

# CHAPTER-ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Situated in the northern hemisphere known as the land of Mt. Everest and the birth place of lord Buddha, Nepal is a tiny land locked country. Nepal with an area 1, 47, 181sq.km (54,718sq.miles), is an independent country. The kingdom roughly rectangular in shape situated of on the Mid-Himalayan mountain section of Asia. Being a sandwich between china in the north and an India in the south, Nepal can be said a buffer state. The country lies between latitudes 26°22' North a longitudes 80°4' East and 88°12' East on/n overages, it stretched for 885 km in east-west direction and for 193km in north-south one. Though Nepal occupies only 0.03% and 0.3% of total land area of world and Asia respectively, the country has an extreme topography and climate (CBS).

Nepal is rich in diversity of different tribal families, culture and in environment. The sociologist believes that the human society develops through different stages.

Clans Tribes Ethnic Groups Nationals

Nepal is multiethnic, multilinguistic, multitraced and multicultural country. Although lower house declare Nepal as secular country in 2063 BS, being a deeply religious country

most of the customs, laws are strictly followed according to the Hindu sculpture. Different tribal families of the mountainous countries like Nepal are diverted socio, economically and culturally according to the environmental adaptation.

About 60 tribal ethnic groups settle in Nepal. They have their own mother tongues (Tamang, 2049 B.S). In the mountain region *Sherpa, Bhote, Manange*. are found. The economic tribes of hilly regions are *Rai, Limbu, Brahmin, Chettry, Gurung, Thakali, Tamang, Sunuwar, Dhami, Thakuri, Newar, Kami, Damai, Sarki*. The castes found in Terai are *Muslim, Maithili, Tharu, Dhimal, Rajbanshi, Satar, Rajput, Mushar, Jangad*. The Chepang are one of deprive, disadvantaged and marginalized group among the tribal people of Nepal. Chepang have suffered from poor economic condition, illiteracy and comparatively backwardness as compare to the other ethnic group.

Chepang usually live close to the forest of the hill. The major homelands of Chepang are Chitwan, Gorkha, Dhading and Makawanpur District. Their settlements are in the height of 1000 to 2000 meter from the sea level. They speak the Chepang language, which is quite different language. From that Tamang, living very close to them. The features of Chepang are magnolia (Bista, 1967).

Chepang are living in primary stage of poverty and background communities of the nation. Chepang are god fearing honest and ethnic groups. Their life is intimately connected with forest. So

their present feature is imbalanced between the man and nature. Chepang are suffered from natural phenomena like deforestation and landslide. Their inhabitation, low productive steep hills, is the major causes of social and economic backwardness of Chepang.

Many Chepang Communities are isolated and neglected from many development initiatives both by the government and INGOs. The neglected segments of society are facing many problems and becoming poorer and poorer day by day. The Chepang communities have not been receiving any benefits of transportation, education, health, modernization and facing problems for their economic betterment. Therefore, under this circumstance it is better to know their present situation through the study of economic and social condition of Chepangs in socio, economic perspectives. I hope the study will help for the further research on the overall aspect of the Chepang Communities of Chitwan District.

## **1.2 Population Distribution of the Chepang**

Chepang usually lives closed to the forest of hills. According to national census (CBS 1998), The Chepang population has reached up to 52,237. Among them female population cover 25,552 and male population cover 26,685. Which is only the 0.23% of total population of Nepal. According to 2058(CBS) census District wise population is as follows:-

**Table 1**

**Total Population of Chepangs in Nepal**

<b>S.N.</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1.	Makawanpur	19,328	37%
2.	Chitwan	19,850	38%
3.	Dhading	9,925	19%
4.	Gorkha	3,134	06%
5.	Total	52,237	100%

Source :- (CBS, 2058 BS)

According to recent survey population of the Chepang in Chitwan District, the Chepang population has reached up to 19,850.

**1.3 Origin and History of Chepang**

There are many controversies about the origin of Chepang. Scholars haven't been able to come to a definite and clear conclusion regarding the origin of Chepang. Some scholars have derived their origin through etymologize and some tired to trace their origin through a legend.

In the book 'People of Nepal' by D. B. Bista, 1967 (page 98-99) quoted Chepang's traditional story on origin as follows:- Chepang are descended of Sita, the heroine of the famous Hindu epic Ramayana. According to the Chepang story, Sita gave birth to a son named Lohari while she was in exile in a hermitage near

the Gandaki River. One-day Sita took her baby out with her because she wanted to show it to the monkeys who were playing with their own babies. She went to the river without the knowledge of the sage Balmiki, her protector. After while Balmiki saw the cradle empty and thought the baby was stolen. Thinking that Sita would be socked and blame the sage for not watching it properly he created a living likeness out of Kush grass. Sita returned with her own child and was amaze to find another in the cradle. Balmiki, then explain everything and advised her to raise both children as her own son. The sage called the new boy by the name Kushari. When Lohari and Kushari grew up they were natural enemies of each other. The descendents of Lohari were called Chepang and Kushari were Kusunda, the food gathering and hunting people living in the forested areas west of the Chepang country.

Some other Chepang say that the Chepang and kusunda have the same origins as the Thakuri's. Kusunda are still in their primitive age. Only a few have been reported to settle permanently and began cultivation but the remaining others gather food and hunt in the forest. They live in cave or in temporary huts in forest of the southern part of the Gorkha and Tanahu District.

Similarly a group of sociologist indicated the place of origin Chepang was Sunathali of Dolkha District. When these ethnic groups arrived, there were four Chepang kings defeated by the king of Patan. The four Chepang Raja were called Pouney Raja,

Gill Raja, Rami Raja and Rabi Raja their common court was at Pukunthali and Raja was the senior most among them(Bista, 1967).

There are various statements in the origin of the word 'Chepang'. In Chepang language, 'che' means 'dog' and 'pang' means 'an arrow'. In this way, the word 'Chepang' came from the help of 'che' (dog) and 'pang' (an arrow). Likewise, in Chepang language 'chyo' means 'top of the hills' and 'bang' means 'rock'. In this way 'chybang means settlers of the top of the hills or the cave of the rock', after a long time, it has undergone a change, and they are called 'Chepang' (Adhikari, 1989).

From the physical point of view, Chepangs have mongoloid features. They are similar in facial and physical structure of Rais and Magars and the like. Although, they are few black then the Rais and Magars. Their language belongs to the Tibet-Burman family. In this sense, we can say that Chepangs are decedents of ancient Kiranti caste.

According to the first scholars on Chepangs, Hodgson (1848) associated Chepang with 'Lhopa' (Inhabitant of Bhutan) due to the vicinity of their language.

Thus, regarding the origin of Chepang, there are not any scientific or factual evidences. All the statements are based on the legends or imaginary. The traditional activities of Chepang of different areas of Nepal are found to be different. They tell various myths about their origin. The Chepang of Nepal are quite

different in their lifestyle, especially related to social, cultural activities are compared to ethnic groups. Even among the Chepang of Chitwan, there are very differences in language with respect of their habitant most of the Chepang of **Shaktikhor VDC** are influenced for social survival. The Chepang in plain and hilly area of Chitwan have different in their occupation behaviors activities. The Chepang of plain area are more forward then the hilly area. Their productive and job opportunities also changes and modified.

#### **1.4 Statement of the Problem**

Nepal is a multiethnic, multi linguistic, multi racial, and multi cultural country. Every ethnic group has it's own economic, social, and cultural beliefs. The cultural activities have own types of important role in the national culture and national building activities. Thus it is an impossible to develop the country by separating this ethnic group from the national stream. There are many ethnic groups in Nepal like:- Gurung, Magar, Tharu, Tamang, Rai, Limbu, Kumal, Dimal, and Chepang. Among them Chepang is one of the major ethnic group of Nepal having their own tradition and culture, who lives in the hilly region. The major home lands of Chepang are Chitwan, Makawanpur, Dhading and Gorkha District. To preserve their value and to change the social, cultural, and economic condition of Chepang it is very important to concentrate on theme. Culture of Chepang is not only their wealth but it is wealth of whole

country. Therefore, it seems very important to know about the social, cultural and economic condition of Chepang.

Day by day, Rich people invest their money in high interest on them and Chepang are unable to pay back due to the lack of proper income. They are suffering from lack of food, shelter and clothes. 70% of children die within half and one year of age due to the malnutrition and different Disease (Thapalia, 2044). So it is necessary that, to preserve their traditional ethnic culture and to bring them in National stream, it is needed to know their present condition and support to make their livelihood easy, we have to aware them for the end of deforestation so that there won't be any lack of forest resources and landslide won't happened. After all they will be able to bring themselves in national level.

