

Chapter - One

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Nepal, while small in terms of surface area, which is only 147181 sq. km, is remarkably diverse in flora and fauna due to its climatic and topographical variation. Because of the varied climatic conditions prevailing at different altitudes in Nepal, a very wide variety of species exists. Nepal is a small area of 14.7 million hectare harbors variety of habitats for the various ethnic groups. Nepal is small landlocked south Asian country, which lies between India and China. The total area of Nepal is 147181 square kilometer.

Nepal is not only rich in natural resources and scenic beauty but also has the people belonging to various tribes and ethnic groups speaking different languages and following various religions. Some of the ethnic groups include Magar, Gurung, Rai, Limbu, Tharu, Chepang, etc.

Nepal embodying great physiographic diversity and biodiversity is also rich in the cultural and ethnic diversity. Nepal is a home to 23 million people, which comprises numerous multi-ethnic, multilingual and multi-religious groups. Government of Nepal has identified and recognized 59 indigenous Nationalities of Nepal through the enactment of the National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities Act, 2002. Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN) 2004 has further classified the 59 Janajatis into five groups comprising of endangered, highly marginalized, marginalized, disadvantaged and advanced group. Among the several ethnic groups, the Chepangs, occupying 0.23 per cent of total population (CBS, 2001) is one of the highly marginalized groups living on the hilly and steeper slopes of Chitwan, Dhading, Makawanpur and Gorkha districts of Nepal.

“Nepal is garden of four casts and thirty-six sub casts” remarked by the king, Prithivi Naryan Shah long ago. When the people divide as accordance with their with their castes, they definitely have different traits and qualities on the ground of their castes. Our country, Nepal is a country of unity within

diversity. In this light, Chepang people are also not the exception of it. Biological resources and associated traditional knowledge play a vital role in the livelihood of rural people. It is linked with food security, human health and environment. Majority of the rural people depend upon these resources for their livelihoods.

Poverty is pervasive in Nepal, which exists as a rural and agrarian phenomenon. About 31 per cent of the total population is living below poverty line in Nepal. It is particularly even more pronounced in the remote areas of the hills and mountains and in the ethnic communities and occupational castes of Nepal. Chepang community, who is still having semi-nomadic way of life are bound to live in abject poverty. Their primary lifestyle includes hunting, foraging for wild roots and fishing and traditional farming near forests. Despite having sound knowledge and close relationship with forests and forest products, the community is still marginalized and deprived of the modern facilities. The indigenous knowledge and skills of valuable forest products is also disappearing gradually in the rural communities. Majority of Chepang (Prajā) households possess small pieces of steep, dry, rocky and marginal lands and utilize the poor quality soils for rain fed crops like maize and millet. The products obtained from their marginal lands do not support them well enough to maintain their basic household needs and are confronted with food deficit problem around the year. Considering all these, this research is focused on determining how to contribute in the livelihood of highly marginalized community, i.e. Chepang community.

1.2 Statement of the problem

There are more than 50 ethnic groups of people in Nepal. Chepangs are among the least known of Nepal's indigenous people. Ordinarily, Chepangs are considered as a forest dwelling tribal community but slowly emerged as simple agriculture-com-food gathering household maintaining people. Ignorant and innocent, they are exploited by the so-called upper cast people. However, in

spite of rampant poverty and backwardness, they are undergoing some changes.

Backward communities display a lot of mysterious things to many people. For a researcher, the backward community can be good experimental group to compare and contrast the social aspects vis-à-vis the other communities including the elite's groups. Similarly, for a policy maker, the backward communities display a lot of constraints in designing a generic policy. These groups need special attention since they are very sensitive to change of any kind. It is a matter of fact that backward communities are very fragile and need special attention. If they are not taken care of properly, they will disperse and might come into verge of extinction. It is also known fact that there is almost no representation of Chepangs in government and other apparatus. In addition, there is a big gap in the distribution of social justice between the indigenous and non-indigenous group.

Social change refers to social relationship, social setting, co-ordination with each other, interaction, interrelationship and interdependent to one another. There is no denying the fact that cultural, political, economical, educational and social revolutions may bring great changes in social relationships. The present research has dealt with the study of socio-economic status of his disadvantaged group of people. Literature and macro level studies of socio-economic status of Chepangs have been found at max. However, micro level studies are in scarce.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The overall objectives of the study are to assess the present socio-economic study of the Chepangs of Sarikhet VDC of Makawanpur district. The specific objectives are:

1. To find out the economic condition of Chepang community.
2. To analyze the social and cultural activities of Chepang community.

3. To analyze challenges of Chepang community.

1.4 Rationale of the Study

The socio-economic study of each ethnic group of Nepal is most important factor for introducing Nepal to the world. Systematic plans and programmed to uplift the standard of living of Chepang People require a clear understanding of their number distribution in different part of the country including their behaviors. This study focus on finding economic characteristics of Chepangs of Sarikhet VDC, and to provide valuable information to prepare plans and programme to uplift their standard of living. Chepangs are one of the weaker and marginalized sections of Nepal. It is well observed that the Chepang community is a self-contained social unit and comparative identity and isolation from mainstream of Nepalese society has enabled them to be away from the process of development and the faces of change.

Hence, the present research will assess their major challenges or bottlenecks of their livelihood. It is expected that the finding of this research work may assist the planners, policy makers and practitioners in an effective manner in the days to come.

The national census 2001 has shown the total population of Chepang to 52,237. The national census 2001 also indicated that their population has been unevenly distributed to 63 districts of Nepal. However, the larger population of Chepangs is mainly spread across the 58 VDCs belonging to Chitwan, Dhading, Gorkha and Makwanpur districts. More than 98 percent of Chepangs live in Chitwan, Makwanpur, Dhading and Gorkha districts. Some of them are also found in adjoining Tanahu and Lamjung districts. Although they form a single indigenous nationality living in the same traditional territory for centuries, they have been separated into four administrative blocks of the country. In line with the national and international rights based perspectives Chepang community presently faces the following problems:

-) The right to nationality through the issuance of citizenship certificate, which has so far been denied to most Chepangs.
-) The right to an adequate standard of living, including adequate supply of food to sustain lives.
-) Their right to be recognized and as an indigenous group, through the promotion of one's customs, culture and other traditions.
-) The right to education at all levels and all forms provided by the State, as well as the use of their mother tongue.

1.5 Limitation of the Study

Each and every study has its own limitations. This study aims to focus the socio economic status of Chepang community in sarikhet VDC. It is a micro study, which attempts to explore the socio economic study of Chepang of Sarikhet. It cannot comprehend the macro view of the socio-economic status of the Chepangs because the socio-economic condition of the Chepang is vague and this study reflects some of the varieties of socio-economic status.

This study is limited only in Sarikhet VDC. This may not reflect the socio-economic status of the whole Chepang community of Nepal. All the information in this study has been based on the data collected by the researcher.

1.6 Organization of the study

The research work is divided into six chapters. Chapter One includes introduction of the study and Chapter Two is associated with review of literature. Similarly, Chapter Three deals with research methodology. Description of study area is done in Chapter Four. Chapter Five is full of about data analysis and interpretation. Finally the generalization is done in Sixth Chapter, the chapter includes summary of the study, conclusion and recommendation.

Chapter - Two

Literature Review

Many anthropologists and social scientists have carried out research on Chepang. But there is unique idea about them. Chepang are the inhabitat in the remote and sparse contours, outback and rolling precipices of the districts of Makwanpur, Chitwan, Gorkha and Dhading. One legend from eastern Nepal claims the Chepangs along with the Hayes Sunuwars are the descendants of Suacchhap, one of the ten sons of Kirathangba, ancestors of Kirat people.

