SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITION OF CHAMAR COMMUNITY
(A Case Study of Jamuni Madhepura VDC in Saptari District)

A Thesis
Submitted to the Central Department of Rural Development
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Rural Development

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July, 2011

RECOMMENDATION LETTER

This thesis report entitled "*Socio-economic Condition of Chamar Community: A Case Study of Jamuni Madhepura VDC in Saptari District*" has been prepared by Dilip Kumar Yadav under my supervision and guidance. This work is the outcome of his own intensive and independent research work and has been prepared in the format as required by the faculty. I hereby recommend this project report for approval and acceptance.

Prof. Dr. Pradeep Kumar Khadka
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APPROVAL LETTER

This Project report entitled "*Socio-economic Condition of Chamars Community: A Case Study of Jamuni Madhepura VDC in Saptari District*" submitted by Dilip Kumar Yadav has been accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Rural Development.

Approved by

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All the successful attempts are the result of contribution of some co-operative hands. A number of individuals have helped and encouraged me in various ways in completing this study. Though I may not be able to mention the names of them, I here with wish to express my special gratitude to the following individuals.

First, I am highly indebted to my respected teacher, Prof. Dr. Pradeep Kumar Khadka for her valuable guidance and supervision to conduct and complete the project work.

I wish to express my gratitude to Prof. Dr. Pradeep Kumar Khadka, Head of the Central Department of Rural Development, for his valuable suggestion and comments. Moreover, I am deeply indebted to all my respected teachers for their valuable advices and inspiration to complete this project report.

I would be failing in my duty if I do not express my gratitude to my parents Ram Charan Yadav whose unending inspiration and immense love have brought me to the present status. I am sincerely grateful to my brothers Biku and Binod. Similarly, I am grateful to my friend Mr. Deependra, Birendra and Shankar. Likewise, I am deeply indebted to Mr. Hari Narayan Yadav, the secretary of the Jamuni Madhepura VDC, who helped me in this work right from its inception and whenever I needed the help. I am also greatly obliged to all the respondents who helped me collect the required information. I express my sincere thanks all those who helped me directly or indirectly.

Finally, especially thanks go to Mrs. Pinky Yadav who inspired me to study the Rural Development and Mr. Ramesh Maharjan for splendid Word Processing and Printing this document.

Dilip Kumar Yadav

ABSTRACT

The aim of the study is to give a short description of the Chamars, a socially dominated caste group of Nepal, regarding their socio-economic status. They are found mainly in Terai Region. Chamars are poorest and backward caste people in Nepal. They are born in poverty, live in poverty and die in poverty. Their life and socio-economic status is still under the smoke of cloud. So, the question is how deeply these social trends affected their daily livelihood and what change it has brought to their socio-economic status. This research attempts to focus on the various aspects of socio-economic life of the Chamar community.

The general objective of the study is to identity the socio-economic condition of Chamar people and the specific objectives are as follows:

a)   *To provide an ethnographic study of Chamars.*
b)   *To identify the problems of Chamar community.*
c)   *To explore the cultural pattern of Chamar.*

For this purpose, the Jamuni Madhepura VDC of the Saptari District is selected purposively. There are 96 Chamar households. The total population of those households is 528. The descriptive and the analytic methods are used in this study. Mainly primary data are used from the field study to provide the reliability and quality to the project report.

The Chamars are traditionally leather workers. According to the Hindu caste hierarchy, they are Sudras and are known as Achhut (untouchable). The Chamars had migrated from India to Nepal many years back. The Chamars of Jamuni Madhepura were also migrated from India, but they first came to Siraha, Saptari and after then, they came to Saptari District. When they came to the study area, they started their traditional work i.e. leather work. Along with the passage of time, their traditional work became scarce and they gradually started to shift away from their traditional occupation. They now are depending mostly on wage labour and agriculture.

The Chamars are, in general, Hindus. They worship Hindu Gods and Goddesses. The festivals of the Chamars are similar with Brahmins and Chhettris. They mainly celebrate Chhath, Dashain, Tihar, Tij, Maghe Sakranti etc. They play their traditional and modern types of band (Baja) as well. Therefore, people invite them to play their band on weddings.

The Chamars are poor and exploited by the high caste group like Brahmin, Chhettri etc. Most of them are landless. Therefore, they are backward in every field. They are uneducated and backward. They have forgotten their traditional way of life. In the study area, it is hardly to see their traditional type of occupation, dress and ornaments. Although they have their own native language, they prefer to speak Nepali language.

Though caste based discrimination is not so rigid as it was in the past, some discriminations still exist in the study area. They are not allowed to enter the house of

Brahmins and Chhettris as well as religious places. The water of a well is not used at the same time by the higher caste people and the Chamars

The conclusions found from the study area as follows:

- *The economic condition of the Chamars of Jamuni Madhepura is very poor. The majority of Chamars in the VDC consist of the landless, the marginalized or small farmers, who do not have enough land or other means of production for survival.*

- *The literacy percent of the Chamars are very low and they hardly complete their schooling. The higher education attended person is nil in the Chamar community.*

- *They practise diverse culturalal activities; they practise their religion, customes, traditions and their social values in a strong and rigid manner.*

- *The Chamars have been subjected to economic exploitation, oppression and poverty. They are still being exploited by the so called non Dalits in many ways; opportunity, status, education etc.*

- *Early marriage, unplanned family, economic disability, illiteracy, lack of decision making power, simplicity, landlessness, exploitation, conventional approach in agriculture are the main constraints for the socio-economic development of the Chamars of the Jamuni Madhepura VDC.*

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ABBREVIATION AND ACRONYMS

CBO	Community Based Organization
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
CDRD	Central Department of Rural Development
DDC	District Development Committee
e. g.	For Example
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
Fig.	Figure
HMG	His Majesty Government
i. e.	That is
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
M.A.	Master of Arts
NDC	Nepal Dalit Commission
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NLA	National Labour Academy
NPC	National Planning Commission
T. U.	Tribhuvan University
VDC	Village Development Committee