Thus based on the above discussion, the study mainly raises the following questions and tries to find out the answers of them:

1. What are the changes that founds under social, cultural and economical changing condition status and what are the reason and impact of changes.
2. What are the major social and economical problems faced by them?
3. How is their family life and village organization?
4. What is their livelihood option?
5. What are the religion, festivals and social customs of the Chepang in Shaktikhor VDC?



## **1.5 Objective of the Study**

The basic and main objectives of this study are to survey the Chepang settlement in Shaktikhor VDC to find out Social, Economic, and Cultural Change among the Chepang.

Following are the major point of objective:

- ) To find out the **Social and Cultural Changes Among** Chepangs.
- ) To find out the **Existing Economic Changes Among** Chepangs.

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

This study is a modest attempt to understand and about social economic and cultural condition of the Chepangs. Therefore, the finding of this study may add something to the existing knowledge of social, economic and cultural changing condition of Chepang of **Shaktikhor VDC**.

The present study on Chepang of Chitwan District may be very important because they are one of the underprivileged and marginalized sections of Nepal. Chepang are those people, who have been almost neglected by the government, facing many problems and becoming poorer and poorer day by day. So, the purpose of my study is to analyze this problem.

The study is an academic study to be undertaken as a requirement for the fulfillment of **Master's Degree in Sociology**

from Tribhuvan University, Nepal. Likewise, this study may be useful for Policy maker, Researcher, Anthropologist, Sociologist and Government Organizations.

### **1.7 Origination of Thesis Report**

This study has been divided into 7 Chapters. The First Chapter is Introduction Chapter. It includes Background of the study, Population distribution of the Chepangs, Origin of Chepangs, Statement of the problems, Objectives of the study, Significant of the study and Organization of the thesis report. In Chapter 2 Relevant Literatures Review. In Chapter 3 Rationale for the selection of the study area, Research Design, Universe and Sampling, Sources and nature of data has organized; Analysis and Interpretation of data, Limitation of the study are kept. Chapter 4 has concluded the General Introduction of Chitwan District, The People and Family life. In Chapter 5 Social and Cultural Activities and Change are shown. The Economic Activities and Change are shown in Chapter 6. In 7 Chapter Summary, Major Findings and Conclusion are kept. Bibliography, Questionnaire for household survey and Photos of the study area are also kept at last.

## CHAPTER-TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature is the mirror of the society. Every society has its own cultural beliefs, rules and regulations that play important role in identifying them in society. Social change is simulated by the education, social interaction with other communities, advancement of cultural activities and ceremonies they traditionally practice.

Hodgson (1848) was the first scholar who wrote about the myths of the Chepangs. He maintained the Chepang as the primitive inhabitation of Nepal.

Bista (1967) was the first anthropologist, to make a preliminary study into a variety of ethnic group of Nepal in his book 'people of Nepal', he said that Chepang do not possess artisan or artistic skill of any kind except the weaving of baskets and leaf umbrellas for protection against rains.

Gurung (1989) describes; the context of Chepang as development is meant to solve their basic problems of poverty, illiteracy, poor health, superstition, low agricultural production and lack of transport and communication. Likewise, he says on the attainment of foodstuff: they eat maize and millet for six months of the year and subsist on roots, fruits and forest produce for the remaining of the year. Their whole life is centered in very little agriculture including hunting, fishing and food gathering. They

are expert in extracting honey from the domesticated and wild bees.

Thapaliya (2044 BS) made an attempt to give an ethnographic picture of Chepang community of Nepal by describing the aspects of their life, origin, organization, pre-history and socio-cultural condition as well as provide the problems prevailing with them.

Thapa (1982) studied the Chepang of Makawanpur, Chitwan, Dhading and Gorkha. He describes, in his book “Chepang haru sanga kehi din” that total population of Chepang, geographical setting, their homeland, occupation, historical, origin, economic condition and marriage system among the Chepang community but he does not talk about pace of socio-cultural change of their life.

On the way of living pattern and poor livelihood of Chepang, the young writer, Swoveet (1993) writes; Chepangs are living nearly in wildness. Only for a few years they have stepped toward agriculture. But they are not successful to gain benefit from agriculture so they are poor and almost in wildness.

They have no good and plain land but steeply and rocky. They make their own land cutting down the woods. Chepang’s meal is generally dhido and tihun. When they have enough grain (food stuff), they eat dhido and tihun and drink jand when they finished it, they boil and eat the leaves of sisnu, tanki and siplighan. They boil and eat the flower of banana, koirala and

kaiyo. They fry and eat the seed of some plants like bhorla, tanki and katus. They eat the fruits like chiuri, kaphal, thakal, jamuna, and khangayo. And they eat the root of some kandamuls like githa, bhyakur, tarul, tyagun and bhorlang. Chepangs eat some insects like hornets, wasps and other kind of insects. They also eat frogs, Crabs, Snails and rats. They hunt too, and kill birds, jackal, deer, bear and porcupine. Chepangs don't have any certain occupation. But now a day they have begun to manufacture some kits like *doko*, *basket*, *string*, *brush* and collect herbals. They supply it to the developed villages and by their food stuffs and clothes they don't feel any hardness and troubles on their poor and natural life and be ever happy.

D.B Shrestha and C.B. Sing (1978) write; we find same introduction of Chepang people of lothar khala-kandraf Gari. This book is also unable to show the family pattern and their changing life style. This book gives the general introduction of Nepalese's ethnic groups in general.

Dhungel (2051 BS) mentioned about society, cultural background, economic condition of the Chepang's as well as some comments has been mentioned for their improvement.

Robil (2000) has carried out a study on Chepangs. The study has particularly focused on the form of shamanism practiced within chepang community. She also has described about the two chepang's festivals, the chhonam and the namrung puja. She also wrote about the dowry system. The parents of the bride should

provide her with a dowry, usually in the form of animals; hens, goat, pigs, water buffalo or cows and the chyuri (Bassia Butyracea).

Bista (1967) has attempted to sketch an ethnographic map of all ethnic group of Nepal. His contribution is highly concrete. He presented ethnographic picture of Chepang as traditional, socio-cultural and economic life in brief. In 1967 he presented the status of Chepang of Chitwan District.

Gurung (1995) mentions society, cultures, life cycle, historical interpretation, ethnic, identity, physical feature, food habits, clothing, festivals clean organization and the occupation of Chepang in “Report from a Chepang Village”.

Some foreign Sociologists and Anthropologists have studies on different ethnic groups of Nepal but only a few are studying on Chepang people. Nepalese scholar Ganesh Man Gurung (1995) wrote on socio-economic aspect where he discussed about three major institution viz family, marriage and kinship of the Chepang and combined together the culture and recent changes in their structural aspects. Family and marriage are the long traditional in the study of sociological and anthropological field, the family of the Chepang is bio-socio, socio-economic and socio-ritual unit of the social organization. He categorized the family patters of Chepang as nuclear, quasi-joint family. As he describes the marriage system of Chepang, he adds marriage fulfills the basic needs of man and woman by providing security

and it is important for family affair. All together he mentioned the Chepang kinship and their blood relation. His book, in the topic village administration aspect' deals with the leadership of the community. If the leadership is traditional conservative, the speed of the progress will be slow and he mentioned about the traditional and conservative, the speed of the progress will be slow and he mentioned about the traditional organizational control or Chepang community and their village administration with their political participation and emerging leadership pattern. On the topic, 'Development Program' he described the progress of the activities done to solve the basic problems of Chepang.

Various writers have mentioned about social change. Singh (1975) has described social change as dynamic change in his book "Social Change in Indian Society". He defines social change as 'changing pattern of family, by modern intellectual influence'.

Margret (1974) defines the definition of kinship structure may occupy a household. It may have co-resident who is not family members. A family may reside in several houses such as in the modified joint family, while the probability is high in three phenomena co-residence, family and domestic function.

Rai (1985) has presented the economy of Chepang of central Nepal as very poor. He has studied their agricultural tools and techniques and their living slandered. They are exploited economically, politically and socially by their neighbors, Mr. Rai

pointed in his study. Hence, present study seems to be urgently needed in order to sketch on ethnographical structure with the changes that have occurred in the economic and social cultural life of Chepang of **Shaktikhor V.D.C** in Chitwan District and the Chepang in general.



