

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1. General Background of the Study**

Nepal is a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multi-lingual nation exhibiting cultural diversity. Nepal, over the centuries, has developed a rigid hierarchical society based on "high" and "low", "touchable" and "untouchable", "pure" and "impure" castes and Dalits occupy the bottom of Hindu caste hierarchy (NHRC, 2003). The total Dalits population in Nepal is 3,030,067 with 1,500,367 male and 1,529,700 female which is 13.33% (NPC, 2001). According to Koirala, "Dalit" refers to a group of people who are religiously, culturally, socially, and economically oppressed. He believes that Dalit is not a caste group but a politically coined word used to refer to a socially backward community in Nepal. Similarly, National Dalit Commission (NDC) has defined Dalit community as racial community who is the most backward in social, economic, educational and political as well as religious sector due to the racial discrimination and untouchability and is abstained from enjoying the dignity and social justice.

Most of the Dalit people are poor and landless. Their traditional occupations are stigmatized by the society and even if somehow they try to pursue it, they can compete with the cheap products available in the market. Cheap products have displaced their means of livelihood. It is therefore; they are not only socially discriminated, but also economically back warded (Bhattachan et.al, 2003).

According to Rijal, the term Dalit is used in Nepal to identify a vulnerable and poor group of people, who are discriminated on the basis of their caste. Some have strong resentment over the use of term "Dalit" as it connotes derogation (Kapali or Rijal 2001)

A particular feature of Saptari district is the high number of marginalized castes and ethnic groups. Nepal is a multi-ethnic society with a complex caste structure sustained by age-long traditions and a historic Civil Code (Muluki Ain). The caste system was originally the extension of functional or vocational specificity of people, but became an increasingly rigid vertical caste structure with the Brahmins (priests) at the top, followed hierarchically by Chhetri (warrior-rulers), Vaishya (tradesmen, craftsmen, and cultivators) and Shudra (servants of the higher castes). The Shudra have been severely mistreated, repressed, and slighted as "untouchable" by the higher castes (Khanal 1996).

Dalits, as perceived, are not a homogenous groups; their heterogeneity extends to language, culture and religion. The Dalit Commission has categorized them in to two broad regional groups.

Terai Dalits are Chamars, Musahar, Dom, Dusadh, Bantar, Dhobi, Halkhor, khatway, Tatma and Patharkatta and Hill Dalits are Sarki, Damai, Gaine, Badi, Kami.

### **1.1.1. Dalit Caste system in Nepal**

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 while Dalit caste group of Hills are Sarki, Damai, Gaine, Kami Badi

etc. In Kathmandu valley, major Dalit caste groups are Chyame and Pode. Most of Dalits are landless.

The Dalit Vikas Samiti (2054 B.S.) has included ethnic cultural groups as the Dalits of Nepal: Lohr, Sunar, Kami, Damai, Sarki, Badi, Gaine, Kasai, Kusule, Kuche, Chyame, Pode, Chamar, Dhobi, Dushadh, Tatma, Dom, Batar, Khatwe, Mushahar, Santhal, Satar and Halkhor (NDSR,2002:8) This list is little bit confusing for two reasons:

- ) Some groups are simply included in the list of Dalits though they are not untouchables as a Dalit group and some groups are not included in the list of Dalits though they are untouchables.
- ) It looks that some groups are included in the list of Dalits without their approval.

The recent government bill in the parliament (March 19, 2002) has identified 28 caste group as Dalits. They are Lohar, Sunar, Kami, Damai, Sarki, Gaine, Kuche, Chyame, Pode, Chamars, Dushadh, Tatma, Dom, Batar, Khatwe, Mushahar, Halkhor, Badi, Badimar, Kasai, Kusle, Kadara, Chunara, Parkhi, Gothi, Dhair and Jhangar. This Dalits list has also created some problems of duplication and unidentified origin (NDSR, 2002:8)

The census of 2001 identified and enumerated only 10 groups, who are included as untouchables in the list of Dalit Vikas Samiti: 5 groups from the hills (Kami, Damai, Sarki, Badi and Gaine) and 5 groups from the Terai (Chamar, ushahar, Dushadh and Khatwe). The untouchables groups such as Tatma, Batar, Dom and Halkhor have not been segregated as a separate cultural group for the census progress but they are included in the list of Dalit Vikas samiti (NDSR, 2002:9)

More specifically, their heterogeneity and hierarchy can be better explained in the following three broad regional groups: 1. Terai Dalit 2. Hill Dalit and 3. Newari Dalit.

In brief, two types of definitions of Dalit are used while defining Dalit in Nepal.

1. The national level definition of Dalit as defined by the Dalit Vikas Samiti or Dalit Ayog and
2. The local level definition of Dalit in the sense of untouchables.

Among the Dalit castes, Chamars are one of the occupational castes and their traditional occupation is leather work. Chamars are the largest group among the Terai Dalit population.

### **1.1.2. Introduction of Chamars**

Nepal is a blend of a large numbers of caste/ethnic groups and tribes. It is the first time, population census of 1991 reported that in Nepal, there are 60 caste/ethnic groups. Half of them were classified as the hill caste/ethnic groups and other half of them as the Terai caste/ethnic groups. Among the Terai caste/ethnic groups, Chamars are the mostly labor community of the Terai region of Nepal.

Socially, Chamars are considered as one of the lowest untouchable group of the Terai. Except Dom and Halkhor, no other groups accept water and cooked food from them. They are popularly known as "Mochi" or "Ram". In terms of traditional cast occupation, Chamars are cobblers, skimmers of dead animals, tanners, shoe-makers and scavengers. In addition, Chamars, also play musical instruments and drums during marriage, Holy and other festivals. The chamars also claim to be Hindu. They have their own priest to perform rituals. Including agricultural labors, the women are traditionally Sudenis or mid wives (National Dalit Strategy Report, 2002)

Chamars are particularly more vulnerable economically, socially, culturally and politically due to lack of information such as low level of literacy, ignorance, lack of awareness, vocational training and access to relevant

services. Socially and culturally, the identity of Chamars is totally ignored and they are dominated by other groups. So, they do not recognize their own lifestyle, customs, ritual value, cultural functions, religions and festivals properly.

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

### **1.1.3. Population**

Among the Terai Dalits, Chamars have the highest population of all Dalits. The total population of Chamars is 2, 69,661 of total population of Nepal where male is 1, 38,878 and female is 1, 30,783 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% (CBS, 2001)

The Saptari is the largest district of all Terai districts and it has 114 VDCs and 1 municipality. The total population of Saptari district is 570282 with 418 densities (people pr km<sup>2</sup>. Among them, the population of Chamars is 21784 where male is 10957 and female is 10827 The literacy is 49.6% where male is 63.2% and female is 35.5% (2001 census)

## **1.2. Statement of the problem**

Dalits or 'untouchable' communities, particularly Chamars have the lowest status in the Hindu social hierarchical structure. Chamars are more vulnerable socially economically, culturally and politically due to lack of

information, low level of literacy and access to services. The major problems for this study are as follows;

- ) Culturally and socially, Chamars are dominated by other caste
- ) Chamars own cultural functions, rituals, festivals, religion identity are ignored
- ) Detail study on Chamars ethnography has not been done.
- ) Chamars literacy rate is very low
- ) Socially, Chamars are considered as one of the lowest untouchable group
- ) Chamars are socially, culturally, economically, politically and religiously oppressed group.
- ) These communities are particularly poor and landless.
- ) Dalits are denied entry by non-Dalits and among the Dalits; "Lower castes" are denied entry by the "Upper castes".

These are the facts about the Chamar community i.e. why the Chamars are dominated by other castes? Why the Chamars' identity is ignored? Why the Chamars are socially, culturally, economically and politically oppressed? A detailed ethnographic study is necessary to answer these questions?

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

The main objective of the study is to describe the ethnographic of Chamars community. The following are the specific objectives of the study;

- ) 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.

- ) To study the economic status of Chamars such as land holding, occupation, livestock practices, income and expenditure.
- ) To find out the root causes of backwardness of Chamars community.
- ) To recommend social policy makers and program managers to protect and empower the Chamars own culture and social function values.

#### **1.4. Relevance of the Study**

This study will find out the real cultural and social ritual value, customs, religion, and lifestyle system of Chamar community of the Terai region. This study will have a greater relevance for the Chamar community and their future generations. It will be also helpful for the developmental partners, NGOs/ INGOs, experts and other organization for the advocacy to protect and development the Chamar community. It will be a useful a guide for researchers, students and individuals who are interested to study about Chamar communities. There is rare study related to Chamar's cultural and social aspects and very surface information about the Chamar's ethnography. Therefore this study provides the detail information about the Chamar community to formulate plans programs for preservation and development of Chamar society.

#### **1.5. Organization of the study**

This study is organized into five chapters which are as follows;

- ) The first chapter includes general background, statement of problem, objectives and relevance of the study.
- ) The second chapter includes literature review.
- ) The third chapter includes Research Method which has Rational of the study area, Research design, Nature and source of data, Universe and sampling procedure, Data collection tools, Household

survey, Semi structural interview, Participants observation and Case study.

- ) The fourth chapter describes geographical setting of the study areas ( Location, climate, network of NGO/s, population distribution and caste/ethnic composition)
- ) The fifth chapter is analytical parts. It includes social aspect: settlement pattern, demography, family, marriage, education Health and sanitation and family planning. The cultural aspect: religion, language, dress and ornaments, kinship system, life cycle ceremony and festivals.
- ) Finally, sixth chapter has conclusion and recommendations of the study.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Regarding the topic, we can find very few written literatures particularly in the field of Chamars community. Major studies of related field are reviewed here.

New Era in 2004 carried out a survey on Chamar, Musahar and Dom communities in the Maithili belt of Nepal for SC/US. This study focused on different issues that included health, education and economy. It is probably one of the most comprehensive studies conducted focusing on Terai Dalit alone.

Bista (1967), in due course of describing about different castes in Terai in his book " Sabai Jatko Phoolbari" he has given a short description about the Chamars as tribe of Terai.

A baseline study was carried out by SC/US in 1990 in its program area of Siraha district. The study focused on areas of agriculture and entrepreneur development, education, human resources development, health care and family planning resource conservation and women development amongst others. Altogether five VDCs were selected as the study area (Muksar, Lalpur, Phulkahakatti, Hanumannagar and Ayodhyanagar). Major findings were: combined literacy rate of Chamar, Musahar and Bishwakarma is 13.9%. Total household, including hill ethnic/caste groups 515 household are landless in the study area.

