

**ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF CHAMAR (Madhesi Dalit) COMMUNITY
OF SAPTARI DISTRICT**

A Thesis

**Submitted to Central Department of Rural Development in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Award of the
Degree of Master of Arts in
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Nathuni Mochi

Roll No: 3771

(4th Batch)

Central Department of Rural Development

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur,

Kathmandu, Nepal

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LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

This is to certify that this Thesis entitled *ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF CHAMAR (Madhesi Dalit) COMMUNITY OF SAPTARI DISTRICT* has been prepared by Mr. Nathuni Mochi, under my supervision, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Rural Development. I forward it with recommendation for evaluation.

.....
Lecturer Mr. Umesh Acharya
Supervisor

APPROVAL LETTER

This is to certify that this project work entitled *ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF CHAMAR (Madhesi Dalit) COMMUNITY OF SAPTARI DISTRICT* has prepared by Mr. Nathuni Mochi has been accepted for the partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Rural Development.

Evaluation Committee

.....
Prof. Dr. Pradeep Kumar Khadka
Head of the Department

.....
External Examiner

.....
Lecturer Mr. Umesh Acharya
Supervisor

Date:

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ABSTRACT

In Nepal, a large numbers of untouchable caste use to refer in term of Dalit. It is very necessary to identify the community to which are Dalits or untouchable belong to caste system. A large number of caste group refer to an occupationally segregated, hierarchical and ritually discriminatory social system based on heredity of an individual or group. They are economically exploited, politically voiceless, socially humiliated and treated as "Untouchables". In essence, the victim of caste based discrimination and untouchables can be considered as Dalits. The major Dalit caste groups of the Terai are Mushahar, Chamars, Dushadh, Khatwe, Tatma, Dom, Halkhor, Batar etc Among the Terai caste/ethnic groups, Chamars are the mostly labor community of the Terai region of Nepal.

The main objectives of the study are to describe the cultural practices and discuss the social value, customs, lifestyle, religious and social phenomena such as birth ceremony, marriage ceremony, death rituals, dresses, language, food habits, festivals etc., study the economic status of Chamars such as land holding, occupation, livestock practices income and expenditure and to find out the root causes of backwardness of Chamar community of Malahaniya VDC in Saptari district. For this purpose, ward no 2 was purposively selected. 40 households of 98 households were selected i.e. 40.8%.

Chamars are the indigenous people of the Terai region of Nepal. They are generally of the black skin. According to Hindu caste system, chamars are one of the untouchable castes of Sudra category. Their traditional occupations were leather work, drummer, dumping the dead animals and serving as midwife. But now they have little bit changed and their traditional work move towards common work, which is done by other castes.

They follow Hindu religion and worship Hindu Gods and Goddesses. They celebrate the Hindu festivals such as Dashain, Deepawali, Chhat, Chaurchan, Judsheetal, Rakshyabandhan, Bibahpanchami, Ekadashi, Shivratri, holli, Ghari, Jitiya, Sama during the year. SAMDHI MILAN is the remarkable event in the marriage rituals of Chamar community.

The literacy rate of Chamars in Nepal is 18.9% where male literacy rate stands at 27.9% and female literacy rate stands at 9%, which is lower than national average (CBS, 2001). In the Chamars community, married man wears: Dhoti, kurta gamchha, trousers, shirts, married woman wears: Saree, saya (petikot), blouse, unmarried man wears: Trousers, shirts, vests, T-shirt, pants, unmarried girls wears: frock, kurta, suruwal.

They have their own kinship system and speak maithili language. Their main foods are rice, pulses, vegetables, bread etc. Their housing pattern is very sensible. Most of the houses are made of bamboo, straw and mud. They use hand pump as drinking water sources. 62.5% of Chamars of study area are land less and they are engaged in labour works. Daily labour works is main occupation of Chamars in study area.

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Acronyms /Abbreviation

VDC	= Village Development Committee
DDC	= District Development Committee
NGO	= Non Government Organization
INGO	= International Non Government Organization
CBS	= Central Bureau of Statistics
NPC	= National Planning Commission
Dist	= District
A.D.	= Anno Domini
HHs	= Households
B.S.	= Bikram Sambat
SC/US	= Save the Children/ United States
Rs	= Rupees
Etc	= Ectera
S.N.	= Serial number