# **CHAPTER-THREE**

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

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

The Chepangs are inhabited in different parts viz. Makawanpur, Dhading, Gorkha and Chitwan of the country. But this study was carried out in Shaktikhor VDC of Chitwan district. The researcher was interested to select this area because the density of the Chepang's population is high in Chitwan district which helps the researcher to find the answer of the questions which were raised in the course of study, i.e. to find out the **Social and Cultural Changes Among** Chepangs, to find out the **Existing Economic Changes Among** Chepangs.

Moreover, the researcher was interested to conduct the research in this area because it is accessible to conduct the field study by which the researcher could cross check the reliability of the data which were collected by the means of different sources by visiting the field area frequently directly or indirectly. On the other hand, the Chepangs people were inhabited since many years where they have practiced many cultural practices which reflect the actual picture of Chepang's society.

### **3.2 Research Design**

Different research designs have used to conduct different researches under sociological study. But the present was based on descriptive research design. Descriptive research design

helped to the researcher to find out the social, cultural changes and existing economic condition among the Chepang people.

### **3.3 Universe and Sampling**

Here, the term universe denotes Shaktikhor VDC of Chitwan district. That has the total population 7419 with 3732 males and 3687 females. Out of this the population of Chepang population was 2867 with 1471 males and 1397 females. The Chepang has 594 households (Households data of Shaktikhor VDC, 2061). Having the different kinds of problems, limitation and difficulties the researcher could not be conducted in all households of Chepang. So, the researcher randomly selected 50 households of the Chepang as the sample. Particularly, the random sampling method was used in the various age groups including males, female's profession and age. As a result, the different views of persons were made easy to draw conclusion to the researcher.

### **3.4 Sources and Nature of Data**

Both primary and secondary sources of data collection methods were used in this study. Primary data were collected from field by using observation, interview, questionnaires, focus group discussion (FGD) and key informant interview. Secondary data were collected from the related published or unpublished documents, articles and books. The nature of the data was both qualitative and quantitative.

### **3.4.1 Key Informant Interview**

This method was used to check the validity of the data with some knowledgeable persons. The key informants were the elders of the family, witch doctors, *maha pandey* and *dhami*. By the help of the key informant researcher tried to understand social and cultural changing and the existing economic condition of the Chepang.

### **3.4.2 Observation**

Observation is one of the techniques of data collection under the sociological study. Observation methods was used to get the relevant information for the study such as food consumption process housing structure, agricultural practices, pattern of dress, food gathering, fishing and their various activities relating social, cultural behaviors.

### **3.4.3 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)**

Some local knowledgeable people were taken as the focus group discussion. They were concern about the knowledge, attitude and traditional practices of social, economic as well as cultural condition of Chepang people.

### **3.4.4 Questionnaire**

Structured and unstructured questions were used for collecting the basic data in terms of personal identification and population

structure, occupation and family members among the Chepang communities.

### **3.5 Tabulation, Analysis and Interpretation of Data**

The data were tabulated according to the need of the research activities. Most of the data were analyzed and presented in descriptive way. The respondent's views were given in tabular form described under different headings and sub-headings. Various tables have been presented according to study objectives. The validity of analysis depends upon the quality of the responses and this quality was well maintained.

### **3.6 Limitation of the Study**

Research refers to the systematic and objective attempt, which is used to study a problem for the purpose of deriving general principles (Bhushan, 1994). This study is related to only the Chepang of Shaktikhor VDC of Chitwan district. It has been conducted only for the partial fulfillment of the Master Degree in Sociology. The findings are mainly based on the social, cultural and existing changing in condition of Chepang. So, that the findings may not be generalized more widely.

## **CHAPTER - FOUR**

### **STUDY AREA AND THE PEOPLE**

#### **4.1. General Introduction of Chitwan District**

##### **4.1.1 Physical Features**

Chitwan District lies in Narayani Zone of the Central Development Region. The total area of Chitwan district is 2218 sq.km. The district is adjacent with Mahabharata range in the north and Siwalik in the south, Dhading, Tanahu, Makawanpur and Parsa in the Northeast side and of the District is bordered by and Nawalparasi and Bihar (India) in the Southwest. On the basis of administrative division Chitwan district into 2 Municipality and 36 Village Development Committee (VDC). The headquarter of this district is Bharatpur (District profile of Chitwan 2062, CBS).

Inner Terai Plain is characterized by tropical climate while the hills surrounding it have sub-tropical climate. The temperature varies from an average minimum of 16.6°C in the winter to an average maximum of 39.3°C in the summer. It has tropical to sub-tropical monsoon type climate with high humidity. The District elevation is about 244 meters to 1945 meters. The climatic differentiation in the District ranges from maximum 26°C to 35°C in the summer and minimum 4°C to 15°C in the winter. The average annual rainfall is 1512.3 ml (District profile

of Chitwan 2062, CBS). The Narayani River is the main river of the District.

*Sal, Dhupi, Chilaune, Katush, Bakaino*, different herbal plants, oilseeds plants are available in the forest of this district. This district is also famous for different wild animals viz. Leopard, Naur, Chital, Bear, Deer, Elephant and Raino beside this wide variety of birds are displays here.

#### **4.1.2 Demographic Features**

According to the National Census undertaken by HMG/N in 2058 the total population of this district is 4, 72,454 consisting of 84,368 households which gives the average household size as 5.59 person. The total males are 2, 33,975 and female are 2, 38,479. The male population is 49.53% and the female population is 50.47% (preliminary result of population census, 2001). Out of the total population of this district the Chepang population is 19,850 (4.20%). (CBS, 2058).

It is a heterogeneous community in terms of caste/ethnic, occupational background and religious background. Different caste/ethnic groups such as *Brahmin, Chhetry, Newar, Magar, Tamang, Gurung, Tharu* are the habitants of this district.

#### **4.1.3 Biophysical Setting**

The climate of this VDC is cold in winter and hot in summer. In the summer, the temperature reaches up to maximum 35°C and in winter temperatures comes down minimum 4°C. The area receive

precipitation mainly during monsoon (July-Sep) with little shower during Nov/Dec. The average annual rainfall is 1512.3 ml. In the winter days, sometimes very dense cloud covers all the day round (District profile of Chitwan 2062, CBS).

#### **4.1.4 Social Setting**

The settlement pattern signifies not only the physical composition of the certain ethnic group but it also represents social, cultural and economical aspect of the family.

Settlement of the study area is divided into two clusters. One is Chepang settlement and another is non-chepang settlement. Non-chepang settlement is modern than Chepang settlement in terms of everyday livelihood. Mainly, the Chepang houses are situated on the blade of the hill. They prefer to live in homogeneous society due to their general life style and equal economic status. They feel too difficulty and unprotected in heterogeneous society, so they cannot easily mix-up with non-Chepang.

Mostly homes are one storied with a thatched sloping roof and supported by wooden logs, stone and bamboo. The walls are made of mud. The house are more congested and lumpy, which are not scientifically made with viewing to safe from hot in summer or cold in winter. They keep their domesticated animals in right or left-hand side or back side of the house. They don't allot special rooms for bed and kitchen, or there is only one room for multiple purposes. The house of Chepang has not ventilators or windows. So, in the cooking time the whole house is covered

with smother smoke and the result is that within the house, there is smearing black smoke in the walls and pillars of house.

An astonishing fact is that where the Chepang houses are made, they have not been registered and they don't have their land ownership certificate. Houses are made in Ailani land (not registered land).

#### **4.1.5 The People and Family Life**

##### **4.1.5.1 The People of the Study Area**

The total population of study area is 7419 composed of 3732(50.30%) males and 3687(49.69%) females (District Profile of Chitwan 2062, CBS). Out of the total population the population of Chepang is 2867 with 1471 males and 1397 females. The study area comprises about 594 Chepang households (Household data of Shaktikhor VDC, 2061). All the families are living inside a compact social unit, which benefits them both socially and economically.

Key informants reported that, few years ago the study area was homogeneous Chepang village but gradually migrant pahadiyas started to build buildings substituting the Chepang. In the study area, Chepang people are mostly depending on hunting, fishing and burn cultivation. Most of the Chepang people are agrarian framer. Mostly adult male's works in fields. The adult female work about firewood collection, kitchen works, kandamuls



collection from jungle, facilitate in crop plantation and harvesting.