The earliest known work on Chepang is that of B.H.Hodgson, a former British resident in Nepal, who carried out a considerable amount of investigations on the non indo Aryan languages of the Indian subcontinent. His first paper, on “(Chepang and Kusunda Tribes of Nepal, 1884)” shows the physical and linguistic affinity between the chepangs and other groups of the region. He hypothesized that their wretched condition, physical and moral, is the result not of inherent defect, but of that savage ferocity of stronger races which broke to pieces and out law. He writes “Chepang still rely more on food hunting and gathering than on agriculture. They expect more from their bows and arrows than from plough. To earn Money, to make a proper house and to wear clean clothes and to acquire education are things which are out of the thought of the Chepang”(1857)

In 1967, Dor Bahadur Bista states, “some of the Chepangs believe that their community is an offshoot of the kirant (Rai-Limbu) group that came from sunthali, Dolakha in the east. Some chepangs believe that the Thami, Pahari and Chepangs are descendants of the ancestors. Some of the chepangs call themselves “the lords of the land”(Hami, Jimi Thami, Bhumi Haun). Although some Chepangs claim their ancestors come from eastern Nepal. Most of them believe that they were originated from the stone of the Mahabharat mountain range. According to Bista, in his book “People of Nepal 1967” Chepangs are

distinguished in two grounds- one purely relying in agricultural economy and other still depending upon food hunting, gathering and fishing. The former groups lives in the hunting and fishing. The former group lives in the eastern part and is known as “Pukunthali” and the other live in western part and is known “Kachhare”. Kachhare Chepangs are more backward and primitive than Pukunthalis. The Kachhare liked to be called “Sunpraja” and have no subdivisions, while Pukunthalies are called “Praja” and have number of exogamous clans.

D.B. Bista (1967:91-92) quotes“One of the popular Chepangs legends states that “Both Lhahri (Lava) and Kushari (Kush) were the sons of sitaji (Ramayan). One day both Lahari and Kusahari, who were very good at archery, decided to test themselves who was better between them. Whoever lost the competition would have to migrate to the west of the Narayani River and never be seen again. Lahari won the competition and since then Kushari had to migrate Narayani River. After that, they remained behaved as enemies.” Likewise, they were natural enemies of each other. The descendants of Lahari were called Chepangs and Kushari, the Kusundda.

According to Bista in his book “People of Nepal” (1967), highlights Chepang from the point of view of socio-cultural settings. He has also made an attempt to bring them to light through the journal “Nepal Digest” (1972), giving some details on their origin, belifes, customs and their economic life (Bista, 1972).

A letter of Prithivi Narayan Shah to Bhagawant Nath, dated 1770, mentions the caste Kushari (Pant: 1968-1969). From then, the term has come in use for over centuries. Some Tamangs in the area also claimed to be descendants of Lava (Lhahari).

In the book “Ethnic Groups of Nepal and their ways of Living” by D.B. Shrestha and C.B. Singh, the authors have attempted to give a brief introduction of Chepangs of Lothar Khola and Sarikhet VDC.

In 1879, another scholars Forbes wrote that this affinity held for “nearly the cognate dialects of Tibet, Nepal and higher Asia and not especially for Chepangs. He concluded that in the early period, the whole sub-Himalayan region was occupied by tribes allied to the Chepangs and Arenac mountaineers, who were cut in to pieces and driven out of central Nepal by the incursion to 1300 years ago, which is the date Hodgson assigns to event”(Forbes 1878: 218-220)

The Praja Development Program Bulletin (1983) is also a helpful document for the scholars who wish to study on Chepangs. It gives some information about their poverty and belief in superstitions and welfare programs launched by the government.

The study carried out by CEDA, Tribhuvan University on “Chepang Jatiko Samajik Sammunati Sarvechhayan” 1975, is a significant contribution on the study of Chepangs in Nepal. The research work has emphasized their socio-economic characteristics.

G.M. Gurung (1989) “The Chepangs: A study in Continuity and Change”, writes, “the traditional distinctiveness of Chepangs of Nepal living in isolation, losing their traditional identities adopting the characteristic of Hinduism and entering in to the main stream of Neplease society, are undergoing change. But the speed and excitement of change has been very slow and certainly not what we find among others.” He has examined Chepangs, society, culture, life style, historical interpretation, ethnic identity, physical features, food habits.clothing, festivals, clan organization and their occupation.

“Chepang Jati Ek Parichaya” written by Bhojraj Thapaliya also made an attempt to give an athnographic picture of Chepang community of Nepal. He has described different aspects of their life, origin, organization pre-history and socio-cultural condition. “Chepangharu Sanga Kehi Din”(Madhuparka September-October 1942, vol. 7 No.5 p.75), by Biswabandhu Thapa is a study

on the Chepang of Makawanpur, Chitwan, Dhading and Gorkha. He Has described the population of Chepangs, geographical setting, their homelands occupation, historical origin, economic condition and marriage system among the Chepang community but he has not talked about socio-cultural changes of their life.

Chapter - Three

Research Methodology

The research is descriptive and explanatory in nature. The study has assessed the overall status of the Chepangs of Sarikhet VDC, Makawanpur. Interviews were taken with the selected samples of the elderly. An attempt was also made to look into their problems through interactions, and observations. The random sampling method was adopted to select the respondents, who were asked semi-structured questions to find their literacy level, age, sex, marital status and the major reasons for their displacements. The findings taken from the research were interpreted, and recommendations were made accordingly.

3.1 Research Design

Research Design is the plan structure and strategy of investigation to obtain answer to research questions. Research design is the conceptual structure within which research is conducted.

This study attempts to identify the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of Chepangs and suggest measures for their sound up-liftment. This study is based on descriptive and exploratory research design. Data and information are collected through field survey in the VDC and they are analyzed to get the answer of the research questions. For this study data was collected through questionnaire from local people, teachers, local leaders and village head. The data collected through questionnaire were classified and tabulated according to the needs of the research.

3.2 Rationale for the Study area

The socio-economic status represents the living condition of particular community. Chepang is an indigenous and one of the Chepangs are mainly distributed mainly in Makawanpur, Chitwan, Dhading, Gorkha and Tanahun district of Nepal. Among the district Makawanpur is a main district where the

Chepangs reside in. Sarikhet VDC is one of the VDC of Makawanpur district. It is good to note that a significant number of Chepangs reside in this village. Plethoras of macro level of studies on Chepang have been found. The present study is very much important in the context of Nepal, because it is real challenge and a call that they should be include in the mainstream of Nepalese society and carried in to a subtle silken thread of nationalism. In this regard, the present study focuses on the present scenario of socio-economic characteristics of the Chepang of Sarikhet VDC of Makawanpur district.

3.3 Natures and Source of Data

To find the above-mentioned objectives. Both primary and secondary data were collected primary data was collected from the household survey, key information, interview and observation and secondary data was collected from the different related materials, books, literature, reports, articles journals and information of Sarikhet VDC

3.3.1 Secondary Sources

Various published and unpublished secondary data was also considered to supplement the data from primary sources. Related journals, books, reports, unpublished records, and theses were consulted. Nepal Chepang Sangh, Makawanpur (NCS) provided data about population distribution, VDCs distribution, land use patterns, geographical information etc. For the supplement of information, many concerned organizations like CEDA, CBS, Central library (TU), PLAN, and NCS were visited.

3.3.2 Primary Sources

Primary data was collected through the household survey with the help of pre-tested semi-structured interview schedule. Primary sources include interviews, questionnaires, observations, or experiments. Information was also collected through various participatory rural appraisal (PRA)

3.4 Selection of the Study Area

Makawanpur district is diverse in caste and ethnic composition as all four castes and several ethnic groups reside over here. Chepang ethnic groups in the district practice shifting cultivation and some Dalits depend on forest for charcoal for subsistence through their traditional occupation. There are residing in forty-three village development committees and one municipality. Majority of the village settlements in the northwest and many villages in the northeast are connected with the Hetauda heading roads by foot-tracks. Among them the Sarikhet VDC is selected as a study area.

3.5 Universes and Sample

The area, which was selected for this study, is Sarikhet VDC of Makawanpur district. The total household in the VDC is 315 and the total population is 2093 the total household of Chepang in the VDC is 160 and total population is 942. The total household of the chepangs, Only 105 Chepangs members were taken as the sample of the study. Sample units are selected randomly. A questionnaire was administered to receive information's on their socio-economic status, observation was also made for collecting information on other aspects not covered by interview, though the universe was relatively small with less number of inhabitants.

