

# CHAPTER-ONE

## Introduction

### 1.1 Background of the study

Nepal is a country of multi ethnic groups, which unify the people of different origins and different cultural background. There live more than 60 ethnic castes throughout the country. Among them Tharu is the fourth largest ethnic group of Nepal. The total population of Tharu is 1533879 which constituted 6.75% of the total population of Nepal (CBS 2001).

Indigenous groups are socio economically disadvantaged than other groups in society. Tharu, one of the most numerous ethnic minorities in the country is indigenous to Terai. Tharus are scattered all along the southern foot hill of the Himalayan. Tharus are considered among the oldest groups of people to inhabit the Terai plains of Nepal and they usually live closer to the heavily forested areas (Bista, 1980).

Tharus are innocent, shy, background indigenous and relatively timid people settled in the Teri region and they are basically agriculture peasant. Government authority in the past and still to lesser degree is out maneuvered by the surrounding non-Tharu has exploited them. They are often in debt since the grain the produce is frequently used to brew alcoholic drinks. More clever persons from the hills will lend them money to purchase food and they continue to compound the interest. Eventually, the Hillman acquires the Tharus land and the Tharus are relegated to landless status (Pyakuryal, 1982).

Tharus, in the early days were not interested in holding land own name, due to the absence of cash. They were most interested in cultivating barren or virgin land for which they did not have to pay revenues for a certain period, later they again moved on in search of such new land. Tharus who had private registered land sold the land whenever possible at a cheap price and moved for the west (Bardiya, Kailali) to cultivate new land for the same reason(Rajaure 1977).

The Tharus are those people who have been almost isolated and neglected by the government. The neglected segment of society is facing many problems and becoming poorer and poorer day by day. The migrated person from hill (*pahadiyas*) highly influencing the life style of

Tharus. The Tharu communities are affected by transportation, education, migration and modernization and seem many changes in their economic and social life. Under these circumstances to know their real present situation there is an urgent need to study economic and social condition of Tharus in a developmental perspective. I hope that this present study will help further detail research on the whole aspects of the Tharu communities of Nawalparasi.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

Nepal is called a country of unity in diversity. According to CBS 2001, there are 104 castes and ethnic groups in Nepal (National Committee for Development of Nationalities, 2057). Most of the indigenous ethnic groups are economically poor and marginalized. Among them, the culture, social behavior, customs and traditions of Tharu community have been greatly influenced by westernization and modernization. As a result, their culture has now been threatened of being disappeared.

The Tharu community, though is called one of the oldest indigenous Terai ethnic groups, it has still controversial saying on its origin. A number of researchers have expressed their opinion differently about the origin of Tharu. Some said that they are from Rajputana, India. Others said argued that they are descendant of Rajput women, who were sent to safer place to get rid of being victimized from their enemy. Such sayings are very common in the rural areas.

According to the President of NEFIN, Pashang Sherpa, there are about 59 ethnic groups. One of them is Tharu. Tharus have their own culture and values. Tharus are the poorest and backward indigenous ethnic group. Most of the Tharus are obligated to live under the poverty line. Farming is the main sources of livelihood of Tharu people. Due to the lack of sources of livelihood, their living condition is deteriorating. Most of them are employed as unskilled wage labors and are very little. The family size of Tharu is very big in average. They spend a lot of money on their unproductive activities like their traditional feast and festivals.

Tharu, The second largest indigenous ethnic group after Magar in Nepal is very rich in culture. But they are losing their culture and customs. Their behavioral patterns are also being changed. It is found that they are following the culture, beliefs, and customs of upper caste to bring their social status up in the society. This is due to mixed culture and very little promotional effort put forth for upgrading the culture of such marginalized ethnic groups the mainstream. Tharus are laborious ethnic groups. They work for days and night even

though they are poor but they were landlord and kings of Terai, (Krauskopff, 2000).

However, their present situation is very poor and they are most marginalized. Majority of them is almost landless and tenants. Their economic and social situation is very poor. Tharus of Benimanipur VDC, in general, have the similar poor socio-economic situation and they are surviving in isolation of the development efforts. The support programme from the local and central government has not been reached to Tharu community. Neither developmental study nor any special program has been planned and implemented for the development of the most marginalized indigenous Tharu ethnic group of the Benimanipur VDC. What type of major issues? How they are planning to address those issues in the present context of modernization, urbanization and Westernization. These are the major concerns that the study is focused in the research.

### **1.3 Objectives of the study**

The general objectives of this study are to find out actual socio-cultural and economic condition of Tharu people in Benimanipur VDC, Pideri of Nawalparasi. However the specific objectives are:

- To identify the existing socio-cultural condition of Tharu people in the study area.
- To identify the economic condition of Tharu people.
- To find out the problem faced by the Tharu people.

### **1.4 Importance of the study**

The Tharus are socio-economically more disadvantageous than other groups in society. They are background groups. Everybody needs to know about the condition of backward people of the country. It is necessary to understand about their socio-economic status for their progress. As such for the improvement of Tharus, it is necessary to know about problem or situation of Tharus. So the study is important to know about the Tharu's situation of education, level of income, health condition, housing condition and resettlement patterns etc.

The study, thus by bringing the clear picture on the changing pattern and trend on socio-economic and cultural conditions of Tharu community of Benimanipur VDC Nawalparasi, will help to open the reality of Tharu life and develop plan to address these issues. This

is considered that the study will be a reference to local institutions in general and more particularly to the VDC for their strategic planning and execution. The Tharu will have an opportunity to analyze the best and ill practices prevalent in their community. So, that they can develop plan themselves by preserving the good ones and removing the ill ones. Ultimately, it is hoped that the study will help for the development and promotion of Tharu community. It will increase the recognition of Tharu community. So, this research is important for such marginalized community, which helps to know their culture and improve their socio-economic condition of this community.

In connection to this, the study on Tharu community, who has wide spread from the East Terai to the West across the country, has a significant meaning to the planner and development workers. The similarities and dissimilarities within the Tharu community could be interesting with plentiful issues for sociologists and anthropologies' research work.

The study has highlighted upon the Tharus inner caste and social system, socio – economic life and their social, economic and cultural changes. Therefore, the study will help to identify the issues and the life styles, their social, economic and cultural conditions. The study, thus by bringing the clear picture on the changing pattern of and trend on socio-economic on socio-economic and cultural condition of Benimanipur village Development Committee, Nawalparasi will help to open the reality of Tharu life and develop plan to address these issues. It is hoped that the study will help for the development and promotion of the Tharu community.

## **1.5 Limitation of the study**

Every study has its own limitation. The limitations of this study are as follows:

- The study area is limited to the Benimanipur Village Development Committee of Pideri, Nawalparasi
- The study is limited the people of Tharu community in Benimanipur VDC-5 Pideri of Nawalparasi.
- The study intends to focus only socio-cultural and economic condition of Tharu.
- The study has done within limited time and resources.



# **CHAPTER- TWO**

## **Literature review**

The history on the study of ethnic groups in Nepal is not so long. It starts only from the fifty's decade. Therefore, the scope of the study is limited. However, Nepali and Foreign researcher have made some studies on Tharu. Among them, Dor Bahadur Bista (1967), Dr. Regmi, (1978), Baburam Acharaya (1953) did some studies on Tharu. The first foreign scholar, who studied on Tharu, is F.B. Hamilton (1971).

Social discrimination on the basis of caste, ethnic and gender difference plays a significant part in maintaining social inequality in Nepal. In the same way the structure of the agrarian of economy of traditional form is also at the root of poverty. Various ethnographic studies have been undertaken in Nepal; some studies have focused on demographic, behavioral, socio-economic and cultural changes in Nepalese peoples. (Bista,1967).

Some Nepali and foreign writes have published articles and books about the Tharu people. Literature review is one of one many research works. For this research the literature review will be done under the categories; the conceptual review and review of empirical study of this, different books, journals, articles, plans and policies, other published and unpublished documents related to the subject will be reviewed.

Research work on Tharu have been started later in comparison to other backward tribe, ethnic groups of Nepal. Tharus are Terai people and there was a calamity of malaria in Terai up to few decades ago and Terai climate is not favorable or romantic to foreign scholars. However, several scholars have written on ecological related anthropological studies, which deal with people, culture and nature. But there are very few studies done about the social, economic and cultural aspect of Tharu. Some of the literatures are reviewed below.

## 2.1 Origins of Tharu

There are many controversies about the origin of Tharus. Scholars have not been able to come to a definite and clear conclusion regarding the origin of Tharu. Some scholars have to derive their through a legend.

Physically, especially in facial feature, the Tharu look like they stem from mongoloid stock. They speak an Aryan language. In an ancient time the Tharu may have accepted Buddhism but later they were influenced by Hinduism (Pyakurel, 1982). Quoting from Nesfield, (Rajaure, 1977) related the Tharu, slightly Mongoloid features to intermarriages, which have taken place over two to three generation. He sees them as strictly Indian and no connection whatever with the Nepalese origin.

