study which attempt to explore the socio-economic condition of Chamars.

- a. This study is limited in the Bishunpurwa VDC-5 of Bara district. Therefore, the studies could not be generalized Chamar community throughout the country.
- b. This study is academic case study. Therefore, large area could not be incorporated in the study.
- c. Simple statistical tools will be used to analyze the data obtained.
- d. Findings of this study may or may not be applicable at the national level but relevant in some of micro perspective.

1.7 Organization of the Study

The study is organized into six chapters. The first chapter discusses the General background of the study, Statement of the problem, Objectives of the study, Importance of the study, Scope and limitation of the study. The second chapter presents the Review of literature. The third chapter contains the Methodology adopted for the study in which various methods of data collection and analysis are described. The fourth chapter describes the Setting the study area as well as cultural pattern of Chamars. The fifth chapter discusses the socio-economic condition and demographic analysis and findings of the study. Finally chapter six presents the Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation of the study area.

CHAPTER – TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Related Literature Review

Different scholars both national and foreign have carried out various ethnographic studies in Nepal. Among them Bista is that indigenous pioneer, scholar who has given a lot of contribution to the field of ethnographic study. His book “People of Nepal” is one of the master pieces of literature on ethnography. He has discussed about lots of ethnic groups in his book.

Similarly, “Sabai Jatko Phulbari” (Bista, 2030) is another book of his, in which he has given the ethnography of different people. However, there is also lack of detailed information about the socio-economic status of Chamars as well as other untouchables.

2.2 The Chamars

There are very few scholarly studies, which have been made on untouchables in Nepal. But almost no sociological and anthropological research has been done by both native and foreign researchers about Chamars. Therefore, we have to rely on Indian literature as well as foreign researchers.

Bista (1967), a renowned anthropologist is also silent in his books about the Chamars. In his book, “Peoples of Nepal”, he says- *“Chamars have been charged of involving in dirty and musical works in the community and eating any animals’ carcasses, except for that of a dog, cat or horse. The Chamars play drums in the wedding band.*

The four volumes of “Mechi Dekhi Mahakali Samma” (1975) have given brief information about Chamar.

“About Fertility Behaviour of Chamar Caste of Dhanusa” (Mahato, 1993), which is a dissertation of degree has only drawn the fertility behaviour of Chamars but it has not given an ethnographic picture of Chamars.

“Chamar Jatiko Samajik Tatha Arthik Avastha of Saptari” (Koirala, 2003), which is a dissertation of degree has identified the socio-cultural factor of Chamar.

Similarly, “Socio-economic and Demographic Impact on Fertility of Chamar of Dhanusha” (Yadav, 2001), which is another dissertation of degree has correlated the age of women and duration of marriage which are found to be positively associated with fertility, where as age at marriage is found negatively associated with fertility. Similarly, child birth experience and desired number of children are positively related with fertility but the level of education and level of income are inversely associated with fertility. Occupational status of people has played significant role in lowering fertility.

Adhikari (2002), has written a thesis on “Poverty in the Chamar Community of the Siraha District”, which is a dissertation of degree, has portrayed the poverty of Chamar and presented the situation of the Chamars. In the research work, Adhikari has clarified that the Chamars are born in poverty, live in poverty and die in poverty.

Similarly, Subedi (1998), Shah (2005) and Gupta (2005) have prepared the theses about “The Socio-economic Impacts on the Chamars”, in which they have drawn the picture of changing condition of socio-economic impact of Chamars. During a long period of time the leather

workmen and village watchmen had become scarce and they gradually started to shift away from their traditional occupation. They now are depending mostly on agriculture and labour.

Ghurje (1969) has given some account about Chamar. He says in his book "Caste and Race in India", "The Chamars, leather workers of Maratha country have Ahir as one of their sub-caste. The Chamars of the central provinces have sub-caste named KorChamar, who are said to be the decendants of alliance between Chamar and Koris or weavers" (Ghurje, 1969).

Similarly, the book has also thrown some light on Chamars of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Bengal (Ghurje, 1969). The book has traced the context of Vedic age, Manusmriti and Rajatarangini about Chamar.

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

"The Chamars are hereditary leather workers, who cut and dry skins, make shoes, sandals and water bags and also do tanning where a Dhor population is not to be found. They are relatively well off economically and are rated the highest in the ritual hierarchy among the Harijan" (Patwardhan, 1973).

About the settlement of Chamars, Sherring (1974) says in his book "Hindu Tribes and Castes vol. II", Chamars cover nearly one-fourth of all the inhabitants of Bilaspur, where they have been settled for so many centuries that have no tradition of any other home."

About their physical features, the same writer says, “they possess active and well set figures marked in features than the easy and higher classes” (Sherring, 1974).

About their marriage ritual, Crooke (1974) says in the book “The Tribes and Castes of the North Western India”, he says- marriage is of two kinds- the Shadi, Charch, or Charhaua, which is the respectable form, and the Dola is used by poor people.

About their tanning system, the same writers say that the system of tanning pursued by the ordinary village Chamar is of the most primitive kind, the skins are placed in pit and covered with water, containing lime (Chuna) and impure carbonate of soda (Sajji); after ten days they are taken out and the hair removed with an iron Scraper (khurpi). They are again removed, sewn up in the form of a bag, which is again filled with the bark solution, and hang on a tree or stand. This process lasts for five days when the tanning is considered complete (Crooke, 1974).

Like this, different scholars have been written different books about Dalit. And the government has been practicing different legal provision and programs for Dalit and oppressed people to uplift the status of them. Not only the government sector but also different NGOs/INGOs, CBOs, NDC have also been doing work in different fields. But the programs and plans did not meet the special Dalit who are living in the grass root level. So, the situation of the Dalit (Chamar) community in Nepal is very pathetic. In the name of Dalit, the higher level people are getting benefited more and more and getting richer and richer day by day. Till now, in the Nepalese society, the Dalit community has been facing different discriminations. Some of them are as follows:

-) Prohibitions imposed up on them to enter public places.
-) Prohibitions on entering or leaving educational institution.
-) Restrictions on entering religious places and participating in various functions.
-) Denial of health and medical treatment and services.
-) Prohibitions on entering the houses of the higher castes groups.
-) Prevention from the use of public roads.
-) Prevention from the use of public wells.

CHAPTER – THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Rationale of the Selection of the Study Area

The study area is selected at Bishunpurwa VDC -5 of Bara district, which is situated in last easter part of Bara district and the name of the village is Bishunpurwa itself. Bara district lies in Central Development Region. The VDC has only one ward for study area i.e. 5. Which is situated as study area because of the following reasons;

- a. The socio-economic condition of Chamar of this VDC is measurable in comparison to other castes.
- b. Any researcher and government agencies did not studied about this community.
- c. This study area is easily reachable for the researcher to collect primary data for research.

3.2 Research Design

The study has been based on descriptive as well as analytical in nature. Being a descriptive work, it does not have any formal hypothesis regarding socio-economic status of Chamar in Bara district. The main focus of the study is to find out and analyze the socio-economic status of Chamar of Bishunpurwa VDC-5 through the description of institution, social organization and economic condition of Chamar people.

3.3 Nature and Source of Data

The study has been used both the primary data as well as secondary data. Primary data has been collected from the field survey through house hold survey, key informants interview, observation and focus group

discussion.

Secondary data has been collected through Government Report, NGOs/INGOs report, VDC office, and other available sources, books, relevant literature and journals about the Chamar. These secondary information are helpful to check the validity and reliability of empirical data. However, the study has been mostly based on the primary data.

3.4 Sampling Procedures

The total population of Bishunpurwa VDC has 4397 with 729 household. The total number of male is 2221 and the female is 2176.

There are 76 household in Chamar community. The total population of Chamar is 314, and male population is 197 and the female is 117. (CBS, 2001) lack of time and financial constraints only 45 household will be taken as a research. I took these household by random sampling.

3.5 Techniques and Tools of Data Collection

3.5.1 Techniques

One of the techniques of primary data collection is the household survey, it is helpful to get reliable and qualifiedly data about socio-economic background of Chamar, a household list was prepared and all the households, in which the household head has been acted as the main respondent has been surveyed, observed and interviewed.

3.5.2 Observation

Observation is also a major tool of data collection. The method of non-participant observation has been used in this study. This method has been used to observe their living style, housing style, art and technology, costumes, daily activities and so on.

3.5.3 Key Informant Interview

The primary data also has been collected from key informants using the semi or unstructured interview method. The local school teacher, intellectual person of village and senior citizens of the community are selected as key informant in order to collect information through interview about socio-economic condition of Chamar of the study area.

3.5.4 Focus Group Discussion

Qualitative information such as expressions capacity, decision making and implementation practice has been obtained from focus group discussion . Two focus group discussion have been made for this study involving approximately a dozen women & men in each group who involved in various activities of the program.

3.5.5 Tools

3.5.5.1 Questionnaire

Structured questionnaire has been prepared to generate the realistic and accurate data from the Chamar community. The respondents have been requested to fill up the questionnaire. In case of respondents who can not fill up the questionnaire, the questions are asked to the respondents and answer has been filled up by researcher himself to collect required data.

3.6 Data Analysis and Interpretation

After the processing and analyzing the data, they have been presented with the help of simple tabular form and simple statistical tools like percentage, ratio, average, table, figure, graphs etc. Family structure, housing pattern, and festival celebration have been descriptively analyzed, information obtained on marriage, education attainment, population composition, economic status, have been simply analyzed. Most of data has been calculated and tabulated with simple percentage.