3.6 Techniques and the Tools of Data Collection

Data may be obtained from several sources; it is not easy to list them in detail. Each research project has its own data needs and data sources. However, the general classification of data sources has the following dimensions:

3.6.1 Household Survey

Structure and unstructured questionnaire was used to collect on the basis data in terms of personal identification and population structure, occupation, land

holding, education and family size etc. The respondents were interviewed with the help of semi-structured questionnaire.

3.6.2 Observation

Research involved in the observation to record the different information related to problems and prospects of socio-economic condition of Chepang community in the Makawanpur district. To accomplish this task, both participant and quasi-participant, observation was used. During this period of observation the value of their cultural identity were sincerely observed. In the observation period the study was based on the observation of costume, feasts and festivals, rituals and other sacred sites.

The respondents were observed with the help of semi-structured checklist.

Observation was an important technique to draw inferences regarding the overall status and living condition of the Chepangs of Sarikhet VDC, Makawanpur. All the concerned amenities at the home were studied to make a candid assessment of their situation. Direct participant with the local people to study their settlement patterns, sanitation, land types, livestock, cropping pattern, source of water drinking and irrigation and festivals celebrations were carefully observed, so much to record the exact condition of the village life.

3.7 Method of Data Analysis

In this study, the data has been analyzed both descriptively and statistically. After collecting various data, were manually processed with simple tabulation. Information, which obtained on geographical setting of the village, housing condition, sanitation family structured, festival celebration has been descriptively analyzed. Information on marriage, kinship, education status, population composition, food habits dress patterns, life style, income and expenditure have descriptively and statistically analyzed. The statistical tools and techniques used in the study are very simple. Most of the data have been calculated and tabulated on simple percentage basis.

Chapter - Four

DESCRIPTION OF STUDY AREA

4.1 Geographical Setting

Makawanpur district is a part of Narayani zone with an area of 2426 sq.km locationally, this district lies in the mid development region. This district is surrounded by the east and south by Parsa, Bara and Rautahat, while to the west and north lies in the district Chitwan, Dhading, Kathmandu and Lalitpur. This district has been 15. Total population of Makwanpur district is 392,604 (2001) which includes 199,144 male and 193,460 female. About 82.5% of the population belongs to rural areas of the district while rests 17.44% belong to urban areas. Average population density of Makwanpur District is 162 people per square km. Which is slightly higher than the national average (157 people per square km). Total household of the district are 71,112 with average of 5.52 members per household/family (DDC, 2007)

Topographically, it has two configurative characters; one is the Mahabharat high hilly land in the northern part, and second one is the Siwaliks also known as the Churia, lower foot hills, in the south. The elevation ranges from 166 m (Raigaon VDC) to 2584 m. (Shimbhanjyang in Daman VDC) above the mean sea level. The outer region to the southern side is Terai that is plain with average hot climate; the northern region up to Mahabharat range is said Inner-Terai, and the land configuration is to some extent undulating in Makawanpur District than Terai.

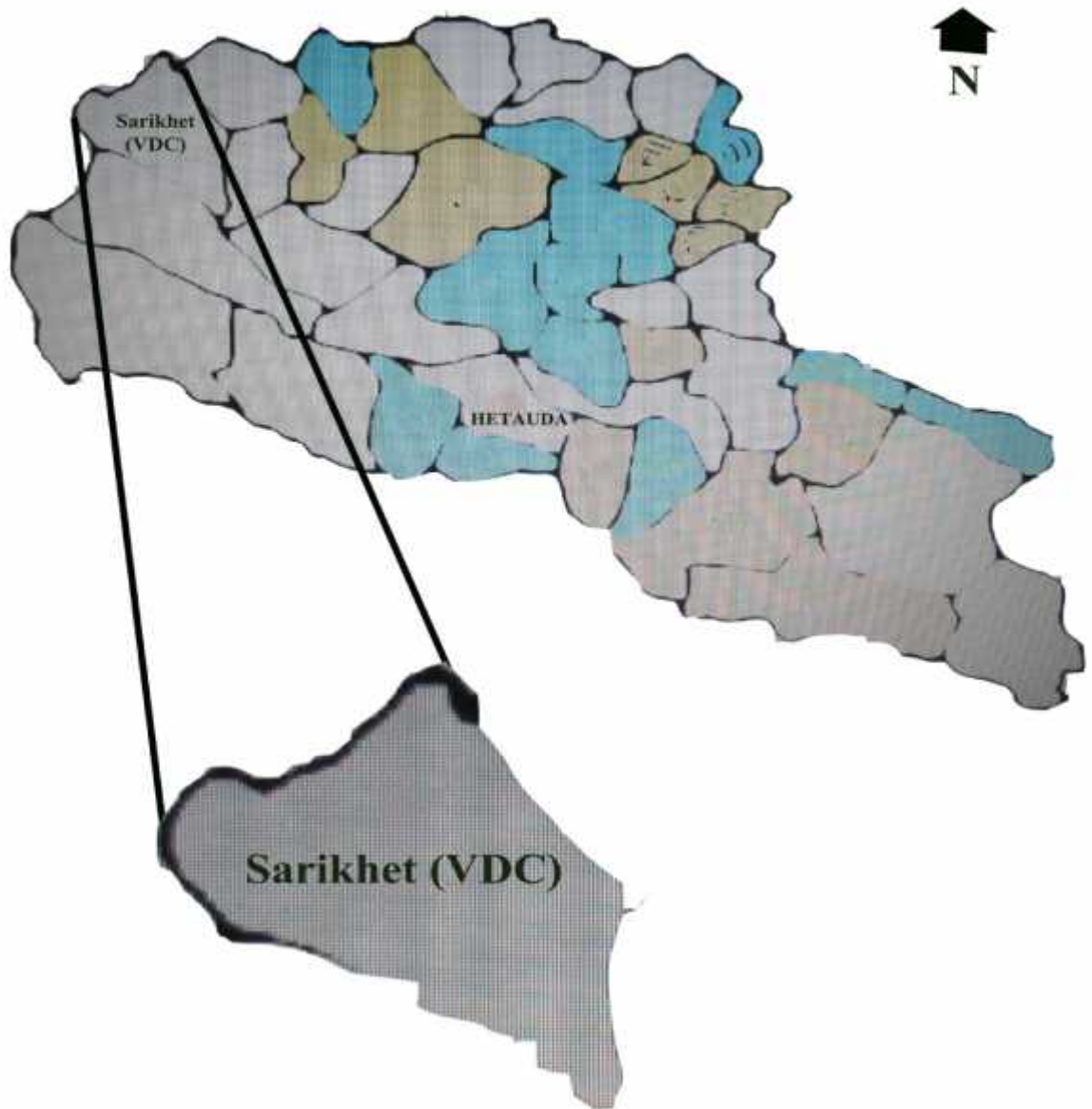
Makawanpur district is diverse in caste and ethnic composition as all four castes and several ethnic groups reside over here. Tamang is the most dominant ethnic group with the population of about 47%. Brahmin and Chhetry ranked second and third position respectively by population. Magar and Chepang ethnic groups have also a representative population with 14.57% and 3.91% respectively followed by Dalits with 2.7%. Chepang ethnic groups in the district practice shifting cultivation and some Dalits depend on forest for

charcoal for subsistence through their traditional occupation.

Makawanpur district lies between 166m and 2584m above mean sea level. The district can broadly be divided into two physiographic regions *i.e.* Mahabharat hills in the north and Churia hills (also called Siwaliks) in the south. About 75% landmass of the district is mountainous and rest 25% is dead hills to plane lands (DDC, 2007). The slopes of northern Mahabharat hills are often very steep.