“When Muslim invaders captured Rajputana and murdered men and women of royal courts, the princess and many other royal women fled away into the forest of Terai. The royal women living inside forest for many years accepted their male servants as a new husband. The offspring of these Rajput women and their servants giving birth to the breed known as the Tharp” (Gautam and Magar, 1994).

“A legend indicates their origins from Rajasthan in north western India. According to this legend the Tharus came from the Tharu desert of Rajasthan in India and hence the name Tharus. Most of them, sincerely believe that they came from Rajasthan in India at the time of Islamic invasions” (Bista, 1980).

In this way, many scholars, as had been noted, have tried to determine the origins of Tharus. These are only plausible and there is not a single or monolithic solution. Since different cultural and racial differences exit among Tharus of Nepal, their origin may stem from some what different circumstances.

## 2.2 Studies on Tharu

Dor Bahadur Bista was the first anthropologist to make a preliminary study in to a variety of ethnic groups of Nepal. In his ethnographic survey of Nepalese people, in one of his book 'People of Nepal' he has given some description on aspects of the socio-economic life pf Tharus, Bista writes: "The Tharu are probably the oldest groups to inhabit the Terai. They usually live very close to the heavily forested regions. A great number of villages of *Tharuwans* are found in small clearing in the middle of the forest itself. Most of the large compact Tharu settlements are found in tropical malarial areas, infected with wild animals such as elephants, rhinoceros, bears, tigers and poisonous snakes."

Tharus are by tradition peasant framers. Some of them are rich farmers and few in the eastern Terai have successfully taken up business. But a great majority of them are very hardworking tenant cultivators. Most of the Tharus in Dang, Deukhuri have been very explicated by the ruthless Jamindar, landlords and revenue agents. They are virtually slaves in the hands of Jamindars, sold and bought at will since most of are landless hare-cropping peasant. Every year they are buried deeper in debt until eventually they are sold to other Jamindars trying to cultivate new area of land (Bista, 1980).

A Tharu is truly son of the forest and to this day he retains freedom of mind and movement, a rather uncommon feature among the tribes of Nepal. The Tharus love fishing but it is the women who on the big catch when they get respite from the field...A tharu is always happy with a jug his brews coming from the many different sources-rice, maize, banana etc. Addiction to drink makes him an easy to the caprices of the landlord and no wonder; therefore he is always in always in debt (Bhatta, 1977).

At first their number was limited after thousand of year they paid there attention to the fertility of land for subsistence. Thus the same one group has been found living in different parts of Nepal (Regmi, 1978).

Tharus main occupation is agriculture and animals husbandry though their women engage themselves in making bamboo baskets and beautiful Dhakki (a kind of receptacle made of cane) and nice fans of wheat straw. They sets traps for the wild animals that came to destroy their crops and when caught they are put to death by means of spears and Lathis (staves) (Shrestha and Singh, 1987).

Tharu people are seen to practice an ancient from of sustainable agriculture with the breeding of animals on one side while cultivating the



on the other side. Most Tharu family possess 5-6 cows, the same number of goats, oxen, pigs and festivals where the demand for sacrifice of a variety of animals is essential. These animals are later consumed. Thus, it is observed that along with gains in manure, the compulsory breeding of animal is for fulfilling the religious and social demand of the community (Gautam and Thapa Magar, 1994).

Tharus are hard laborious ethnic group, their main occupation is agriculture. Tharus supply rice in different parts of Nepal by producing rice in fertile land of Terai. Apart from agriculture, they are also involved in fishing, making rope, Dhakki, mat etc. In some extent they are also involved in raising animals e.g. pig, buffalo and chicken. In addition to this, some of them are involved in business and poor Tharus subsist on working as wage labour or working for others (Dahal, 2049).

Rajaure(1977) views that due to geographical cross cultural and cross linguistic factors, several regional varieties of Tharu culture have developed in different parts of the country within the narrow belt of Tharu inhabitation. He loosely put these cultural variations into the major two groups less influenced by other cultures and more influenced by other cultures.

According to Rajaure, "There was no interaction in significant degree between Tharu and non-Tharu in the time before the eradication of malaria as few non-Tharus landlords who had controlled over most of the land in Dang valley, used to come down only for few months in winter of year while the Tharus were working there as their tenant farmers for the whole year. But there occurred great interaction then before between the Tharus and non-Tharus, the immigrants from the hill, after the implementation of malaria eradication and land reform programs. However, as he notes, these two programs, which proved very helpful and beneficial to hill people, proved less fruitful and unfortunate to the Tharus. Tharus prefer disciplined manner are peaceful and obey the rules of society while the hill people in the other hand are a freedom living people with a material spirit dislike to remain under the control or domination of others. So the first impact that took place in Tharu villages, after the immigration of hill people, according to Rajaure's findings was "the decay and neglect of the village level rules, customs and disciplines, which had been imposed up till then by the committee of the Mahaton and the Tharu household chiefs."

Describing the general socio-economics condition of Tharus, Pyakurel (1982) summarizes "Indeed they are one of the major ethnic groups in the Terai region and one of the more underdeveloped groups in Nepal. Their history is a story of extreme deprivation enormous hardship and class exploitation. Because of physical and social isolation from the

development activities in region and from cultural contact with other people their superstitions backwardness and timidity were reinforced. As people they are generally illiterate and unschooled, they lack of awareness about their rights and privileges. The gap between them and non-Tharus is very wide.”

Pyakural had carried out his fieldwork in the eastern Chitwan, the main concern of his study was to explore how variability in settlements pattern affect the process of integration and economic modernization of farm people. The research was focused on four Tharu village that represent different location and compositional situations in the Chitwan district of Nepal. One between the two major findings of his study, which differs from what generally thought is that village location (centrality) is a more important conditional factor reinforcing the manifestation of ethnicity that is the ethnic composition of the village (homogeneity\diversity).It means that households in centrally located village (irrespective of their homogeneity\diversity) are to more isolated areas as the findings of the study tells. The next finding of the study is that no relationship is noted within the villages between degree of ethnicity of household and household’s inclination to adopt new farming practices, ethnicity (in a behaviors sense) and the adoption of agriculture innovations appears to be independents phenomenon. Pyakural considers this finding as indirect evidence that ethnicity does not hinder agriculture modernization and Rural Development.

A study was undertaken by Research Center for Education Innovation and Development (CERED) in 1980 on different Tharu community of Nepal to examine the education status of Tharu. In the CERED report, the major findings of the study are the Tharu are educationally a disadvantaged community, large number of Tharu of Tharu children goes to school from Tharu families living in mixed communities than from exclusive Tharu community and a small percentage of the Tharu children complete their education.

The economic factors found responsible by the study behind the low level of school enrollment of the Tharu children are landholding and food sufficiency. The study stated that landholding and food sufficiency of the family have strong relationship with the enrollment of the Tharu children.

A peculiar to point out is that despite the fact that Gautam Buddha was born in Nepal Terai at Lumbini, the Terains (Tharus) are not followers of Buddhism. They are mostly Hindu (Rakesh, 1994).

The economy of the Tharus is based on agriculture and animal husbandry. They no longer cultivate cotton but bye cheap clothes. They

live in joint families in compact, nucleated settlements. The house consists of large extended families. (Regmi, 1999)

In 1969, Prof. A.W. Mac Donald published an Article on two Tharu festivals, which he had observed in Dang valley. It was the first present the Tharu festival of Nepal in anthropological perspective.

In this way previous scholars have contributed by carrying out their studies on the Tharu indigenous of Nepal. The studies are mainly focused on the habitant, occupation, festivals, economic exploitation and ethnicity which are mostly anthropological studies. On the basis of location it is found that, the studies were centered most on Chitwan, Dang, Siraha, and Surkhet districts and some other district of the kingdom are still virgin to study.

As many previous studies are centered on people, culture and festivals in the anthropological sphere, there is lack of the study on socio-culture and economic life of the Tharus of Nepal. It is known that the major studies were come out about 15-20 years before. Since then, many changes have been occurred in the socio-economic and cultural life of the Tharus. Therefore, Present scholars should pay their attention to study the present socio-economic and cultural condition of the Tharus of Nepal.

# **CHAPTER-THREE**

## **Research methodology**

This chapter deals the research methodology of the present study. It includes the method of study, selection of study area, research design and method of data collection.

### **3.1 Rationale for the selection of the study area**

Based on the nature of the study, Pideri village of Benimanipur VDC is selected for the study where majority of the dwellers are Tharu. The following criteria are used to select the Pideri as a study area.