Another study carried out jointly by SC/US and INHURED international in 1999 suggests that traditional caste occupations among the Terai Dalits not only exists today, but will continue to exist for generations to come. Siraha was selected as the study district owing to the existence of the well

established traditional Hindu caste system. The study covers Lahan Municipality, Asanpur VDC and Dhangadi VDC. The entire study was completed within a time span of only 7 days, so the findings cannot be said to be that meaningful.

Mahato (1993), in his Master's Degree dissertation "About Chamars fertility behavior of Chamars of Dhanusha" has shown only the fertility behavior of Chamars but there is not found about ethnographic studies of Chamars.

Similarly, the four volumes of Mechi dekhi Mahakali Samma (1974) are also unable to give detail information about Chamars. These books give a very few things about Chamars. "Maithil Brahmin, Kyastha, Baniya, Teli, Kalawar, Dom, Chamar, Mushalman etc came in Sapatari from southern states many centuries ago. Yadav, Koiri, Sudi, Tharu, Kurmi etc speak Maithil language. Amat, Hajam, Gwar, Teli, Chamars, Dom, Halkhor etc are Maithil Thars" ( Mechi to Mahakali1974)

Subedi (1998), "Socio- economic status of Chamars" (A socio-Anthropological case study in Dang district) is a dissertation of Master's Degree has shown the ethnographic, socio-cultural life, economic and occupation condition. He says that Chamars sit and play with high caste and following their festivals rites and habits. They become more interesting and conscious about education. Impact of modernization most of them have sifted from their traditional leather works to other occupation.

Researcher Team: Dr Krishna B. Bhattachan, Kamala Hemchuri, yogendra Gurung and Chakra Man Bishwokarma, June 2003. Existing practices of caste Based Untouchability in nepal and Strategy for a Campaign for its Elimination.

This study was the unique for the learners, researchers, teachers, advocates, Dalits leaders. In this study clearly mentioned the form, nature, intensity and effects of caste based untouchability; level of awareness among the Dalits about the caste based untouchability and the legal mechanism; challenges facing the Dalit movement and their organizational needs; and ultimately formulate a campaign strategy for the elimination of caste based untouchability in Nepal.

NNDSWO, "Ethnographic study of Terai Dalits" has studied the Terai Dalits (Chamars, Dom, Dushadh, Musahar, Bantar, Halkhor, Khatway and dhobi) Ethnography in different Terai districts but not detail. It gives surface meaning only.

Sripuraj Community Development Center, "Base line survey 2001" of Malahaniya VDC of Sapatari district. In this survey report, all the information of Malahaniya VDC has included and analyzed. But Chamars related information is not mentioned properly.

G.S. Ghurye (1969), has given some account about Chamars. He has said in his book "Caste and Race in India", the Chamars, leather workers of Maharatha country has Ahir as one of their sub-caste. The Chamars of the central Provinces have sub-caste named Koris. Chamars who said to be the dependents of alliance are between Chamars and Koris or Weavers.

From different angles, many researchers have studied various ethnic/caste groups of Nepal. Some studies have focused on socio-culture change, socio-economic status while some have focused on socio-culture concentrate on demography. Different sociologists and anthropologists both indigenous and foreign have carried out various ethnographic studies in Nepal But there are very few literature available on Chamars. Bista is one of indigenous pioneer scholar, who has given a lot of contribution on the field of ethnographic study. His book "People of Nepal" is one of the Master pieces of literature on ethnography. This study will provide the meaningful ethnography of Chamars.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study attempts to collect basic information, ethnographic details by using both primary and secondary information and also will try to find out the hidden facts that are traditionally practiced in Chamars community. The following research design has been used to collect the basic information

#### **3.1. Rationale of the Selection Study Area**

The Malahaniya VDC of Saptari district is the most populated and has 22 different castes where Chamars is the second highest position in population. This area is under developed and Dalit caste has no any position in society. No any research has carried out in this area due to very far from the high way. The total population of this VDC is 7531. Ward no 2 of this VDC is totally Chamars settled community where 98 houses hold with 589 populations. It has 2 toles, one has 40 house-holds which is very appropriate for study so it was selected.

#### **3.2. Research Design**

This study focused more on descriptive research method. Standard field methodologies adopted for systematic gathering of qualitative and quantitative ethnographic information. This includes on household survey, semi structured interviews, participants observations and case study.

#### **3.3. Nature and Sources of Data**

This study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected through field works. Similarly, secondary data were collected

through published and unpublished materials such as research articles, reports, books, CBS, VDC and DDC profiles.

### **3.4. Universe and Sampling Procedure**

Malahaniya VDC consists 9 wards where ward no 2 is full of Chamars community so it was selected for study. The total population of the Chamars people of the study area is 506. In the selected ward, ward no 2 has 98 Chamars households. Out of the 98 households, 40 household were selected purposively.

### **3.5. Data Collection Tools**

Most of the data, primary taken from household survey, Semi structured interviews, participant observations and case study.

#### **3.5.1. Household Survey**

The household survey is an important step of data collection. So, various questions which are result oriented were prepared. The questions were developed to collect data from areas of personal identification, occupation, income expenditure, land holding, livestock practices and education.

#### **3.5.2. Semi Structured Interview**

Semi structural interview was taken from the household heads to know the opinions and attitudes concerning the cultural social rituals value, customs, festivals celebration and religion.

Similarly, key informants such as heads of Chamars Maijan, Jawar, Priests, Sudeni and Leaders were interviewed for more qualitative data about the Chamars community.

### **3.5.3. Participant Observation**

Researcher collected the data about cultural practices of the community by observation. The researcher directly participates with them and noted the necessary information such as health and sanitation, types of house, untouchable's practices, and death rituals and festivals celebration.

### **3.5.4. Case Study**

In this study, some cases were selected for detailed study. It includes the cases, such as people facing discriminated events by upper castes such as using common well, entry to temples.

### **3.5.5. Process of Data Analysis**

Collected data through various instruments are tabulation and analyzed descriptively. Important characteristics (Population composition, age, sex, economic status, marital status, occupation, education etc) are tabulated and described in details.

### **3.5.6. Limitation of the Study**

The research has the following limitations;

- ) This study is conducted for the partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree in Master of Arts in Rural Development.
- ) The time duration of the study is only six months.
- ) It is conducted in inner Terai of Nepal. So, that finding cannot be generalized in every place.
- ) It covers only Chamar community

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY AREA**

#### **4.1. Introduction**

From the field survey it has found that most of the chamars do not have own land or they are land less. So, most of the chamars are engaged in labor work. They have own house, but most of the houses are constructed by straw, bamboo, soil, wood and grass.

#### **4.2. Physical Feature of the Study Area**

Nepal is divided into five development region with 14 zones and 75 districts. There are 3913 VDCs and 58 municipalities. Among them Saptari is located in Sagarmatha zone. Saptari lies mainly in the Tarai region with part of the district lies between Siraha in the west and Sunsari in the east as well as Udaypur in the north and Bihar of India in the south.

The district Saptari lies between 26°25' to 26°47' north latitude and 86°28' to 87°7' east longitude. The river Balan and Koshi separate Saptari district from west and east respectively. It is about 500 ft above the sea-level. Its area is about 1363 sq km. The region as a whole is flat land and was considered as Malarial region till 1960 (Gaige' 1975).

There are 114 VDCs and 1 municipality in Saptari district. Rajbiraj municipality is the Headquarter of the Saptari district. Malahaniya VDC is situated in eastern southern part of Saptari district. It is surrounded by Phoolkaha in the west, Goushala in the north, Sripur in the south and Aurahi in the east. It is far rural area.

### 4.3. Population Size of the Study Area

**Table 4.1, Number of Households and Population by Sex and Ward**

Ward	Total Households	Male	Female	Total Population	HH size
1	154	424	387	811	5.26
2	102	290	258	528	5.5
3	180	502	463	965	5.36
4	156	422	390	812	5.20
5	140	385	370	755	5.39
6	160	436	411	847	5.29
7	175	472	453	925	5.28
8	190	521	491	1012	5.32
9	166	456	420	876	5.27
<b>Total</b>	<b>1423</b>	<b>3908</b>	<b>3623</b>	<b>7531</b>	

Source: VDC Malahaniya Profile'08

Above Table 4.1 shows that total households are 1423 and total population of Malahaniya VDC is 7531 where males are 3908 (51.89%) and females are 3623 (48.11%). In average, a family has 5.36. Among the 9 wards, ward no 8 is the biggest and has highest population.

### 4.4. Caste/Ethnic Composition

**Table 4.2, Caste/ethnic Composition of Population of the Study Area**

S.N.	Caste/ Ethnic Group	Population			%
		Male	Female	Total	
1	Baniya	39	31	70	0.93
2	Barahi	14	21	35	0.46
3	Kami	11	7	18	0.24
4	Chamars	304	272	576	7.65
5	Dushadh	245	252	497	6.60
6	Hajam/Thakur	101	101	202	2.68



7	Gaderi	14	15	29	0.39
8	Brahmin	3	3	6	0.08
9	Haluwai	15	14	29	0.39
10	Yadav	1353	1286	2639	35.04
11	Dhanuk	303	284	587	7.79
12	Tatama	81	63	144	1.91
13	Khatwe	95	80	175	2.32
14	Dom	9	6	15	0.20
15	Tharu	731	656	1387	18.42
16	Muslim	103	81	184	2.44
17	Teli	289	284	573	7.61
18	Mushar	152	131	283	3.76
19	Rouniyar	31	29	60	0.80
20	Lohar	5	2	7	0.09
21	Mali	7	5	12	0.16
22	Natwar	3	0	3	0.04
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3908</b>	<b>3623</b>	<b>7531</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: VDC Malahaniya Profile'08

Above Table no 4.2 shows the caste/ethnic composition of population study area. In this area, there are 22 caste/ethnic groups. Among them Natwar is the lowest and Yadav is the highest in numbers. Tharu is the second highest dominant caste/ethnic group with 18.42% in total population. Total Chamars population of VDC is 576 (7.65%).

#### 4.5. Chamars Population

Total households of the VDC are 1423 covered 7531 population. Among the 1423 households, only 112 households are of Chamars community. Chamars community is only in wards no. 1 and 2. Following table shows the details.

**Table 4.3, Ward wise Households and Total Population of Chamars**

<b>Ward</b>	<b>Total HHs</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total Population</b>
1	14	36	34	70
2	98	268	238	506
<b>Total</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>576</b>

*Source: VDC Malahaniya Profile'08*

Above Table No 4.3 shows the fact figure of the Chamars community of Malahaniya VDC. Only ward No 1 and 2 have Chamars community. Ward No 1 has 14 households with 70 populations and ward no 2 has 98 households with 506 populations. Ward No 2 is selected for study. Among them, 40 households with 220 populations are selected.