CHAPTER – FOUR

SETTING OF THE STUDY AREA AND CULTURAL PATTERN OF CHAMAR COMMUNITY

4.1 The Bishunpurwa Village Development Committee: the Study Area

4.1.1 Physical Setting

The Bishunpurwa VDC is one of the 98 VDCs of the Bara district which is located in the middle part of this district and surrounded by three VDCs namely Daurwa in the east, Mallahi in the west and Bishunpurwa itself

It is a less developed village largely populated by poor ethnic caste groups like Brahminm, Chhetri, Tharu, Kami, Sarki, Mushar, Jhangar, Teli, Badi, Magar, etc. But the settlement of Chamar in this VDC is miserable among other caste groups. The Bishunpurwa VDC occupies approximately 14 Sq. km. area. There are 3 villages in totality in the VDC which are as follows;

Table No. 4.1
Number of Villages in the VDC

S. N.	Ward No.	Villages in the wards
1	1	Bishunpurwa, Dushad tole
2	2	Bishunpurwa Dushad tole
3	3	Bishunpurwa Dushad tole
4	4	Bishunpurwa Dushad tole
5	5	Bishnpurwa Chamar tole
6	6	Daurwa
7	7	Daurwa
8	8	Malahi
9	9	Daurwa

Source: CBS, 2010.

4.1.2 Climate and Soil

The Bishunpurwa VDC is a beautiful village, which is situated in terai area. The climate of this VDC is characterized by sub-tropical climate. In this area, different types of soil are found like sandy-loam, silty-loam, clay loam, etc. The rainfall (monsoon) in this district usually begins from the end of May and lasts for three to four months till August and sometimes till September. The land of this VDC is very much fertile.

4.1.3 Population Distribution

According to the CBS 2010, the total population of the Bishunpurwa VDC is 4397 with 729 households. Out of the total population male population is 2221 (50.51%) and female population is 2176 (49.49%). There are 9 wards and more often two or three villages are included in one ward in this VDC. The population and households of the Bishunpurwa VDC are shown in the table below.

Table No. 4.2
The Households and Population of the Bishunpurwa VDC

Ward No.	No. of Household	Population		
		Male	Female	Both
1	120	309	304	613
2	57	179	170	345
3	63	209	104	313
4	64	203	298	501
5	98	298	293	591
6	106	342	337	679
7	87	245	240	485
8	77	215	210	425
9	75	225	220	445
Total	729	2221	2176	4397

Source: CBS, 2010.

The above table shows that total population of the Bishunpurwa VDC is 5, 614. In this data, male population is higher than female population.

The total population of the study area belongs to different age-groups which is shown in the following table.

Table No. 4.3
Distribution of Population by Age-groups

Age	Population	Percent
Below-4 years	557	12.66
5-19	1580	35.93
20-59	2011	45.73
60 to above	249	5.66
Total	4397	100.00

Source: CBS, 2010.

In the above table out of the total population, 12.66 percent population belongs to below 4 years age groups, 35.93 percent population belongs to 5-19 years age group, 45.73 percent population belongs to 20-59 years age group and 5.66 percent population belongs to above 60 years age groups.

4.1.4 Caste and Ethnic Composition

The people of various castes and ethnic groups are living in this VDC which are as follows;

Table No .4.4
Caste Wise Distribution of the Population in the Study Area

S. N.	Caste	Total Population	Percent
1.	Brahmin	15	0.34
2.	Tharu	1810	41.16
3.	Kami	45	1.02
4.	Chamar/Harijan	314	7.14
5.	Unidentified dalit	18	0.40
6.	Maghi	192	4.36
7.	Kanu	25	0.57
8.	Yadav	80	1.81
9.	Kami	130	2.98
10.	Teli	190	4.32
11.	Hajam	46	0.82
12.	Sunuwar	66	0.50
13.	Musahar	76	1.72
14.	Kalwar	457	10.39
15.	Dushad	492	11.18
16.	Muslim	47	1.06
17.	Mallah	341	7.75
18.	Dom	16	0.36
19.	Koiri	16	0.36
20.	Kumhar	17	0.38
21.	Kurmi	32	0.72
22.	Others	18	0.40
	Total	4397	100.00

Source: CBS, 2010.

The above table shows that the populations of Tharu and Dushad in percent are 41.16 and 11.18. These two castes are the major castes group in the study area. Similarly, Kumbar, Kayastha, Badhae etc are castes in minority in the study area. The population percentages of Kalwar, Mallah are 7.75 and 7.14 percent respectively.

4.1.5 Occupation

The people of the Bishunpurwa VDC are engaged in various occupations. But, most of the people are engaged in agriculture. So, agriculture has been proved to be a major source of employment and income of the

households of this VDC. Besides this agricultural occupation, some people involve in non-agricultural economic activities which are shown in the following table.

Table No. 4.5
Distribution of Total Household According to Non-agricultural Economic Activities

No of Households			Types of Activity					
Total	Having economic activities	Not having economic activities	Total	Manufacturing	Trade/business	Transport	Service	Others
729	70	659	70	1	35	0	10	24

Source: CBS, 2010.

According to the above table, 10 households engage in service, 35 households engage in trade/business, 0 households engage in transport, 1 households engage in manufacturing and serving and 24 households engage in other non-agricultural economic activities.

4.1.6 Economy of the Villages

As in other rural parts of the country, the economic activities of the people of the Bishunpurwa VDC are based on agriculture. Almost the whole population is engaged in agricultural activities. The main agricultural products are rice, wheat, maize, potato, oil seeds etc. Besides agriculture animal husbandry is another source of income. The domestic animals such as buffalo, ox, goat, pigs, chicken etc are reared and sold as a means of income that supplements the agricultural profession.

Due to the unequal distribution of land more than half of the population does not produce enough crops to feed them for the whole year. The populations of 10 years of age and over who usually live by economic activity are as follows;

Table No. 4.6
Distribution of Population by Economic Active (Over 10 Years)

Total			Economically Active			Economically Inactive		
Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	female
3139	1586	1553	1649	1183	467	1489	403	1086

Source: CBS, 2010.

The above table shows that the economically active population is higher than the economically inactive population. The male population is higher than the female population in comparison.

4.1.7 Educational Status

In the Bishunpurwa VDC there are three primary level schools and one secondary level school which are running in good condition providing education. The literacy rate of this VDC is 42 percent.

The literacy status of six years and above population in the Bishunpurwa VDC is given below.

Table No. 4.7
Literacy Status of the Bishunpurwa V DC (above 6 years)

Gender	Literate	Percent	Illiterate	Percent	Total population	Total percent
Male	334	42.33	455	57.67	789	100
Female	252	35.64	455	64.36	707	100

Source: National Labor Academy, 2004.

The table shows that, above 6 years population consist of 42.33 literacy percent of male and 35.64 literacy percent of female. Similarly 57.67 percent of male and 64.36 percent of female are illiterate in this VDC.

4.1.8 Health Facilities

In the Bishunpurwa VDC, there is one sub-health post. People are getting health facilities from private allopathic medical practitioners, village health workers and traditional healers such as Guruwa, Biadawa, Dhami, Jhankri etc

According to the records of Prathamik Swastya Kendra, Bishunpurwa's major health problems found in the whole VDC include: Scabies, worms, diarrhea/dysentery, pneumonia, typhoid etc.

4.1.9 Transportation

The Bishunpurwa VDC is 36 km South from Mahendra Highway. So, transportation facility is not so good in this VDC. Inside the VDC area, all major roads are also graveled, but the problem is that there is not any regular transportation service. In the local area, tempo, rickshaw and bullock carts are important means of transportation sources which carry people and goods from one place to another.

4.2 The Cultural Pattern of Chamar Community

4.2.1 Origin

Scholars have not been able to come to a definite and clear conclusion regarding the origin of Chamar. Most of them believe that they come from India. Chamars are Indio-Aryan and they were migrated from India (Subedi, 1998). The term 'Chamar' or 'Chambhar', the name of the working caste on leather is derived from a Sanskrit word, meaning "working in leather". We can also say that the word "Chamar" has been taken from the word "Charmakar" where 'Charma' means leather and 'Kar' means worker. So, the 'Chamar' is derived from the word "Charmakar". Chamars are also called "Mochis". Now a days they are known as "Ram" also. Their mother tongue (Language) is "Maithili".

In Hinduism, Chamars and Sarkis have the same social and occupational status (Mahato, 1993). But Sarkis are hill caste/ethnic group and Chamars are Terai caste/ethnic group or indigenous.

The Bara district is not the place of origin of Chamar rather this group has come from the Siraha and Saptari districts. This community has come to the Bara district through internal migration due to the hand to mouth problem.

4.2.2 Population

In the study area, there are altogether 76 households of Chamar. The total population of the Chamar is 314 and the male population is 197 and female population is 117, which shows that the number of male is more than the number of female. The household size of the Chamar family is 4.13 percent. (Field Survey, 2010)

4.2.3 Physical Feature

About the physical features, "It posses active and well set figures are more brown than black in color, and less marked in features than the easy and higher classes".

4.2.4 Occupation

The traditional occupation of Chamar is associated with their leather work and the occupation of watch men is heredity one. But the situation has changed a lot. Very few of Chamars are involved in their traditional occupation.

Many of the young Chamars hate the leather work. Very few of them like to do the work but it is very difficult to get the work. Some Chamars still do the leather work but they do not take it as the main occupation. They cannot survive only by this work. Therefore, they are compelled to

change their occupation. The next occupation which is of the watch men is also difficult to get. Therefore, Chamars are changing their traditional occupation. Now a day they are interested to embrace the agricultural occupation.