Like primitive hunting gathering age, the Chepangs of Chitwan still engage themselves in hunting and gathering of wild animals, herbs and roots of kandamuls like *githa*, *bhyakur*, *tarul* and fishing. Beside this they were also make different domestic useful instruments by bamboos like *baskets*, *umbrellas*, *doko* and *nanglo*. Previously they were making these instruments for the use of their households but now a day they were making for selling purpose for their substance.

Most of Chepang are non-vegetarian and their major food and drinks are cooked rice, *dhido*, *tihun*, *kandamuls*, *jand*, and *raksi* . They eat meat of chickens, goats, buffalos, pigs, crabs. Chepang people wear typical cloths and ornaments. However, now a days a few Chepangs both males and females wear the modern clothes. Mainly males wear shirts and pants and females wear blouse and sari.

#### **4.1.5.2 Family Life**

Family is the basic unit of society. It fulfills various needs of the members. In addition, it performs survivable function including continuity, integration and change in the society. So, it is necessary to deal with family type, family size, separation, property, inheritance, decision making process and generation gap.

The family structures of the Chepangs are both nuclear and joint types. Most of the Chepang and other Nepalese family structure is invariably joint family. The concept of nuclear family is alien to them and is not the same as it is to the westerners. However in general practice, family is divided into two broad categories popularly known as nuclear and joint family. Joint family is a main sociological phenomenon in the Nepalese society. This is unaffected by caste and ethnicity, religion, language, occupation and urbanization. We define nuclear family as a group consisting of a husband, his wife and their unmarried sibling living together. Nuclear family has become an ideal norm since long time back. Some Chepang live in joint family also. Nuclear and joint, both types of families are prevalent in the society. Father is the head of the family. After elder brother's death, the family responsibility is transferred to his wife in the lack of his other brothers and their capability. Most of the families are consisting of husband and wife and their siblings. Such families are found in high economic status as well as in poor. The researcher found that mostly Chepang are living in joint family system it is due to lack of sufficient land fair economic condition.

There is the dowry system in the Chepang families. Traditionally, Chepang gives dowry to their siblings, some give a piece of land or the tree of chyuri and their unmarried children magnify it by achieving their labor wages and collecting money

themselves. They have system of sponging of son in law in the lack of son.

In the Chepang of **Shaktikhor VDC**, both nuclear and joint families are found. The relationship among father, mother, son, daughter, and other members of households are interdependent for their family affairs. The father consulted to his son advice for domestic affairs, which is younger as crossing 17-18 years of his age. The mother protects her children for unfavorable condition of the household when the children are unmarried. Between mother and children there may be clash in their relation after her children are married sometimes, there is quarrelling between uncle and nephews after the father's death for their division of properties. As the result the family pattern is changing to a nuclear family.

**Table 2**

**Family Types of the Sample Households**

<b>Types of family</b>	<b>Household No</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Nuclear Family	32	64%
Joint Family	18	36%
<b>Total</b>	50	100%

Source: Field Survey 2008

The table 2 shows that 64% Chepang live in the nuclear family and 36% are in the joint family. One of the elderly Chepang was

reported that the ancestors of Chepang were lived in extended family, but now their family structures have been changed into nuclear and joint family. Nuclear family is the sign of modernity.

#### **4.1.5.3 Educational Status of the Study Area**

Educational status is one of the most important indicators of social and economic development of the people in any country. “Education is a human right with immense power to transform. Its foundation rests the cornerstones of freedom, democracy and sustainable human development Anna (UNDP, 1999)”. Education enlightens human beings; it helps one to judge between right and wrong. In every society, education plays vital role in creating society well off. Literacy status had often been used to denote “how the society is educated?”

It is a fact that education makes people change their attitude of fewer authoritarians and more resentful of formalized authority. Educated people are open to criticism, more tolerant of non-confirming ideas and behavior in other and more complex situation. It is not only helping the individual for personal development but it also provides knowledge and skills that gravitates a community towards participations in nation building efforts. Lack of education is responsible for economic and social backwardness, breeds, ignorance, superstition and rigidity in personality. Lack of education is the barrier of the social economic development of a community and nation. It is a major

weapon to uplift the poor condition of the weaker people of the society if it is made available to these weaker people.

Literacy is one of the major indicators of social, economical development of the nation. It reflects the status of women/men in the society. In Nepal, literacy rate of female is very low as compared to male. Gender disparity in the education sector is still a problem in Nepal.

**Table 3.**

**Educational Status of Household in the Study Area**

<b>Educational</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Per (%)</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Per (%)</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Per (%)</b>
Illiterate	71	36.97	103	55.97	174	46.27
Literate	121	63.02	81	44.02	202	53.72
<b>Total</b>	192	100	184	100	376	100

Source: Field Survey 2008

Table 3 shows that literacy rate of Chepang's is not satisfactory. The literate population is 202 and illiterate population is 174. The percentage of literate and illiterate is 53.72 and 46.27 respectively. The main cause of illiteracy is poverty. But the literacy rate of female is poor then males. There were many reasons behind it like early marriage, social values, geographical difficulties, household activities and many more. Before some decades, the Chepang believed that there was no use of education for their children. They did not need education activities to look after their agricultural and other traditional educational

activities. So at that time they didn't send their children to the school. But now a day in the younger generation of Chepang, knowing the benefit and value of education and the active role it can play in there over all life, they have considerable interest in education. The Chepang are becoming more conscious to send their children are capable of reading and writing.

**Table 4**  
**Educational Attainment of Chepang**

<b>Academic Qualification</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Per.</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>Per.</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Per.</b>
Primary	72	49.65	65	74.71	137	59.05
Lower	59	40.68	18	20.68	77	33.18
Secondary	11	7.58	4	4.59	15	6.46
College	3	2.06	-	-	3	1.29
<b>Total</b>	145	100	87	100	232	100

Source: Field Survey 2008

Table 4 shows that 49.65% male and 74.71 female are attained in primary school and 40.68% male and 20.68% female are attained in lower secondary level. Only 7.58% male and 4.59% female are attained in secondary level. The researcher found that only 2.06% males were attained the college level but none of female was attainting the college, it shows that the status of educational attainment of the Chepang is very poor.

## **CHAPTER - FIVE**

### **SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND CHANGE**

#### **5.1 Religion and Festivals**

##### **5.1.1 Religion**

Religion is the belief in spiritual beings. Religion helps society for its proper regulation. It plays the major role in social aspects, so it has been a powerful agency in society and performed many social functions. Religion is the beliefs in supernatural power and the nature mainly based on social, economical and environmental aspects of the believers that may cause to see different types of religious practices in the world. But the religion helps people to find the answer about the meaning of life, unexpected happening in human life and the death through which people try to manage their own livelihood as well as their day to day life. Similar religious beliefs bring the individuals together and lessen the gap between them.

Though religion is a highly personal thing, it has social aspects and social roles to play. Chepang practices their own tribal deities, who consist of worship a number of spirits and some Hindu deities such as Ram, Krishna, Shiva, Vishnu, Ganesh and Devi etc. On the basis of their religious practices it is hard to categorize them into one particular religion of Nepalese context. Hinduism as the dominant religion may have great influence on the Chepang in the history.

Basically, the Chepangs of **Shaktikhor VDC** are Hindu. But in recent past, some Chepang are changed in to the Christian religion due to the publicity of Christian religion.

**Table 5**  
**Religion of the Chepang**

<b>Religion</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Hindu	46	92%
Christian	4	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Field Survey 2008

Table 5 above table shows that in Chepang community there are 92% Hindus and 8% are Christian. Nepal was the Hindu country before declaration of secular country. But in the study area the researcher found few Christian HHs then the researcher try to know why the few HHs became Christian?

One of the elderly Chepang had reported that firstly we were Hindu, but by last some years we have been following Christianity it is because of impression of Christian. Frequently the team of Christian people were visited our areas we heard their religious Bible that impressed us and we became Christian.



### **5.1.2 Curing Diseases by Religious Method**

In Chepang communities, pandey or mahapandey is the cultural accepted as medicinal practitioner. Chepang have their own *Jhankri*, (wizard) is called pandey or mahapandey (the priest of Chepang). Chepang people, who have belief on *Bhutpret* (ghost), *Boski* (witches) as cause of illness, send their patient to the pandey. Chepang belief that the pandey can defeat to *Bhutpret* and *Boski* by beat a tambourine with recited the mantra (words recited in prayer to a deity or god).

Finally, priest announces the cause of displeasure of the evil spirits (*Bhutpret* and *Boksi*) or causal factor of illness of the patient. Then, the pandey or mahapandey prescribes for offering and homage to the evil spirits. Doing so, the patient can get well or sometimes not.