Climatic variation in the district ranges from tropical to temperate. Tropical and sub-tropical climate exists in the southern part of the district, in the Churia range. In the northern part, the Mahabharat range, predominated by the temperate climate. Makawanpur district can broadly be divided into three seasons: cold, hot, and rainy season. Cold season exists between December and February. The temperature in cold season falls down to 6.60C (average) but in the up hills, particularly in Daman and Simbhanjyang area, snowfall occurs. Forest fire problems do not exist during the cold season in this district. Hot season exists between March to June with the average temperature of 32.9oC. This is the fire hazard season in the district. Monsoon remains active, generally, from July to September in this district, and, is called rainy season. Average rainfall is 2274 mm in Churia hills and 1908.6 mm in Mahabharat range. Rainy season is a less fire hazardous season. Average relative humidity of the district is 73.5%.

Makawanpur District Map



Source: District Development Committee (DDC)

4.2 The Sarikhet Village Development Committee (VDC)

Thus, Makawanpur district has altogether a total of 326 kilometre of road, providing services to its 314,599 people, which are residing in forty-three village development committees and one municipality. The total road length has to serve an area of 2426 km². Of the total road length, the Hetauda city road has 30 km long (HMG 1995). Majority of the village settlements in the northwest and many villages in the northeast are connected with the Hetauda heading roads by foot-tracks. Among them the Sarikhet VDC is selected as a study area. The study area, geographically located around 27° 31' 48" and 84° 54' 00". Covering an approximately an area 40 sq. km. This VDC separated by Manahari in the south and east, Chitwan in west and Dhading in north. Manahari Bazaar is it's small center for their trade. Manahari is a small center of Makawanpur District. The Mahendra Highway is located in center of Manahari Bazaar. It's lies between 166m and 2584m above mean sea level. The district can broadly be divided into two physiographic regions *i.e.* Mahabharat hills in the north and Churia hills (also called Siwaliks) in the south. About 75% landmass of the district is mountainous and rest 25% is dead hills to plane lands (DDC, 2007). Sarikhet VDC is a small part of Mahabharat hills.

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The Chepangs residential pattern and the type of house are traditional, some houses are made of wood, some are made his from stone. Administravly this VDC occupies six different wards with different villages.

The total population of VDC is 6929 with total population 3,713 male and 3,216 female out of which 1,127 are Chepang people. The total number of household were 1065 out of which, 260 households belongs to Chepang people. There are different ethnic groups of living in Sarikhet VDC. There are one healthpost in the VDC and two government school in different wards of VDC

4.3 Housing Pattern

The Chepang residential pattern and the types of house are traditional some houses are made of wood some are made of stone. Most of the roofs of the houses are made with thatch. The Chepang houses are small and narrow. The houses are two stored and the house has no separate rooms.one stored make one room. They use the upper on for their bedroom and the low is used for the kitchen. The size of the Chepangs house is from 5 to 7 meters long and 4 to 5 meter wide in the average. The roves being conical. Most of the designs of the house are built on rectangular size. The door is in the middle of the front wall. The windows are also in the middle of the front wall or any side in the wall of the stonewall house. But the wooden houses have no windows. The front side of the house attaches the verandah. Verandah is very useful of the guest and their daily functional life. The front of the house has also a courtyard. It is very important for their cultural activities. Some Chepangs are keeping their animals in the side of verandha. Their house is very rough and dirty because they don't clean the house daily. The Chepangs scrub the house only in the particular function. They are painting their house's wall with the red mud in the festivals.

The hearth is being in the middle of the low stored. Thus inside of the whole house id dirty and black by the smoke. The Chepangs sleep around the hearth to make it warm in the winter season.

Now a day, the house of the Chepangs in the Sarikhet plain area are found neat and clean building pattern is changing day by day as Brahman kshetry.

Chapter - Five
DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION
SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESPONDENTS

It is essential to know some demographic and socio-economic status of the study Chepang community. This Chapter mainly deals with some important demographic characteristics such as literacy status, educational attainment occupations, size of land holding, cause of migration, income level and other economic characteristics of respondents.

5.1 Population Characteristics of Sampled Households

As the family is the principal productive unit, it is also the sole source of labor supply. Though all the family members contribute to subsistence and commercial aspects, the age of the population was categorized in three age categories in the study area. The economically active population was considered the members of age 15 to 59 years. Though the members with age below 15 and above 59 years also have the supportive role in the economic activities of the family, they were not considered as economically active members. Out of the 810 total populations of the sampled households, the study revealed that majority of the population (50.63 percent) was of economically active age. Overall, 50.86 percent of the sampled population was male and 49.15 percent of population was female. The study revealed male population higher in all age group except group of age below 15 years.

Table 5.1
Population Distribution by Age Group and Gender

Age	Male		Female		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
20-25	20	33.33	10	25	30	30
25-30	13	16.66	10	25	23	20
30-35	4	6.66	6	10	10	8
35-40	14	23.33	6	15	20	20
40-45	7	11.66	8	20	15	15
45-50	5	8.33	2	5	7	7
Total	63	100%	42	100%	105	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2011

The above table shows the distribution of respondents by age and sex structure. In due course of conducting research, the researcher found that 30% respondents were between the age ranges of 20-25, of which, 25% were female and 33.33% were male. Similarly, about 20% of the respondents were between the age group of 25-30, of which, males constitute 10% and the female constitute 25%. In the same way, about 8% of the respondents were between the age group of 30-35 which constituted 6.66% males and the rest 10% females. Likewise about 20% of the respondents were between the age ranges of 35-40 which constituted 23.33 males and the rest 15% females. Similarly about 15% of the respondents were between the age group of 40-45, where the share of males is 11.66% and the females 20%. Likewise, the share of males is 8.33% and the share of females is 5% among the respondents who fall in the age ratio of 45-50 years of age.

5.2 Structure of Family

In the context of the Chepang family, it consists of a group of persons who are related by blood. In the observation of the present researcher, the male members are generally grandfather, father, father's brother, father's siblings,

and father's son and so on. On the other hand, the female members of the family are grandmother, mother, father's unmarried sister and wives of the sons.

The family structures are of both nuclear and joint type. The concept of nuclear family is alien to them and is not the same as it is to the westerners. However, in general practice family is divided into two broad categories popularly known as nuclear and joint family. Joint family is a main sociological phenomenon in the Nepalese society. This is unaffected by caste or ethnicity, religion, language, occupation and urbanization. Nuclear family is defined as a group consisting of a husband, his wife and their unmarried siblings living together. Nuclear family has become an ideal norm since long. Some Chepangs live in a joint family. The Chepang society is paltry a liner society. Father is the head of the family. After elder brother's death, family responsibility is transferred to his wife in the absence of his other brother. Most of the families consist of husband, wife and their siblings. Such families are found among the Chepangs with good economic status, while poor Chepangs live in joint families.

Most of the young Chepangs are found living separate from their families immediately after they get married. This is because they want to live in a peaceful atmosphere. They do not want to take up the whole burden of the joint family. They think that a huge joint family becomes a great burden for women. The practice of dowry is also prevalent in the Chepang community. As their traditional culture, the chepangs give their married daughters a piece of land or a tree of *Chyuri* (butter tree). The unmarried children continue to work as laborers and collect money for themselves.

The relationship among father, son, mother, children, sister, daughter and other member of household are interdependent in their family affairs. The father consults with his son on domestic affairs when the latter is below 16 years old. The mother protects her children from unfavorable condition of household until they are married.

The Chepang live as extended family units, often with three generations living in the same house. If a family has many sons, or if a son has many wives, the

men will live separately with their wives and children. The family structure is patrilineal (line of descent traced through the males) and predominantly patriarchal (male dominated), but the mother plays an important social role.

Table-5.2
Family Type of Chepang in Sarikhet VDC

Family Type	Household Number	Percentage
Nuclear	31	64.58%
Joint	17	35.42%
Total	48	100.00%

Source: Field Survey, 2011

The above table no 5.2.1 shows that, of the 64.58 percent families were nuclear and remaining 35.42 percent were joint families.

5.3 Educational Status of the Respondents

Less than 15 percent Chepangs are literates and almost 90 percent of them are leading life under utter poverty. These days, there are some projects run for chepangs, but are not becoming really effective so far. School enrollment ratio of school going children is still very low and drop out rate is very high. The census 2001 has revealed that the population of Chepand is 52,237. Education is one of the important human capitals, which plays important role in determining household status in the society. It is the main factor of socio-cultural and economic change in a society. Without education people' attitude, knowledge cannot be developed and so with the society.