4.2.5 Family and Social Organization

Family is a universal institution. It is found in each and every society. It fulfills emotional and physical needs of it's members. It is a biological unit composed of groups of persons and kin who are related through blood and marriage. It usually begins when the partners marry because marriage is the basic of family.

The family system is divided into three categories - nuclear, joint and extended. In the society of Chamar, it is found that they are either joint or extended categories of family. But now a day some changes are found in it due to change in economic status and diversification of occupation.

Like other patriarchal societies, the father (Chamar) is the functional head of the family and outer activities. After the death of the family head, his position is taken by his eldest son.

4.2.6 Settlement Pattern and Houses

The settlement pattern of Chamar in the Bishunpurwa VDC is compact in nature and most of the houses are built closely. But the clustering of houses has no particular direction as that of other ethnic groups like Tharus. Due to population increase in the settlement area which it presupposes the lack of land it is insufficient for the construction of new houses.

In the study area, there are 5 small clusters of Chamar houses. Most of houses are made up of bamboo walls and thatched roofs slopping towards

two sides. Most of the houses are found to be one strayed with small windows. All the members of the family, both married and unmarried, sleep in the same rooms.

As the size and shape of the houses are very small and narrow because of the poverty, separated sons are also found to be living together, cooking separately.

4.2.7 Food and Drinks

Most of the Chamars are non-vegetarian and their staple food is rice. They consume more fish, meat and alcohol than vegetable curry and bread. They eat the meat of chicken, pig, rabbit, pigeon, tortoise, buffalo etc. They used to eat even Caracac some 5-7 years ago. But nowadays, they doesn't eat Caracac because of awareness.

4.2.8 Dress and Ornaments

The Chamars of the study area do not wear traditional type of dresses. Patwardhan (1975) says about the dress and ornaments of Chamars of Rae pore "The dress of man is usually a single cloth, on end of which encircles their loins, and another their head, and the women wear little or no jewellery".

According to the key informants, the traditional types of dresses of male Chamars are Kurta (a type of shirt), Lungi or Dhoti (white cloth for wearing under the waist, but the cloth is not stitched). The Cmamar women's traditional dresses are choli and lahnga (a traditional type of long skirt).The women's traditional ornaments are silver or aluminum bangle, earrings, Nathiya (a silver bangle wearing in nose) etc.

Now a day, we cannot see the traditional types of dresses and ornaments in the study area. Today, shirt, trouser and coat are worn by old male

Chamars and pant, shirt, T-shirt; shoes are worn by young male Chamars. Blouse/Cholya, Dhoti, maxi, petticoat are worn by married women and mini skirt, T-shirt, maxi, suruwal-kurta are worn by unmarried girls. They wear ear rings, phuli, tilahari etc. Due to the poverty most of the ornaments are made of brass, silver, aluminum and plastics.

4.2.9 Language

The language of Chamar in the study area is Bhojpuri. It is different from the Nepali language. Most of the Chamar of the study area know how to speak their native language but they use the Nepali language to interact with other caste groups. The young Chamars like to speak Nepali more than their own language. The Chamars who have done inter-caste marriage, speak Bhojpuri home, but the Chamars who have not done inter-caste marriage, speak the Chamar language in the house.

4.2.10 Birth and Death Rite

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

Birth impurity is observed by Chamars as well. During the time of delivery they take help of a woman called sudeni (a local old woman who knows something about delivery, but special health care). The woman who gives birth to a baby is called Sutkeri and her family members observe birth impurity for 13 days. But sometimes, they observe only for 10 to 12 days. In the Chamar society, the birth of a son is often higher than a daughter. In the Chamar community they celebrate other ceremonies like Chhait (sixth day ceremony), Nwaran (Name giving ceremony), Bhat Khwai (Food giving ceremony).

When a person die the dead body is cremated in any selected area or generally at the side of the river called Bara by sons and other close relatives. At that time, the dead body is tied with cloth. All the relatives and close neighbors participate the funeral procession. If the dead person is old or adult, he/she is burned but if the dead person is a boy or child he/she is buried. The burning process of corpse is initiated by his/her sons and some other relatives too. They shave their head and after finishing the burning process, all the participants of the funeral procession take bath in the river.

The family members and clan members associated with deceased are also ritually impure. They are not allowed to take salt and mustard oil for 12 days. At the mother's death, sons do not take milk at the father's death, sons do not take curd. No pooja (worship) or any religious function can be performed during those days. Death impurity in the Chamar society is performed by son-in-law (Jwain) or nephew (Bhanja).

4.2.11 Marriage

Marriage is a socially recognized institution for having legitimate sexual relationships between a man and a woman for the protection, Upbringing, Maintenance and socialization of the children through establishing a family. It is a strong institution in Hindu society and perhaps in every other society. The marriage system of Chamar is similar to other caste groups like chhetri or Brahmin. In the Chamar society especially three types of marriage system are in practice.

- (a) Magi Bibaha (Arranging marriage)
- (b) Mankhusi bibaha or bhagi bibaha (love marriage)
- (c) Jari Bibaha (compensation Marriage)

4.2.12 Religion and Festivals

Religion is a part of culture. Each and every society of the world does have its own religious tradition. The religion of every ethnic group is interwoven with their religious processes. Chamars are rigid in their religious belief. Ghurye (1969) says, "The Chamars of Bihar are more orthodox in the matter of religion than their eastern brethren, some of them having advanced so far in the direction as to employ Maithali Brahmins for the worship of the regular Hindu gods."

Although Chamars of the Madesha VDC are rigid in the matter of religion, they are not as orthodox as Indian Chamars. Chamars of the study area strongly say that they are Hindus. They worship Hindu gods and goddesses like Siva, Krishna, Ram, Vishnu, Durga, Laxmi, Kali etc. They also worship their own Kul Dewata (deities). They worship their deities in the night of Nawami, the greatest festival of Hindus Dashain. They put Dhoja (pieces of cloth) on the main pole of the house. It is put in the up stairs. They think that pleasure and misery are directly related with the religion.

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

Chamars of the Bishunpurwa VDC celebrate various festivals as other Hindus do. Dashain, Tihar, Tij, Maghe Sakranti, are the main festivals of Chamars in the study area.

CHAPTER - FIVE

SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

This chapter Provides socio-economic and demodgraphic information of the Chamar of the Bishunpurwa VDC.

5.1 Demographic Characteristics

5.1.1 Household and Family Size

The demographic features of sampled respondent's households of charmers of the Bishunpurwa VDC are given in the table.

Table No. 5.1

Household and family size

No. of HHS	Total Population	Total male	Percent	Total female	Percent	Average family size of HHS
45	285	152	53.33	133	46.67	6.33

Source: Field Survey, 2010.

The total population of the Chamars in the sampled households in the Bishunpurwa VDC is 285. Out of it, 152 (53.33%) were males and 133 (46.67%) females, which shows that the number of male is higher than the female. The average family size is 33 which is greaten than 5.20, the average family size of the Bara district in 2004. This large family size is due to the large extended family size.

5.1.2 Age and Sex Composition

The population distribution of the Chamar in the Bishunpurwa VDC is given in table 5.2.

Table No. 5.2
The Population Distribution of the Chamars in the Bishunpurwa VDC, on the Basis of Age and Sex Composition

Age Group	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
0-9	41	26.97	40	30.07	81	28.42
10-14	23	15.13	15	11.27	38	13.33
15-59	76	50.00	64	48.12	140	49.12
60 and above	12	7.89	14	10.52	26	9.12
Total	152	100.00	133	100.00	285	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2010.

The table shows the distribution of population by age and sex groups. The age group (15-59) accounts highest with the proportion 49.12 percent of the total population (50% male and 48.12% female). The 60 and above group has the lowest proportion 9.12 percent of the total population (male 8.00% and female 10.20%). Likewise, (0-9) and (10-14) age groups rank second and third having 28.42 percent (26.97% male and 30.07% female) and 13.33 percent (15.13 male and 11.27 female) of total respectively.

5.1.3. Structure of Family

Father is the head of the family and makes household decision. The family fulfills various needs of the members. In addition, it performs several function inducing continuity, integration and change in the society.

It is believed that the majority of family in Nepal is joint. The study shows that the joint and the nuclear families are found in the Chamar's Society. The nuclear family consists of married couple and their unmarried children, and Joint family is a group of brothers' family living together in which there is a joint living space and property.

Table No. 5.3
Respondents by Family Structure

Family structure	Respondents	
	No	Percentage
Nuclear	13	28.89
Joint/Extended	32	71.11
Total	45	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2010.

The above table shows that the family is categorized into two types: nuclear and joint/extended. Out of the total households, 11.11 percent Chamars live in joint/extended family and 28.89 percent in nuclear. The joint/extended family is higher than the nuclear family in the Chamar community.

5.2 Social Status

5.2.1 Respondents by the Language Spoken

One of the major characteristics of the Dalit Caste group is their mother tongue. The Chamars also have their own mother tongue. In the study area, most of the Chamars speak their mother language.

Table No. 5.4
Respondents by Their Mother Tongue

Language	Respondents	
	No	Percentage
Mother tongue/Bhojpuri	40	88.85
Nepali	50	11.11
Total	45	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2010

The above table shows that most of the Chamars, 40(88.89%) speak mother tongue and 5(11.11%) of respondents only speaks the Nepali

language. Though recently the Chamars feel more comfortable speaking the Nepali language in the process of their communication, the impact of modernization has deeply affected in terms of language. Chamars, who speak mother tongue among themselves also speak other language i.e. Nepali to deal with their owners.