### **5.1.3 Festivals**

Festivals are major aspect of people's. Every caste/ethnic groups have their own types of festivals. Thus, Chepang indigenous are also entertained with many festivals throughout the year. Major festivals of the Chepangs of Shaktikhor are described as follows:

#### **5.1.3.1 Saune Sankranti**

Saune Sakranti is the most important festival for the Chepang. It is celebrated in the first day of Shrawan. They believed that after Saune Sankranti happiness will come and disaster will go. Some Chepang throw burning firewood (*Agulto*) as a symbol of scabies

(*luto*). After the month of Shrawan, new harvests and fruits will be started to bring in. so, they think that they may not die due to famine. In this view, all the family members and relatives gather and celebrate the Saune Sankranti by taking their ceremonial foods and enjoy by singing and dancing.

### **5.1.3.2 Nwagi**

Nwagi is one of the most important indigenous festivals of Chepang. It is the beginning of testing to new crops or festivals of eating nwagi. Nwagi is celebrated in the month of bhadra.

In During the festival, they collected different kinds of agricultural product e.g. *Ghaiya* (Day-rice), *Girmala* (Spong-guard), Lemon (Sour fruit) and offer their ancestor. On this festivals, senior clan member of Chepang family or pandey worship to dead ancestors spirits by offering new food Chepang's esteem worship to dead ancestors spirits by offering new food and then all the people eat and drink. Before performance of worshipping, they do not eat anything made by new crops.

### **5.1.3.3 Dashain**

Dashain is a national festival, which is celebrated by Chepangs like other local people. Most of the Chepang are Hindu in **Shaktikhor VDC**. These Chepang celebrate the festival in very simple way. They immolate the pigs and buffalo during the festivals. The poor Chepang take buff by sharing in the group.

On the day of Dashami they put tika from their elder relatives in their forehead. The son in law and brother in law or daughter in law or sister bring goat or hen to their parent's house as a gift for tika. In return, parents give some money to them.

#### **5.1.3.4 Tihar**

Tihar is one of the popular festivals of Chepang communities. They worship the goddess laxmi; do Gaudi puja and Bhai tika in Tihar. They celebrate Tihar by singing and dancing, eating, drinking. Specially, they sing *Deusure* and *Bhailo* during the festival. Bread, meat, *raksi*, *Jand* is the main food, which is used to eat and drink during the festival. Their other cultural activities are similar to Hindu culture.

#### **5.1.3.5 Mage Sankranti**

Maghe sankranti is a great festival of Chepang. The first magh is the day of maghe sankranti festival. In this day all the family members and relatives are invited and enjoyed with their ceremonial foods, especially they used to eat yam, meat, *jand* and *raksi*. In addition, singing and dancing enjoy the festival.

### **5.2 Food and Drinking Habits**

Food and drinking habits of human being differ according to their ecosystem. So, the food habits of Chepangs also depend on their own ecosystem of their area. They eat grain for three to six months of the year and subsist on roots, fruits and other forest product for the remaining of the year. Generally, they eat boiled

maize flour (*Makaiko Dindo*) and boiled millet flour (*Kodako Dindo*) with pulse or other vegetable soups as a daily food. But they take rice only in the festival and ceremonies. They depend on fruits, roots, leaves and wild vegetables available in the forest. *Gittha*, *Vayakur* (wild yam), *Tarul* [Yam], *Pindalu*, *Niuro*, *Sisnu*, *Koiralo* use as a substitute of food during the starvation time. They eat buffalo, fish, pork, mutton, chickens, frogs and toads. Toad is their staple. In the recent year, Chepang's of Shaktikhor have left to eat frogs because they are living close to the Brahmin and Chhetris societies. Even though, the Chepang of Shaktikhor have started to earn by the vegetable production such as cucumber, snake guard, bitter guard, pumpkin etc, still they are in miserable condition and are force to practice subsistence always. But they are tackling hard in every aspect to their hard life to lead. As for as Chepang of my study areas are unconcerned they drink alcohol and they smoke cigarettes, *bindi* and *surti* in their daily life. The Chepang forefather used to eats beef openly but now they eat beef secretly and they don't eat the meat of sheep. It is a taboo (Gurung, 1979). Now a day, they worship cow as other Hindu do and they call it Gaudi puja. They eat the meat of sheep too and they have broken their social taboo.

### **5.3 Dress Pattern and Ornaments**

The Chepangs have their own cultural dress. The Chepang forefathers wear traditional dress. The dress of male Chepang is called as *Changa* and the female Chepang as *Punga* which is

color full clothes but *Changa* is not color full cloths. Around sixty years ago the life styles of Chepang were very hard. At that time they had no clothes and ornaments. Till that time they are known as the poorest ethnic group. But now the system is changed, Chepang also wear different varieties of clothes, generally male Chepang wear *dhoti, bhoto, daura, kachhad*, and female Chepang wear *phariya, sari, cholo, patuka and ghalek*. The poor male Chepang didn't wear any cloth on the upper part of the body. They only cover lower part of their body with dhoti. The female Chepang wear sari for the upper part of body, they cover only the breast by loincloth. In the Shaktikhor area, a few oldest Chepang wear their traditional dresses but most of the Chepang wear modern dress as the other's Nepalese people do. They wear shirt, pant, vest, t-shirt, cap, shoes and the female wear sari, blouse, petticoat, kurta suruwal, *macsi*, slipper, shoes etc the school girls wear shirt *frok* and ribbon etc. Nowadays, the new generations of Chepang (male or female) have no visible distinction between them as compared to Brahman and Chhetry. We can find the Chepang of the **Shaktikhor VDC** are rapidly changing as far as their dress patterns are concerned.

They have no money to buy valuable ornaments. Chepang women do not have golden ornaments. There are no specific ornaments to designated for married, widow and unmarried women. Aged married women have worn silver bracelets on both wrists as an ornament. In the present time they use.

## 5.4 Language

Chepong people have their own language that is called “Chepong language”. Chepong language is close to *Newari, Magar, Thami, Thakali,* and *Sherpa* language. Chepongs speak their own dialect, which is related with Tibet Burman. Most of the languages speaking in Nepal are from Tibet Burman Comparatively. Chepong language is backed as compared to other ethnic languages. They are not conscious about their own language. Thus, it is not developed; the language is different from each other even in the different places of Chepong community. It is distinct with the homeland. We cannot hear same language within one District. Most of the Chepong speak their language in their home and community. In the **Shaktikhor VDC** the Chepong know and speak the khas and Nepalese language. They speak the mixed dialects too of all. Today in the **Shaktikhor VDC** the Chepong speak Nepalese dialects with other caste people and in their house and community too.

## 5.5 Clan System

Regarding the Chepong community, different exist among themselves on their own clan system because some of the Chepong observe the clan system where as others do not. The clan system of Chepong of different regional differs from each other.

Chepong originated directly from the earth in the Chepong traditional region. They are not migrants. When the ancestors

come directly out of the earth, they come out at different places. Thus, their clan name was determined by the place of their origin. The different clan names are; Darsirang (originated from the bottom of the saaj tree), Galsarang (originated from black soil), Dhusarange (red soil), Tisir Mai (swamp area), Baspure (bamboo) and similarly Bhamsarange, Buinthali, Tokchy mai, Chyoklorang mai, Kurang mai, Bharbang mai, etc. (Rai, 1985, page 7-8).

Most of the Chepang's clan names have been coined from the name of their original village from where they migrated and their clan names are given according to their skill and occupation. The Chepang of Shaktikhor VDC also have different kind of lineages (gotra) and clans (thar) their lineages are Mahangotra, Surbamsi, Kasiyam, Balo gotra, Karngorta and such clans are Dhemlang, Mampung, Khopralli, Mugipare, Chaulinge, Phulseki, Tipamgi, Ramchurang, Khopreli, Maisare, Mathoke and Bageli etc. It is found that their lineage (gotra) and clans (thar) are different by their inhabitation place.

## **5.6 Social Customs**

### **5.6.1. Pregnancy and Baby Birth**

The Chepang do not have religious activities during pregnancy period. Pregnant women work as before no additional diet and care is provided to the pregnant mother. The researcher found that birth rate is more in the Chepang families because they need more human resources for agricultural and animal husbandry

activities. If they do have more children, they think that more agricultural production can be made and more animals can be kept.