Table-5.3**Distribution of respondents by educational status**

Education	Rich	Medium	Poor	Total
Illiterate	9(35.7)	8(25.0)	25(42.4)	42(40)
Primary level	5(64.3)	17(53.1)	27(45.8)	49(46.66)
Up to SLC	-	6(18.8)	7(11.9)	13(12.39)
Higher Education	-	1(3.1)	-	1(0.95)
Total	14(100)	32(100)	59(100)	105(100)

Source: Field Survey, 2011

In the study area, majority of the respondents were found with primary level (46.66 percent) followed by illiterate (40 percent) and only very few had secondary (12.39 percent) and higher secondary level (0.95 percent) education in the study area (Table 5). Illiteracy rate was found higher in the poor households (42.4 percent) than rich (35.7 percent) and medium households (25.0 percent). While looking from the gender perspective, illiteracy rate was considerably higher in female (80.95) than that of male (29.76). Out of total female respondents, only 19.04 percent was found literate with primary education level whereas 70.23 percent of the male respondents were literate. Out of the respondents, only 60 percent of them were literate and the overall literacy rate of the population was 68.54 percent. The number and spread of schools in the study area were low and the quality of facilities in the existing schools was not adequate as most of the schools did not have enough number of teacher and required furniture as per the student number. The school enrollment rate though was satisfactory with not much disparity between boys and girls but the dropout rate was higher after primary level education. Distant locations of the schools, poor road access, low income, lack of labor force for farming and food insecurity were the key hurdles depriving children from going to schools.

5.4 Religion of Chepang

The Chepang are primarily ethnic religionists. However, they have integrated many beliefs and practices from other religions into their own unique system. Many rituals are performed and a variety of deities are worshipped. An important ritual the Chepang observe is known as the Kulain Puja, which involves the worship of dead ancestors.

Tabel-5.4
Religion of Chepang

Religion	No of Respondents		Total	
	No	%	No	%
Hindus	49	49	49	49
Buddhist	33	31	33	31
Christian	22	20	22	20
Total	105	100%	105	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2011

While assessing the religion of the respondents, it was found that about 49% of the respondents were Hindus followed by 31% Buddhist and the rest 20% Christians.

5.5 Occupational Status of Households

For over a thousand years, the Chepang lived in very poor conditions. In the 20th century, their quality of life began to improve due to the development of progressive agricultural techniques. Before they began to settle in villages, the Chepang led a nomadic life, doing some fishing and hunting. Today, they live in sheds made of tree branches and cultivate crops such as maize and millet. They still have customs akin to nomadic life, such as using traps to catch birds and gathering various forest products. Occupation structure reflects the nature of local economy and various commercial and employment opportunity of the people of the area.

Tabel-5.5 Major Occupation of Respondents

Occupation	Number of Respondents	%
Agriculture	29	28
Hunting	25	24
Labors	23	22
Business	11	10
Govt. job	1	1
Pvt. Job	9	8
Student	7	7
Total	105	100

Source: Field Survey, 2011

In due course of assessing the major occupation of the respondents, about 28% of the respondents were found holding agricultural as their major occupation followed by 24% hunting, 22% labor, 10% business, 1% government job, 8% private job and the rest 7% student.

Table 6 indicates the distribution of the respondents' occupation. The major occupation of the respondents under study area was basically agro-forestry. The findings revealed that 75.2 percent of the respondents were entirely engaged in farming as their primary occupation. In general, crop farming along with livestock husbandry and collection of forest products were the major farming activities of the community. Some of the respondents had mixed type of occupation i.e. Farming with service, farming with business and farming with wage laboring.

Table-5.6
Distribution of Respondents by Occupation

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Farming	79	75.2
Farming + wage laboring	16	15.2
Farming + Service	5	4.8
Farming + Business	5	4.8
Total	105	100

Source: Field Survey, 2011.

Note: Farming: Crop, Livestock

Service: Governmental job, Non-governmental job

Business: Shopkeeper, Home stay Wage laboring: payments
for work performed

Other respondents (15.2 percent) were dependent on farming and wage laboring. The wage rate at the village was significantly lower (Rs. 30-35/day) than available in the plain areas near market center (Rs.100-150/day). People go to the plain areas near market center seeking higher wages and even out of the valley for construction works during off seasons of farming. Exchange of labor during peak periods of farming called *Parma* is prevalent in the village rather than paying wages for labour. With the widespread illiteracy and limited opportunity, only very few (4.8 percent) of the respondents were engaged in farming and services as well as in business together.

5.6 Monthly Income of Respondents

Table 5.7: Distribution of Respondents by Monthly Income

Income size	No of Respondents	Total	
		No.	%
1500-2000	29	28	28
2000-2500	23	22	22
2500-3000	21	20	20
3000-3500	20	19	19
3500-4000	12	11	11
Total	105	100	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2011

While analyzing the monthly income of the respondents, it was found that about 28% of the respondents earned Rs. 1500-2000 followed by (22%) Rs. 2000-2500, (20%) Rs. 2500-3000, (19%) Rs. 3000-3500, and the rest(11%) 3500-4000. Thus, it is clear from the above table that still the respondents are living with the meager income.

5.7 Landholding Size

Land is the important component of any farming system, which needs investment of labor and seeds to yield a product. Land ownership within the agrarian economy of the study area provides a major source of income, which is an important natural asset that farmers have. The three major types of agricultural land owned by households in the study area are; *khet* consisting leveled terraces (with bunds to hold water) on which paddy and wheat can be grown, *pakho bari* is the dry land which consists of out-sloped, rain-fed terraces where paddy can not be grown but crops like maize, millet and other vegetables are commonly grown, and the *khoriya* (slash and burn) where clearing small patches of forest for one season's harvest before allowing it to

revert back to the forest practice is done. Such unproductive land is set aside for producing buckwheat, broom grass, bamboo and other species.

Table 5.8 Distribution of Respondents by Land holding (cultivated\ uncultivated)

Landholding in Ropani	Cultivate		Uncultivated		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
10-20	17	26.66	11	25	28	26
20-30	20	33.33	15	37.05	35	35
30-40	10	13.33	4	15	14	12
40-50	9	15	6	15	15	15
Above 50	7	11.66	6	12.05	13	12
Total	73	100%	32	100%	105	100

Source: Field Survey, 2011

In due course of analyzing the land possession of the respondents, it was found that above 26% of them had 10-25 ropani of land followed by (35% 20-30 ropanies, (12%) 30-40 ropanies, (15%) 40-50 ropanies and the rest (12%) above 50 ropanies.

The data reveal the fact that still the majority of Chepangs live subsistence living due to less land possession.

5.8 Food Habits

Generally, the Chepangs eat at least three square meals a day. The first meal is at early in the morning around 6 AM. After the meal they will be busy with their respective works. The second meal is in afternoon around 1 PM. After the second meal, they take a siesta up to 4PM. And they go to work up to 6 PM. The third meal is in the evening around 8 PM. although they often do not get

enough food to eat, they appear to be well fed in comparison to other indigenous ethnic groups. They generally rely upon cereal crops for five to six months and for the rest of the months; they have to live on wild resources.

Maize and millet porridge (dhindo or khole) forms the staple food of the Chepangs. Dhindo may be accompanied with some vegetable curries, fish, chicken, meat or simply a bit of salt and chili. Maize or millet beer or alcohols are the cultural drinks of the Chepangs, preferred and consumed by all. Children of grown-up men or women. Seasonally. They also devour various types of fruits; in general the Chepangs are fond of fish and meat of pig, fowl, and wild goat. Curry prepared from bats, crabs, shrimps, larvae and pupae of bees are other interesting cultural food items of the Chepangs.

There is no definite cooking method and the methods are very crude. It is very interesting that the Chepangs divide their food equally among the family members regardless of age. Though these people eat three meals a day, just filling the stomach is a major concern. They generally depend upon their agricultural products for half a year, the other half year, they exist on the products of the jungles' bounties that they are compelled to consume include things like gittha, byakur, even bharlang stinging nettle, fogs, mushrooms and such.