5.2.2 Respondents by Their Costumes

Regarding the traditional costumes of the Chamars, the males wear Kurta (a type of shirt, lung or Dhoti (white cloths) for wearing under the waist, but the cloth is not sewed). The Chamar women traditional dresses are choli and lahnga (a traditional type of long scort).

There days male Chamars have begun to wear the modern clothes seen as shirts, plants, waist coats, and the married Chamar women have begun to wear blouse/chalya maxi, petticoat. Similarly the unmarried Chamar girls wear miniskirts, t-shirt, maxi, suruwal-kurta etc about which the table 5.5 shows.

Table No. 5.5
Respondents by Their Costumes

Customs	Respondents	
	No	Percentage
Traditional	15	33.33
Modern	30	66.67
Total	45	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2010.

The above table shows that most of the Chamars, wear modern costumes. Among the respondents, 30 (66.67%) respondents wear modern costumes and 15(33.33%) wear traditional costumes at ones which show that the socioeconomic life style of the Chamars is rapidly changing.

5.2.3 Respondent by Age at Marriage

Marriage is one of the most important parts of life. So, it is meaningful for the whole life. Marriage is an institution with admits man and woman to lead a family life. In the Hindu culture there are various types of marriage. The CHAMARs are also not far from these marriage variations.

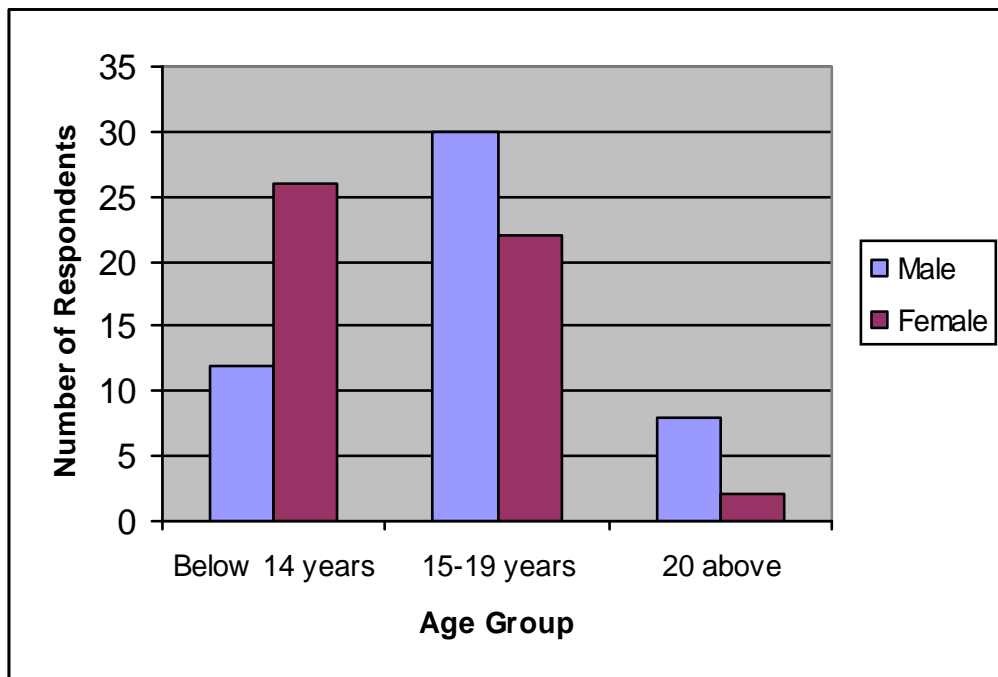
Basically the researcher found the arranged marriage in the Chamar community. Love marriage is found in rare cases. Divorce and widow marriage are not found in the study area. Inter-caste marriage is prohibited. The Chamar community generally follows the customs of the marriage by agreement. The following table shows the age at marriage of the respondent.

Table No. 5.6
Age at Marriage of the Respondents

Age at marriage	Respondents			
	Male	Percent	Female	Percent
Below 14 years	15	33.33	25	55.56
15-19 years	25	55.56	18	40.00
20 above	5	11.11	2	4.44
Total	45	100.00	45	100.00

Source: field Survey, 2010

Fig No. 5.1
Age at Marriage of the Respondents



The table and figure show that the maximum 25 (55.56%) females get married under 14 years whereas 15 (33.33%) males get married under 14 years. Similarly, 18 (40%) females get married under 19 years whereas 25 (55.56%) males get married in the same age. Only 2(4.44%) females and 5 (11.11%) males get married after 20 years.

Thus, marriage system of the female Chamar begins bearing a child before the age of 20 years. Early marriage invites early pregnancy and high fertility.

5.2.4 Respondent's Preference for the Child

In Nepalese context, son plays a vital role in the family. He becomes the owner of the property after his father/mother's death. Due to the lack of awareness and education, Nepalese people have taken the son as the insurance in old age and as a means to continue the generation. The Chamar communities are not free from this type of thinking. Rather, it is found very rigid in the context which is shown in the table 5.7 below.

Table No.5.7

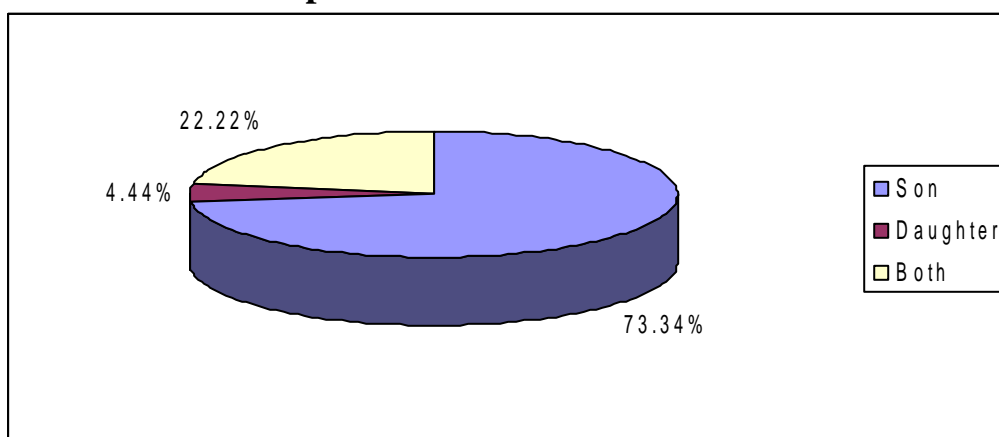
Respondent's Preference for the Child

Child Preference	Respondents	
	No	Percent
Son	33	73.34
Daughter	2	4.44
Both	10	22.22
Total	45	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2010

Fig. No. 5.2

Respondent's Preference for the Child



The above table and figure show that out of the total respondents, 33 (73.34) prefer son, 2(4.44%) prefer daughter and 10(22.22%) prefer both (son and daughter). The above condition shows that there exists the domination of female in the Chamar society.

5.2.5 Perception of Respondents on Causes of Illness and Preference of Treatment.

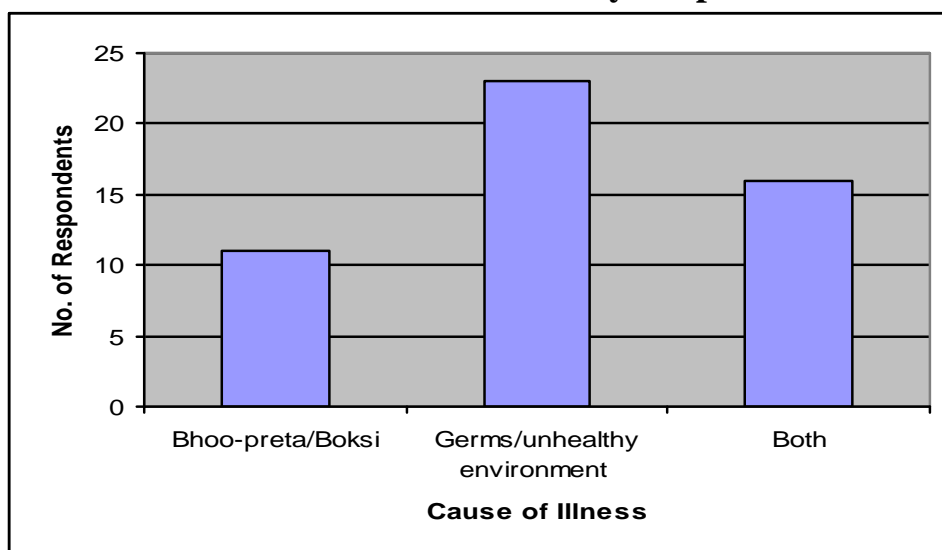
The respondents have indicated the causes of illness differently which are given in the following table.

Table No. 5.8
Cause of Illness as Perceived by Respondents

Causes	Respondents	
	No	Percentage
Bhoot-preta/Boksi	15	33.33
Germs/unhealthy environment	18	40.00
Both	12	26.67
Total	45	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2010.

Fig. No. 5.3
Cause of Illness as Perceived by Respondents



All respondents were asked about the causes of illness. Among them, 15(33.33%) respondents replied. Bhoot-preta/Boksi as the main cause of illness. Similarly 18(40.00%) believed germs as the main cause of illness. 12(26.67%) respondents showed their belief on both.

The above table and fig. show that the Chamars have strong belief on supernatural power (such as Bhoot-preta/Boksi) as the cause of illness. But at the same time it is also found that there is a grate change in cognitive pattern of Chamars. Since 27(60%) respondents didn't accept the influence of supernatural power regarding the cause of illness, the change in belief system is brought out by interaction with other communities. And the literacy of the respondents seems to play an important role.

The respondents opined differently when asked about the preference of treatment.