#### **4.6. Population by Age and Sex**

Malahaniya VDC is the largest one and populated among the 114 VDCs. Total population of this VDC are 7531 with different 22 caste/ethnic community. Following table shows the details population by age and sex.

**Table 4.4, Distribution of Population by Age and Sex**

<b>S.N.</b>	<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
1	Less than 1 year	94	85	179	2.38
2	1-2 year	217	202	419	5.56
3	3-4 year	248	202	453	6.02
4	5-7 year	380	337	717	9.52
5	8-11 year	384	346	730	9.69
6	12-14 year	227	201	428	5.68
7	15-18 year	326	300	626	8.31

8	19-45 year	1474	1422	2896	38.45
9	46 year above	572	525	1083	14.38
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3908</b>	<b>3623</b>	<b>7531</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: VDC Malahaniya Profile'08

Above Table 4.4 shows that 2.38% population are less than 1 year. 5.56% are among 1-2 year. 6.02% are among 3-4 year. 9.52%, 9.69%, 5.68%, 8.31%, 38.45%, 14.38% population are the age of 5-7, 8-11, 12-14, 15-18, 19-45, 46 years above respectively.

#### 4.7. Housing Pattern

Researcher found through observation that most of Houses are made from locally available materials such as bamboo, straw, tile made of mud etc. Individual's respondents housing pattern is as follows:

**Table 4.5 Housing Pattern**

S.N.	Type of house	No of households	%
1	Phush (Huts with Straw)	26	65
2	Kachcha (Huts with tiled)	13	32.5
3	Pakka (Made from cement and brick)	1	2.5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field survey, 2008

Above table 4.5 shows that 65% households have made their houses from Bamboo and Paral. 32.5% people have kachcha houses and only 2.5% people have a pakka houses. Table housing Pattern proves that socio economical status of Chamas of this VDC is very weak and miserable condition.

#### 4.8. Physical Facilities

Malahaniya VDC is very far from the highway. It is lies south and west part of district near the India border. Roads of this area are kachi (even not graveled). There is a sub-health post and a primary school. C.M.A facilitates the sub-health post. Hat bazar, rural market is not there. People of this VDC go to 4 to 5 km far from the VDC for the market business.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ASPECTS OF CHAMARS**

#### **5.1. Origin of Chamars**

Chamars are Indo-Aryan and they have migrated from India especially from Darvanga of Bihar and UP before 300 years ago when other casts were entering into Nepal (Subedi 1998). The origin of chamars is derived from Sanskrit word that means leather worker. We can say that the word chamars has been taken from the word "Charmakar", 'Charma' means leather and 'Kar' means worker. Chamars are also called Mochi, Ram, Harijan, Mahara, and Rabidas and so on.

According to the 'Purans' Hindu religion scripture, the chamars descended from the union of beat man and chandal women. The father of the cast was 'Nisadha' (the offspring of the bramin father and sudra mother), and the mother 'Viadcha' (offspring of Baishya father and bramin Mother) according to the 'Manus' Dharmashashtra.

In Hindu religion, Chamars and Sarkis have the same social and occupational status (Mahato, 1993). But Sarkis are hill caste/ethnic groups and Chamars are Terai caste/ethnic groups.

#### **5.2. Clan Names and Gotra**

According to the key informant who is a pandit of chamar community has informed that chamars have six major clan names. They are Mochi, Ram, Harijan, Rabidas, Mahara and Chamar. Most of them prefer to use Ram as their clan name. Those names are used on the basis of their choice. Chamars have their own Gotra that is 'Kashyap' Gotra.

### **5.3. Life Cycle Rituals**

Chamars have their own pandit (priest) to perform life cycle rites. If the priest dies his son replaces him.

#### **5.3.1. Birth Rituals**

When pregnant woman is ready to give the birth, then family members prepares a separate room for delivery which is called 'Soirighar'. The mother, after giving birth to a child is kept in the Soirighar for 6 days. Once a child is born, there is a tradition of throwing 'Bahinga' made by bamboo, over the Soirighar. In addition, a pair of old shoes is hung at the main entrance believing that it will ward off evil spirits. Now a day, this practice is changed.

During the period of 6 days, mother is not allowed to perform any Puja (woship) or touch anything or anyone except her child. A chamain (who is as a local version of the midwife), looks after the needs of both the mother and baby. During the period, mother is given to eat mixture of ginger, Sakkhar (cooked juice of sugarcane) and rice only as a food.

#### **5.3.2. Chhathiyar**

Chhathiyar is performed on the sixth day of child birth. Father of the child invites guests and neighbors for birth day celebration. Both child and mother are bathed, nails cut and dressed in new yellow color. On the same day parents name the new baby. A delicacy made by seven cereals is distributed to all relatives. On that day, a small feast is organized. People are invited participate the feast and wish the child and mother for good future.

### **5.3.3. Mundan (First hair cutting ceremony)**

When child's hair cut at first time is called "Mundan". There is no fixed date to celebrate Mudan. Mostly people in Chamar community perform Mundan when the child is 3 to 5 years old. On this day parent of child invite their relatives for feast also. Child is placed on his/her mother's lap and the hair is cut by barber. The collected hair is thrown into the river.

### **5.3.4. Marriage**

Marriage ceremony is an important social ritual in the society. It is strictly endogamous and arranged through negotiations. The breaking of endogamy was and still stigmatized. If a man breaks the rule of endogamy, he is expelled. Marriages established alliances based on mutual economic support and is symbolically affirmed with the exchange of gift after the wedding.

Marriage ceremony performs after selection the bride and bridegroom. Actually in the Chamars community, marriage performs when girl's age is 14-16 and boy is of age 18-20 years old.

Mostly maternal uncle (Mama) takes the leading role for section the bride and bridegroom from both sides. At the first, girl's parent goes to see the boy. Only if accepted the boy's family members go to see the girl. Dowry and date of marriage are fixed when the boy's family members go to see the girl. The girl's ancestors, four generations removed and her mother and maternal grandmother must be different in the lineage from those of boy's. In this process a mediator or Aguwa plays a vital role in negotiations. After confirmation of marriage date and time, it starts to celebrate marriage ceremony. Marriage invitation cards are distributed from both sides to their relatives. Marriage rituals are performed at bride's residence and the feast is hosted by bride's family. Groom's family arranges the 'Baarat' (People) and

goes to the bride's place along with a musical band and 'Dala' (Dala is made from bamboo by Dom community which is the most important). Once the 'Baarat' reaches the bride's place with cord and Banana as 'Sagun' (Holy Food) at first, the ritual called 'Parchhawan' is performed, where the groom remains on his palki and bride's family members come out and wishing him with sprinkle rice and grains for his prosperous future.

In the bride home, groom is visited to the relative and villagers home with band team. Relatives offer to the groom rupees and kind as a 'Bilauki'. Then proper marriage place called "Soymbar" is organized and well decorated. All Baarat as well as other guests are requested to sit and welcome them with tea and snacks at first. Then bride and bridegroom are called and perform the soymbar. In the soymbar, bride worship the groom and put on flower's 'Mala' each others and exchange ring each others. Women are singing the different local marriage songs in side and musical band party plays the musical bands outside.

After the 'Soymbar', bride and groom go in to small well decorated hut called 'Marawa'. Priest starts the marriage activities and photographers engage to take photos with video and camera. After that a member of bride family mostly 'Mama' or father or mother performs the 'Kanyadan' a formal process of giving hands of bride to the groom's hand. In Kanyadan ritual, a member who performs Kanyadan, worships bride and offers to groom with special dowry.

Sinurdan performs just after kanyadan. In sinurdan session, pandit makes a small corner from saris or other cloths and gives achhat and flower to five members of bride relatives. Then pandit performs sinurdan mantra. Groom put on the sindur on bride's forehead and all selected members offer the achhat and flower to the bride and groom as a congratulation.

Then an interesting activity performs that is called SAMDHIMILAN. In the session of "samdhimilan" Father and mama of both bride and groom sides, stand and hand shacks each others at first, then they exchange their new cloths each others. After that they apply each others a mixture of oil and bisar called "Keshar" in competitive way. The entire people take enjoy by seeing the kesar applying competition among the samdhis. Female groups sing different local marriage songs to make samdhimilan sessions more attractive and joyful environment. At last, the Baarat settles for the night after taking dinner. Next day, Baarat returns to groom's home with beautiful bride.

In the groom's home, mother of groom's well-comes them with performing sweet marriage songs and they enter the bedroom. Groom meets or talks with bride at first time, by giving special gift such as gold bangles, ring so on according to his capacity which is marriage symbol for woman.

Gouna (2<sup>nd</sup> time of marriage) is organized after 2 or 3 years of 1<sup>st</sup> time of marriage. In the Chamars community, 2nd time of marriage organized and bride is settled in her husband house permanently. At first, parent of groom go to the bride or samdhi home with "KOSHELI" as a sagun. Then talk for Gouna of bride and Groom with suitable date and time. When agree in the bride home for Gouna, then process of Gouna starts. Groom goes to bride home with Baarat in the indicated date and Gouna celebrate, Bride and Groom meet each other once again. 'Samdhi' parent of bride, handovers the bride to the Groom. Groom brings the bride in his home for permanent.

### **5.3.5. Death Rituals**

The funeral procession is organized if anyone from the community dies. Family members along with relatives are informed regarding the death. While cremating the body is faced north. It is the eldest or the youngest son who performs funeral rites. Death ritual is observed for four days like other Terai cast or ethnic groups. 'Kriyaputri' who performs death ritual is purified on



the last of the fourth day. Adults are cremated and ritual is observed for 12 days. The eldest or youngest son only gives fire to the dead body. "Panchakarma" is performed before giving fire to the dead body. In this ritual, Kriyaputri goes around the dead body for 5 times. Kriyaputri is kept in a separate room for 12 days. During these 12 days, he is not permitted to take salt, other vegetables, daal, specially onion, garlic, and meat. Those days they eat only plain rice, ghee, and milk. He wears white cloth called 'Utari' and keeps a knife and green bamboo stick in hand. During the 12 days, following activities are done.