The economic condition of Tharu is miserable in comparison to other castes of Benimanipur VDC. The population of Tharu is higher in Benimanipur in comparison to other neighboring village and VDCs. Time and other limiting factors are study in Benimanipur than other VDCs vicinity to the researcher.

### **3.2 Research design**

A descriptive as well as analytical research design was applied in order to analyze and interpret the quantitative and qualitative data collected from the concerned field. This research design tends to describe the socio-cultural and economic condition of the Tharu people in sequential order.

### **3.3 Nature and sources of data**

Both primary and secondary data with quantitative as well as qualitative nature were used in this study. The primary data were collected through the interview schedule, observation and interview with key informants and the necessary secondary data were collected from VDC records, Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) and relevant literatures from library. In order to check the reliability of the collected information and data, an attempt was made to cross check the information by asking some question to other respondent.

### **3.4. The universe and sample size**

A unit of this study is Tharu household and the universe of this study is the sum total of Tharu households of this study area. The total population of the VDC is 8620 among them Tharu population is 689 (VDC office).

In this VDC there are 155 Tharu's households and among the nine wards in VDC ward no. 5 village is the area where Tharu reside densely. There are 120 households of Tharu which are located in Pideri. Among them 60 (50%) households was selected for households survey by using simple random sampling technique.

### **3.5 Techniques and tools of data collection**

To connect the primary data, different techniques and tools were applied.

#### **3.5.1. The interview schedule**

The interview was conducted in 60 households out of 120 using both structured and unstructured questionnaire. The basic quantitative information such as age, sex educational attainment, landholding, occupation and other socio-cultural and economic and economic characteristics of the household were gathered through household survey. The respondents were requested to fill up the questionnaire. In case of illiterate respondent, questions were asked to them and their answers were filled up to collect data.

#### **3.5.2 Observation**

The observation was used to get the relevant information for the study. It was used to observe the village settlement pattern, agriculture practices, dressing pattern and house type.

#### **3.5.3. Interview with key informant**

The aged people of the village, school teachers, village headman and those who have knowledge about Tharu of this study area were selected as key informant about socio-culture and economic condition of Tharus of Pideri village. Such information collected by the interviews with key informants was used as the qualitative data for this study.

### **3.6 Method of data analysis**

Data collected by different sources are manually processed with simple tabulation. Information on geographical setting of the village, family structure, and housing condition is descriptively analyzed. Information obtained on marriage, education attainment, population composition, economic status, income status, income and expenditure pattern are simply analyzed. Most of the data are calculated and tabulated with simple percentage.

# CHAPTER-FOUR

## The Overview of the Study Area

This VDC is popularly known as 'Sardi'. This name was derived from the Magar language in which 'sar' means lotus and 'di' means lake. It is said that there was a lake in the village where a lotus used to grow. It was only for the administrative purpose that it is named Benimanipur.

In 1963 malaria was eradicated in the Terai region then people started to settle in this region permanently most of them coming from the nearby Palpa region.

### 4.1 VDC Profile

This VDC lies six miles north of East-West Highway. It takes about three hours to reach the village from the highway. In the monsoon season there is no transportation facilities because rivers are flooded. Agriculture products and other goods are mostly transported by bullock carts or tractors. Only in winter days the villagers get bus services from Dumkibas to Benimanipur VDC.

According to the VDC office the total population of the village is 8620. There are altogether 1405 households, out of which 4366 are males and 4254 are females. Almost all the people who reside in this VDC are farmers. There are few people who go to work outside mainly to India. A very small number of people are engaged in governmental and non governmental services. Besides farming, some people are also engaged in cottage industry, trade, teashop, carpentry etc.

Health service facilities are very poor in this village. A sub health post was established from 1993 and there are few health related personnel. There is no electricity in this village. There is also lack of all weather motor able roads. People use bullock carts, tractors and porters to transport goods in monsoon time. This VDC has few telecommunication facilities but the postal services are being available. In this VDC people get information through the medium of radio. There is no such market where the villagers could at least manage their entire primary needs.

People usually go to Dumkibas, Arunkhola, and Bardaghat for marketing and other services. There is only one higher secondary school. The village children can study up to their higher secondary education within the village.

The general subsistence is based on agriculture which is traditional. The main crops of this area are paddy, wheat, maize, and mustard. Herding and livestock rearing are also prevalent in this VDC. Herding system is existed traditionally but high breed livestock domestication is spreading slowly. People of the various castes and creed inhabits in this VDC. They are different ethnic group such as Bharaman, Chhetri, Magar, Tharu, Newar, and Kumal. Nepali language is the medium of general communication. Tharu and Magar languages are also spoken by the people of these ethnic groups.

## **4.2 Natural Resources and land use pattern**

The natural resources of the study area can be divided into three types: Soil, Forest and Water. The soil is fertile, so it helps to yield more crops. The forest provides various types of wood, fruit and other forest related resources household and market purposes. The water used for drinking and irrigation purpose.

Study area has mainly plain topography and used for agriculture purpose that can be categorized as upland (Bari) and low land (Khet). Both types of land have been utilized twice a year for cropping farming. Major crops are paddy, wheat, maize, mustard, vegetables.

The people of study area are depended on forest for firewood, timber, fodder and other forest products for their daily consumptions, construction and seasonal agriculture needs.

Similarly sources of drinking water of study area are taps and under ground water managed by constructing tube-well. For the irrigation purpose, the local streams are utilized mainly in rainy season.

## **4.3 Climate**

The temperature of Nawalparasi district reaches up to 41c in April to July. Average annual temperature is 31.7c. January and February are cold. Rain falls more or less all the year except three month of winter. The annual rainfall occurs around 2000mm and temperature between 5c in winter to 41c in summer.

## **4.4 Income Sources**

Major income sources of inhabitant in the study area are agriculture which includes the production of cereals (rice, wheat, maize, etc.) and



vegetables. In livestock production of meat (goat, poultry, pig) and milk (cow and buffalo) are supportive income sources. Other income sources are daily production labor, mason, house servant and low level technical work in local level.

# CHAPTER-FIVE

## Analysis

### 5.1 Social characteristics of Tharu people

Every society is composed of many small characteristics like families, small organization, clubs, groups etc. Social characteristics of Tharu people depends on different factors like origins history of Tharu, Population structure of Tharu people, kinship, family size, types of family, health and sanitation, education, family planning, GOs and NGOs working in this community. These factors are described below.

This topic includes social character, life cycle ceremonies and social services like education, health and sanitation, family planning etc. This chapter also attempts to analyze the data and information collected for securing objectives and derives the major findings are systematically presented, described and analyzed in the subsequent sub-headings.

#### 5.1.1 Origins of Tharu

Nepal is multi- linguistic, multi-religious and multi racial/ethnic country. Among them Tharu is a major one. It is not proved that when and from where ancestor of Tharu came in this area. Different scholars give different opinions about it. Some scholars say that Tharu's ancestors were Rajput women of India. Rajputs were defeated by Muslim invasion and Rajput women run away with their servants into the forest areas for refuge. After sometimes these Rajput women cohabited with servants and local people and gave the birth of new cult known as Tharu (Bista, 1967). Some Rana Tharu women push plate of food toward their husbands by foot considering them as the descendents of Rajput blood and their husband as the servant hence higher status than their husbands (Gautam and Thapa Magar, 1984). But this custom is prevalent among Rana Tharu only. So, it is not universally applicable.

Some Say that the Tharu came from the *Thar* Desert of Rajasthan, India. So later were named Tharu. Whatever different scholars say about the origin, all try to prove that Tharu are migrant people but there is about it if they were migrants why they choose such malarial, forested and unhealthy land in spite of choosing more suitable and healthy land. The theory of descendents of Rajput women and their servants is not also applicable to all the Tharu of Nepal. Whatever different scholars say about the origin, it is not easy to prove that who came from where in

prehistoric period. And there is no doubt that Tharu is the indigenous people of Nepal as well as Nawalparasi district.

The Tharu are laborious, honest, sincere, simple-minded and most of illiterate people. They live in joint extended family up to 4-5 generations together. They are one of the more underdevelopment groups of Nepal. Their history is the story of stream deprivation, enormous hardship and class exploitation. Other clever groups take advantage of being simple nature of Tharu. They feel content with their own society and circumstances. This has kept them almost isolated within their own localities and made a group relatively unknown to outsiders. Because of their superstitious, backwardness and timidity, they are physically and socially isolated from development activities and cultural contact.

### 5.1.2 Population Structure of Tharu People

The selected research area of this study is Pideri village of ward-5, Benimanipur VDC where the Tharu reside densely. They are living in cluster. Out of 120 total household in Pideri village, only 60 households among them were selected as a sample for this study. Total population of Tharu is 342 in those 60 households.