Table No. 5.9
Preference of Treatment by Respondents

Preference	Respondents	
	No	Percent
Guruwa, Indigenous Medicines Healers	28	62.22
Doctors/Health practitioners	17	37.78
Total	45	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2010.

All the respondents were asked where they get their patients treated when they get sick. 28(62.22%) respondents informed that they consult the Guruwa was and indigenous healers at first. Only 17(37%) respondents choose health post, hospital and doctors for their treatment.

The table gives clear information that the role of indigenous healers in the Chamar community is still decisive and significant because 62.22 percent respondents showed their first preference to indigenous healers. The attraction towards health post, hospital and doctors is also found but the number is low.

5.2.6 Respondents' at Decision Making

Decision making is a important matter in every house hold. So, the Chamar household is not an exception. As in most of the Nepali households, the decision is made by the male head of the family but in the study area the decisions of the family were made by female as well.

Table No. 5.10

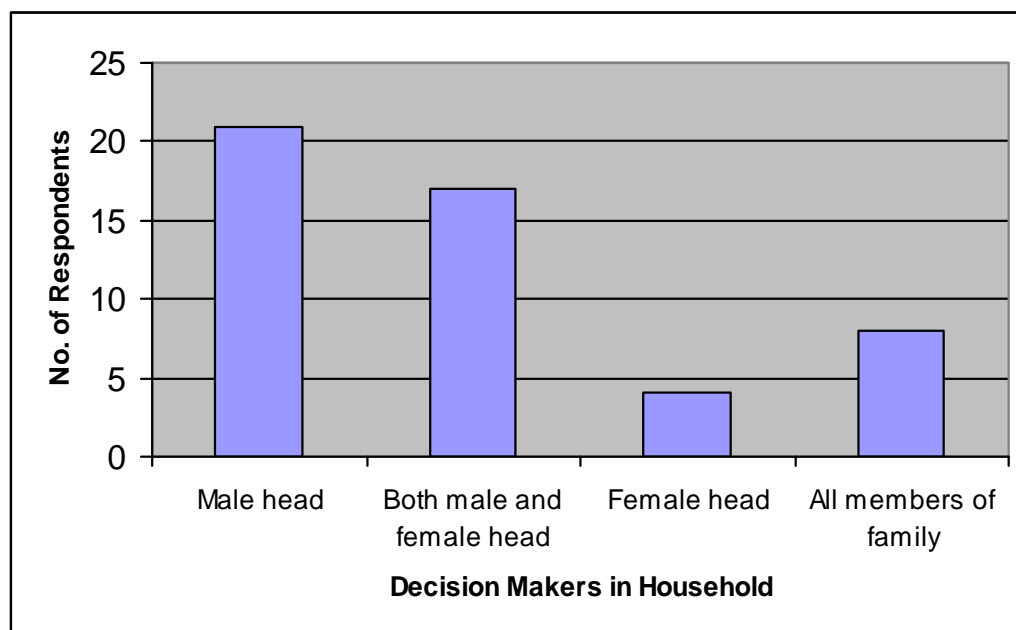
Decision Making in the Chamar Community

Decision Maker	Respondents	
	No	percent
Male head	22	48.89
Both male and female head	15	33.33
Female head	3	6.67
All members of family	5	11.11
Total	45	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2010.

Fig. No. 5.4

Decision Making in Chamar Community



Though most of the decision making in the family in the study area is made by male i.e. 48.89 percent, the female headed households are also in substantial number which is 6.67 percent. Both male and female cover 33.33 percent in the study area in making family decision. Similarly,

11.11 percent family decision is made by all the members of the family. Thus, we find out that most of decisions are made by the males in the households of the study area and the females remain very passive.

5.3 Economic Status

5.3.1 Occupational Status of Respondents

The people of the Bishunpurwa VDC are engaged in various occupations. But the Chamars of this VDC are mostly engaged in daily wage labour, agriculture and others. The primary occupational status of respondents in the study area is shown in the following table.

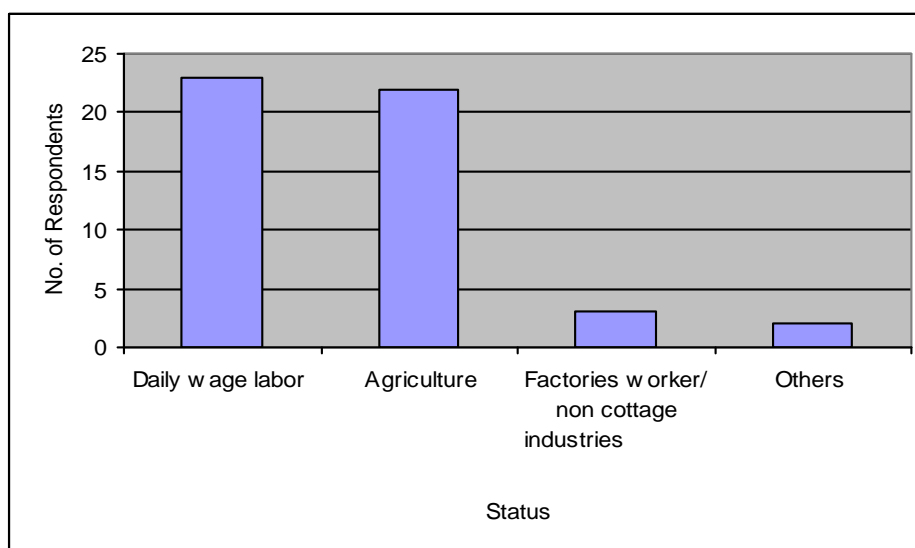
Table No. 5.11
Primary Occupational Status of the Respondents

Occupation	Respondents	
	No	Percentage
Daily wage labor	22	48.85
Agriculture	18	40.00
Factories worker/ non cottage industries	3	6.67
Others	2	4.44
Total	45	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2010.

Fig. No. 5.5

Primary Occupation Status of the Respondents



The table and figure present that most of 22(48.85%) Chamars are engaged in wage labour and it is itself a major occupation 18(40%) respondents' main source of family income is agriculture. 3(6.67%) are engaged in factories and 2(4.44%) are engaged in others.

The Chamars lead their livelihood through many secondary activities, which are presented in the following table.

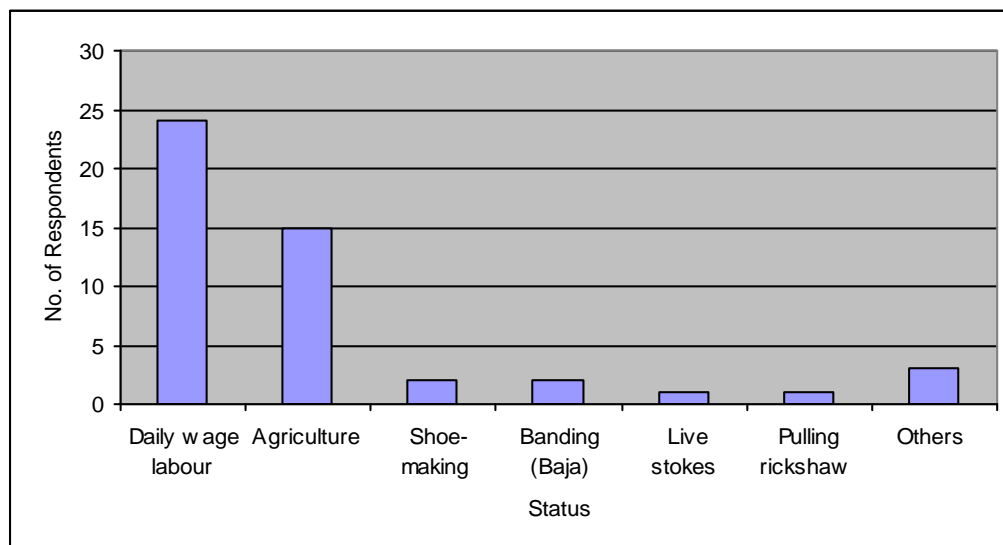
Table No. 5.12
Source of Secondary Occupational Status

Occupation	Respondents	
	No	Percentage
Daily wage labour	20	44.44
Agriculture	13	28.85
Shoe- making	2	4.44
Banding (Baja)	2	4.44
Live stokes	1	2.22
Pulling rickshaw	3	6.67
Others	4	8.85
Total	45	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2010.

Fig. No. 5.6

Source of Secondary Occupational Status



The table and figure show that out of 45 respondents 20(44.44%) take Daily wage labour as the secondary occupational source, 13(28.89%) take family agriculture, 2(4%) take livestock, 2(4.44%) take factories, 2(2.22%) take bonding, 3(6.67%) pull ricksha and the remaining 4(8.89%) are engaged in others.

5.3.2 Land Ownership

Agriculture is the main source of the Nepalese people for their livelihood. But most of the Chamars are landless. So the agricultural production is not sufficient for the fulfillment of their needs.