Table 5.9
Distribution of Households by Food Sufficiency

Food Sufficiency in months	Number of Households	Percent
1-6 months	59	56.2
6-8 months	32	30.47
8-12 months	14	13.33
Total	105	100

Source: Field Survey, 2011

Table 5.8 shows the food security status of the households. As a proverb ‘**6 mahina anikaal, 6 mahina sahakaal**’ is popular in Chepang community, more than 50 percent of the respondents (56.2 percent) of the study area were hardly able to meet their food demand for 6 months. About 30 percent of the households had food sufficiency for 6-8 months and only very few households (13.3 percent) fulfill household food demands from their own production. Lack of irrigation, fertilizer and improved seeds, conventional farming practices, small size of productive lands coupled with loss of top soil due to erosion had further worsened the food security situation of the community and helped them to depend more on food gathering from the forests to meet household demands. Most of the households had to rely considerably on the forest products during food deficit season especially from February to July.

5.9 Migration

Nepal is a country of diverse ethnic group. Many people from different ethnic group migrate from one place to another place to another in search of better opportunities. If we go back to the history of Chepang community, the Chepangs are said to have come to Nepal long time ago. There is no specified data when they come here. According to them, they had small size of farm land or where landless peasants in their ancestral place, which forced made them to migrate in the central part of Nepal.

The duration of migration varies in Sarikhet VDC. It has been classified as a short period, long period and permanent.

Tabel-5.10 Period and Destination of Migration in Sarikhet

Place	Period of Migration	No. Of People	Percentage
Manahari	Short period (month)	2	50.00
Manahari	Long period (year)	1	25.00
Outsidemanahari	Permanent	1	25.00
Total		4	100

Source: Field Survey 2011

Migration flow among the Chepangs of Nepal are Very limited while, observing the Chepang community on the basis of above data shows that of the 4 migrates, 50 percent of people are migrated for a short period, 25 percent of people migrated for long period and 25 percent migrated permanently to settle at other place. Despite the habit of not loving to leave house, migration is still observed among the Chepangs. Migration among these people is mainly because of their poor economic condition.

5.10 Origin Myth

Some sociologist\Anthropologist have tried to trace the origin of Chepang on the basis of their dialect and historical links. The Chepangs are old inhabitants of Nepal. There are many assumptions of the history of origin with etymological of Chepangs. The word 'Che' means Dog and 'Pang' means arrow. It means they are engaged in hunting using dog and arrow since long years back to join hand and mouth.

Another legend says that the word "Chepang" is derived from the two words 'Che' and 'Bang', meaning 'top of hills' and 'stone' respectively. Hence, it can be said that Chepang have been living in the hills and call themselves "Chepang".

Others believe that their origin had been from Kiranti or Rai, Limbu. While living at Sunthali of Dolakha District, they started to call themselves "Chepangs" with the passage of time. It is reported that some of the Chepangs were originated from the stone of east Mahabharat Hill and seprated their ancestors toward west. They Speak Tibeto-Burman languages.

Different scholars have defined the origin of Chepang differently. The reliable one of their myth is associated with Ramayan. It sayas, Sitajee gave birth to Lohari while she was in exile in a hermitage near the Gandaki River. One day Sitajee came out of the hermitage to show the baby to those who were playing with their own babies. She went to the river without the knowledge of the sage Balmiki, her protector. After a while, when Balmiki saw the cradle empty, he

thought the baby was stolen. Balmiki thought that Sitajee would be shocked after knowing the truth and would blame him for not watching the properly. Thus, to get rid of the problem, he created a living likeness out of Kush grass. Sitajee returned with her own child and was amazed to find another in the cradle. The sage explained the truth of her and suggested her to bring up them as her own sons. The sage called the new boy 'Kushari' and her own son Lahari. When Lahari and Kushari grew up, with the passage of time, they turned to natural enemies of each other. The descendants of Lahari called themselves 'Chepang' and Kushari 'Kusunda'. Some other Chepang says that the Chepang and the Kusundas have the some lineage with the Thakuris on their origin. Kusundas are still in their primitive stage. Only a few of them have been reported to have settled permanently and begin cultivation. On the other hand, bulks of Kusundas have been engaged in gathering food and hunting in forests. They live in caves or in temporary huts in the forest of the southern part of the Gorkha and central part of the Tanahu district.

Still there is another interesting story on Chepangs. It says, there were four Chepang Kings who were eventually defeated by the Raja of Patan. The four Chepang Rajas were called Pony Raja, Gill Raja, Rami Raja, and Raji Raja.

Among the Chepangs of Makawanpur, majority of Sarikhet VDC are generally influenced by the culture of other castes. The Chepang in plain and hill area of Makawanpur are different in their occupational behavior. The Chepang of plain area are more forward than that of hill. Their agricultural productivities and job opportunities also matters their differentiation.

5.11 Clan

Chepangs clans differ from one place to another. Some Chepangs clan is associated with soil, bamboo and so on. Chepangs believe that they were originated from their heritage land and do not wish to migrate to any other place. The Chepang belong to his clan are Parsirang, Gasirang, Banspur, Chusarangi, Kinthali, Ponilgarang, Byesyakhore, Darreikholak, Kherangmai,

Tarlingmai, Gharamgmai, Misirimai, Poudolimai, Dolata etc. Their clans are made on the basis of marriage relationship.

Most of the clan Names of Chepangs have been coined from the names of their original village from where they have migrated. Similarly, their clan names are also given as per their skill and occupation.

Some Chepangs have acquired their clan name due to their inter-caste marriage relationship. They are named as Tamang-Chepang, Newar-Chepang, and Gurung Chepang etc. This type of clan is determined where the non Chepang male gets married with Chepang women (G Gurung)

The Chepang of Sarikhet VDC have different kind of lineages and clans. Their lineages are Mahangotra, Suryabamsi, Kasiyam, Balagotra, Karmgotra, and the clans include: Dhemlang, Maimpung, Jarunge, Khoprali, Gaurange, Goisirange, Mugipare, Chaulinge, Maispare, Rakteli, Rindinge, Khentokhe, Mathoke, Denthoke, Pamduge and Bangeli.

5.12 Hierarchy

Chepang have hierarchical system among themselves. They have some division and sub-division in the community as Sunpraja, Dutpraja and Ghartipraja.

Sunpraja is considered as the highest among them and Ghartipraja is the lowest in their community. Dutpraja is lower than Sunpraja but higher than Ghartipraja. They have restriction on the food of higher castes and the food touched by the lower caste is considered as untouchable. However, with the rapid growth of modernization and the awareness programs launched by various organization in their locality, the system of hierarchy gradually being disappearing. Chepangs have no economic clans or group. Never the less, some kind of hierarchy among them in the society is seen sometimes.

5.13 The Life - cycle and Changes

Human life is not normal. Birth and death is natural phenomena in every

community of any society. Every ethnic group has its own philosophy of life and death, human relationship, importance and their social activities as well as the life cycle. Such ceremonial activities of life cycle are not an exception to change and modification but cultural contact and dominance of majority groups gradually bring change over minority groups.

Birth, marriage and death are most important events of individual life. All communities have almost such occasion celebrating and conducting in special ceremonies. Chepang communities are no freer from this phenomenon. They have their unique ceremonies during birth, marriage and death.

5.13.1 Birth

The **Chepang** have no such term of religious activities in the moment of the pregnancy. They have some ceremonies of food introduction, name giving and hair saving which are related with the Hindu religion. When the child is born they perform the name giving ceremony on the third observe birth pollution within that period. On the name giving day, their brother in law or son in law sprinkle water mixed with the excreta of cows to purify the polluted house. The parents give name to the baby and tie yellow thread on the wrist neck waist legs of the baby. In the polluted period the mother doesn't touch water and prepare food for other members in the family. During baptism, some Chepangs invite 'pande' (priest of Chepang) for giving name to the baby and purifying the house.

