

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Tharu is the fifth largest ethnic group living in different parts of Terai and inner Terai. Mostly they live in Dang, Chitwan, Bardiya, Kanchanpur, Kalaiya, Morang and Jhapa and are basically agriculture peasant. The total population of the Tharu according to the National Census 2001 is 11, 94,224, which constituted 6.46% of the total population of Nepal. Tharu is one of the indigenous groups having own language, dressing and have own ethnic identity. They worship various gods and goddesses and enjoy themselves by eating, drinking and dancing, in brief Tharu people know how to live in pleasure. They have their own socio-cultural life. “Tharus are an innocent, shy and relatively timid people. Some of the earliest settlements of Tharus were deep in the forest isolated from other ethnic groups. Government authorities in the past and still to a lesser degree are out maneuvered by the surrounding non-Tharus has exploited them Tharus are not good in business or home economics. They are often in debt since the grain they produce is frequently used to brew alcoholic drinks. More clever persons from the hills will provide them money to purchase food and then continue to compound the interest. Eventually the Hillman acquires the Tharus land and the Tharu’s relegated to landless status” (Pyakuryal 1982).

Although the slavery system was abolished many years ago, Tharus were compelled to live as a bonded labor and *Kamaiya* as in mediaeval period, because of general illiteracy, lack awareness about their rights as a citizen and feudal systems of economic exploitation, Tharus have been subjected to the very lowest status in the society. But, now *Kamaiya* are freed from landlords after a decision

taken by the government in 2060 B.S.

There are controversies about the origin of the Tharus. Scholars have not been able to come to a definite and clear conclusion regarding the origin of the Tharus. Some scholars have derived their origin through etymologies and some tried to trace their origin through a legend. “Physically and especially in facial features, the Tharus look like they stem from mongoloid stock. They speak an Aryan language. In ancient time the Tharus may have accepted Buddhism but later were influenced by Hinduism” (Pyakural1982). About the origin of Tharus “A legend indicates their origins from Rajasthan in north western India. According to this legend the Tharus came from the Thar desert of Rajasthan in India and hence the name Tharus. Most of them sincerely believed that they had come from Rajasthan in India at the time of Islamic invasions”. (Bista1980:89). One source stated that they are originated from *Ajodhya* (Ayodhya) Rams capital in the Ramayan (Carnegy 1868:10). Another source stated that in several areas Tharu claim Rajput origin (Crooke 1896:402) .It is also not clear about the entrance of Tharus in Nepal. It is believed that Tharus came from south (Crooke 1896:382) Tharus are distinctly identified with their language.

In Tharu society mostly men uses a kind of special dress ‘*Langoti*’ and ‘*Bhoto*’. Tharu women like to design different designs of tatoos in their skins. They also use silver *Chura*, *Bulaki*, and *Kalli* .They have ‘*Bhoiyer*’ in their society whom they worship as their God. ‘*Holi*’ and ‘*Maghi*’ are their main festivals.

Tharus do not have any collective identity; they are identified with their speaking style, dressing and rituals. They are divided into four groups.

- a) Rana Tharu
- b) Dangura Tharu
- c) Kathariya Tharu
- d) Chitwaniya Tharu

e) Kochila Tharu

Dangura are the largest and more traditional group (Rajaure 1978). Rana Tharu claims that they originate from Chittor whence they were driven out by Akbar in 1567 A.D. They later lost their identity by eating fowls and using alcohol (Srivastav 1958:14). Rana Tharus are the descendents of the *Rajput* women who fled to the jungles to escape the Muslims and later married with their servants, with Tharus being the descendents of these marriages (Nevill 1904:107).

Rana Tharu is the second largest group of Tharu community. The total population of the Rana Tharu is 336,000 (CBS 2006). Mostly this group lives Western part of Nepal. They are found in Kailali, Kanchanpur, Banke and Bardiya. They are Indo Aryan speaking group ([www.ethnologue.com](http://www.ethnologue.com)).

Kathariya is also recognized as Khatima Tharu. They are from Indian origin. The total population of Kathariya Tharu is 106,000 (CBS2006). Their language is Central Indo Aryan. They dwell in Western part of Nepal. They are very similar to Rana and Dangaura Tharu ([www.ethnologue.com](http://www.ethnologue.com)).