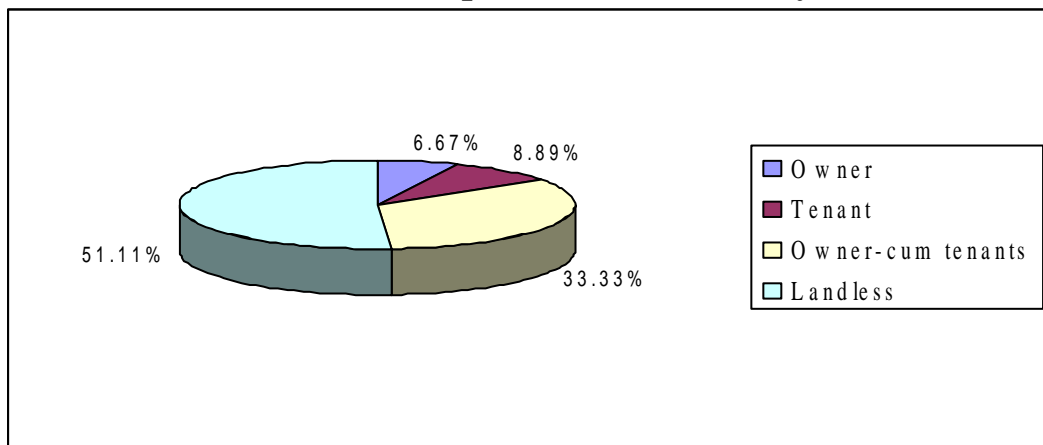
Generally, in the study area, there are three types of cultivators. They are owner, owner-cum tenants and tenants about which the following table shows.

Table No. 5.13
Land Ownership Pattern in the Study Area

Types of tenure	Respondents	
	No	Percent
Owner	3	6.67
Tenant	4	8.89
Owner-cum tenants	15	33.33
Landless	23	51.11
Total	45	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2010.

Fig. No. 5.7
Land Ownership Pattern in the Study Area



The tenants are those who have not their own land but they cultivate the land of others. The owner-cum tenants are those who have very small area of their own land and have rented land. The landless are those who have not their own land for cultivation.

The owner operators are recognized as an important class and which has various benefit from economic point of view. In the study area, out of total respondents, 3(6.67%) are owners, 4(8.89%) are tenants, 15(33.33%) are owner com tenants and the remaining 23(51.11%) are landless.

5.3.3 Respondents by Adequacy of Food Grain

During the study period, it was tried to find out whether the annual production of food grain was sufficient to meet the daily requirement of one year or not. The farming land is being divided into small pieces where as the population is growing rapidly. Most of the Chamars are landless. So, they haven't sufficient food for daily requirement which the table 5.14 shows.

Table No. 5.14

**Adequacy of Food Grain Among the Chamars of the Bishunpurwa
VDC**

Group	Respondents	
	No	Percent
Food sufficiency	7	15.56
Food deficient	38	84.44
Total	45	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2010.

The table shows that only 7(15.56%) households produce enough grain from farming and remaining 38(84.44%) house holds have to depend on other sources. This shows that most of the people do not have enough food grain. Thus, people suffer from many kinds of diseases as well as malnutrition. The very poor people are compelled to knock the door of other relatively rich households for their livelihood.

5.3.4 Housing Conditions of the Chamars

The Chamars are seen to have lived in closely packed communities. Their houses are joined to each other. Their social activities like pujas, marriage and other functions are indicative of their community and unity. Chamars mostly live in one story huts with bamboo walls and thatched roofs. Houses are made on both sides with thatched roofs. The following table shows their housing condition.

Table No. 5.15
Housing Condition of the Respondents

House Types	Respondents	
	No	Percent
Kachcha (Roof of Tile or Tin)	6	13.33
Phush (Thatched roof)	39	86.67
Total	45	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2010

The table shows that most of the respondents have phush type and the number of it is house 39 (86.67%). Only 6(13.33%) of them seemed to be kachcha houses.

The settlement pattern of the Chamars is not scattered, instead their houses are clustered in a certain area. They use either a corner of their land or uncultivated land for garbage management.

5.3.5 Respondents Source of Fuel

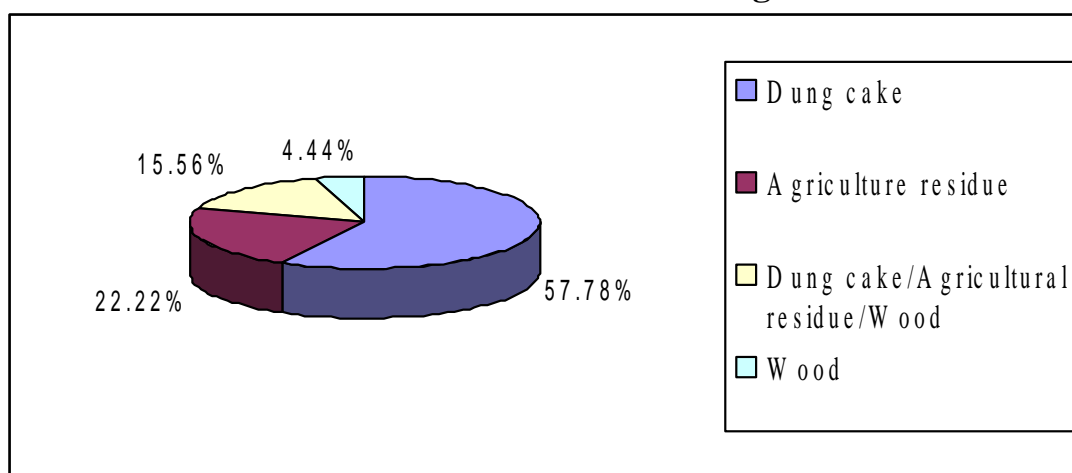
Biomass is a source of energy which mainly consists of fuel wood, agriculture residues and animal dung. Biomass fuel accounts the highest energy consumption in Nepal. The commercial form the energy such as electricity, fossil fuels etc is not very significant. In the study area, dung cake and agriculture residue are seen as the major sources of cooking and heating.

Table No. 5.16
Sources of Fuel for Cooking

Source of Fuel	Respondents	
	No	Percent
Dung cake	26	57.78
Agriculture residue	10	22.22
Dung cake/Agricultural residue/Wood	7	15.56
Wood	2	4.44
Total	45	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2010.

Fig. No. 5.8
Sources of Fuel for Cooking



Above table and figure show that the entire households rely on Dung cake, Agriculture residue, and wood as a source of energy. Among the respondents 26(57.78%) rely on Dung cake, 10 (22.22%) rely on agriculture residue, 7(15.56%) households rely on Dung Cake/Agriculture residue/wood and 2 (4.44%) rely on wood for their major source of energy in cooking, heating lighting etc. Due to poverty, they haven't used modern form of energy like kerosene and electricity.

5.3.6 Respondents' Water Sources

Water is essential for humans to survive. Most of the Nepalese people are away from safe drinking water. In the study area, most of the Chamar use tube-well as the main source of drinking water. There is no modern tap.

The Chamars in the study area don't use toilet. They either use open area or bank of river/stream. The main cause of this is that many of them are landless and have poor economic condition.

5.3.7 Literacy Status of the Respondents

For every one primary education is basic human needs education is the basic foundation and a must for development; lack of education may obstruct the development process of the country.

Table No. 5.17

Literacy of the Respondents

Literacy	Respondents	
	No	Percent
Literate	16	35.56
Illiterate	29	64.44
Total	45	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2010.

The table shows that out of 45 respondents 16 (35.56%) respondents are literate where as the remaining 29 (64.44%) respondents can neither read nor write.

5.3.8 Educational Status of the Chamars

Education is the measurement of socio-economic development of community and nation. It is the major weapon to uplift the poor condition of the weak people of any society. It not only helps the individual for

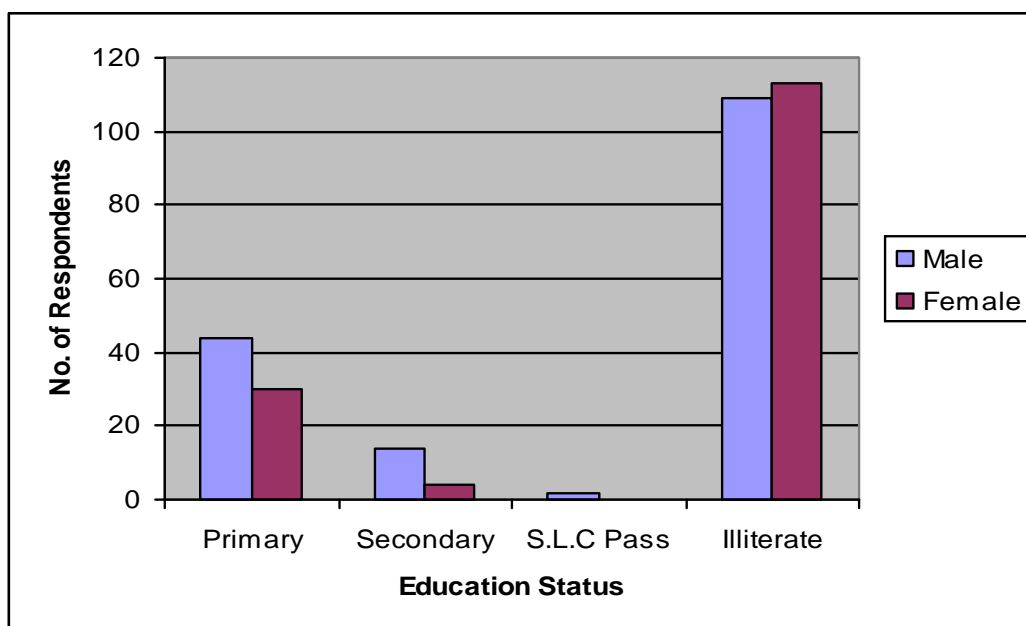
personal development but also provides the knowledge and the skill that gravitate the community towards participation in nation building efforts. On the other hand most of the aged Chamars are uneducated and do not understand that value of education.

Table No. 5.18
Educational Status of the Chamars

Education	Respondents					
	Male	Percent	Female	Percent	Total	Percent
Primary	40	26.33	25	18.78	65	22.80
Secondary	12	7.89	3	2.25	15	5.26
S.L.C Pass	2	1.31	0	0	2	0.70
Illiterate	98	64.47	105	78.94	203	71.22
Total	152	100.00	133	100.00	285	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2010.