- 4<sup>th</sup> day-** The ritual called "chhaur jhappi" is observed. on this day, the 'asthu' (remains) are buried under the Tulsi plant. Kantaha performed chhaur jhappi.
- 7<sup>th</sup> day-** Satkarma is performed by Kriyaputri believing that the soul of the dead body to rest in peace.
- 9<sup>th</sup> day-** Naukesh is performed in this day. Kriyaputri saves his hairs and cut his nails. All the family members also save their hairs and cut their nails. A small feast is organized in this day.
- 11<sup>th</sup> day-** Sraddha is performed in this day. 11 pindas (Ball of rice) are made and offered. This activity facilitates by Kantaha. On this day, family of dead organized Sraddha feast. They also invite to their relatives for participation in the feast.
- 12<sup>th</sup> day-** On this day "Pittarpachchha" is performed. Kriyaputri is purified on this day. On that day, again a small feast is organized. It is the last day of the death rituals.
- 13<sup>th</sup> day-** Satyanarayan Puja is performed on this day. Padit (Priest) is called for Puja and Daan Dakshina is provided to the Pandit.

## **5.4. Festivals**

Different castes of Nepal have different customs and traditions during the year and celebrate festivals in their own style. In the Chamar community, different types of festivals are celebrated like others caste/ethnic groups. Major festivals are Jursheetal, Rakshabandhan, Chaurchan, Jitiya, Dashain, Deepawali, Chhat, Maghe sankranti and Phaguwa (Holi).

### **5.4.1. Jursheetal**

This festival is celebrated on the second day of Baishakh. Baishakh Purnima is the main day for this festival. They welcome the New Year and farewell the past year. Especially on this day, elder people bless to younger by sprinkling fresh water on the head for long life and good future. They celebrate this festival happily and hopefully for prosperous, peace and good health. On this day all the family members enjoy to take delicious and special foods such as rice, pulses, different type of vegetables, Taruwa, Bari, Puri, curd, meat etc.

### **5.4.2. Rakshabandhan**

This is the very important festivals for this community. On this day, all sisters prepare variety of delicious food; prepare the puja for raksha Bandhan. Sisters worship their brothers by putting on Red Tika on her brother's forehead and tying the raksha bandhan in his right hand. Then they bless their brothers for strength and good health.

### **5.4.3. Chaurchan**

Chaurchan is celebrated with great enthusiasm with an unflinching belief of being blessed with son, have his/her wishes fulfilled and wealth as

per one's desire. This is totally pure vegetarian festival. During this festival, People worship moon in the late evening, invites the relatives and neighbors and take special food like rice pudding, Puri made by rice flour, curry and fruits.

#### **5.4.4. Jitiya**

Jitiya festival is a very important for woman in Terai region. It is special for Tharu community. But other caste/ethnic groups also celebrate Jitiya. Particularly, brothers invite to sisters on this day. Only married women celebrate Jitiya. In Jitiya, women worship to the God "Jitamahan" for prosperous and good health for their family members in general. Especially it is celebrated for their husband's long life and prosperous in future. Each and every married woman celebrates these festivals for two days. First day, they do not take food and water during 24 hours and they go to nearest pond. In the pond, they bath at first and worship God with PINA, OIL, and KERAU on ghiroula leaf. Second day, they collect ghiroula's leaves, flowers, sakhar, banana, chiura and courd and prepare mixture of banana, courd and chiura as PRASADI. Then worship the God and distribute the PRASADI to all the members of family. After puja, they enjoy to take different types of delicious food. On this occasion, meat of goats is compulsory as special food.

#### **5.4.5. Dashain**

Dashain is the greatest festival of Hindus. But this festival is celebrated in a simple manner in Terai including chamar community. It is celebrated as a Victory of Hindu deities (Goddess) over the demons and it is also celebrated as happy ceremony in the occasion of Ram's victory (Ram killed Raavan). In the ninth day of Dashain, people of this community worship the goddess Durga and offered different types of sacrifice as Vacals such as goat, pigeon, cock etc. They enjoy taking fresh meat in their food. In the day of Dashami,

the 10<sup>th</sup> day of Dashai called "Vijaya Dashami", Mela organized in different places. People go to Mela and enjoy with family and friends. During the Dashain, people worship the Goddess Durga regularly. They also organize Bhajan Mandali Called " Chaithasar". In the chaithasar, new people request to god for acceptance as a pujari.

#### **5.4.6. Dipawali**

Dipawali is known as "Sukhrati" and "Laxmi Puja" in the Chamar community. This festival is celebrated by the Chamar community with great respect for 5 days. Just before the festival, all parts of the home and surrounding are cleaned and painted. In the first day people worship the crow and give food to eat and in the evening play the fire ball called "Hukahuki". In the second day, people worship the dog and provide sweet food to eat. Similarly 3<sup>rd</sup> day people decorate especially for Laxmi Puja, the goddess of prosperity. Cows are worshiped and given food to eat. People worship Goddess Laxmi and distribute the sweets to all. In the evening people light the home and surrounding to welcome the Goddess Laxmi. People also enjoy by playing cards called "Juwa" in whole night. In the 4<sup>th</sup> day, people worship ox and give pure food to eat. 5<sup>th</sup> day is called "Bhardutiya" in Maithili language. In this day especially brothers go to the sisters with parcel of sweets and sisters worship the brothers by putting on Tika and Mala and give to eat delicious food with blessing. Then brothers give the gift to the sisters.

#### **5.4.7. Chhath**

Chhath is an important religious festival of the Terai people. It is also a full vegetarian festival. The Terai people worship the rising sun as well as the setting sun. The rising sun is the symbol of success, sublime beauty, strength, stamina and light. Whereas the setting sun is the symbol of disparate darkness, disappointment and dissatisfaction. It is said that, it provides all devotees with protection from skin disease like leprosy. All devotees put on colorful new dresses so the celebration presents a colorful picture. There is no

famous sun-god temple in Terai, So all devotees proceed towards a river or pond in the colorful procession.

The Chhath Parwa starts right from the fourth day of Dipawali and ends after the 6<sup>th</sup> day, so it is called "Shasthi Vrata". On the 4<sup>th</sup> day at dawn the devotees go to the river side or pond for a ceremonial bath where they remain standing with folded hands until the sun rises. The 5<sup>th</sup> day is observed as a day of fasting. On this day, they prepare food like Bhusuwa, made by fried rice flour, Thakuwa and Kasar etc with pure ghee and flour of wheat and rice. These things along with some fruits especially bananas are kept in a pure clean place for offering to the sun-god. In the evening, of 5<sup>th</sup> day of after dipawali, they dip their feet in the water up to the knees and worship the sun-god with offerings they hold in their hands, until the sun sets. After sunset some of the devotees prefer to return their homes. On the next day morning they again go to the river or pond side to offer prayers and worship the rising sun. They sing chhath folk songs both times. After this they go to their home and eat.

#### **5.4.8. Sama**

Sama is a very important and distinctive program of Chamars community. In these festivals, all the females are prepared SAMA (statues made from mud). They worship sama with different types of local songs during the week. At the last day of week, they prepare delicious food and decorated a small temple. Temple is made from bamboo and banana trees. All the sama (status) settled in the temple and temple is brought in the nearest pond. Temple is tied with a pillar in the middle of pond for ever. Then, they distribute delicious food and enjoy them selves.

#### **5.4.9. Tila Sankranti (Maghe Sankranti)**

The 1<sup>st</sup> day of the month Magh is celebrated as Tila Sankranti which is known as Maghe Sankranti in Hilly region. It is not related directly with any God or Goddess. On this occasion, in the morning Chamars people take bath. They celebrate this festival by preparing Laddu of Til, Murahi, Cheura etc which called "lai" in local language and eat with delicious curry, milk or curd. They also prepare 'Khichari' (a mixture of rice, lentil ghee etc). Because of poverty, most people eat only 'khichari'. During this festival, they consume this variety of 'lai' themselves as well as send these to their married daughters with the purpose of hearing the news of their daughter who are living far away from them.

#### **5.4.10. Faguwa (Holi or Hori)**

Holi is the festival of flying colors in the day of full moon of the month of Fagun. Chamars people observed this festival as one of the most important festivals with the religious. Significance of Holika's death on this particular day and celebrate this each year. Everybody, young or old, boys or girls celebrate these festivals happily using different types of colors. They put colors on each other's face and body. These festivals also signal to the beginning of spring season. They eat special sweet dish 'Malpuwa' made from flour, sugar and milk, puri and also drink "Bhang and Dhaturu" and alcohol. They reach door to door of relatives or friends with dancing and singing Hori song and coloring each others.

#### **5.5. Dress (Cloth)**

Dress is one of the important indicators of the socio-cultural status of caste or community. It may differ according to the geographical condition. Researcher has found the dress of Chamar community in the study area. Those are as follows:

Married man wears : Dhoti, Kurta Gamchha, trousers, shirts

Married woman wears: Saree, Saya (Petikot), and blouse

Unmarried man wears: Trousers, shirts, vests, T-shirt, pants

Unmarried girls wear: Frock, Kurta and Suruwal

## **5.6. Ornaments (Jewelry)**

Ornament is one of the important indicators of the socio-cultural status of caste or community. It may differ according to the geographical condition. Researcher has found the following traditional ornament of Chamar community in the study area.

Mang Tika- Worn on Head, made from silver

Chhak- worn on the nose

Nathiya- worn on the nose

Jhumka/Marwadi (Ear rings) - worn on the ear, made from silver

Hasuli (necklace)- worn on neck, made from silver

Thesa or Thansi -worn on the fingers of feet made from silver

Kada - worn on the feet made from silver

Payal-worn on the feet, anklet

Baju - bangle

Payeth - worn on the arm

Paunchi - Worn on the arm

## **5.7. God and goddess**

Researcher has found that most of the Chamars in the study are learnt to be Hindus by faith. They have their own family deities and village deities. Kali, Lakeshwori, Raktamala, Meera, Kulhelni, Narsingh, Goraiya, Gaiya are the family deities in each and every family. Bhagawati, Dagrini and Dihiwar are the village deities. Village deities are also called the "Gram deities". In some of family, Hanuman is also a family deity. "Gharpuja" is a very important for

family deities. Each family worship family deities regularly and Gharpuja organize in need basis. Grampuja organize once a year in groups. Grampuja is common for all the villagers.

### **5.8. Food Habits**

Most of the people belonging to the Chamars community are non-vegetarian. They enjoy taking pork, chicken and eggs in their lunch and dinner. Males consume liquor also. However, there are some vegetarians who take and enjoy with fresh vegetarian food. Their staple foods are wheat, rice, pulses, and varieties of vegetables, milk, curd and achar. Vegetarians do not take liquor.