**Table-5.1**

**Distribution of Tharu population by Age and sex**

Age Group	Male	Female	Total	Percent
0-5	29	26	55	16.08
6-14	54	61	115	33.62
15-30	41	52	93	27.19
30-60	36	35	71	20.46
Above 60	3	5	8	2.33
Total	163	179	342	100

*Source: Field survey 2008*

In this community, it can be said that there is high fertility and high mortality rate prevail in the study area.

### 5.1.3 Kinship

Different types of kin group are found among the Tharu of Pideri village. Among them consanguine and a final relationship are the most common.

Some terms of consanguine kin group are, Baba (father), Dao (Mother), Baje (Grandfather), Bajai (Grandmother), Didi (sister), Mama\Mami (Maternal uncle\Aunty), Kaka\Kaki (Uncle\Aunty), Mausai, Bani (Mother's Sister), Fui (Father's sister), Beta (Son), Beti(Daughter) etc.

Similarly some terms for a final kin groups are, Sasura (Father in law), Sas (Mother in law), Jeth\Dewara\Bhatu (Brother in law), Nanad\Bhauji (Sister in law), Damad (Son in law), Bahuriya (Daughter in law), Bhada (Brother's son) etc. Tharu people of this area marry in their caste and outside and inside relationship. Cross cousin marriage is also used in this community.

### 5.1.4 Types of family

Family is the basic and universal social structure. The family is a group defined as an institution for the procreation and upbringing of persons, united by the ties of marriage, blood and adoption constituting a single household interacting with each other in their respective social roles of husband and wife, son and daughter and brother and sister etc.

There are two types of family in this Tharu community. In this area both joint and nuclear family were found. Among the 60 households of Tharu, the types of the families were found as in the table below.

**Table-5.2**

#### **Distribution of households by family type.**

<b>Family Type</b>	<b>Households</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Nuclear	27	45%
Joint	33	55%
Total	60	100%

*Source: Field Survey, 2008*

The table shows that out of 60 household 45% Tharu lives in the nuclear family and 55% are in joint family. There are different reasons behind disintegration of joint family system leads home for idles, encourages, litigation, leads to quarrel, privacy define, uncontrolled procreation. So they separate after they got married.

### 5.1.5 Family size

In total 60 households, the family size varies from 2-12 members. The family size is shown in the table below.

**Table-5.3****Households by family size**

<b>Family size</b>	<b>No. of household</b>	<b>Percent</b>
1-4	11	18.33
5-8	26	43.33
9-11	16	26.67
12 & above	7	11.67
Total	60	100

*Source: Field survey, 2008*

The above table reveals that out of total households, the family size of 1-4 members was found 18.33%. This family size is generally known as small and good. The family size with family members of 5-8 can be categorized into medium which one was found occupied 43.33% of the total sample households. In such household to carry out educational, economic activities is harder than in above small family size. The family size with members of 9-11 size was found covered 26.67%. In such household to provide all modern facilities is not easily possible as it requires huge amount of income, which were found of extremely larger size having the member more than 12 in number. The average family size in this community is 5.77 members per family.

**5.1.6 Drinking water and sanitation**

Pure drinking water and sanitation is the most necessary thing for healthy life. Drinking water is one of the main affecting factors of health. In the past the rural people used to use spring water and public well for drinking water but now tube-well are in their villages. Therefore the sources of drinking water are taken as an indicator to find out the health situation of the study area. The detail is given in the table below.

**Table-5.4****Sources of Drinking water of sampled Households**

<b>Sources</b>	<b>No. of Household</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Public well	37	61.67
Tube\private well	23	38.33
Total	60	100

*Source: Field survey, 2008*

From the above tables, it is clear that the majority 61.67% household use the public well for drinking water and remaining 38.33% household use the private tube well for drinking water.

In sample household, there is no making and using the toilet 60 percent household in this community. So they used to go nearby bushes and stream for excretion. The toilet using practice of sample households is given in the table below.

**Table-5.5**

**Toilet using practice of sampled households**

<b>Attributes</b>	<b>No.of Household</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Kachchi Toilet	24	40
No Toilet	36	60
Total	60	100

*Source: Field survey 2008*

Above table shows that only 40% of total household use Kachhi toilet and 60% household have no toilet. Toilet using practice is not satisfactory.

**5.1.7 Health service**

In rural society health is the synonyms of Dhami/Jhankari. The people still believe in Lago, Boksi etc. In this Tharu community, when anyone falls sick the patient is sent firstly to their own Gurau. If the patient does not recover by the treatment of Gurau, then only the patient is carried to the nearby health center and hospital. But treatment practice during illness is directly related to the health situation of human being. Therefore the practice of treatment during illness of sampled household also studied. The table given below describes about the treatment practice of sampled households in first priority basic.

**Table- 5.6**

**Treatment practice**

<b>Treatment practice</b>	<b>No. of household</b>	<b>percent</b>
Gurau	27	45
Health post	13	21.67
Both	20	33.33
Total	60	100

*Source: Field survey, 2008*

In the above table the majority 45 percent of sample household visits to their own Guruwa at firstly and 21.67% visit to the health center. Similarly 33.33% visit both Gurau and health post simultaneously. In the simple cases of illness they at first visit health centre.

## 5.1.8 Education

Education is the measurement of the socio economic development of community and nation. It is said that education is the heart of everyone's life who wants to make it bright. National census 2048 shows that 40% people are literate in average. Level of education in the Tharu community is found as in the table below.

**Table-5.7**

### Level of education in Tharu community

Educational Attainment	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Illiterate	50	35.46	75	51.72	125	43.71
Literate	40	28.36	37	25.52	77	26.92
Primary level	31	21.98	20	13.79	51	17.83
Lower s. level	11	7.80	8	5.52	19	6.64
Secondary level	8	5.67	7	4.83	15	5.24
Higher s. level	1	0.7	0	0	1	0.34
Total	141	100	145	100	286	100
Children under 5 years					56	

*Source: Field survey 2008*

*Note: Children under 5 years of age have not been considered by literate or illiterate.*

Above table shows that, among the total 286 people (excluded under 5 years age) 125(43.71%) people have never been enrolled in school and have unable to read and write. So they are illiterate. 77 (26.92%) population are found literate. The literate people are mostly young people. In whole sample population, only one male is found intermediate (12) passed.

### 5.1.9 Family Planning

The major problem of Nepal is pressure, which is affecting the efforts made of government for the betterment of the people. The family planning program of government is lurching slowly in village. Some Tharu men have undergone vasectomy operation and some tharu women have undergone laparoscopy operation. Few of the man and also women use other means of contraceptive for temporary family planning. The knowledge and awareness of the planning seems to be low among the Tharu of study area.

**Table-5.8**

**Distribution of respondents by using contraceptive devices in the study area.**

<b>Method</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Vasectomy	4	6.67
Laparoscopy	17	28.33
Temporary Family Planning	11	18.33
Not any	28	46.67
Total	60	100

*Source: Field survey, 2008*

The above table shows that out of 60 respondents, 53 percent know at least one method of family planning, 18% have used temporary family planning method. Similarly, 6.67% have done vasectomy operation and 28% percent female have done permanent laparoscopy. 46.67 percent have not used any means of family planning.

### 5.1.10 Garbage Disposal

Household waste material garbage is the root cause of making environment dirty and unhygienic for health. Most of the rural villagers are still not awake about their surrounding environment and they throw wastage every where. But now by taking different training about home made wastage maintenance they are practicing to make compost fertilizer and keep the surrounding areas clean. Therefore the details about practice of garbage disposal of sampled household are shown in the table below.



**Table 5.9****Practice of Garbage Disposal of sampled Households**

<b>Attributes</b>	<b>No. of Household</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Piling in manure pit	27	45
Piling in open space	21	35
Throwing Haphazardly	2	3.33
Burning	10	16.67
Total	60	100

*Source: Field survey, 2008*

The about table informs that 45 percent household were piling waste materials in to a manure pit, 35 percent piling in open space, 3.33 through haphazardly and remaining 16 percent burning the waste material.

**5.1.11 Work distribution in families**

It is found that in the families of Tharu, each member of household has his\her own responsibility for running a family life. In the most of the houses, man is the head of household. The head of household has the main role in decision making. In this community men do hard and heavy work, like plugging land, construction house, carrying heavy load etc. Women work, like preparing meal, caring children and animal caring. Women also do collecting firewood and harvesting and planting crops. Children after the age of 7/8 they assist their mother in household work. The work distribution and working hours of men and women and children in Tharu community is shown below in the table.

**Table-5.10****Work distribution in Family**

<b>Family member</b>	<b>Work distribution</b>	<b>Average working hours</b>
Men	To plough the land in farming season, Daily wage labor etc	9 hours per day
Women	House and shed cleaning, preparing meal and feeding animals-morning etc	8 hours per day
Children	Grazing animals on holiday and bring water for cooking	3 hours per day
Old people	Grazing animal	5 hours per day

*Source: Field survey, 2008*

## 5.1.12 Leadership and Development

Leadership is very important factor for human being for society. No one can stand peaceful life in the society in the absence of the leadership. Leadership is needed for uniting society, creating peacefulness and making the society best and fair.