Fig. No. 5.9
Educational Status of the Chamars



The table and figure show the educational attainment of the Chamar community of study area. Out of the total population 22.80 percent have been attaining primary education (26.33% male and 18.78% female). Similarly, 5.26 percent have been attaining secondary education (7.89% male and 2.72% female). Only 0.70 percent Chamars have passed the S.L.C. 1.31% male and 0% female). No Chamar student has achieved the higher education.

5.3.9 Respondents by Income Sources

Nepal is predominantly an agricultural country. Most of the people in Nepal are primarily engaged in agriculture. So, the people of Bishunpurwa are not exception. But most of the Chamars of Bishunpurwa VDC are involved in Daily wage labour and their family income sources are daily wage labour.

Table No. 5.19
Income Sources of Respondents

Income Source	Respondents	
	No.	Percentage
Daily wage labour	18	40
Agricultural	13	28.89
Factories worker	3	6.67
Banding	2	4.44
Shoe- making	2	4.44
Pulling Riksha	3	6.67
Others(Specify) migrated to India in search of work	4	8.89
Total	45	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2010.

Above table shows that most of the Chamar people are engaged in daily wage labour to fulfill their family's basic needs. Out of 45 respondents,

18(40%) respondents family income sources is daily wage labours and daily wage labour itself is taken as the majour occupation, 13(28.89%) respondents main source of family income is agriculture, 3 (6.67%) respondents main source of family income is factories worker, 2 (4.44%) respondents main source of family income is Shoe- making, 3(6.67%) respondents main source of family income is pulling riksha and remaining 4(8.89%) respondents main source of family income is seemed to have migrate India in search of work.

Some years ago, the Chamar parents were not interested to send their children to school the main reasons behind it are their high illiteracy; lack of knowledge and poor economic condition. But now a days the Chamars of younger generation know that education can play the vital rote in their over all development. So, there is a considerable increment of interest in education in the Chamar community.

Though the Chamars are socially, economically and politically backward, in the study area, no one of the respondents is interested to participate in politics. This is all because they don't know the rights of citization.

In the context of knowledge about HIV/AIDs, Out of the total respondents, 30 (66.67%) respondents have knowledge about HIV/AIDS and 15(33.33%) haven't any knowledge about it.

The Chamars practice their own tribal religion which consists of worshipping a number of spirits and some Hindu Gods such as Shiva, Krishna, Ram, Laxmi, Kali etc. Similarly, the Chamars have their own Kuldevata, an ancestral deity, installed in their family house.

The Chamars celebrate many kinds of feast and festivals as the other Nepalese people. Singing dancing, eating, drinking are the main activities

in festivals. The main festivals of the Chamar are Dashain, Tihar, Krishna Asthami, Maghe Sangranti, Holi, Ram Nawami, Tij etc.

The main problem faced by them is that they are landless. Due to landlessness and poverty, they don't use toilet. They have not received any grants from the government. They want that the government should make toilets and provide them with loan without any interest.

Shoe-making (Leather work), the traditional occupation of Chamars, is in extinction of Bishunpurwa VDC. Many years ago majority of Chamars are involved in shoe-making (Leather work). But nowadays they are leaving their tradition profession due to lack of skilled training, rapid rate of industrialization and low availability of raw materials. Those people who have practiced their traditional profession, they haven't sufficient to meet their daily requirement to adopt that profession. So, they are escaping/leaving that job.

In Nepal, the nature of exclusion and discrimination against Dalit (Chamar) differs with the level of awareness in society, and socio-economic and cultural status. It also differs according to the strength of the state legal and regulatory mechanism. The attitude of society towards them is very pathetic in Bishunpurwa VDC. Some of them are as follows:

-) They use to wash dishes for owner and upper classes.
-) Prohibitions imposed up on them to enter public places.
-) Restriction on entering religious places and participating in various functions.
-) Prohibitions on entering the house of the higher caste groups.
-) Prevention from the use of public wells.

CHAPTER – SIX

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Summary

Nepal is ecologically and culturally a heterogeneous country from southern belt of Terai to Northern high range of the Himalyas. People of different regions have different life style and culture. But in spite of it, people have strong feelings of nationality. Though people belong to different races, castes and different customs and traditions, they live under one unity, which comes to be known as Nepali culture.

Nepali society is caste hierarchical. It has been characterized by astrictive hierarchy of pollution and purity. Among all castes of Bishunpurwa, Chamar is an important schedule caste, known as Ram also. They are Indo-Aryan and migrated from India. In India, they are known as Harijan and eat carcasses in Indian society. They all have low social status. They have been neglected in all aspects of social life

The purpose of the study was to find out the socio-economic condition of Chamar in the Bishunpurwa VDC of the Bara district. The basic objective of the study was to access their living standard, social condition and problems and to analyze the result in a way which can bring a positive change in their life.

To fulfill the objectives, 45 houses were chosen as sample and one senior person from each household was interviewed with an objective of getting key information. The data collected from the study covered various aspects of their life such as household size, educational status, occupation etc. The summary of the data has been presented as given below.

Among the total population of sampled households, the population of male was found to be slightly greater than that of female. The majority of the people belonged to active age group (15 – 59). So, the households depend on their active age group members for livelihood.

The Chamars are backward in educational sector as well. Most of them are illiterate. Only 28.78 percent people are literate in the study area which is very low in comparison to higher castes. In addition to it, females are too backward in education than the males. Only, 21.06 percent of females are literate of the total Chamar population.

Occupation is a major aspect that determines economic condition of a person. Most of the Chamars in Bishunpurwa are found to be dependent on wage labour and agriculture. They can not make a good living even through the occupation. So, many others have also adopted other occupations such as pulling riksha, banding etc.

Extended or joint family had been a tradition in the Nepalese society, but nuclear or small family is getting popular now a day. Same is the condition in the Chamer community. Although, most of the Chamars have joint family, nuclear family is getting popular in the Chamer community these days. Not only family structure but other traditional cultures, rites, customs are also being modified along with the pace of modernization.

Most of the Chamars get married at their early age. Traditional marriage is preferred in their community. However, youngsters prefer to follow modern styles of marriage. Only 11.11 percent male and 4.44 percent female get married at proper age. It is because of the lack of knowledge and awareness.

They follow Hinduism and hence they worship Gods and Goddesses and. They celebrate the major Hindu festivals like Dashain, Tihar, Chhaiti etc. All kinds of religious ceremonies including birth and death are observed by the Chamars according to their tradition and customs. They perform birth and death ceremony in their own way. The most of the respondents were found to give preference to son than daughter.

Regarding the language, they have their own language named Maithali, but new generations want to speak the Nepali language also.

In the case of dress, the old Chamars wear traditional type of dress. The younger people however are partially influenced by modern fashion.

On the whole, although the young generation is leading towards new types of occupation and modernization, old generation still is involved in traditional occupation. Normally, they are not allowed to touch, the so-called upper caste people. We can say that this kind of domination and behaviour by the so called upper caste people on them is a major cause of their degrading condition in society.

6.2 Conclusion

In general, some of the conclusions found from the study area as follows;

- © The economic condition of the Chamars of Bishunpurwa is very poor. The majority of Chamars in the VDC consist of the landless, the marginalized or small farmers, who do not have enough land or other means of production for survival. They have to knock the doors of others for their livelihood. Landlessness is the main cause of the poverty.
- © The literacy percent of the Chamars are very low and they hardly complete their schooling. The higher education attended person is nil in the Chamar community. Due to inadquacy of

higher education, they are innocent and unaware of their right as citizens.

- © They practise diverse cultural activities; they practise their religion, customs, traditions and their social values in a strong and rigid manner. They have strong belief on their tradition. In the present time, due to impact of urbanization and modernization, their cultural practices are being influenced by other cultures.
- © They celebrate different feasts and festivals. In the mean-time, the unproductive expenses are done in the name of festivals, religion and social customs. So, such ceremonial customs increase their poverty.
- © The Chamars have been subjected to economic exploitation, oppression and poverty. They are still being exploited by the so called non Dalits in many ways; opportunity, status, education etc.
- © Early marriage, unplanned family, economic disability, illiteracy, lack of decision making power, simplicity, landlessness, exploitation, conventional approach in agriculture are the main constraints for the socio-economic development of the Chamars of the Bishunpurwa VDC.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX-I

HOUSEHOLD SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Name of Respondents: _____ Date: _____
Age: _____ Marital status: Married () Unmarried ()
Sex: _____ Diverse () Separated ()
Address (VDC): _____ Education background: _____
Present occupation: _____

2. Family Roster:

S.N.	Age Group	Male	Female	Total
1.	0 - 4			
2.	0 - 9			
3.	10 - 14			
4.	15 - 59			
5.	60 above			

3. Educational Attainment of family members:

S.N.	Educational level	Male	Female	Total
1.	Primary			
2.	Secondary			
3.	S.L.C.			
4.	Above S.L.C.			
5.	Illiterate			

4. What was your age at marriage?
----- age.
5. Source of drinking water.
a) Tub well () b) Well () c) Stream/cannel ()
d) Tap ()
6. Do you have toilet?
a) Yes () b) ()

17. What is your secondary occupation?
- a) Farming () b) Wage labor ()
- c) Service () d) Animal husbandry ()
- d) Business () e) Skill ()
- f) Shoe-making () g) Others(Specify).....
18. What is the in come source of your family?
- a) Farming () b) Daily wage labour/factory worker ()
- c) Service () d) Bending ()
- d) Business () e) Pulling Rickshaw ()
- f) Shoe-making () g) others (Specify).....
19. Livestock information.
- a) Cow/Oxen () b) Buffalo ()
- c) Got/Sheep () d) Pig()
- e) Hen () f) Others (Specify).....
20. What is your land tenures status?
- a) Own land () b) Owner ()
- c) Tenant () d) Owner cum tenant ()
- e) Landless ()
21. How much land do you have cultivated?
- a) Bigha() b) Katha ()
- c) Dhur () d) Others(Specify).....
22. Do you have food sufficiency during the year?
- a) Yes () b) No ()
- 22.a) If no,how do you manage?
-

3. Participation of politics.

Level	Participation		Duration
	Male	Female	
Ward Level			
VDC Level			
DDC			

24. Knowledge about development.
a) Yes () b) No ()
25. How much your annual average income?

26. Loan transaction.
a) Formal () b) Informal sectoral ()
27. Who is your decision maker of your family?
a) Male head () b) Female head ()
c) Both Male & female () d) All members of family ()
28. What is the source of fuel for cooking of your family?