### **5.9. Traditional Leadership**

In the study area, it was found that traditional caste panchayat still exists and is empowered to punish the offenders of the community rules by imposing fines payable in cash and in kind or even by ex-communication. They have their own traditional leaders as Maijan and Jawar. They belong to the same community and are responsible for settling disputes and taking major decisions on community affairs. According to some local leaders, 'Maijan' covers 30 to 40 villages and 'Jawar' covers 1 to 12 localities. It is the eldest son who takes over if Maijan or Jawar dies amid the ceremony called 'Pagadi Ceremony'. He has to wear a pagadi and a grand feast is organized inviting all the members of community. The procedure of the selection of Jawar is learnt to be more or less the same as the Maijan. Any person of the community organize social work such as Puja, feast, marry etc he should take permission from the Jawar. If Jawar has any problem, in that time Maijan gives the final solution in participatory way.



### **5.10. Preference of sex**

Researcher found that most of the chamars family prefer son. Family who have tow or three sons they do not want to have daughter but a family who have 2 or 3 daughters they try to have son instead. However they have 4 or 5 daughters till they hope for son. So study has found most of parents preferred son than daughter.

### **5.11. Gender**

It was found out that women are more sufferer than male within the chamars community. Women are engaged in household works especially in kitchen, caring of children and labour work. They are also responsible for all the management of household. Their social, educational, economical status is much lower than males. Health and nutritional status of dalit women is pathetic. The political participation of women at the local group village, ward is much lower to the males. Each and every decision relative to the family is made by males. Such as children education, purchasing of food, land, land holding etc. Especially in the chamars community females are not allowed to make decisions by themselves even though they have right to make decision. Even they are not allowed to talk with other males especially to the elder brother in law, father in law etc and always have to keep 'Ghog' for covering head.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF CHAMARS**

Everyone is affected mostly by his/her economic condition. A person economically sound stands good position in his/ her society and respected from all. Economic condition directly affects the social aspects of a person or a family. Chamars are the poorest caste group among the other various caste/ ethnic groups in the Terai region.

#### **6.1. Traditional Occupation**

Chamars are associated with leather work, drumming and watch man as heredity occupation but now they have changed their traditional occupation and engaged in other social work such as agriculture work, labor work and other services. Very few families engaged in traditional work. They are going to change their work style day by day.

##### **6.1.1. Occupational Condition**

Life is the much easier in the study area than other part of country. Mostly Terai is the rich part of the country. Labor work is the main occupation of the study area. Most of them do not have their own land. They work in other field. Some of them took land as a rent and work. Some of them engaged in other labor work such as livestock, driving rickshaw, tractor, firewood collection, trade, labour, and skilled labour. The main occupation of household is shown below in the table.

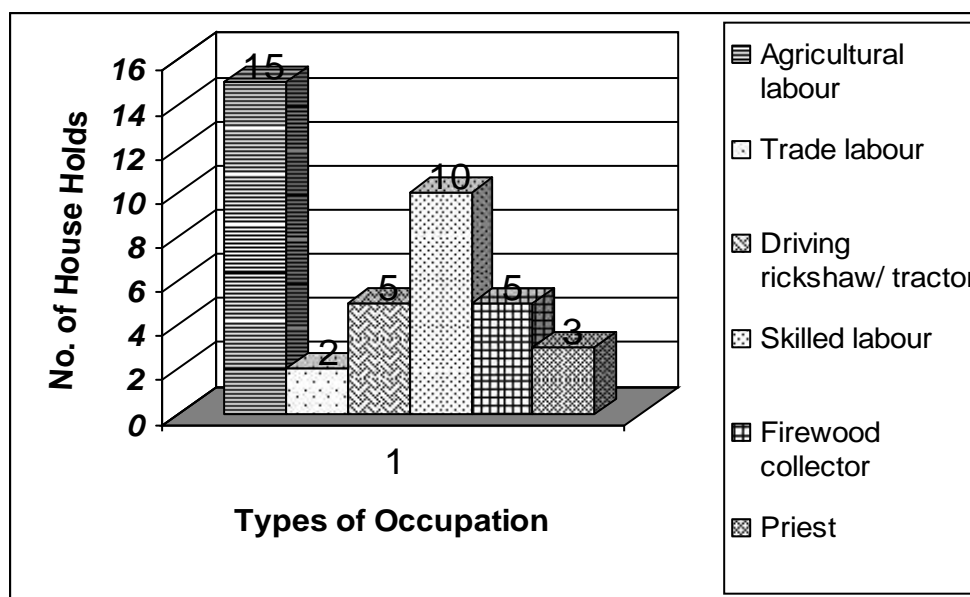
**Table 6.1: Distribution of Sampled Households by Occupation**

S.N.	Type of Occupation	# of HHs	%
1	Agricultural labour	15	37.5
2	Trade labour	2	5
3	Driving rickshaw/ tractor	5	12.5
4	Skilled labour	10	25
5	Firewood collector	5	12.5
6	Priest	3	7.5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field survey '2008

Above Table 6.1 shows that the main occupation of Chamar community in study area is agriculture labour and skilled labour. 37.5% people engage in agricultural works and 25% people engage in construction works. Skilled labour means "Raj mistri" in local language. 12.5% people engage in firewood collection works and 12.5% people are rickshaw/ tractor drivers. Only 2% people involve in trade works.

**Figure: 6.1, Distributions of Sampled Households by Occupation**



Based on Table 6.1

## 6.2. Land Holding

Mostly Chamars are very backward in economic condition. They are vulnerable due to the landless and absolute poverty. They lead very simple life style without any high desire. Following Table shows the landholding pattern of Chamars.

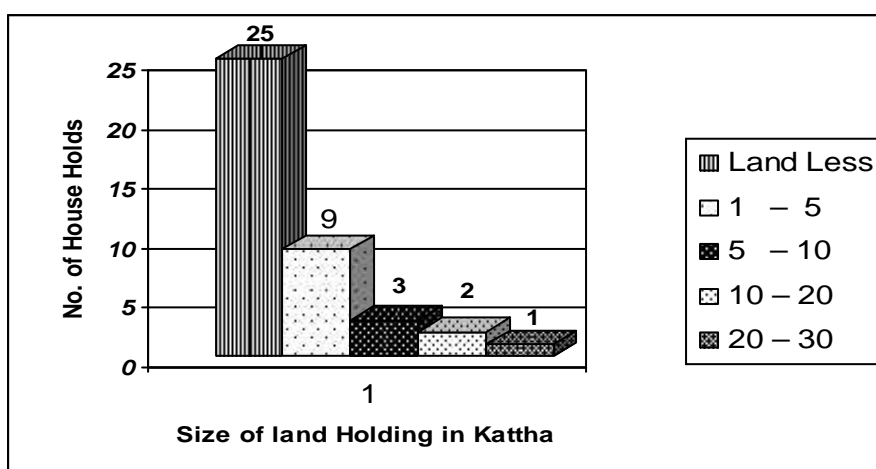
**Table 6.2: Distribution of Sampled Households by the Size of Landholding**

S.N.	Size of landholding (in kattha)	# of Households	%
1	Land Less	25	62.5
2	1 – 5	9	22.5
3	5 – 10	3	07.5
4	10 – 20	2	05.0
5	20 – 30	1	02.5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field survey '2008

Above Table 6.2 shows that most of households are landless. 62.5% households out of 40 households are landless. 22.5% households have less than 5 kattha land. 7.5% households have less than 10 kattha and only 2.5% households have more than 20 kattha land. All the landless people settle their residence in common land called Alani Land. All the people of study area depend on labour works.

**Figure: 6.2, Distribution of Sampled Households by the Size of Landholding**



### 6.3. Livestock Keeping

Animal husbandry is the other main source of income in Chamars community. Mostly Chamars keep goat, cow, buffalo, and ox for economic purpose as well as religious purpose. Cow is kept for calf, milk and dung. Cow is also kept for worship as a Laxmi. Following Table indicate the number of animals in study area.

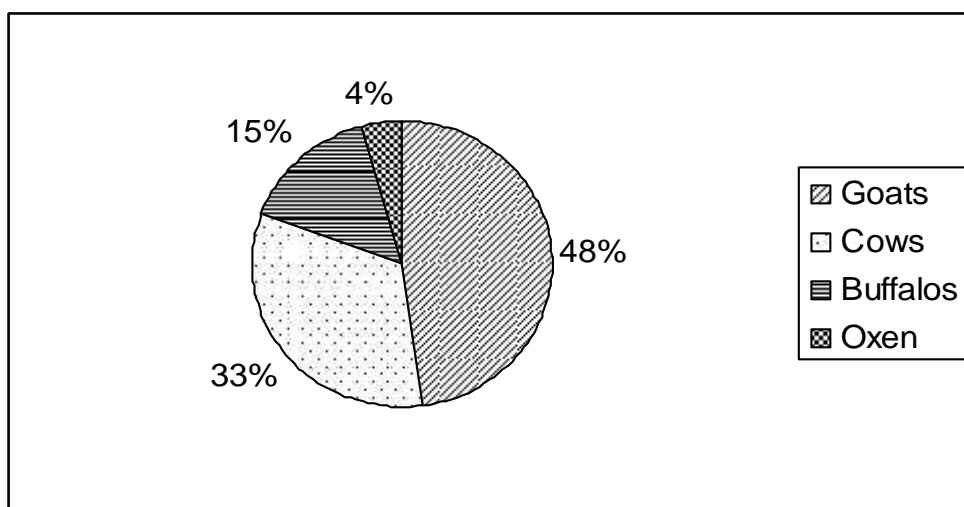
**Table 6.3: Livestock Keeping in Sampled Households**

S.N.	Type of livestock	Number	%
1	Goats	65	47.79
2	Cows	45	33.08
3	Buffalos	20	14.70
4	Oxen	6	4.43
	<b>Total</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field survey '2008

Above Table 6.3 shows that most of people of Chamars community keep animals in their home as economic and religious purpose. 47.79% households keep goats that are high of all. 33.08% households keep cows, 14.70% keep buffalos and only 4.43% keep ox for agricultural works. Altogether 136 animals are in 40 households in study area.

**Figure: 6.3, Livestock Keeping in Sampled Households**



#### 6.4. Food sufficiency

The level of food production and consumption determines the poverty or prosperity of the people or society or nation. In the study area, people of Chamars community depend on production. Food grains production is not sufficient to meet daily requirement. They fulfill their requirement by earning from labour works. The following table shows the fact for food sufficiency.