After the birth of child they have some ceremonies like name giving, food introduction and hair cutting which are related to Hindu religion. After the birth of child they perform name giving ceremony. Generally, name is given after 9<sup>th</sup> days of female child-birth and 11<sup>th</sup> days of male child-birth. They observe birth pollution until for that period and on the day of name giving, the priest sprinkles cows urine (*gahut pani*) in order to purify the house and ties a yellow thread blessed by him around the wrist of the baby and the parents. Then the pollution period is over for the family members except for the mother of the baby, who observe pollution for 22 days by not touching water and food prepared for the people (Bista, 1996).

### **5.6.2 Hair Cutting Ceremony**

Chepong perform hair cutting ceremony when the male child reaches at the age of 5 or 6 years. The boy mother's brother (maternal uncle) is invited for the occasion to save the head of the boy, leaving a small tuft of hair at the top (Bista, 1967). The maternal uncle gives some money and new clothes to the boy. The parents give party to the maternal uncle and relatives on this occasion, his parents and other relatives put tika on his forehead and they bless for his long life. Before some time ago, they



observe this ceremony as important ceremony. But now a day, this ceremony is loosing its importance.

### **5.6.3 Marriage and Divorce**

Marriage and family are the oldest and universal institution found in all societies. Marriage is the institutionalized and legitimate form of man and women's relationship based on sex. In the life of human being, marriage is an important part. Every society had developed a pattern for guiding marriage. It is related with procreation of children their up bringing, decant and inheritance. Marriage is socially and legally approved relationship to have children and right to several relations. The definition of marriage is socially recognized institution for having legitimate sexual relationship between man and woman for the procreation up bringing maintenance and socialization of children bringing through establishing family. The marriage fulfills their basic needs of man and women by providing security and stability. Chepang regard marriage as an important family affair.

Marriage is restricted among the relationship of blood and kinship. But in practice, this is not found because among the Chepang their maternal relations are found to establish within six and seven generation. The Chepang, who have different clans, marry outside of their khalak (consanguine kin) within seven generations. The kachhare Chepangs who have no division and subdivision can do intermarriage with member of outside kin

groups of three or four generation. Cross cousin marriage is prevalent among the Chepang for who are not close with Brahman and Chhetry culture. Physical beauty is not major consideration for selection of boy's major is health and hardworking nature and bride's beauty is considered at the time of the selection. The time of marriage is when the boys and girls gain maturity in their physical condition.

Generally, Chepang have two marriages, his and her parents' arranged marriage is formal marriage. Informal marriage is elopement and capture. But both types of marriages are legal. Regarding in an arrange marriage, first of all the boys, his father and some few relatives or neighbors move out of the girls father's house to purpose for marriage with a bottle of *Raksi* (home-made wine). If the girl's parents accept it, the marriage proposal considered to be accepted, if not accepted that means the marriage proposal is refused. According to G.M Gurung, after the settlement of the marriage, both parents celebrate with home-made wine. On the weeding day, marriage procession take place after the short and very simple ceremony, the party returns with the bride to the house with groom. Arrange marriage is popular in the Chepang community.

Majority of Chepang are poor. They can not spend enough money in arrange marriage. Therefore, marriage by capture and elopement is very common. If one boy or one girl want each other but their parents are not agree with them, the girl would eloped with the boy in the other place for short period. After

sometimes, she can come back in boy's house, and they start their family life. If the girls of boy's choice are not ready to elope with him, he may capture the girl with the help of his friends. But, if a captured girl is not ready to married with him, she would come back to her parent house.

There is also divorce system among Chepang community. There is an easy system of divorce. If the wife or husband disliked each other they do '*sinkapangro*'. The husband and wife take on 'sinka' and exchanged one to another then they called "we are brother and sister since today and the sinka is broke themselves. It is traditional system of divorce of the Chepang community but nowadays they follow law of society and they are totally changed.

#### **5.6.4 Death**

Every living being had to face an unavoidable event of life that is death. Chepangs beliefs on reincarnation. The soul of man goes to the heaven and transfers to the new life according to their activities whenever they were alive. The unique tradition of the Chepang community is that they put '*Sunpani*' in the mouth of the dead body and put some money in the pocket. This is done in order to help the dead body's soul to pay fees for crossing the river to reach the heaven. The offer grain water, pots, spade, axe and tobacco in the funeral ground for the dead body. These implements help the soul to go to the heaven. The pregnant women, animal and other caste people should not touch the dead

body. They believe that if the animal and non-Chepang touch the dead body, it causes the harm for family of cadaver.

When someone dies, they cremate the dead body besides a river. The eldest and younger son mourns for 13 days after the death. The man, who mourns, shaves his hair, mustache, beard and eyebrows. He wears white dress provided by mother's brothers. A brother's son or husband's brother's son does this in case if their no son of deceased men or women respectively. The brothers and close family members also observe death pollution and mourn for 13 days by abstaining from eating salt, meat, millet, pulse, mustard, oil, milk and curd (Bista, 1967). On the 13 days, they perform a funeral ceremony leaded by pandey. In the funeral ceremony, pandey request to join the group of other dead soul within their family. He offers a bowl of boiled rice and wine. The family invites all the funeral precisionist, relatives and there villagers and gives boiled rice, meat and home-made wine. The visitors also bring same beer with them. The married sister and daughter bring goat and battle of wine each. They give a gift some rupees in returns for whoever brings the present of goats and wine. The funeral is done in the name of dead person.

The Chepang ancestor of **Shaktikhor VDC** buried the dead body in the hill. But nowadays, they started to cremate the dead body in the hill. The mourning continues for the five days for the child, but for the elder ones the mourning lasts for 13 days, their son purifies the death pollution on that day they sprinkle '*Sunpani*' and '*Gahutpani*' by their son in law to brother in law.

## CHAPTER - SIX

### ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES AND CHANGE

#### 6.1 OCCUPATION

The economic activities of the study area are primarily based on traditional agriculture like the Nepalese rural community. Though it is a primary occupation of Chepangs. The agricultural activities are not sufficient to employ the entire population of the Chepangs. Beside this the Chepangs of the study area are engaged in other different occupation activities. Chepangs pass their life through many activities, which is presented as follows,

**Table 6**

#### **Distribution of Occupation Status**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Sample Household Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Agriculture	25	50
Business	05	10
Service	03	06
Wage Labour	15	30
Other	02	04
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

Sources: Filed Survey 2008.

Table no.6 shows that 50% Chepang house-holds are found involving in agricultural activities likewise 10% in Business, 6% in Service, 30% in wage labor and 4% in others. Comparatively, most of the Chepang are found to be involved in the agricultural activities. It is also found that, now a day they are not limited only in the traditional activities and are also trying to penetrate in new field.

## **6.2 Land Holding Size**

Now a day, Chepang are primarily agrarian people. For generations, the Chepang have live a semi-nomadic existence, characterized by hunting fishing, food gathering and burn cultivation. Slowly, they began to change towards settled cultivation and settled peasant life. Now they don't have enough land to make theirs life easier. There is not any Zamindar (Those peoples who have more land) Chepangs in the study area. Slowly they began to practice other activities more to sustain their livelihood. Most of fertile lands are owned by other non-Chepangs people. So, they don't have a sufficient land to survive their life. Especially there are three types of land such as paddy land (*khet*); Rain fed land (*bari*) and khorla. The Chepangs have comparatively more Rain fed land than the paddy land and khorla. The following table shows the land holding pattern of Chepang of the Shaktikhor VDC.

**Table 7**

**Distribution of Landholding Size**

<b>Land in Kattha</b>	<b>Households</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Land less	05	10
01-10	39	78
10-20	04	8
20 above	02	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

Sources: Field Survey 2008.

Table no. 7 shows that, out of the total (50) house-holds 10% of households are landless, 78% of house-holds have 01-10 *Kattha* land, 8% house-holds have 10-20 *Kattha* land and 02 house-holds have 20 *Kattha* land. The majority of Chepangs do have 01-10 *Kattha* land but they feel difficulty to join their hands up to mouth every day because the land which was found under the Chepang households was infertile. But the Chapangs house-holds who have 20 and above *Kattha* land they are able to join their hands up to mouth normally.

### **6.3 Animal Husbandry**

Animal husbandry is indispensable with agriculture. In the study area, animals are bred only for domestic use. Buffaloes and cows are kept for milk and manure. But it is found that the Chepangs kept buffaloes rarely where as the cows in large number. Because

the buffaloes are expensive comparatively than cows. Oxen are used to plough the agricultural land and to draw wheel.