5.13.2 Hair-Cutting Ceremony

Chepang have hair-shaving ceremony when the male child reaches the age of five or six. The maternal uncle of the baby is invited to shave the head of the boy. The maternal uncle gives some money and new clothes to the child. The child's parents give a party to the maternal uncle and the relatives. On the

occasion of food giving to the child, his parents and other relatives put Tika on the forehead of the child and they wish for his long life and prosperity.

5.13.3 Marriage And Divorce

Marriage and family are the oldest and universal institutions found in all societies. Marriage is the institutionalized and legitimate form of uniting both man and women for establishing permanent relationship between them. It is basically related with production of children, their up-bringing. Descent and inheritance. Therefore marriage is socially and legally approved relationship to have children and a right to several relations. Marriage fulfills their basic needs of man and women providing security and stability. Chepangs regard marriage as an important family affair.

According to the customs and culture of Chepangs, the marriages are established with different clans. They marry outside of their khalak with in seven generation. The kachhare Chepangs who have no division and subdivision can arrange intermarriage with member of outside kin groups of three or four generation. Cross- marriage of inter caste marriage is prevalent among the Chepangs. The time of marriage is determined when the boys and girls attain maturity.

Generally Chepang have two kinds of marriages - formal and informal. His/her parents arrange formal marriage. While the informal marriage is arranged by the couple themselves.

5.13.4 Death

Every human have to face an unavoidable event of life- death. In face, death is certain to every life and it has its philosophy. Chepang accepts the term 'death'

with the belief of new life after death. Chepang believe that souls of man transfer to the new life and goes to the heaven after death.

It is interesting to note that Chepang put money in the mouth of the dead body. This is done in order to help the dead body's soul to pay the fess for crossing the river to reach the heaven. Besides, they also offer grains, water, pots, spade, axe and tobacco in the funeral ground of the dead body. These activities are done in order to help the soul to reach heaven. The dead body is not allowed to be touched by the pregnant women, animal and the people of other castes. If it is not followed, the soul would find problem in reaching heaven and the person who touches the dead body would also equally find problems in his life.

5.13.5 Feast and Festival

The festivals observes by the Chepang are indigenous as well as imported ones. The indigenous festivals are Chonam, Tongklong, Saunesakranti, Maghesakranti, Bhumipooja, Goide puja etc. the imported festivals are Dashain , Tihar etc Christian Chepangs also observe Christmas.

Tonglong is the ancestral worship and they honor their ancestor's spirits whit filial love and intimacy. Nwagi of Chonam is a day for eating new crops and most of the relatives and villagers get together and enjoy meat and local beer. During Saunesakranti, their female kins are invited and the festivals are observed with feasting.

5.13.6 Language

The Chepangs have their own language, which belongs to the Tibeto-Burman family. According to Schafer and Toba, the Chepang language is close to the languages of Thami and Hayu (Dhungel, BS2051:42).The naming ceremony

among the Chepangs takes place nine days after the birth of the child. During the ceremony the Chepang shaman (Pande) reads sacred texts over a cock, a hen, thread coloured with turmeric, thin roti (bread) made of maize flour, totala flower, egg, etc and takes them outside for worship. The child and its mother are tied with the thread, and the child is given a name. Alcohol is required during marriage. The boy's side must obtain the consent of the girl's side before or after marriage. Special ceremony must be carried out when the bride is brought and enters the groom's house. The Chepangs like to marry within their own community. There is a practice among Chepang of the son-in-law living in the father-in-law's house. The different languages spoken by each ethnic group represents each group's collective identity, as well as the wider way in which interpersonal communication occurs in Nepalese societies. That is to say that in the context of Nepalese folk life, oral communication is more functional than written forms of communication. Oral traditions are immediate and directly engaging, serving as a point of immediate contact in village communities. Whereas written forms are limited; as illustrated by the fact that according to the 2001 Census only 53% of the population was literate.

Chepang speak their own language known first classified Chepang language in the eastern sub group them Tibeto- Burman family. Schafer and Toba have classified Chapang language along with thami and Ilayu in the centre Himalayan section of the bodice division of the Tibeto-Burman family. Though they speak their own language among themselves, most Chepangs speak khasnat (Nepali) as a second language. There is no script in this language.

5.13.7 Dress Pattern

The Chepang forefather wears traditional dress. The male Chepangs use the changa and the female use Panga is colorful cloth but Changa is non-color cloth. The male Chepang wear dhoti. (languthi or loin cloth) bhoto, daura,

kachhad, pheta of changa's and female Chepangs wear sari, cholo, patuka and ghalek of panga. The poor male Chepangs didn't wear any cloth on the upper part of the body. They only cover the low part of the body, they covered only the breast by loin cloth. They strolled on the bare feet.

In the Sarikhet area a few oldest Chepangs are wearing their traditional dress but most of the Chepang are wear modern dress as the Brahman kshetry. They wear shirt, pain slipper. Shoes, cap, vest, etc. the female wear sari, blouse, petticoat, bodice, bracers, slipper and macis, the schoolgirls wear shirt frock and ribbon etc.

Now a day the new generations of Chepang male of female have no visible distinction between them and Brahman- kshetry. We can find those Chepang of Sarikhet village development committees are rapidly on their dress pattern.

5.13.8 Consideration of Indigenous People In Mountain Areas

The celebration of august 9 as international day of indigenous peoples (IPs)' is symbolically significant and provides us a moment to reflect on the importance of considering indigenous people in mountain areas. I focus here on two key ideas after a brief background.

The term 'indigenous' has been debated and is contested in south Asia where, except for Nepal which recognizes 'Janjati's', few countries accord the term legitimacy, referring to such groups variously as tribal, ethnic minority, among others and arguing that the term indigenous finds its origin in American and Australian history in the context of migration. The debate over terminology has been complicated by the struggles of indigenous groups in the region, articulated as demands for self- determination, and perceived as a threat to the unity of nation- states. Determination is often only an articulation of their need

for greater voice and autonomy in governance and decision- making rather than a desire to secede from the nation- state

Although state have recognized indigenous people through a different terminology - and it is important to acknowledge that progressive programmers and policies have been put into place these groups- the assessment finds these communities to continue to be marginalized from the economic and political mainstream, where the integrated face a threat of cultural extinction.

It is important to consider indigenous people in mountain areas for two reason, which subsume several issues:

First, many mountain region are sites of intense conflicts structured around issues of ethnicity. What are the deeper structural causes of these conflicts? Areas inhabited by indigenous people continue to be poorer relatively, and he attitudes of mainstream society towards the indigenous person are still predominantly pejorative. Land alienation, displacement, and natural resource policies that discourage traditional practices without a provision of alternatives are some of the reason for their persistent poverty. These in turn are linked to the lack of voice of indigenous people in decisions peace and harmony in mountain areas issues cannot be ignored.

Second, mountain areas are rich not just in diversity of cultural groups and indigenous people but also in biological diversity. The destruction and extinction of each is inextricably linked with the other. If mountain areas are to be valued for the diverse ecological services they provide to the plains, it is necessary to preserve the stakes of people who inhabit these areas. Market incentives are just not enough. The identity of indigenous people is embedded in their relationship to their land and resources, with traditional knowledge playing an important role in environmental conservation. To that extent, the

fate of mountains is deeply entwined with that of people who inhabit them- many of whom are indigenous.

It is essential to know some demographic and socio-economic status of the study Chepang community. This chapter mainly deals with some important demographic characteristics such as age-sex structure, marital status, age dependency and family size. It also provides analysis of socio-economic characteristics such as literacy status, educational attainment, occupation, size of land holding, number of cattle holding, cause of migration, income level and other economic characteristics of respondents.

Chapter - Six

SUMMARY CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

6.1 Summary

Chepangs have been considered as one of the indigenous groups of Nepal. There is no denying the fact that in the past Chepangs were living in isolation and roaming like nomads having no contact with the outside world. However with the passage of time, they have been improving themselves and developing relationship with other people and have been living in the society. The influence of modernization has less effect with their life. Very few of Chepangs were found literate in the field. Political participation of the community is also poor. There lies abject poverty among them. still they rely on wild food to make their hand to mouth.