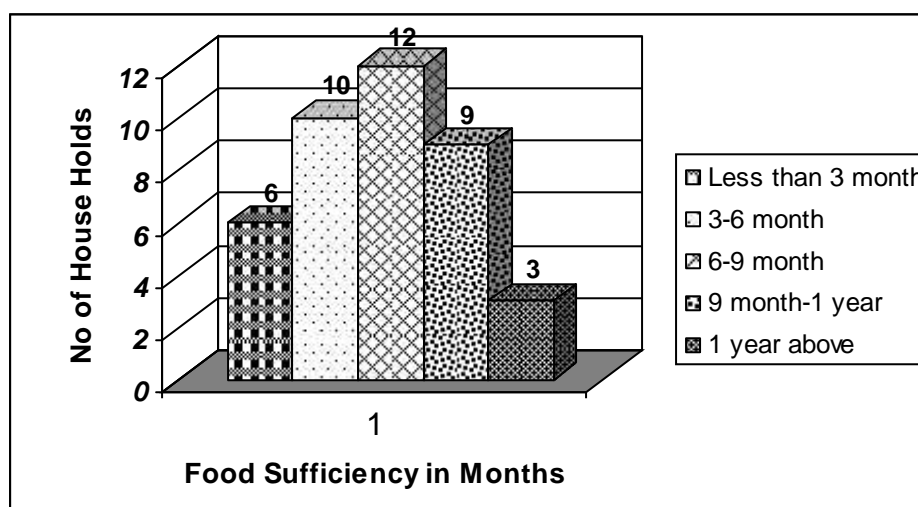
**Table 6.4: Food Sufficiency of Sampled Households**

S.N.	Food sufficiency in month	# of Households	%
1	Less than 3 month	6	15
2	3-6 month	10	25
3	6-9 month	12	30
4	9 month-1 year	9	22.5
5	1 year above	3	7.5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field survey '2008

As the data shows that 62.5% people are landless. They totally depend on labour works. The table 6.4 shows that 15% households out of 40 households; fulfill their food requirement up to 3 month. 25% households fulfill their food requirement up to 6 month. 30% households maintain up to 9 month and 22.5% fulfill food up to 1 year. Only 7.5% households get food above 1 year. Household which have 20 kattha and above land have sufficient food. They sell food grains for other purposes.

**Figure: 6.4, Food Sufficiency of Sampled Households**



### 6.5. Income Sources

Most of people in Chamars community are landless and they engage in labour works. Very few households have their own land which is not sufficient for livelihood. All are depend on labour works. Among them 25% people are skilled labour. They go to outside for works and rest depend on agricultural works directly and indirectly.

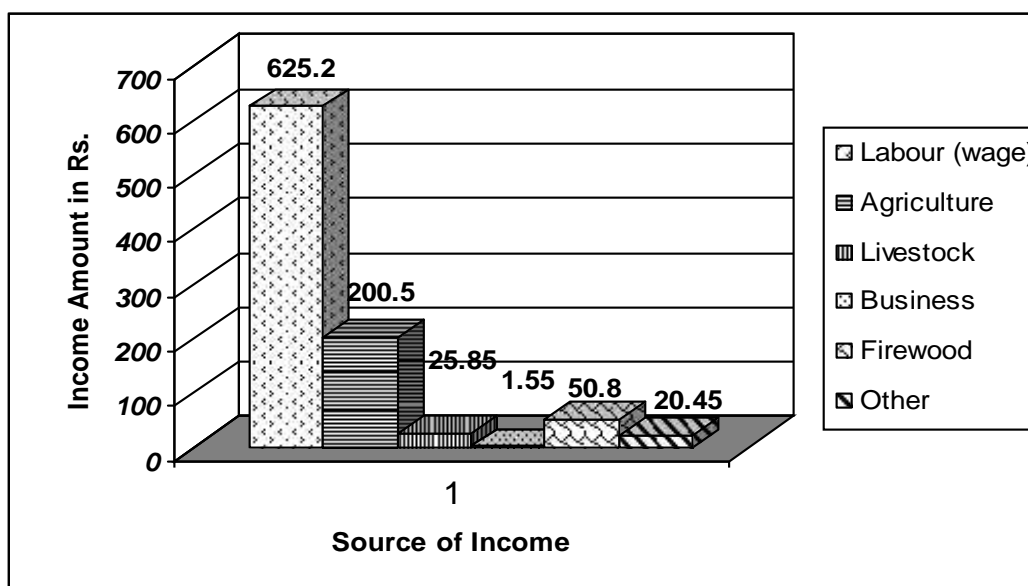
**Table 6.5 Source of Income of Sampled Households**

S.N.	Source of income	Total income amount('000 Rs)	%
1	Labour (wage)	625.20	67.63
2	Agriculture	200.50	21.69
3	Livestock	25.85	2.79
4	Business	1.55	0.16
5	Firewood	50.80	5.49
6	Other	20.45	2.21
	<b>Total</b>	<b>924.35</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field survey '2008

Above Table 6.5 shows that most of people of study area are labour. 67.63% people are unskilled labour. Their income source is waging. 21.69% income comes from land, 5.49% income comes from firewood collection and purchasing. 2.79% income comes from livestock keeping. Only 0.16% income comes from small business.

**Figure: 6.5, Source of Income of Sampled Households**



### 6.6. Expenditure Pattern

The main expenditure items are food item and clothing. Food items are as cereals, pulses, vegetables, fruits, wheat, rice etc. Very few people expense in children education. Education pattern is miserable condition. Secondly expenses item is clothing. The following table shows the expenditure situation of sampled households.

**Table 6.6 Expenditure of Sampled Households**

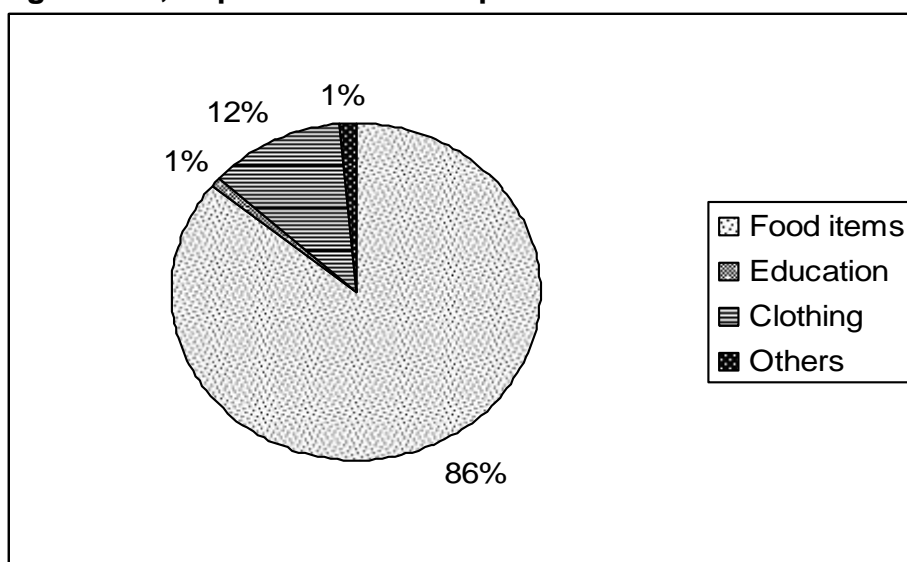
S.N.	Activities	Expenditure('000 Rs)	%
1	Food items	755.50	85.94
2	Education	5.75	0.65
3	Clothing	105.45	11.99
4	Others	12.35	1.42
	<b>Total</b>	<b>879.05</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field survey '2008



Above Table 6.6 shows that most of income people expense in food items. 85.94% expenses are in food items. 11.99% of total income expenses in cloths. Only 0.65% of income expenses in children education and 1.42% in other purposes.

**Figure: 6.6, Expenditure of Sampled Households**



### 6.7. Education

Education is the most essential factor for the socio-economic development of any community and nation. It is most important weapon to uplift poor condition. It is not only personal or individual development but also social development and social participation. It provides knowledge and skills for development. Following table shows the education status of sampled households.

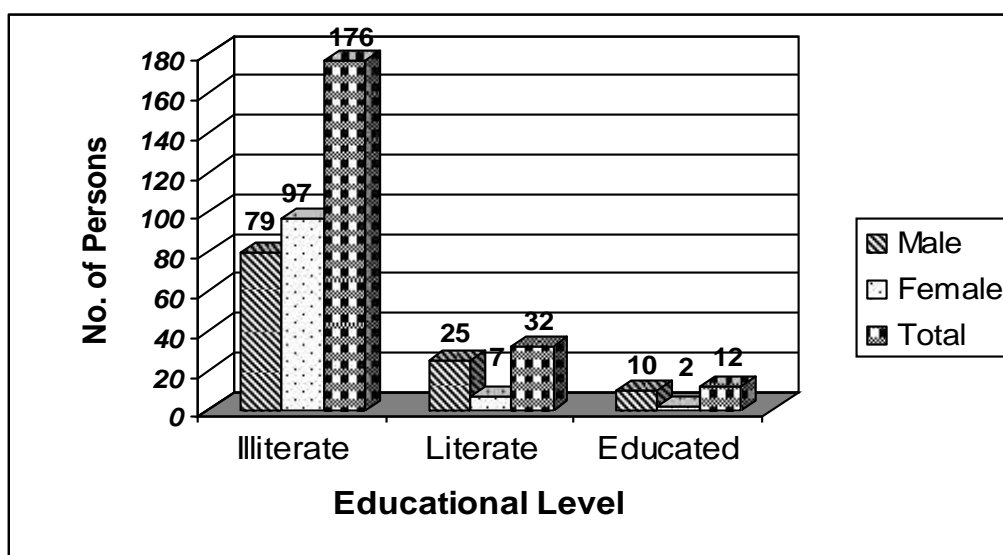
**Table 6.7 Educational Status of Sampled Households**

Level	Population				Total	%
	Male	%	Female	%		
Illiterate	79	69	97	92	176	80
Literate	25	22	7	7	32	15
Educated	10	9	2	1	12	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field survey '2008

Above Table 6.7 shows that educational status is very low. 80% people of sampled households where 69% male and 92% female. 15% people are simply literate where 22% male and 32% female. Only 5% are educated (reading class7-10) where 9% male and 5% female.

**Figure: 6.7, Educational Status of Sampled Households**



### 6.8. Drinking water and Drainage

There are hand pump and well main source of drinking water. Hand pumps are provided by VDC and NGOs. Most of them use the hand pumps for drinking water. A few households have their own hand pump and others have common.