In the study area, the Chepang house-holds who do not have land they kept less number of animals and who have land they kept more number of animals. But goats, chickens and ducks are kept by all Chepangs house-holds. The numbers of animals of the study house-holds in the Shaktikhor VDC are shown in the table given below.

**Table 8**

**Distribution Livestock Farming**

<b>Types of</b>	<b>Households</b>	<b>No. of Animals</b>
Cows/Oxen	45	272
Buffalos	05	08
Goats	50	387
Chickens and	50	830

Sources: Field Survey, 2008

Table no 8 shows that among 50 households of the study area 45 households kept Cow/Oxen and only 5 household kept Buffalo. All house-holds kept goats, chickens and ducks commonly. One of the informant reported that goats, chickens and ducks can be sold in the market easily. They are kept for the purpose of meat which helps for house expenses.



## 6.4 Types of Corps Production

The Chepang produced two kinds of crops mainly. The crops of rainy season are Maize, Millets, Paddy, Junelo, Kaguno and others vegetable product. And the crops of winter season are Wheat, Barley, Mustard, Pea, Potato and other seasonable vegetable product. In **Shaktikhor VDC**; agriculture system is very primitive type. They lived both in plain and hillside of VDC and cultivate crops. They plant maize, paddy, millet, wheat, *mass (kalo dal)*. Now a day's Chepang use chemical fertilizer and improved seed to increase the level of productions in their agricultural land. Not only that Chepangs have also started to cultivate non-seasonable crops, vegetables and fruits.

**Table 9**

### **Types of Crops Production in Sample Household.**

<b>Types of Crops</b>	<b>Households</b>	<b>Amount (Muries)</b>
Maize	50	394
Paddy	42	224
Millet	38	198
Wheat	25	86
Other	50	77

Sources: Field Survey, 2008

Table no. 9 shows that, each and every household cultivate Maize and most of the household cultivate paddy, millet, wheat in good amount. But Maize is the common production crops to

the Chepangs because it can be produced even in the slope land easily. The researcher also found that some of the houses cultivate *Junelo, Kaguno, Barley, Mustard, Pea, mass (kalo daal)*.

## 6.5 Level of Food Sufficiency

The level of food production and consumption determines the poverty of people or nation. During study period, we tried to find out whether the annual production of food grains is sufficient to meet the daily requirement for one year or not. The farming lands are dividing in small pieces where as the population is growing rapidly. In this section it tried to shows the level of food sufficiency from own agriculture production.

**Table 10.**  
**Distribution of Sample Household of Food Sufficiency**

<b>Food Sufficiency in Month</b>	<b>Households</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Zero – 03	9	18
04-06	28	56
07-09	11	22
10-12	02	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

Sources: Field Survey, 2008.

Table no.10 shows the 18% of household are able to join their hand and mouth up to 3 month, 56% households have sufficient food for 04 to 06 month and 22% have sufficient food for 07 to 09 months and only 4% households have sufficient foods for one year. The house-holds have not sufficient foods they fulfill their needs by earning from wage labor, agro labor, pottering, lone borrowing one credit purchased. Whatever they grow in the field can just support their food problem. A significant part of the agriculture products in the study area goes for brewing *jad*. Therefore, agriculture has no direct economic value except for subsistence's. Thus, every year the Chepangs community might falls under the cycle of poverty.

## **6.6 Annual Income**

To illustrate the further economic characteristics of Chepangs their annual income was investigated. The respondent couldn't say their exact annual income, so various source of their livelihood were asked and the total annual income derived from different source was calculated in terms of money. There is no other importance income source to them then that agriculture itself. The other income sources, what they do have are nominal and minor or not sufficient for their livelihood. Besides agricultural income there is other side income through service. Wage labor, Animal husbandry, Business. All these are not considered as good part of income as agriculture income source. But those sources of income are supposed to contribute substantially to the economy of Chepangs.

**Table 11**

**Estimated Annual Income of HHs from Different Sources.**

<b>Income in Rs.</b>	<b>Number of Household</b>				
	<b>Agriculture live stock</b>	<b>Wage labors</b>	<b>Service</b>	<b>Business</b>	<b>Other</b>
Less than	13	-	-	-	-
10,001-20,000	10	02	-	02	02
20,001-30,000	2	03	-	03	-
30,001-40,000	-	05	01	-	-
40,001-50,000	-	05	02	-	-
<b>Total</b>	25	15	03	05	02

Sources: Field Survey, 2008.

Table no.11 shows estimated annual income of the each household of Chepang from different sources. 25 households earn from agricultural live stock, 15 households earn from wage labour, 3 households earn from service, 5 households earn from business and 2 households from others. But the house-holds people who are involved in wage labour and service earn more.

## 6.7 Annual Expenditure

There is very low economic condition of chepang in the study area. To illustrate the further economic characteristics of Chapangs their annual expenditure was investigated. The respondent couldn't say their exact annual expenditure, so various source of their livelihood are asked and estimated annual expenditure derived from different source is calculated. The following table shows the estimated annual expenditure of sample household.

**Table 12**

### **Estimated Annual Expenditure of Household**

<b>Expenditure in Rs.</b>	<b>Number of Household</b>					
	<b>Food</b>	<b>Clothes</b>	<b>Health</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Feast &amp;</b>	<b>Other</b>
Less than 5,000-	08	25	40	42	27	42
5,001-10,000-	10	20	10	04	19	08
10,000-20,000-	16	05	-	01	04	-
20,000-30,000-	12	-	-	-	-	-
30,000-40,000-	02	-	-	-	-	-
40,000-50,000-	-	-	-	-	-	-
50,001-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>

Sources: Field Survey, 2008

Table no.12 shows that the Chepangs of **Shaktikhor VDC** spends their more income in food. They barrow money with high interest to solve the problems. They have no objection for high interest. The researcher has found that in the field survey only 2 households are able to fulfill food by their own production and most of the people fulfill their food by purchase. Among 50 households 47 households spends their money for education. The above table shows that the Chepang community of **Shaktikhor VDC** is socially and economically deprive.

## CHAPTER - SEVEN

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

#### 7.1 Summary

Nepal is the country of different ethnic group, which unify the people of different origins and different cultural backgrounds. There live more than 61 ethnic castes through out the country. There are May kinds of castes and ethnic groups with different languages, religions and cultures in our country. The major ethnics groups of Nepal are *Gurung, Magar, Thapa, Tamang, Rai, Limbu, Kumal, Dhimal* and *Chepang*. *Chepang* is one of the major ethnic groups of Nepal and they are living in the hilly region. They are living in poor economic condition, illiterate and backward as *Chepang* are living in primary stage of poverty and backward community of the nation.

This study has been conducted to find out social, economic and cultural change among *Chepang* in **Shaktikhor VDC**, Chitwan District. The specific objectives of this study are to find the social, economic and cultural change among *Chepang* and to explore the income and employment potentials in relation to mobilization of their skill and market potential.

This study is based on descriptive research design because it tries to describe social, economic and cultural practices and ethnographic aspects of *Chepang*. Both primary and secondary data have been used in this study and in the case of nature of

data both the qualitative as well as quantitative natures of data are used. Household were taken as unit of the study and form the total 594 Chepang households that were Universe of the study, 50 households have been selected as sample of the study by using randomly sampling that is 8.41% of total households. The primary data for this study were collected through interview schedule to respondent, interview with key informant, and observation. Finally the gathered data have been first classified on quantitative and qualitative basis and analyzed in the descriptive and statistical way by using simple statistical method like average, percentage.

The major finding of the study can be summarized as follows:

- ) The total populations in 1376 households of the study area are 7419 (male 3732, female 3687).
- ) Among 50 families 32 (64%) are nuclear family and 18 (36%) are joint/extended types.
- ) Literate rate of 53.72% (male are 63.02% and female are 44.02%).
- ) Chepang has strong belief on super natural power such as *Bhoot- Pret, Spirit, Boksi* as the causes of illness.
- ) Indigenous Chepang have their own typical social customs regarding childbirth, name-giving, hair cutting, marriage and death.



- ) *Saune Sankranti, Nwagi, Maghe Sankranti, Dashain* and *Tihar* are the major festivals of Chepangs of the study area.
- ) Early, Widow, Cross-cousin, Polygamy, love and marriage by capture and elopement are the interesting features marriage in the Chepang custom.
- ) The economic condition of the people of the study area is primary based.
- ) They have been engaged in agriculture and wage labour as a Major resource of subsistence.
- ) Chepang depends on various occupations to solve the hand up to mouth problem.
- ) More than 50% of them derived their means of livelihood as farming; near about half of them are agro labours.