Chitwaniya Tharu lives in Narayani and Lumbini zone of Nepal. The number of this group is 80,000 (CBS1991). Mostly they are found in Chitwan, Nawalparasi and Rupendehi districts of Nepal. Their language is Eastern Indo Aryan ([www.ethnologue.com](http://www.ethnologue.com)).

Kochila is one of the recognized Tharu group. The total number of this group is 258,000 (CBS2003). They are also recognized as Saptari Tharu. They are Indo Aryan speaking group. Mostly they live in Eastern part of Nepal. They are common in Saptari, Morang, Siraha, Udayapur, Sunsari, Mahottari, Sarlahi and Dhanusa districts ([www.ethnologue.com](http://www.ethnologue.com)).

Culture is the behavior or activity of individual, group or society from the birth to death knowingly or unknowingly. It has been transmitting from one to another generation. If we try to find out the actual meaning of culture, Culture is socially accepted oral or written treasure that has been protected from the history to this modern period. Existing traditions, dressing, dance, festivals, the way of feeding, naming ritual, marriage system, funeral activities etc. are culture. Society is constructed on the basis of culture so culture is any society's identity. Tharu culture has its own shape and it is different then other castes and ethnic groups.

Festivals have socio-cultural significance. On one hand they are preserving their culture and in other hand festivals help to maintain social integration and discipline. Maghi plays very importance role to maintain social order and stability in Tharus society.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Nepal is one of the poorest countries in the world. According to CBS 2001 data 42.5% Nepalese people are below the poverty line. In this condition, some caste and ethnic groups are bound to meet their basic needs. Social discrimination plays a significant role in maintaining social inequality in Nepal. Socio-economic and cultural development helps to uplift the status of any group.

Nepal is rich in her tradition, culture and civilization. In Nepal there are different groups, whose culture differs from one another. Nepalese peoples celebrate various sorts of ceremonies and festivals and enjoy themselves by singing, dancing and eating. Most of the festivals of Nepalese peoples are related with religious myth. But we know very few of them.

The important question is in spite of rich culture, why Tharu people are not distinctly identified because of their culture. As mentioned in the Encyclopedia of

the social sciences, festivals derived for the most part from collective ritual. The tendency of primitive behavior relies upon magic that involves the participation of the social group- clan tribe or family in activities which are held to affect the interests of the whole group. Hence, the greater proportion of primitive ritual is collective and most activities involve collective rituals. Festival is traditional culture which has been done for the purpose of getting pleasure during the off season and at the same time some festivals are made for getting religious merits and so on.

Festival is a process of rejoicing. It is important in human society and culture for several points of views. Festival is a part of human culture; hence in every culture has its own festivals. In society peoples get a lot of recreation from the celebration of festivals. During the festivals period people becomes happy and try to free from anxieties, troubles, mental tension, strains and other general practical difficulties. During the short period of Maghi festival Tharus also becomes free from this troubled and busy world. During festivals period Tharus wear beautiful clothes, eat delicious food, love and respect each other. In another sense we can say festivals bring integration among Tharus. So here in this study, the researcher tries to study about Maghi festival of Tharu community and which has socio- economic and cultural importance.

Tharus are the original inhabitant of Terai. It is said that they developed the capacity to fight against Malaria, and for to get this capacity one should live for three thousand years in the highly affected part by Malaria (Carnegy 1868:175). So, Tharus are actual Terai people and they must be identified by the nation so that they have national identity.

Due to modernization and continue interaction with other groups, they have been loosing their own social and cultural importance. They have lost their socio-

cultural identification because of illiteracy, poverty and political influence. So the socio-economic and cultural condition of the Tharus in Nepal is seriously thinkable, likewise the Tharus of Hekuli VDC of Dang district are also suffering from the same problems. Therefore a study of Maghi festival of the Tharu villages in Hekuli VDC is essential that will provide potential to identify the culture of the Tharu and preserve their culture to some extent.