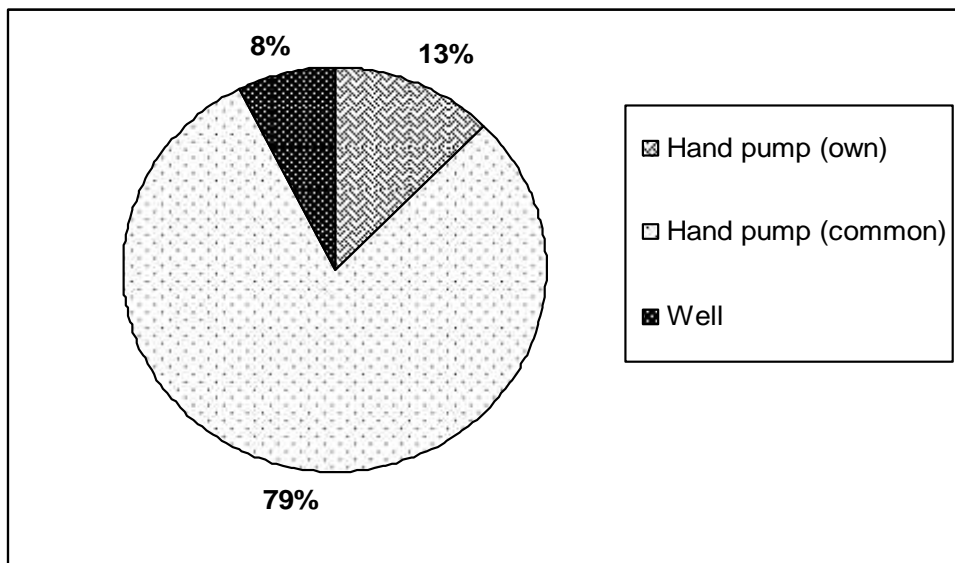
**Table 6.8 Source of Drinking water in Sampled Households**

S.N.	Source of water	No of HHs	%
1	Hand pump (own)	5	12.5
2	Hand pump (common)	32	80
3	Well	3	7.5
<b>Total</b>		<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field survey '2008

Above Table 6.8 shows that 80% households out of 40 households, use common hand pumps for drinking water. Only 12.5% households use their own hand pump. Among them 7.5% households still use well near by their homes. There is a traditional concept for well. Households who make well, they should use well compulsory.

**Figure: 6.8, Source of Drinking water in Sampled Households**



## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

#### **7.1. Summary**

1. In the sample population, the percentage of the male population is slightly more than female which is 51.89 % is higher than the national average.
2. This study has found that 80 percentage of population is illiterate or 20 percentage populations is literate which is very lower than the national average 58 percentage.
3. Labour work is the main occupation in the study area. Out of total sample households 67.5 percentages are engaged in labour work and rest are in agriculture, business and others work respectively.
4. Chamars are economically very poor 62.5 % people are landless, 22.5% people have less land than 5 kattha 7.5 % people have less than land than 10 kattha, 5 % people have (10-20) kattha land.
5. Chamars are Hindu religion. They worship all Hindu Gods and celebrate all festivals of Hindu such as Judshital, Chaurchan, Dashain, Dipawali, chhathetc.
6. Chamars observe the various type of life cycle ceremonies such as birth rituals, marriage death rituals etc. as other ethnic groups are practiced.
7. Regarding marriage ritual, Bilauki Magne, Samdhimilan, and Gauna is the distinctive activities which are found in the chamars community.

8. Chamars have their own Pandit within the chamars community.
9. Mainjan System is remarkable in the chamars community. Mainjan covers 30 – 35 villages and a Jabar covers 2-3 villages. They make major decisions in the chamars community.
10. Chamars are very back in the field of education, economy and social participation.

## **7.2. Conclusion**

Chamars are one of the untouchable castes according to the Hindu religion. Their traditional occupation was leather work and traditional works were midwife, drummer and dumping the dead animals. But now they have changed their traditional work and occupation.

After analyzing the social and cultural aspects of the study area at Malahaniya VDC of Saptari district, following conclusion has been presented.

1. Chamar people are marginalized from main stream of the development process of the nation. They have no access to any natural resources, technological knowledge, educational opportunities, political power and employment opportunities.
2. The life cycle rituals performed by all the study population are more or less similar. Chamars have their own pandit to perform life cycle rituals.
3. Chamar community has their own informal council, constituted of elderly citizens. The leaders of the councils are known as 'Maijan' and 'Jawar'. They have the authority to intervene in disputes and

functions in the role to ensure harmony. They take major decision on community affairs.

4. In study area, Malahaniya VDC consists of nine wards. Out of nine wards, ward no one and two are separated for the others. All the Dalits are in the ward no one and two Chamars are excluded from real participation from most of day today social activities at the village level.
5. Chamars have their own cultural activities which are distinctive than others.
6. Chamars were socially and economically exploited. They were victims of economic, racial and social discrimination.

### **7.3. Recommendation**

On the basis of the findings of the study the following recommendations have been presented to uplift the socio-economic status and ethnographic cultural of the Chamar community of the studied area.

1. At first, to protect the right and to develop the consciousness of the Chamars. The government and NGO/INGO should be involved for welfare of backward people to bring forward and employment the specific program to meet the needs of Chamar community. Following are some programs to be launched immediately.
  - a. Free and compulsory education program for both children as well as adult Chamars upto the higher secondary level.
  - b. Livelihood and income generating program based on Local resources such as handicrafts, animal husbandry, vegetable farming, cultivation etc should be promoted.

2. There should be an intensive review of the implementation of legal measures adopted for the termination of caste based discrimination, which can be tackled only with government intervention.
3. Program should address their dignity and self-esteem that has been suppressed from generation to generation. The main sterilization should be dissected toward justices, equity, human dignity, resolve respect of Chamars that can make intervention fruitful.
4. As Chamar women are 'Sudeni', midwife by tradition, they should be given special training as midwives to provide the quality services to local people.
5. The program should be participatory. The active participation of Chamars should make necessary, which prevent Chamars to become subject of program; Program should be for the Chamars by Chamars and of the Chamars.
6. Chamar should be involved in all organizations community and local level consumers committees, management board of school, temple and other institutions.
7. Education vocational training and all other income generating scheme need to be launched as well as the planner should be aware about the possible negative effects that program could cause in community that is backward.
8. Chamars should make aware from the suppression, oppression, unjust and exploitation from social structure. They should make more capacity to bargain in negotiation with government, NGO and INGOs for their betterment.

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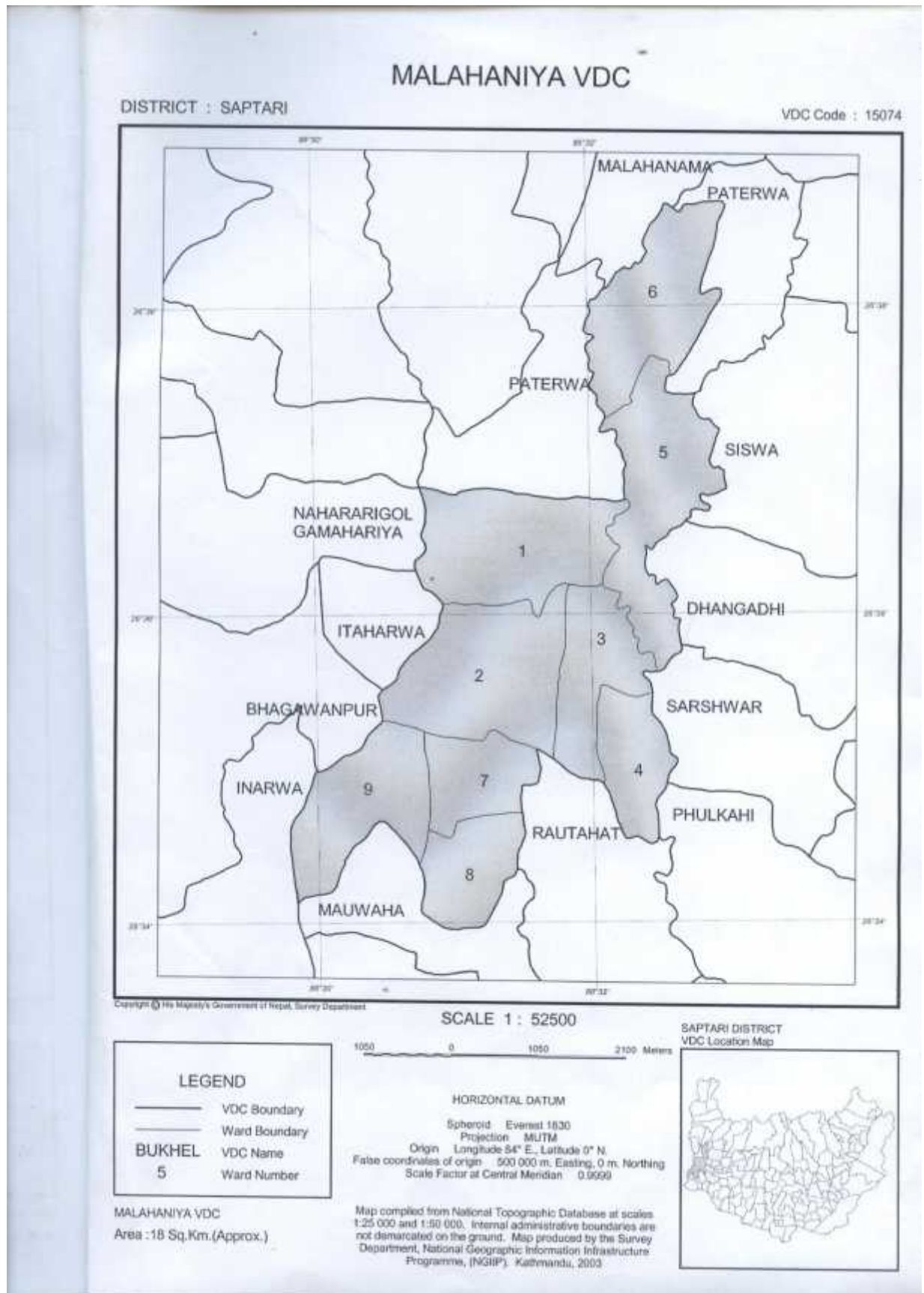
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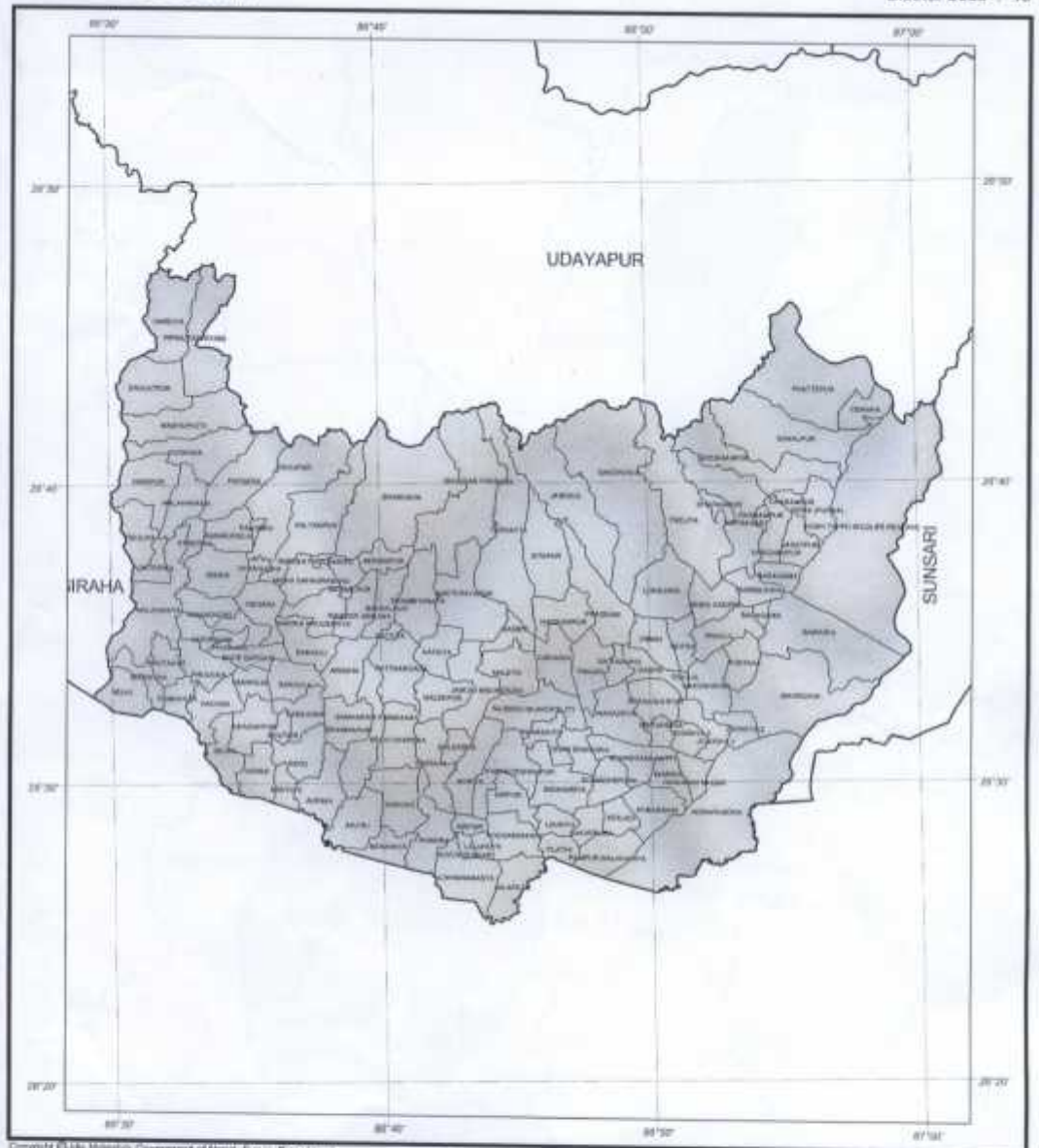
Annexes