The research is descriptive and explanatory in nature. The study has assessed the overall status of the Chepangs of Sarikhhet VDC, Makawanpur. Interviews were taken with the selected samples of the elderly. An attempt was also made to look into their problems through interaction, and observation. The random sampling method was adopted to select the respondents who were asked semi-structured question to find their displacement. The findings taken from the research were interpreted and recommendations were made accordingly.

In the course of assessing the sex structure of the respondents it was found that 30% of the respondents were between the age ranged of 20-25 followed by (20%) 25-30, (8%), 30-35, (20%), 35-40(15%), 40-45 and the rest (8.33% male and the female 5%) 45-50 years, similarly, while assessing the educational status of the respondents, it was found that about 64.28% of the male respondents were illiterate followed by 83.33% female. Similarly, about 35.07% of the male respondents were literate followed by 16.66% females. In due course of assessing the major occupation of the respondents, about 28% of the respondents were found holding agriculture as their major occupation

followed by (24%) hunting, (22%) labor, (10%) business, (1%) government job, (8%) private job and the rest (7%) student, while assessing the religion of the respondents, about 49% of the respondents were Hindus, 31% Buddhists and the rest 20% Christians. In due course of analyzing the monthly income of the respondents about 28% of the respondents were found earning Rs.1500-2000 followed by (22%) Rs.2000-2500, (20%) Rs.2500-3000, (19%) Rs.3000-3500 and the rest (11%) 3500-4000. Majorities of Chapangs were found living in joint family and majority of them have no knowledge of family planning awareness. While analyzing the age of being married, it was found that about 36.24% of the male respondents married at the age of 10-15 years. Similarly, the percentage of females of the same age goes up to 54.83. In the same way, about 26% of the respondents were found married at the age of 15-20 followed by (21%) 20-25 and (11%) 25-30.

While assessing the level of education, it was found that about 52% of the respondents had acquired education up to grade five followed by (29%) up to 5-10 grades, 18% SLC appearing and only respondent was found receiving education above SLC.

When the level of discrimination against Chapangs was assessed, the researcher found that about 30% of the respondents were dominated by the local elites, the educated lots dominated about 20%, and about 30% were discriminated on the ground of being poor. While assessing the access of Chapangs in social services, it was found that only about 24% of the respondents had access in schools, followed by (21%) road, (16%) telephone, (14%) health post, (13%) safe drinking water and the rest (12%) sanitation. In due course of analyzing the push factors of migration, 37% of the respondents said that low level of agricultural productivity was the main cause of migration. Similarly, 20% said that lack of sufficient land forced the people to migrate to other areas. The reason behind landlessness on the part of majority of the local people is that handful of landlords have occupied most of the productive land.

Fifteen percent of the respondents said that the people were bound to leave the village because of the loss of land due to soil erosion. The remaining 28% of the respondents said that lack of job opportunities in the village caused migration. While assessing the land possession of the respondents, it was found that about 26% of them had 10-20 Ropani of land followed by (35%) 20-30 Ropanis, (12%) 30-40 Ropanis, (15%) 40-50 Ropanis and the rest (12%) above 50 Ropanis. Similarly, the researcher made an attempt to assess the amount of food production and its sufficiency among the Chepang. It was found that about 25% of the respondents produce 5-10 Muris of food grains, which sustains them only for six months. Similarly, about 35% produced 10-15 Muris of food, which is also sufficient only for six months. Similarly, about 18% of the respondents were found producing 15-20 Muris of food, which is also sufficient only for six months. Similarly about 18% of the respondents were found producing 15-20 Muris of food grains per year but the production was not sufficient to run the family for a year. In the same way, it was found that about 12% of the respondents used to produce about 20-25 Muris of food that is sufficient for a year followed by (10%) producing above 25 Muris of food, which is sufficient for a year. Similarly, while assessing the possession of livestock of the respondents, it was found that about 30% had 5-10 numbers of chickens followed by (27%) 10-15 numbers of goat, (13%) 15-20 numbers of cow, (20%) 20-25 numbers of buffalo and about (10%) had a ox, in due course of assessing the major festivals being celebrated in the community, about 40% of the respondents were found celebrating the Chonam festival, while 25% observed Dashain followed by Tihar (15%), Maghesakranti (10%) and Saunesakranti(10%),likewise, while assessing the major measures to be adopted to rise the living standard of the Chepangs about twenty-eight percent of the respondents emphasized the need to develop infrastructure in the study area so as to help raise that living standard. Similarly, 24% of the respondents called for sound education provision followed by elimination of social discrimination (18%), management of irrigation (18%) and provision of agriculture subsidy (12%).

6.2 Conclusions

It can be concluded that with the passage of time, Chepang of Sarikhet VDC of Makawanpur district were found improving themselves and developing relationship with other people and have been living in the society. The influence of modernization has less effect with their life. Very few of Chepangs were founded literate in the field. Political participation of the community is also poor. There lies abject poverty among them. Still they rely on wild food to make their hand to mouth. The census 2001 has revealed that the population of Chepang is 52,237 Chepangs, who live in the central regions of Nepal, are also known as the Chepangs have their own language, which belongs to the Tibeto-Burman family. According to Schafer and Toba, the Chepang language is close to the language of Thami and hayu (Dhungel, Bs 2051:42). The naming ceremony among the Chepangs takes placed nine days after the birth of the child. Duting the ceremony the Chepang shaman (pande) reads sacred texts over a cock, a hen, thread coloured with turmeric, thin roti made of maize flour, total flower, egg, etc and takes them outside for worship. The child and its mother are tied with the thread and the child is given a name. Alcohol is required during marriage. The boy's side must obtain the consent of the girl's side before or after marriage. Special ceremony must be carried out when the bride is brought and enters the groom's house. The Chepang like to marry within their own community. There is a practice among Chepang of the son - in-law living in the father-in-law's house.

The Chepangs mostly bury their dead. The dead body is bathed and new clothes and garlands of flowers are put on the body and wrapped with burial cloth. A box is made of the barks of sal, in which the dead body is kept and buried. Chepang are to two types, viz pukunthale and kachhare. The kipat system in the past. They are considered a little more knowledgeable and adopt in Chepang society. The kachhare are ordinary Chepangs.

Majority of the respondents were found married at early age. Similarly, their education level of the respondents was also found very low. Only about 64.28% of the male respondents were also found very low. Only about 64.28% of the male respondents were illiterate followed by 83.33% female. Similarly, about 35.72% of the male respondents were literate followed by 16.66% females. Majority of the respondents were found holding agriculture as their major occupation. While assessing the religion of the respondents, about 49% of the respondents were found Hindus, 31% Buddhist and the rest 20% Christians. They were found living with meager income. Very few of the respondents had knowledge of family planning awareness. Similarly majority of the respondents were found discriminated by the elites, the people of higher caste and some of them were found discriminated on charge of untouchability. Very few of the respondents were found holding sufficient land for food production. The food produced in their land is not sufficient to run their livelihood even for the period of half year. Chonam, Dashain, Tihar, Maghessankrati, and Saunesankrati are the major festivals that are celebrated by the Chepangs.

6.3 Recommendations

As per the finding and observation of the researcher, following recommendations are forwarded to overcome the problems of Chepangs and increase their living standard.

- Their indigenous settlement must be protected and secured. Special measures must be adopted by the government to control the out migration of the Chepangs
- Special quota should be allotted for Chepangs in the sector like education, health, job, etc to increase their living standard and broaden their outlook,

- Provision of easy access to loans for running cottage industries should be made available
- Action oriented NGOs rather than income oriented should be allowed to operate their activities in the region.
- Ensure mechanism of social integration through cross- cultural exchange.
- Unique culture of Chepangs is at the verge of extinction. Hence, special program should be launched in the area for the protection of their unique cultural and tradition.
- Chepangs are still not consulted in decision-making process at the local and national level. Hence, their participation is essential to make any program related to them success.
- Participatory management approach should be applied in the study site make any program related to Chepangs a sustainable and durable one.

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