**Table-5.11**

**Distribution of respondents by knowledge on development and contact with development workers.**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Respondent</b>					
	Yes	%	No	%	Total	%
Knowledge on development	26	43.3	34	56.67	60	100
Contact with development workers	10	16.67	50	83.34	60	100

*Source: Field Survey, 2008*

The above table shows that out of 60% respondents only 43.33 percent have some knowledge about development. And similarly only 16.67 percent were in contact with development workers. This table proved that they are less conscious on development.

## **5.2 Cultural Characteristic of Tharu people**

This chapter analyses the cultural characteristics of Tharu people. Culture is the most important factor which directly affects the developmental pace of the society. Culture is the mirror of the society. Culture, both material and nonmaterial, of a community, are the indicators of achieved development and at the same time they show the destination of the society where it aims to reach.

Each society has its own culture. Culture is transformed from one generation to next generation by the way of learning. Culture socializes people. All ethnic groups/castes found in Nepal have developed their own culture according to their beliefs and convenience. Tharu people also have their own culture. They perform some rituals according to their culture. The rituals (Life cycle ceremonies) to be performed in Tharu communities are described as followings.

### **5.2.1 Birth**

Tharu people do not celebrate as marriage and death because they do not give important attention to birth as other group of people. But children are highly desired by Tharu with no discrimination between boy child and girl child.

In this community birth of a son is not taken as so important matter as the other Hindu society. Most of them prefer equal number. Children are considered helping hands of their parents as Tharu work manually in agriculture. So they need manual labor force in agriculture. And we can see the birth rate and number of children are high in Tharu society. Although it is found some young Tharu of Pideri are using family planning method.

Nothing is done after conception but the pregnant women are exempted from hard work. Normally pregnant women gives birth to a child in inner bed room but sometimes she gives birth in the fields, Streets because she keeps working on just before a child's birth. Mother and new born baby are considered as the polluted so they are not supposed to touch or come in to direct contact by others. Only Sudeni (Traditional midwife) or those who have to care for the mother. Sudeni comes twice a day during the confinement. The room is kept warm by burning fire wood the mother and new born baby. She also washes the clothes. After completing her job she should take bath to be pure.

Generally after 4 or 5 days when the umbilical cord dries and falls off the ritual called *Ghatwa Karaina* is performed to purify mother and child. Until this ceremony new born baby and mother as well as their room is also considered polluted.

All the things of her room are taken out side on the day. The floor is smeared with cow dung to make it pure. All clothes used by mother and baby must be washed. Both mother and child should take bath. Mother should go to water resources for bath. After putting rice and money on the winnowing fan, the child is laid down on it and is shown to the sun. And *Gurwa* worship god offering chicken, egg, alcohol, milk and sacred water on the courtyard. *Sunpani* (Water which is touched on gold) is sprinkled over the mother and child for purification.

After *Ghatwa Karaina* ceremony the mother gains the status as before. She is not allowed to participate in household works as usual but for weeks she does not do heavy works and carries heavy load.

### **5.2.2 Name Giving Ceremony**

There is not certain time and ceremony for name giving. There is practice of giving names on the basis of events, places, festivals related to birth of child. For example if a child born on the Wednesday (*Budhabar*), the child is *Buddhi* or *Budhhe*, the child born in the month of *Falgun* is named *Faguni*. Generally *Tharus* do not like to be addressed by their names. They are generally addressed as *Chaudhary* by the outsiders. For their day to day use *Tharus* are called by their position in their sibling hierarchy in the family. For example eldest son is called *Badka*, second son is called *Majhala* and youngest son is called *Chhotaka* and their wives are also addressed by their husband's position in the sibling hierarchy of the family e.g wife of eldest son is addressed as *Badki*, wife of second son as *Majhili*, and wife of youngest son as *Chhotki*.

### **5.2.3 Chhaewar**

This is the ceremony of cutting hair of son for the first time. If family can afford, this ceremony is celebrated of all sons and if family is poor, it is done at least of the first son. Generally this ceremony is performed at the age of four or five. This is done on Monday or Wednesday in the month of *Falgun*. Family deity is worshipped offering wine and maternal uncle cuts the hair of child. He also gives some present to child. After that grand feast is organized for invited guests cutting chicken, he-goats, sheep, pigs and they also drink wine. Father of child goes to river. No such ritual is celebrated for girl child. Menstrual and menstrual cycle don't

considered polluted. So, monthly menstrual cycles don't observe as polluted.

## **5.2.4 Marriage system**

Marriage is another important rite to be performed in all societies according to their culture. The bond of marriage provides legal rights for the couple towards each other. Marriage establishes relationship between two different families. Marriage is thought to be a religious activity as well as a moral duty in all societies and religions. The ways of performing marriage are different in different societies. Marriage is thought to be a religious activity as well as a moral duty in all societies and religions. The ways of performing marriage are different in different societies. In this Tharu community marriage can be done in many different ways, but mostly arranged marriage is in practice in the Tharu society because such type of marriage is socially permitted and considered to be a holy marriage. The different forms of marriage forms marriage practice in this society are as follows:

### **5.2.4.1 Arrange Marriage**

Generally there are two systems of fixing the arrange marriage.

#### **a) The Exchange Marriage**

In this exchange marriage system a family of bridegroom must give or make promise to give one of its girls to the family of bride. This system of marriage helps Tharu in many ways. This system is considered practical in this society. This system was more prevalent in past then today. Poor Tharu can't give cash for the girl and this system also saves the trouble of fixing the bride price. There is chance of being age difference between partners. That's why the birth of son does not bring about real happiness because of exchange marriage system or bride-price system in Tharu society. Equal number of children is though to be better for marriage.

#### **B) Bride Price Marriage System**

According to this marriage system certain amount of money and goods have to be paid for the bride to her family by a boy's side. Bride price is called Jhanga in this society. This type of marriage is difficult and creates problems in a poor Tharu family.

During the Study period the bride price was rupees seven thousand to twelve thousand, one Dharni oil or Ghee, fifty Pathis of rice, pig, salt and white clothes. The price is determined by the background of girls. If she is unmarried and good looking girl her price is high and if the bride is widow or divorced her price is low.

But nowadays due to the influence of Hindu society, practice of making ornaments for bride by boy's side and giving some present to son in law by the parents of girl and other family members is on practice.

Generally the age of marriage of Tharus is fourteen, fifteen to twenty four, twenty five. Mostly marriage is done in the month of Falgun. This month is considered better for marriage though marriage is also done in other months. The traditional method is long and unique. Nowadays there is decrease on marriage done by traditional rituals but not totally in modernized way.

The main ceremony of marriage is called Bhoj on the days of marriage bridegroom takes a bath and worships to his kuldevta and offers wine. He also worships knife lying by the side of deity which keep with him through out the marriage. He also worships village deity under the direction of Ghar Gurwa. The bride grooms wears turban and white clothes but nowadays he puts in pant, shirts and cap then marriage procession start with the musicians walking ahead playing the instruments. Guruwa and a few Tharu singers sing song.

When bridegroom reaches to bride's village there also he visit and pay homage to the shrines of the deities of that village. Girls of bride's village come and tease the bridegroom and his party. But the party of bridegroom's side walk quit silently towards the bride's house. After approaching the bride's house wine is poured into the mouths of Dwala carriers. Marriage procession is welcomed by asking them to sit on the straw mat. The bridegroom sits beside the knife which is brought by him self. One of the women of the bride's family cleans the feet of bride groom and few other respected person of groom's family, then the groom is taken to deity room where he offers a wine which he has brought from his home to God and sticks the knife into ground. He is offered food and home made beer. Mean while outside the deity-room groom's party served with home made beer and feast. Groom rejoins his party and spends the night with them. After dinner some people go to sleep while other entertains singing and dancing and teasing groom's party.

The next day, around 4 am groom takes a bath and puts on formal dress. After that sun warming ceremony is marked. Mats are laid around fire. This is done in the courtyard and one person holds on open umbrella over the groom. After Dhahej dharana (dropping the dowry) is marked. In

this ritual, a metal pot is brought from bride's house in which bride's father of headman of bride's house drops one rupee into it. Then other members of family, guests and people from both sides drop money. This money called the Dahej (dowry) and it becomes the personal property of the couple.

#### **5.2.4.2 Marriage by Elopement**

It is also found the practice of getting married without the permission of their parents. In such marriage, they stay outside of their area and send message to their home. When their parent asks them to come home they come home and ceremony is preformed just as the arrange marriage.