This study attempt to answer the following questions

1. What is Maghi festival?
2. What is the socio cultural importance of Maghi festival of Tharu Community for Tharus?
3. What are the changes undergone during celebrating Maghi festival? What is the cause of it?

### **1.3 Objective of the Study:**

The general objective of this study is to explore about the Maghi festival and its importance in Tharu's life.

The specific objectives of this study are as follow:

1. To provide detailed description about Maghi festival celebrated by the Tharu people in Dang district
2. To describe the socio-cultural significance of the Maghi festival of the Tharus of study area.
3. To observe whether some changes have undergone in the Maghi festival due to modernization and Hinduism process or any other factors.

### **1.4 Importance of the Study**

Nepal is rich in her traditional culture and civilization but we know very few about them. Hence in this study the researcher being a student of sociology tries to study sociological importance of the Maghi festival of the Tharu community of Hekuli VDC in Dang district. This study is an attempt to give detailed sociological

information about the Maghi festival of the Tharus and at the same time it would try to provide the socio-cultural importance of the Maghi festival of the Tharus of the study area. In Nepal there are many things to be explored to fulfill the gap of sociological knowledge.

Various scholars have talked about the Tharus and their festivals. But they do not talk about the socio-cultural importance of Maghi festival. The dynamics of the cultural change' wanders between the description of traditional culture and a discussion of the effects of increasing contact with Hindu society and in neither regard can it be said to be successful. Nevertheless it does mark a kind of turning point in Tharu studies (Srivastava1958:102). Macdonald has commented that "The descriptive ethnographical study of the different ethnographical study of different population of Nepal remains our essential task "(Macdonald 1975:286). Whatever they had mentioned about Tharu, they had not tried to give clear information about the changes occur during time being hence, this study is essential.

The knowledge about ethnographic study is one of the important parts of every individual study. So the study about the Maghi festival is one of the parts to analyze the universe of Tharu society. "How little was known about the Tharu group (Bista 1967) made to find out and understand about the Maghi festival of selected Tharu villages of Hekuli VDC in Dang district that will add some contribution to fulfill the knowledge of Tharu group. This study would be important to those people who are interested in understanding Tharus and their culture. Every society changes during the gap of time and Tharus are also no exception of this change. When change will occur the originality will be lost hence this study will be able to give the information of change which takes place in Maghi festival. Maghi festival has some sorts of socio-cultural importance but is changing in pattern due to various factors. So this study will also try to see the course of changes too.

It is hoped that this study of the Tharus of Hekuli VDC will represent the whole area of Dang district. It is the oldest settlement and there settle those who have different economic status and cultural behavior in the VDC area. So it is hoped it will help in future to any scholar or researcher to study detail research on festival and whole structure of Tharus to some extend.

### **1.5 Theoretical Model**

Ethnographic method and the concept of Structural and Functional model are used as conceptual tools for reviewing the Maghi festival of Tharus in Hekuli VDC of Dang. The concept of structuralism and functionalism is widely used in sociology to present the structure of the society and cultural pattern and behavior of the particular community or society. Different social units are united to form the structure of the society and different units are functioning to form a social identity. Tharu society is also a structure of different social and cultural units which are functioning together to identify the Tharu society. Different units of Maghi festival like social, cultural, religious, economic are studied to get the definition of Maghi festival.

### **1.6 Organization of the Study**

This study consists seven chapters. First chapter deals about statement of the problem, objective, background and the importance of the study. In second chapter relevant literature is reviewed. The third chapter describes about sampling and tools and techniques of data collection. Fourth chapter includes demographic and general profile of the study area. Tharus culture and festivals are explained in fifth chapter in brief. Sixth chapter of the study demonstrates about Maghi festival and its functional importance in Tharu community. In the last chapter summery, conclusion and recommendation are included.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

There are some of the literatures of Tharus but these literatures are not sufficient to describe each and every pattern of the Tharu culture and their livelihood so a clear knowledge is essential of each and every field related to Tharus. Some foreign and Nepali scholars have studied about Tharus but that is not enough to state the whole structure of the Tharus. There are differences among the Tharus of different areas of Dang valley. There is an absence of specific study of particular Tharu festival.