## **7.2 Major Findings**

- ) Chepang, who are also marginalize group of Nepal, are found very poor, isolated and deprived. Their livelihood is found more or less similar to the primitive society. They are found fully dependent with other, particularly in land and other means of production for the survival.
- ) The main constrain of the development of chepang people and their society is the lack of proper education. The

literacy is found very low. Even they are not aware of the importance of the education and the poor economic status also played the vital for the lack of education.

) It is found that Chepang people are culturally very rich. They practice their typical religion, customs, tradition and their social values which are found very strong and rified. Chepang's life is reflected in the festivals, religions and social customs that they have followed. These ceremony, festivals and religions also provide them a kind of confidence, social security and social harmony.

) Due to the social relationship with other people and attachment with other world, their life and behavior merely changing day by day any many changes have already been found. They have change food practices i.e. how they are not fully dependent with jungle (kundamul) for the surviving food; they have started to work in other societies, now they do not feel hesitation to send young labour in the factories and industries outside of the village. Some of them are also working as a labour in golf country too. Because of the construction of the roads and other infrastructure development they have direct access and attachment with other societies from which they get more benefit and make their life more comfort then in the past.

) It is found that chepang society also reflect the 18<sup>th</sup> century feudal society. This is found that they are exploited,

oppressed and badly treated by the land lord, local bourgeoisie and so called high class people of the society. They have not direct access in opportunity, debt, education and employment. Drinking alcohol, early marriage, unplanned family structure is the major factors for the advancement of their society in general.

) Lastly, it is found that chepang society of Shaktikhor village is run a way for the change. Many things have been changing i.e. economic status, education status, attachment with outer world, political power, social status, women's status. They are in the process to eliminate some hindrance factors for the development society i.e. early marriage, high birth rate, belief in superstition, things, traditional and conservation practices.

### **7.3 Conclusion:**

The economic condition of the Chepang indigenous is very poor, isolated and marginalized group of Nepal. The Chepangs are often associated with primitiveness and backwardness. They don't have enough land or other means of production for survival. The adult literacy rate is very low. Most of them do not know the importance of education. They cannot receive education due to their low economic status. Chepangs are culturally rich. They practice their typical religions, customs, traditions and their social value are found very strong and rified. Festivals, religions and social customs are major aspect of socio-

cultural and economic life of the Chepang. Their ceremonial customs as they practice provide them a sense of confidence, comfort and sense of soon religious security, social feeling and social solidarity. Chepangs have been subjected to economic exploitation, oppression and poverty. They are still being exploited by non-che pang in many ways such as opportunity, status, debt, education etc. Their habits are drinking alcohol, early marriage and unplanned family structure. Illiteracy, lack of decision making power, simplicity, exploitation, unproductive ownership of land, complicated geographical position, lack of co-operation and service are the completely barrier to lift their livelihood. And limited fertilizer, erosion of water and soil limited production of crops, limited income, lack of information of markets and skills, conventional approach on agriculture are the main constraints for the social economical development of the study area.

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## QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HOUSEHOLD SURVEY

Questionnaire on **Social, Economic and Cultural Change among Chepangs People.**

### 1. General information

Name of Respondent: -

Ward No:-

Sex: -

Village:-

Age: -

Education:-

Marital status: -

Occupation:-

Family size: -

Religion:-

### 2. Description of the Family Member

S.N	Name	Relation to Respondent	Sex		Age	Education	Marital Status	Occupation	Remarks
			Male	Female		A	B	C	
1.									
2.									
3.									
4.									
5.									
6.									
7.									
8.									
9.									
10									

Note:



A = (a) Illiterate (b) Literate (c) Primary level (d) Lower secondary level

(e) Secondary level (f) College level

B = (a) Unmarried (b) Married (c) Widow/Widower

C = (a) Agriculture (b) Dependence (c) Hunting (d) Pandey

### **3. Land Holding Size**

) Do you have land for cultivation?

(a) Yes (b) No

If yes, how much land do you have?

(a) Bigha (b) Katha (c) Dhur

) Do you have cultivated any other's lands?

(a) Bigha (b) Katha (c) Dhur

### **4. Household Income**

) How much income you generate from different sources last year?

Source:

In Rs.

(a) Agriculture production (cultivating own land)

(b) Service

(c) Working as a haruwa (servant)

(d) Cultivating on others land (adiya)

- (e) Beekeeping
- (f) Fishing
- (g) Hunting
- (h) Basketing
- (i) Livestock sale
- (j) Wage labor
- (k) Business/Trade
- (l) Income from members living away from home
- (m) Other

## **5. Production**

J What are the main food items you produce for your daily need?

Sources

In muries/ pathies

- (a) Paddy/rice
- (b) Wheat
- (c) Junelo
- (d) Phapar
- (e) Maize
- (f) Millet
- (g) Kaguno
- (h) Buck wheat

(i) Masuro

(j) Pea

) Did your family grow adequate food grain from your own land for all year round?

(a) Yes

(b) No

If no, what are the other sources to fulfill for this deficiency?

(a) Working as huruwa (b) seasonal labor (c) both (d) others

) How many months of food shortage do your household face in a year?

In months.....

) Where did you go for to search work/ job?

) How much time your salary covers for your livelihood?

) Do you have any property that refers to your ancestor's?

) How easier or difficult to run your family?

) Do you have any lone? If you have then for what and how you have taken?

## **6. Annual Expenditure of Household:**

Source

In Rs.

Food

Cloths

Health

Education

Feast and Festival

Others

### **7. Livestock Farming**

) Does your family have domestic animals?

(a)Yes (b) no

If yes,

<b>Types of Animal</b>	<b>No. of Animals</b>
Cows/Oxen's	
Bulls/Buffaloes	
Goats	
Chickens and Duck	
Others	

### **7. Residences**

) What is your house made up of?

(a) Mud and stone (b) Bamboo and mud

) Do you have toilet in your home?

(a) Yes                      (b) No

If yes, temporary or permanent

) How do you take household decision in the family?

(a) Alone      (b) both husband and wife      (c) decision from all

### **8. Feast/ Festivals**

) How many festivals do you celebrate in a year?

) How do you celebrate traditional festivals?

### **9. Dress Pattern and Ornament**

) What is the change in your and ancestor's dress pattern?

) What are the popular ornaments used by Chepang people?

### **10. Birth Ceremony**

) How do you perform your birth ceremony?

) Did you celebrate your hair cutting ceremony?

### **11. Marriage/ Divorce**

) How do you perform your marriage process?

) Have any member of your family married with person of another caste (Outside the Chepang community)?

(a)Yes      (b) No

If yes, with which cast has the relation been set up?

) Do you know divorce process?

## **12. Death**

) How do you perform death pattern?

13. Where your ancestor's come from?

14. What is your family type?

(a) Nuclear            (b) Joint

15. Which god/goddess do you worship?

16. Do you have any change in your religious aspect at present?

(a) Yes                (b) No

17. Is there any support for study from government or any other organizations'?

18. Do you know anything about politics? Do you participate in political activities?

19. Do you have any change recently?

20. What did you aspect from the government?

## **KEY INFORMANTS**

1. Can you introduce about the Chepang, their origination and history of your ancestors?
2. Where did the Chepang live in Nepal?
3. What are the gods and goddesses of Chepang people?
4. What are the festivals celebrated in your society? How are they celebrated?
5. What religions and social customs are performed in childbirth and how are they completed and when?
6. Is there any difference in the customs to perform during the birth of son and daughter?
7. How is marriage custom performed?
8. Do you know early marriage, polygamy/polyandry marriage, widow marriage and aged marriage in your society?
9. How is death customs completed in your society?
10. Please, give some details about daily meals of the Chepangs and food for special occasions, feast and festivals.
11. What are the dresses of the Chepangs?
12. What are the popular ornaments used by Chepang people?
13. What are the ethical entertainments, musical instruments and

traditional weapons of Chepang people?

14. What is the cast system in your society?

15. Do you know about witch doctors? If yes, tell how they treat the patient?



## CHEPANG'S VILLAGE



## **Chepang's House**



## **Chepang's Kitchen**

## **Chepang's Old Man**



## **Chepang's Women Scrubbing the Pot**



## Chepang's Childrens