#### **5.2.4.3 Re-marriage**

Re-marriage is popular in Tharu community. If women dissatisfied with her husband then come to natal home and refuse to go back to her husband's home and marries with another man. Similarly, if husband is not happy with his wife then he brings second wife. Widow marriage is also common in this community.

#### **5.2.4.4 Levirate and Surrogate**

In this community, they have a custom that a widow can marry with her husband's younger brother. Similarly, there is practice that a widower marries with the younger sister of his deceased wife. However, such system is not so popular among the Tharu community of Benimanipur.

#### **5.2.5-Death**

Death is considered as one of the events of great significance of the Tharu societies as also in the other tribal communities. Tharu accepts the term of death with the belief of new life after the death. After death, the boy is put on a bamboo frame, tied with a string and covered with cloth. After death the dead body is surrounded by katro and is taken to the river, the body is placed in it is filled. Rice is spread along the burial route, for it is believed that as birds start picking the grain, the dead person's sin is washed away. After the burial all members of funeral party bath in the river. If sons are many, only eldest son set for kora (uteri) other brothers help him in different activities. The person who lived on kora called kiriyaputri (kartahar). The purification completed in 13 days. In this event, they give jal to the tree of Bar and Pipal for the memories of their relatives. In 12 days village invited and giving Bhoj. The kiriyaputri remains in barakhi up to one year after

death. In this barkhi up to one year hair cutting prohibited. In the day of barkhi leaving, he has to go bank of river or some religious place and cuts hair and give Tarpan. After this, in every pitri aunsi they give Tarpan in the memory of their Pitri.

### **5.2.6 Clothing**

Tharu dress wear little, thin cloth because of the hot climate. Traditionally male Tharus wear Bhoto (a kind of Nepali vest), loin cloth of white cotton and cap.

But nowadays, shirt, waist coat, half pant is the most popular dress among the Tharu of Pederi. Most of them wear Nepali cap. Some educated Tharus have taken to European and modern dress like other caste people of Nepal. Tharu women of Pideri wear knee length dress Gunew (sari) and cholo (blouse).

But now days, Tharu women whether unmarried girls or married women wear colorful knee length sari and blouse with buttons and Kurta Salwar.

### **5.2.7 Ornaments**

Tharu women like to themselves with ornaments as in the case with women of almost all tribes. On their ears, these Tharu women wear the mundri on which a silver jhilmiliya and huge. On their nostril is a phuli or sometimes a nattha is also hooked on. On their arms wear bangle like ornaments called tra, which is made base on metal or silver. They wear shellac bangle on their wrist and at the two ends of the feet are decorated with rings too. The most attractive use of ornaments made by Tharu women is on the neck, where they hang multi colored glass beads (pote) and silver coin necklaces around the neck. They put on tika (tikuli) on their forehead. It seen that they use very little ornaments made of gold. Name of ornaments are kalli worn on the ankle and look like large rings. The married woman tattoos their hand, legs and their breast with elaborate motifs. It is believed that if the women not do this, then that women cook is not worthy to be eaten. But I found in my field area that this tattoo system is not compulsion as before.

### **5.2.8 Food and Drink**

Most of Tharu people eat rice three times a day. Rice is the staple food of the Tharu and most of the Tharu are non-vegetarians. They consume more fish, meat and alcohol (jaad and raksi) than vegetables, bread and



milk and other item made by milk. The kinds meat they eat consist of chicken, pork, pigeons, sparrow, rat, rabbit, he-goat etc. They take breakfast, lunch and dinner in a day all of content rice. Alcohol (jaad and raksi) is necessary in every festival. They welcome their guest by jaad and raksi with meat and fish.

### **5.2.9 Religion and Festival**

There are many different religious followed in different societies. Main religions found in Nepalese society are Hinduism, Buddhism, Muslim and Christian. Religion is an important thing, which leads society towards disciplined life. Religion creates bond in society and promotes morale in human nature. About 80% of Nepalese people believe in Hinduism.

Most of Tharu people of this community are follower of Hinduism. When they get trouble or when they need something desperately, they pray and request God/Goddess for relief or for the wanted thing. They go to temple of the God/Goddess whom they had prayed to make their wish fulfilled. At home, they worship Kuldevata God of their clan. They believe that worshiping of Kuldevata will help them to lead a prosperous and healthy life.

Tharu indigenious are entertained with many festivals through out the year. Festivals are major aspects of people's life. Celebrating, festivals give entertainment to people and it strengthens the bond among family members. The main festivals Tharu people celebrate are Maghi, Fagu (Holi), Dashain, Dewari, Jitiya, Jarmaastami (Krishna Astattami).

#### **5.2.9.1 Maghi**

The Maghi festival is celebrated on the first day of Magh. In the last day of Paush the Tharu man and women go for fishing early in the morning. They eat fish, meat and alcohol (jaad and raksi). At the last day of paush they cook chichar, which is cooked only in that day and eat in the next day. They eat shakhatkhanda (sweet potato), banana, sugarcane, tarul, chaku, chiura etc in that day. Married sister and daughter are invited that day and enjoyed with food.

#### **5.2.9.2 Fagu (Holi)**

Fagu is the most important festival of Tharu in Pideri. During the Falgun on the day before the full moon, they celebrate it greatly. There is folk story about when and why this festival started. In mythological period, there was a demon named Hiranya Kashyap. He had son named Praladh.

In apposition to his father Praladh was a devotee of God. He did not stop praying God in spite of his father's threatening. At last his father ordered his sister Holika to take Praladh in her lap and sit in a fire because Holika had the blessing of immunity of fire and he wanted to kill his son by burning. But by the blessing of God Holika got burnt and praladh remained alive. So, this festival is celebrated making happiness of victory of truth against the false. On this day, Tharu people gather in one place and entertained themselves by throwing abir and other colorable materials on each other and sing a holi song and dance in group with help of musical instrument.

### **5.2.9.3 Dashain**

Dashain is one the great festival of Tharus as well as all Hindu of Nepal celebrated in the month of Ashwin and Kartik. The Dashain is taken as a victory of Hindu Deities over the demons and it is also taken as happy ceremony due to Rawan is killed by Ram. The Thauru celebrated Dashain up to 10 days. The Tharus Dashain actually starts in the 8<sup>th</sup> day called Maha Asttami. In this day they worship of ancestral deities. Other program is like Hindu of Nepalese.

### **5.2.9.4 Dewari (Tihar)**

This festival falls in the month of Kartik (Oct/Nov). Tharu celebrate Dewari up to 5 days. On the first day of Tihar, they worship crow, second day they worship dog and third day they worship goddesses Laxmi and eat varieties of food and sing and dance in a group called Deusu and Vailo. In this festival Tharu people make a special food (Roti) with the mix of water and chamal ko pitho (water and rice flour) and steam it, this food is very hygienic for health. On the last day of Tihar the sisters put tika on the foreheads of their brothers. Besides this, they also worship their ancestral deities for five days.

### **5.2.9.5 Jarmasttami**

Tharu address Kirshna Asttami as Jarmasttami. The Jarmasttami is celebrated in the month of Bhadra on the same day all over the Nepal. In this day women and girls take fasting and spend night by singing the songs related to the Krishna and dancing.

### **5.2.9.6 Jitiya**

Women celebrate a festival in honor of Krishna on the eight day of waxing moon (asttami) in Aug/Sept. The Tharu women and girl practices this festival by fasting for a whole day, worshiping, singing and dancing. In this day women sing and dance in group which is called Jamta dance. In the evening eat some fruits and milk.

## 5.3 Economics System

The economic system of the Tharu community is subsistent type. Agriculture and labour works are the main occupation of Tharu people of this area. Among 60 households, three households are landless. Other 57 households have their own land but not enough to grow crops as much as the need. Livestock farming can't be done in professional way because of fodder unavailability. They tame few cattle for manure purpose. So the economy of this community is not strong.

### 5.3.1 Occupation

For the survival, people need to be engaged in occupation. Most of Nepalese people are involved in agriculture. Tharu people here also are involved in agriculture. Tharu people here also are involved in agriculture. At the break time of farming, they do labour work as their secondary occupation. The table below shows the occupational status of 164 adult Tharu (Population from 15 to 60 years).

**Table-5.12**

#### **Occupational status of Tharu people**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>No. of people</b>	<b>percent</b>	<b>Remark</b>
Only farming	68	41.46	
Farming+labour work*	63	38.41	
Farming+carpenter*	11	6.71	
Living on only labour work	9	5.49	*secondary occupation
Business	6	3.66	
Service	7	4.27	
Total	164	100	

*Source- Field Survey, 2008*

Among 342 people of Tharu community 8 people are old people, 115 are below 15 years and 164 adult are involved in different types of occupation. From the data above shows 41.46% of the adults population are engaged in only farming, 38.41% of the adults population are engaged in agriculture and labour work. 6.71 of adults population are engaged in farming and carpenter, 5.49 of the adult population are living on only labour work. 3.66 adults population are engaged in business work based on agriculture and remaining 4.27 of the adults population are engaged in different service. (Teacher, peon, police)

### 5.3.2 Agriculture

Tharu people of this community are adopting agriculture as their main occupation since the time immemorial. For them agriculture is important both for subsistence and market economy. Agriculture is important in the same way to all economic strata.