Dor Bahadur Bista was the first native anthropologist to study about different ethnic groups of Nepal. In his ethnographic survey of Nepalese people, he has given description on different aspects of Tharus. He writes “Tharus are socio-economically backward people among the oldest group inhabit in the Terai. They usually live very close to the heavily forested regions. A large number of the villages of *Tharuwan* are found in small clearings in the middle of the forest itself. Most of the large compact Tharu settlements are found in tropical malarial area, infested with wild animals such as elephant, rhinoceros, bears, tigers and poisonous snakes.” (Bista 1967:221)

On the occupation and economic status of the Tharus, he further describes “Tharus are by tradition peasant farmer. Some of them are rich farmer and few in eastern Terai have successfully taken up business. But a great majority of them are very hard working tenant cultivators. Most of the Tharus in Dang have been very greatly explicated by ruthless *Zemindars*, landlord and revenue agents. They are

virtually slaves in the hands of *Zemindars*, sold and bought at will since most of them are landless share-cropping peasants; they have to rely entirely on the mercy of the *Zemindars*. Every year they are buried deeper and deeper in debt until eventually they are sold to other *Zemindars* trying to cultivate new area of land” (Bista1967:162).

Rajaure, (1977) in his study entitled “Anthropological study of the Tharus of dang-Deokhuri”

has presented the ethnography of an indigenous tribe the Tharus. He writes “Tharus, in the early days were not interested in holding land registered in their own name, due to the absence of cash. They were most interested in cultivating barren land, for which they did not have to pay revenues for a certain period, later they again moved on in search of such new land. Tharus who had private registered land sold the land whenever possible at a cheap price and moved further west to cultivate new land, for the same reason” (Rajaure1977:282)

He further writes “Tharus social, economic and educational backwardness, the effect of the old civil code, the behavior of the landlords, merchants and local officials have all combined to induce as sense of tribal inferiority among the Tharus who lack faith in administration and officials”(Rajaure1977:286).

In his book he has also presented the ethnography of an indigenous tribe the Tharu in detail. Regarding the living territory of Tharus, Rajaure writes “They scattered all along the southern foot hills of Himalayas from Bhutan in the east to the Nainital, terai of India in the west and including the most of Terai portion like Banke, Bardiya, Kailali, Kanchanpur and chitwan of Nepal

Rajaure views that due to geographical cross cultural and cross linguistic factors, several regional variation of the Tharus culture have developed in different parts of the country with in the narrow belt of Tharu in habitation. He has loosely put this cultural variation into the major two groups- less influenced by other cultures

and more influenced by other cultures. Tharus of Chitwan, Dang, Surkhet and Bardiya belongs to first group while the Tharus of east Jhapa Koshi region, centre (Bara & Parsa districts) and far west Khailali (excluding the Dangaura immigrant Tharus belong to latter group).

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

Rajaure has noted a special attitude of Tharu to live in isolation which he expressed as ”A general Tharu mentality, which is found neither among the hill ethnic groups (Tibeto-Nepalese), nor among these of Terai (Indo-Nepalese) makes the Tharus feel content with in their own Tharu society and circumstances. This has kept Tharu almost isolated with in their own localities and has made them a group relatively unknown to the outsiders” (Rajaure 1977:389)

In 1969 Pro. A.W. Macdonald published an article on two Dangura Tharu festivals. It was the first article to present the Tharu festivals. In 1975 he published "Essays on the Ethnography of Nepal and South Asia, Ratna Pustak Bhandar. Here also he had mentioned about Tharu ethnic group. He has commented that "The descriptive ethnographical study of Tharus of Nepal remains our essential task". About Maghi he has mentioned that it is the festival of entertainment. It is the time of eating, drinking and celebration and doing no work at all. Even personal servants and agricultural employers of Tharu get holiday during this festival. All the annual agreement between land owners and tenants end on this day.