Source of fuel	Percentage
Wood	
Kerosen	
Dung cake	
Agriculture residues	
Others	

29. Some information about festivals, ceremonies and rituals.

30. What type of festivals do you celebrate a year?

S.N.	Name of festivals	Worshipping of God
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

31. How much is your annual average expenditure?

CHECKLIST

1. When and where did you forefather come in village?
 2. What is the period of mourning?
 3. What types of practice do you followed for the corpse?
 a) Burial () b) Cremation () c) Both ()
 4. Do you have your own traditional dress pattern?
 a) Yes() b) No()
 5. Which is the mother tongue?
 a) Maithali () b) Bhojpuri () c) Others (Specify).....
 6. Do you have own food habit?
 a) Yes () b) No ()
 7. Any other culture and tradition in your community?
 a) Yes () b) No ()
 8. Have you face any social discrimination?
 a) Yes () b) No ()
 - 8.a) If yes which class people.
 a) Brahman () b) Chhettri() c) Others(Specify).....
 9. Indicate the types of customs, which is being practice in your family during birth, marriage and death ceremonies.
 10. Have you planned any scheme to improve your economic condition?
 11. What are the socio-economic changing factors of CHAMAR community?
-

12. What types of program do you wish government should implement for the up liftment of your community?

S.N.	Problems	Reasons	Needs
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

**APPENDIX-II
PHOTOS**



THE YOUNG CHAMAR PULLING RICKSHAW OF THE STUDY AREA



THE CHAMAR PERFORMING DEATH RITUAL



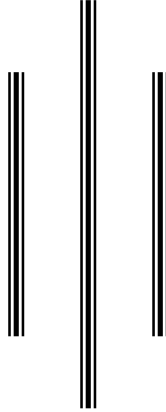
CHAMAR CHILDREN PLAYING AT STREET



RESEARCHER DOING RESEARCH AT FIELD

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITION OF CHAMAR COMMUNITY

(A Case Study of Bishunpurwa VDC- 5 in Bara District)



A Project Report

Submitted to the Central Department of Sociology

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts in Sociology

By

Manoj Sah

Central Department of Sociology

Tribhuvan University

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

2010

RECOMMENDATION LETTER

This Project report entitled **“Socio-economic Condition of Chamar Community: A Case Study of Bishnupurwa VDC-5 in Bara District”** has been prepared by Manoj Sah under my supervision and guidance. This work is the outcome of his own intensive and independent research work and has been prepared in the format as required by the faculty. I hereby recommend this project report for approval and acceptance.

Prof. P.L. Das
(Supervisor)
Central Department of Sociology

APPROVAL LETTER

This Project report entitled “**Socio-economic Condition of Chamar Community: A Case Study of Bishnupurwa VDC-5 in Bara District**” submitted by Manoj Sah has been accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Sociology.

Approved by

Dr. OM Gurung
(Head of the Department)

Prem Chalaune
(External Examiner)

Prof. P.L. Das
(Internal Examiner)

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All the successful attempts are the result of contribution of some co-operative hands. A number of individuals have helped and encouraged me in various ways in completing this study. Though I may not be able to mention the names of them, I here with wish to express my special gratitude to the following individuals.

First, I am highly indebted to my respected teacher, Prof. P.L Das for his valuable guidance and supervision to conduct and complete the project work.

I wish to express my gratitude to Dr. Om Gurung , Head of the Central Department of Sociology, for his valuable suggestion and comments. Moreover, I am deeply indebted to all my respected teachers for their valuable advices and inspiration to complete this project report.

I would be failing in my duty if I do not express my gratitude to my parents Raj Narayan Sah and Dhreepati Devi whose unending inspiration and immense love have brought me to the present status. I am sincerely grateful to my brothers Saroj and Ranjit, and sister Matrina Sah, Similarly, I am grateful to my friend Byas Muni yadav, Binod Kumar Mandal Likewise, I am deeply indebted to Dumber B. Patel, the secretary of the Bishunpurwa VDC, who helped me in this work right from its inception and whenever I needed the help. I am also greatly obliged to all the respondents who helped me collect the required information. I express my sincere thanks all those who helped me directly or indirectly.

Finally, especially thanks go to my father who inspired me to study the Sociology and Nirmala Banskota for splendid Word Processing and Printing this document.

Manoj Sah

Executive Summary

The aim of the study is to give a short description of the Chamars, a socially dominated caste group of Nepal, regarding their socio-economic status. They are found mainly in Terai Region. Chamars are poorest and backward caste people in Nepal. They are born in poverty, live in poverty and die in poverty. Their life and socio-economic status is still under the smoke of cloud. So, the question is how deeply these social trends affected their daily livelihood and what change it has brought to their socio-economic status. This research attempts to focus on the various aspects of socio-economic life of the Chamar community.

The general objective of the study is to identify the socio-economic condition of Chamar people and the specific objectives are as follows:

- e) To study the socio-economic condition of Chamars.*
- f) To identify the problems of Chamar community that stem from and lead to their perpetual backwardness in Nepalese society.*
- g) To explore the cultural pattern of Chamars.*
- h) To provide relevant recommendations to policy makers.*

For this purpose, the Bishunpurwa VDC of the Bara district is selected purposively. There are 96 Chamar households. The total population of those households is 528. The descriptive and the analytic methods are used in this study. Mainly primary data are used from the field study to provide the reliability and quality to the project report.

The Chamars are traditionally leather workers. According to the Hindu caste hierarchy, they are Sudras and are known as Achhut (untouchable). The Chamars had migrated from India to Nepal many years back. The Chamars of Bishunpurwa were also migrated from India, but they first came to Siraha, Saptari and after then, they came to Bara district. When they came to the study area, they started their traditional work i.e. leather work. Along with the passage of time, their traditional work became scarce and they gradually started to shift away from their traditional occupation. They now are depending mostly on wage labour and agriculture.

The Chamars are, in general, Hindus. They worship Hindu Gods and Goddesses. The festivals of the Chamars are similar with Brahmins and Chhettris. They mainly celebrate Chhath, Dashain, Tihar, Tij, Maghe Sakranti etc. They play their traditional and modern types of band (Baja) as well. Therefore, people invite them to play their band on weddings.

The Chamars are poor and exploited by the high caste group like Brahmin, Chhettri etc. Most of them are landless. Therefore, they are backward in every field. They are uneducated and backward. They have forgotten their traditional way of life. In the study area, it is hardly to see their traditional type of occupation, dress and ornaments. Although they have their own native language, they prefer to speak Nepali language.

Though caste based discrimination is not so rigid as it was in the past, some discriminations still exist in the study area. They are not allowed to enter the house of Brahmins and Chhettris as well as religious places. The water of a well is not used at the same time by the higher caste people and the Chamars

The conclusions found from the study area are as follows:

- The economic condition of the Chamars of Bishunpurwa is very poor. The majority of Chamars in the VDC consist of the landless, the marginalized or small farmers, who do not have enough land or other means of production for survival.
- The literacy percent of the Chamars are very low and they hardly complete their schooling. The higher education attended person is nil in the Chamar community.
- They practise diverse cultural activities; they practise their religion, costumes, traditions and their social values in a strong and rigid manner.
- The Chamars have been subjected to economic exploitation, oppression and poverty. They are still being exploited by the so called non Dalits in many ways; opportunity, status, education etc.
- Early marriage, unplanned family, economic disability, illiteracy, lack of decision making power, simplicity, landlessness, exploitation, conventional approach in agriculture are the main constraints for the socio-economic development of the Chamars of the Bishunpurwa VDC.

On the basis of findings the following suggestions are recommended for the upliftment of the overall condition of the Chamars of the Bishunpurwa VDC.

- *Provide Land Ownership*
- *Raising Educational Status*
- *Raising Awareness*
- *Raising Livestock*
- *Aware for the Usages of Contraceptives*
- *Launching Community Based Programs*
- *Launching Skill Development Programs*
- *Participating on Government Sector*
- *Preserving Traditional Occupation*
- *Raising Awareness about Health and Sanitation*
- *Social Inclusion*

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ABBREVIATION AND ACRONYMS

CBO	Community Based Organization
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
CDSO	Central Department of Sociology
DDC	District Development Committee
e. g.	For Example
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
Fig.	Figure
HMG	His Majesty Government
i. e.	That is
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
M.A.	Master of Arts
NDC	Nepal Dalit Commission
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NLA	National Labour Academy
NPC	National Planning Commission
T. U.	Tribhuvan University
VDC	Village Development Committee