Generally, they are always engaged in their agricultural works. Man and woman both equally participate in the farm work. Here, agriculture involves the production of food grains, cash crops and various kinds of vegetables. In other words, agriculture is highly labour consuming activities particularly in the traditional agrarian community like Tharu. From the study it is found that more than 85% populations are involved in agriculture. Because of the agricultural occupation land is the most important among the Tharu for livelihood.

#### 5.3.2.1- Land holding size of the respondents

The occupational pattern indicates that majority of Tharu household depended on agriculture. Therefore, the size of farming land and land ownership are the main indicators of economics status of Tharu. The possession of land is greatly valued, among the Tharu of Pideri. It is valued not simply as a factor of income and security. On the other land it is an index of social status and prestige. In this village, out of 60 household 57 household have their own land. Only 3 household have not their own land. The following table shows the size of landholding in the Tharu community.

**Table-5.13**

#### **Land holding size of respondent**

<b>Landholding in kattha</b>	<b>No. of H.H</b>	<b>percent</b>	<b>NO. of months they can eat from their own land production</b>
landless	3	5	0
1-10	21	35	5
11-20	16	26.67	6
21-30	15	25	8
31 and above	5	8.33	12
Total	60	100	-

*Source: Field Survey, 2008*

According to the above table, 3 households were found landless 21 house owned 1-10 katthha, 16 households owned 21-30 katthha land out of 60 households only 5 households have occupied 31 and above land size.

Out of 60 total Households, 35% households have 5 month food sufficiency, Similarly 26.67% household have up to 6 month food sufficiency, 25% households have 8 month food sufficiency and remaining other 8.33% households have over a year food sufficiency.

\*20 kattha=1Biga

### **5.3.2.2- Rented in**

Apart from 11 households all Tharu households rented in other land under share cropping system. Though most Tharu household have own land but it is insufficient for a whole year so 49 households farm other land in share cropping.

### **5.3.2.3- Form of tenant**

Apart form 11, all households of Pideri work as tenant farmers in other's land owned by other cast groups pm a share cropping basis. There are two forms of share cropping in the village.

#### **a) Adhiya**

In this system, the landlord gets 50% of the production and pays for seeds, fertilizer, labour, (if labour is hired) as well as revenue. Except 13 households all 47 households divide the production on according to this system.

#### **b) Trikhut**

In this system landlord gets one third of the production and all costs is paid by the tenants except revenue. In Pideri 13 households divide the production under this system.

#### **c) Thekka**

In this system tenant must be give production to landlord that is held in coordination between tenant and landlord.

### **5.3.2.4- Classification of land**

There id traditional classification of land which is divided into two types Khet and Bari. Bari is called the land where crops except paddy are production like maize, wheat, mustard, potatoes and other vegetables. Bari is heavily manure with organic fertilizer.

The crop grown in Khet is mainly rice. Nowadays Khet is heavily manure with chemical fertilizer. Secondary crops such as barely, linseed and wheat are grown.

### 5.3.3- Labour Exchange

Tharu people at the time of farming exchange labour inside their community as well as outside their community with other caste people. It is called Parma. In this system they exchange work. They work at there neighbour on the condition that they also will get equal work from them. The rate of labour exchange is one women equal one woman, whole day works equal whole day work. One man equal to two women (if man not possible) and the man with oxen (with ploughing land) equal three women but the people who hold service can't go for parma, they have to pay 60 Rs/ day for women and 120 Rs /day for man and 60 Rs / day for oxen.

### 5.3.4- Livestock Farming and poultry Farming

Tharu people of this community are farming different livestock/ cattle such as cows, oxen, buffalo, goat, sheep, pig, pig hen etc. This community is environmentally and naturally suitable for livestock farming. But the Tharu people of this community are not accepted cattle farming as a professionally. They are only farming for household expenditure. The following table shows the number of animals kept in the Tharu community.

**Table 5.14**

#### **Situation of livestock farming in the Tharu community.**

No. of Animals	1-2 Animals	3-5 Animals	More than 5 Animals
No.of household	12	23	25

*Source: field survey 2008.*

Above table shows that 12 household were found who kept 1-2 animals, 23 households were found keeping 3-5 animals and 25 households were found having more than 5 animals. The animals tamed in those houses were cows, oxen, buffalo, got, pigs and sheep.

Tharu people were self dependent in the production of chicken. But they are getting problem in poultry farming, chicken are attacked by a kind of strong disease which kills them. They have not consulted any veterinarian about this disease.

### **5.3.5 Wage labor**

Most of Tharu people of the study area depended on wage labour for their livelihood. In the off-season of agriculture, they go to find work at construction site. Tharu men work as carpenter and mason at construction site. Women collect sand from river or carry load of construction material at construction site. The rate of daily wage varies by sex, age and types of work. According to the respondents, laborers get wages varying from 60 Rs to 200 Rs for a whole day work.

### **5.3.6 Service Holding**

Seven people from this community were found engaged in different kinds of jobs like police, teacher, and peon.

### **5.3.7 Fishing and Hunting**

One of the subsidiary professions of Tharu is fishing. Children, old men and women all catch fish. Mainly fish is consumed at home but sometimes they also sell. Beside this, Tharu hunt animals, birds. In such activities they catch nice small bird named Battai especially.

### **5.3.8 Making Handcraft**

Tharu do not live idle in their needs. They produce and make all the things of their needs. They are self dependent. Making handcrafts is also one of the sectors for household production. The Tharu make several types of basket, mats, nets, and traps. Women weave different pattern of picture of flower and animals in basket and mats. They make handcraft for their domestic use or present in different occasion and also sell in the local market.

### **5.3.9 Liquor Making**

Tharu people are known as liquor drinking people. They like to drink alcohol like Jaad and Raksi (alcohol). They say, while doing physical work, need to drink alcohol. They need to drink alcohol as they do physical work. In past, they could make sufficient alcohol at their home.



At present, because of unavailability of firewood and cereals, they can't make alcohol as before. Women of Tharu community make alcohol. Some women of this community make alcohol and sell it in the village. They sell alcohol in 40 Rs/liter.

### 5.3.10 Annual Incomes

Most of the Tharu people's source of income is agriculture, than the laboring is their one of the source of income. Many Tharu people rear the livestock but it can't hold their economic needs, but little of need it fills. Because of uneducated, only little of them work in office like. Some Tharu have business work. Most of their business works depend on agricultural production.

**Table-5.15**

#### **Distribution of respondents by income sources**

<b>Source</b>	<b>No. household</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Agriculture	24	40
Agriculture +labor	21	35
Only laboring	4	6.67
Service	6	10
Business	5	8.33
Total	60	100

*Source: Field Survey, 2008*

Table no 7.4 shows the distribution of income sources. 40% Tharu people's sources of income is only agriculture, 35% from agriculture +laboring and 6.67 depend on only labor work. 10% Tharu people's sources of income is service and 8.33% people's income source is Business. With this analysis of the table, we can say the income source of Tharu people of Pideri of Benimanipur VDC is not so good because most of their income source is not securing.

# **CHAPTER- SIX**

## **Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations**

### **6.1. Summary**

Nepal is a country where different castes, ethnic people and different local language are found. There are high mountains, mid hills and plain (Terai). In these different geographical areas, people from different ethnic groups inhabit.

This study is about socio-cultural and economic condition of Tharu people in Nepal with Reference to Benimanipur VDC of Nawalparasi district. The specific objectives of the study are to identify the existing social condition of Tharu people in the study area. The entire output of the study is based on the field work with the application of field survey by interview schedule, key informant interviews and semi-participant observation. The research design consists of the combination of both qualitative and quantitative data collected from both primary and secondary sources. Descriptive research design has been applied for the collection, analyses and presentation of the information and findings.

In Benimanipur VDC of Pideri, there are total 120 Tharu households. Among these households, I have selected only 60(50 %) households for household survey by using simple random sampling technique. In these 60 households, there is 342 populations comprising 163 male and 179 female. Out of total population the children less than 5 years is 20.19% which denotes the rapid growth of population. Among total population 286(not excluding under 5 year's age) 43.71% are illiterate and remaining 26.92% are literate and remaining 29.37% are also literate and studying primary, lower secondary, secondary and higher secondary level. Tharu people even in this 21 century believe in witch craft and go to treat themselves to witch doctor instead of going to nearby hospital. In sanitation, tharu people were found ignorant. New generation of Tharu were found conscious in family planning. More than 50% of couples have done family planning. They prefer the number of child, 2 in minimum and 5 in maximum.