Srivastava in his book "The Tharus: A Study in Cultural Dynamics" writes "Tharus are the romantic peoples. They celebrate festivals and eat, drink sing and dance, According to him the Tharus with their more settled economic life and over increasing number of adoption of deities and saints from other religions have also developed celebrated rites, rituals and ceremonies to be observed at periodical occasions. Festivals have socio-economic significance. On the one hand, they are preserving their traditional culture where as on the other hand festivals help to maintain social integration, solidarity and discipline in the Tharu community. As mentioned earlier, Tharu culture is the unique and they celebrate various festivals and feasts. And hence to understand their festivals and social solidarity, the researcher tries to study the Maghi festival of the Tharus (Srivastava 1958:305).

Srivastava exclaimed "The dynamics of the change wanders between the description of traditional culture of the Tharus and a discussion of the effects in increasing contacts with Hindu society and in neither regard can it be said to be successful. Nevertheless it does mark of the turning point in the Tharus studies".

In same book Srivastava also writes about the origin of the Tharus "Rana Tharus claim that they originate from Chittor where they were driven out by Akbar in 1567 A. D. They later lost their caste by eating fowls and using alcohol

(Srivastava 1958:336)

Nevill (1904) one the foreign researcher studied about Tharus and writes about the origin of the Tharus: “Rana Tharus are the descendents of Rajput women who fled to the jungles to escape Muslims and later married their servants and with the Tharus being the descendents of these marriages.

Crooke (1896) writes “It is not clear about Tharus origin. In Dang few people had any opinion on the origin of the Tharus. In several areas Tharu claim a Rajput origin. It is not clear about the entrance of Tharu in Nepal. It is believed that Tharus came from South.” (Crook 1896:366)

Beames (1869) about the language of the Tharus he writes: “One source stated that Tharu language was similar to that of Magar and Gurung a Tibeto-Burman speaking group in Nepal. The Tharu language was the variant of other local dialects and was readily intelligible to the local castes. At present Dangura language seems as a mixture of Nepali and Indian dialects where as Chitwaniya language is a mixture of Nepali and Bhojpuri (Beames 1869:344)

Mechi Mahakali (2059) a monthly magazine published in Dhangadi writes: “Tharus are the original inhabitant of Dang district. It is believed that Tharu are living in Dang from Neolithic period.”

Carnegy (1869) one of the foreign researchers writes about the origin of Tharus: “There are different sources about the origin of the Tharus one source stated that Tharus are originated from Ajodhya (Ajodhya) Ram’s capital in the Ramayan.

A study was carried out by Research center for Educational Innovation and Development in four major districts; Sunsari, Chitwan, Dang and Kailali where

Tharus live in sizable number to examine the educational status of the Tharus. The major findings of the research is “ Tharus are educationally disadvantaged community, large number of Tharu children go to school from Tharu families living in mixed communities than from exclusive Tharu community and a small percentage of the Tharu children complete their education. The economic factor found the study behind low level of school enrollment of the Tharu children and land holding and food sufficiency, the study states that land holding and food sufficiency of the families have strong relation with the enrollment of the Tharu children. (CERID: 1998)

K.N. Pyakural, 1982 has concentrated his Ph. D. research on the study of Tharu people which has entitled; Ethnicity and Rural Development; a sociological study four Tharu villages in Chitwan Nepal. Assessing the general socio-economic situation of Tharus, he describes: “Indeed they are one of the major ethnic groups in the Terai region and one of the more underdeveloped groups in Nepal. Their history is a story of extreme deprivation enormous hardship and blatant class exploitation. Because of social physical isolation from development activities in the region and from cultural contacts with other people, their superstition, backwardness and timidity were reinforced. As people they are generally illiterate and unschooled, they lack awareness about their rights and privileges. The gap between them and non Tharus is very wide”. But now there is found different situation of different group of the Tharu community than the some years ago. So far as these literature concerns on socio-economic and cultural life of the Tharus, this study has further included some new information of these topics especially about cultural pattern and changing factors of their cultural life.