# SAPTARI DISTRICT

ZONE : SAGARMATHA

District Code : 15



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SCALE 1 : 350000



LEGEND	
	District Boundary
	VDC Boundary
<b>MORANG</b>	District Name
	VDC Name

DISTRICT : SAPTARI  
Area : 1363 Sq. Km. (Approx.)

**HORIZONTAL DATUM**  
Spheroid Everest 1830  
Projection MUTM  
Origin Longitude 84° E., Latitude 0° N.  
False coordinates of origin 500 000 m. Easting, 0 m. Northing  
Scale Factor at Central Meridian 0.9999

Map compiled from National Topographic Database of scales 1:25 000 and 1:50 000. Internal administrative boundaries are not demarcated on the ground. Map produced by the Survey Department, National Geographic Information Infrastructure Programme, (NGIIP), Kathmandu, 2003

LOCATION MAP



## **Checklist for Key Informants**

1. Origin of Chamars: (Clam, Gotra, Dihh)
2. Migration History of Chamars: (Generation, Comes)
3. Birth Ritual: (Child birth, Nuwaran, Chhaity, Mundan)
4. Marriage: (Age, Sex, Mediator, Dowry, Janti, Bilauki Magne, Fooding, Samdhimilan)
5. Gouna ( 2<sup>nd</sup> time of marriage)
6. Death Ritual: (Kriya Karmi, Duration, Clothing, Process, Kriya garaune person, Used materials, Fooding, Bhoj, Dan)
7. God and Goddess: (Special offering, Worship, kulDeuta/ Gramdeuta Puja )
8. Festivals during the year: (Dashain, Deepawali, Chhat, Churhan, Judsheetal, Raxa bandhan, Bibahpanchami, Ekadashi, Shivratri, holli, Ghari, Jitiya, Sama)
9. Gender: (Occupation, Social Participation)
10. Dressing (Male and Female, Special day and general)
11. Preference of sex: (Son, Daughter)
12. Mainjan System; (Organization, Rules, Role and responsibility, Rights and duties)
13. Root causes of backwardness of Chamars communities

## **Participants' observation**

- House type and Sanitation
- Food habits, dress according to rituals, jewelry and ornaments
- Physical facilities

### **Lists of the key informants**

- ) Sitaram Ram
- ) Ganeshi Ram
- ) Baldeo Mahara
- ) Ras Lal Ram
- ) Baldeo Ram
- ) Dashai Ram
- ) Kuber Ram
- ) Resham Lal Ram

## घरधुरी तथ्यांक संकलन फारम

फारम भर्नेको नाम  मिति:

### १. पारिवारिक विवरण

घर नम्बर

घरमुलीको नाम

घरमुलीको उमेर  लिंग

घरमुलीको शिक्षा  धर्म

घरमुलीको पेशा

### २ परिवार सदस्यहरु तथा घरमुलीसंगको सम्बन्ध

क्रसं	सदस्यको नाम	घरमुलीसंगको सम्बन्ध	उमेर	लिंग		वैवाहिक स्थिति		शैक्षिक अवस्था				पेशा
				महिला	पुरुष	विवाहित	अविवाहित	प्रा वि	मा वि	उच्चशिक्षा	साक्षर	

### ३ भूमि सम्बन्धी विवरण

क्रसं	भूस्वामित्व	कुलक्षेत्रफल	खेत/बारी	घडेरी	सिंचित	असिंचित
१	आफनो निजि जग्गा					
२	मोही जग्गा					
३	बटैया जग्गा / अधिया					
४	अरुलाई कमाउन दिएको जग्गा					
५	अन्य भए					

४ बाली उत्पादन तथा बिक्री विवरण

क्र सं	बालीको नाम	उत्पादन परिमाण	बिक्री परिमाण	कैफियत

५ आफ्नो जग्गा जमिनबाट वर्षको कति दिन खान पुग्छ ?

३ महिना भन्दा कम	३ देखि ६ महिना	६ देखि ९ महिना	९ महिना देखि १ वर्ष	१ वर्ष भन्दा बढी

६ पशुपालन सम्बन्धी विवरण

क्र सं	पशुपंक्षीको किसिम	संख्या	वार्षिक आमदानी	कैफियत

७ आमदानीका स्रोतहरु र खर्चका विवरण

क्र सं	आमदानीका स्रोतहरु	वार्षिक आमदानी	क्र सं	खर्च विवरण	वार्षिक खर्च	कैफियत

८ बालबालिकाको पढाई लेखाई सम्बन्धमा तपाईंको विचार के छ ?

छोरालाई मात्र पढाउने

छोरीलाई मात्र पढाउने

छोरा छोरी दुवैलाई पढाउने

किन?

९ तपाईंको आफनो पेशामा संतुष्ट हुनुहुन्छ ?

किन ?

१० तपाईंको परिवारमा मुख्य मुख्य काम गर्दा सो काम सम्बन्धी निर्णय कस्ले गर्छ ?

बुवाले	<input type="text"/>	हजुरबुवाले	<input type="text"/>
आमाले	<input type="text"/>	हजुरआमाले	<input type="text"/>
बुवा आमा दुवैले	<input type="text"/>	हजुरबा हजुरआमाले	<input type="text"/>

११ तपाईंले वर्ष भरिमा कुन कुन पर्व मनाउनु हुन्छ ?

दशैं	<input type="text"/>	तिहार	<input type="text"/>	होली	<input type="text"/>	जितिया	<input type="text"/>
चौरचन	<input type="text"/>	छठ	<input type="text"/>	रक्षा बन्धन	<input type="text"/>	जुडशितल	<input type="text"/>
कृष्णास्टमी	<input type="text"/>	समाचकेवा	<input type="text"/>	अन्य	<input type="text"/>		

१२ तपाईंहरु बिरामी पर्दा उपचारको लागि कहाँ जानुहुन्छ ?

अस्पताल	<input type="text"/>	स्वास्थ्य चौकी/उपस्वास्थ्य चौकी	<input type="text"/>		
क्लिनिक	<input type="text"/>	औषधि पसल	<input type="text"/>	धामीभांकी	<input type="text"/>

१३ महिलाको सुत्केरी कसबाट गराउनुहुन्छ ?

डाक्टर/नर्स /अनमी	<input type="text"/>	तालिम प्राप्त सुडेनी	<input type="text"/>
सुडेनी	<input type="text"/>	घरछिमेकको बुढिआमा	<input type="text"/>

१४ पांच वर्ष मुनिको बच्चालाई खोप लगाउनुहुन्छ ? लगाउनु भएको छ भने कुन कुन खोप लगाउनु भएको छ ?

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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१ बि सि जि

२ पोलियो

३ टि टि

४ डि पि टि

५ दादुर

१५ परिवार नियोजन सम्बन्धमा तपाईंलाई थाहा छ कि छैन ? छ भने कसले प्रयाग गर्नुहुन्छ

श्रीमति

श्रीमान

दुवैजना

१६ बच्चालाई भाडापखाला लाग्दा के गर्नुहुन्छ ?

नुन चिनी पानी खुवाउछु

जीवनवल बनाएर खुवाउछु

स्वास्थ्य केन्द्र लैजान्छु

धामी भाक्री बोलाउछु

१७ पानीको श्रोत के के छन ?

क्र सं	स्वामित्व	धारा	इनार/कुवा	ट्यूबवेल/ हातेपम्प
१	निजि			
२	सार्वजनिक			

१८ तपाईंको घरमा शोचालय छ कि छैन ?

छैन

छ

छ भने खाल्डो चर्पी

रीङ्ग बला चर्पी

अन्य

धन्यवाद