Politically Tharu people are not active. They don't take interest in political decision making. So the Government doesn't show any concern to allocate budget for the development of Tharu's village. But, inside their community economically and physically strong men lead.

Tharus are of average sized and mongoloid appearance people. They follow Hinduism, but their culture is unique. Their customs and traditions are different than other ethnic people. In marriage, they normally marry inside their caste but outside maternal and paternal relationship. Mostly arranged marriage is in practice in Tharu society because such types of marriage is socially permitted and considered to be a holy marriage. They perform other life cycle rituals according to Hindu way and they celebrate festivals of Hinduism. They worship Kuldevata.

Tharu people are very fond of drinking alcohol. They celebrate festival and ceremonies very happily by drinking alcohol from morning till evening. They spend a lot for alcohol in ceremonies and festivals.

Tharu people of this area are mostly involved in agriculture and labour work. Some Tharus are recruited in police force. Again some are in government peon and household servant. From the study it is found 85% Tharu people are depended on agriculture. Their secondary occupation is labour work. In the off season of agriculture, they go to find labour work their survival. Out of 60 households, 3 households are landless, 21 households have occupied 1 to 10 kattha as their own land, 16 households have occupied 11 to 20 kattha as their own land, similarly 15 households have occupied 21 to 30 kattha and remaining other 5 households have occupied above 30 kattha as their own land. Though Tharu people hold their own land, but most of them have not enough food production even for six months by their own land. So, they need to farm others land in the form of Adhiya farming and also need to find other secondary works to solve their hand to mouth problem.

Generally Tharus are known as hardworking, honest and peace loving people. Though, Tharu people are very hard working in nature, but their economic condition is poor and they are living backward life.

## **6.2 Conclusion**

Tharu people of Pideri village of Benimanipur VDC-5 are found follower of tradition. Tharu people are agriculturist and their main profession is agriculture. But the agriculture pattern they are adopting is old and traditional; they have not been utilizing modern technology in agriculture. They do only subsistence farming. Their secondary profession is labour work. They spend their major source of earning on the feasts and drinking of Jad and Raksi, which is unproductive. They are backward in education and adopting new technology. Their

knowledge towards health and sanitation is very poor. They still believe in witchcraft instead of going to nearby hospital.

The Tharu people have changed their attitude towards education. Now a day, Tharu people are sending their children to school. There is hope that the new generation of Tharu will get educated.

The Tharu of Pideri village has their own ways of performing birth, marriage and death ceremonies. But the basic concepts of performing life cycle ceremonies are according to Hindu rites. They celebrate festival with great joy. They enjoy drinking alcohol like Jad and Raksi in ceremonies and festivals. So limited land, using traditional means and methods in agriculture, high fertility rate, poor educational attainment, lack of health facilities and excess use of liquor are main factors of Tharus poor socio-economics condition. They are also not good in managing their income and expenditure in proper way.

### **6.3 Recommendations**

There are not many studies done on this ethnic group. Though some studies were conducted, there findings are not similar. There are some cultural differences among Tharus of different places due to difference in geography and social environment. So, detailed and intensive study about the Tharus of all over the country is necessary to understand the Tharus real socio-cultural and economic status.

Based on my study in Pideri village of Benimanipur- VDC, as a researcher, I would like to give some suggestion or recommendations, which may be useful for the improvement of socio-economic condition and development of Tharu in Pideri -5, Benimanipur-VDC Nawalparasi.

- The majority people of that area are illiterate. Educating adult is the most important things for the development of Tharu community. There is necessary of formal and informal adult classes, which can be organized by government organization, NGO and INGO.
- Tharu still use tradition agricultural technology. Modern agriculture technology, improved seeds should be introduced to improve production and to overcome from excess manual labour.
- The implication of small farmer programme will be fruitful for Tharus.

- Government should provide some low interest loan facilities for seeds, fertilizers and insecticides.
- They spend their major sources of earning on the feasts and drinking Jad and Raksi. Therefore the awareness about such bad habits should be thrown to Tharu through education.
- Creating awareness on health and sanitation will be very helpful for the Tharu people to save their children life from diseases like diarrhea, typhoid, jaundice, pneumonia, chickenpox etc. Health sector of government should provide health education for this community.
- Tharu people have rich culture. It seems important to create knowledge to preserve good aspects of their culture. Due to influence of other castes, Tharus are losing their culture everyday. GOs and NGOs should educate Tharu people to preserve their culture.
- There is high fertility rate among Tharu. So to solve this problem family planning programs should be made more familiar. Tharu people should make aware of family planning method. For this, personnel government and non government agencies should approach to village level and give information and make aware of people about the importance of family planning.
- Income generation activities like livestock farming, commercially growing vegetables and other cash crops need to be started in this village. Government should provide JTA and veterinarian to promote this sector.
- They are less conscious on development and polities. It is necessary to motivate Tharu to take part in local polities.

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# Annex I

## Household Survey Questionnaires

1- Name of Respondent:

Age:                      Sex:                      Educational Status:

Marital Status:                      Occupation:

2- Family background

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
Below 15 years			
16 to 60 years			
60 and Above			

3- Educational background

Age Group	Male		Female		Total	
	literate	Illiterate	Literate	Illiterate	Literate	Illiterate
6-16						
16-20						
Above60						

4- What was your age at marriage?

Sex	10-15 years	16-24 years	24 years & above
Male			
Female			

5- Distance of School form village.....

6- What is/are the reasons for not sending children to school?



a) ..... b) ..... c).....  
7- What is the source of drinking water?

- a) Tap water
- b) Hand pump public
- c) Hand Pump (own)
- d) Other

8- System of medical treatment

- a) Hospital practitioner
- b) Traditional medicine

9- How do you treat if your child is suffering from diarrhea?

- a) Give salt, sugar & water mixture
- b) Give "Jeevan-Jal"
- d) Contact Gurau/ Dhama
- c) not allowed to drink

10- Contact with health worker.....

- a) Yes
- b) No

11- Number of family members

- a) Smoking .....
- b) Drinking alcohol .....

12- Contact with development worker

- a) Yes .....
- b) No .....

13- Knowledge about development

- a) Yes .....
- b) No .....

14- Your marriage?

- a) Within cast
- b) Inter cast

15- What do you prefer at birth of child in your family?

a) Son

b) Daughter

16- Which type of family do you like?

a) Nuclear

b) Joint

17- If you are married more than one, why?

a) Death of wife/ husband

b) Divorce

b) Separate

d) Lack of children

e) To increase manpower

f) Other if any .....

18- Family planning measure adopted?

a) Yes

b) No

19- Have you done permanent sterilization?

a) Yes

b) No

20- Do you have your own organization?

a) Yes

b) No

21- What is your occupation?

S.N	Particular	Primary	Secondary
1	Farming		
2	Animal husbandry		
3	Wage labor		
4	Servant		
5	Weaving mat and ropes		
6	Fishery		



27- Do you produce the vegetables?

a) Yes

b) No

c) If yes, how much you earn from vegetables selling? Rs.....

28- Do you feel it support for your economic activities?

a) Yes

b) No

29- Interest rate in the informal credit in market?

.....

30- Loan transaction situation

S.N	Source	Amount (Rs.)
1	Formal Sector	
2	Informal	
		Total

31- Income level

Income (in 1000 Rs.)	Agri-culture	Wage labor	Service	Skill	Busi-ness	Live-stock	Other
< 1							
1 to 5							
6 to 10							
11 to 15							
16 to 20							
20 to 25							
25 to 30							
30 to 35							
35 Above							

### 32- Annual expenditure level

Income (in 1000 Rs.)	Food grain own land	Food grain purchased	Jad and Raksi	Fest and festivals	Clot hing	Edu cation	Smo king	Sp eci es	kero sene	Ot her
<1										
1 - 5										
6 -10										
11-15										
16-20										
21-25										
26-30										
31-35										
35>										

## **Annex II**

### **Questionnaire for Key Informants**

1. When & where did you or your forefather came in this village?
2. What is the period of mourning?
3. What types of practice do you followed for the corps?
4. Do you have your own traditional dress pattern?
5. What mother tongue do you speak?
6. Do you have your own food habit?
7. Do you take rest once a week?
8. Any other noticeable culture and tradition in your community?
9. Indicate the type of customs, which is being practice in your family during birth, marriage and death ceremonies?
10. What types of programmes do you wish government should implement for the upliftment of your community?

S.N	Problems	Reasons	Needs

**SOME PHOTOGRAPHS OF THARU COMMUNITY IN PIDERI, NAWALPARASI**