He writes “Tharus were unaware of their rights and opportunities for land ownership. A phased land reform act promulgated in 1964, which fixed a ceiling on the size of land ownership. Surplus lands were confiscated and distributed to

the landless. The intent of this act was to provide land to the tenant, as well as the landless, who, in Terai, were frequently Tharu. Those who were clever got better land and the poor, naïve and innocent got the worst. According to the law, tenants had given priority but clever landlords never let the happen. Though the ceilings were fixed, clever people managed to officially transfer the ownership of land to several relatives or friends and there by escaped by the law. There are still landlords who are profiting from surplus lands at the expense of the poor and there are still Tharus who do not have their own land”.

Dr. Ram Dayal Rakesh (1994), in his book “Cultural Heritage of Nepal Terai has mentioned different aspects of socio-religious life of the Tharus of Nepal. He writes ‘A peculiar to point out is that despite the fact that Gautam Buddha was born in Terai Nepal at Lumbini, the Terians (Tharus) are not followers of Buddhism. They are mostly Hindus Rakesh (1994:365).

Many previous scholars have contributed by carrying out their studies on Tharus of in Nepal. The studies are mainly focused on habits, occupation, economic exploitation and ethnicity in traditional basis only. Therefore present scholars should pay attention to study the present condition of the Tharus of Nepal.

Bhatta (1977) in his book entitled “Natural History of Nepal” has written about the Tharu tribes indicating their relation with Jamin, Jaal and Jungle as well as their habit and indebtedness. He writes:“A Tharu is truly a son of the forest and to this day he retains freedom of mind and movement, a rather uncommon feature among the tribes of Nepal. The Tharus love fishing, but it is the women who go on the big catch when they get respite from the field...A Tharus is always happy with a jug his brews coming from the many different sources – rice, maize, banana etc. addiction to drink makes him an easy prey to the caprices of the landlord and no wonder, therefore, he is always in debt”.

Ishwor Baral and Babu Ram Acharya had tried to study on the Tharus. According to Babu Ram Acharya, at first the Tharus most have been settled in between the ranges of Mahabharat and Chure. Dr. Rishi Keshav Regmi studied the Tharus of Nepal in 1978. In the book titled “Ek Srot Tin Dhara” he has described about the relationship of man and environment. He writes “At first their number was limited after thousands of year they paid their attention to the fertility of land for subsistence. Thus the same one group has been found living in different parts of the country of Nepal” Bhatt (1977:79),

Ashok Tharu (2056) writes in his article “Saki Ye Ho! Maghak Pili Guri Jad” has written “One of the character of our Tharu literature ‘Barkimar’ lost his life on the day of Maghi and recognized as main ‘Barkimaram’. ‘A person died on the time of Maghi (sun is in Northern Hemisphere) got rid of the life cycle of born and died”.

He also writes “Our ancestor Gangewa was so filled with the arrows in such a way hit by Arjun that there was not a single place in his body, but he was in such a meditation that he was giving knowledge to Yudhistir and other hermits. When the sun turned towards northern hemisphere he lost his life”

Chabilal, (2056) in his article “Magh Tuhar Yo Kamaiya Kamlariyanak Pida” writes “There is social concept that a person gets rid of all sins after getting bath on ‘Dovan’ and ‘Triveni’ and touching salt and pulse. We believe that by greeting our relatives our sins of sacrificing the animals of whole year is removed”. On this day all the Kamiyas get free from their yearly troubles. They can move wherever they like, they feel completely freedom on this day. On the second day of Maghi they go to their land owner’s house and discuss about the problems that they faced for the whole year and also confirm either to leave or continue the work.



He writes “Though Kamaiya freedom is written in Nepal Constitution, law and Human Right Manifesto but still Tharus are forced to live as Kamiya. Lack of education and unemployment is the cause of this”. Male and females working in hotels also suffer from mental and economic tension. Some females suffer from sexual harassment.

Rawal Ramesh (2065) in his article writes “From last year government declared national holiday on Maghi but actually Kamiyas don’t need Bida (holiday) but they need Sida (food). Government should provide basic material for Tharus during Maghi festival.

S.L. Chaudhary (1999), has postulated harassed picture of Socioeconomic Status of Dangaura Tharus, he describes “How yesterday’s Tharu landlord and Zamindars become Kamaiyas and bonded laborers of today’s”. He has mentioned two reasons. One is the social culture that costs maximum extravagant and superfluous expenses and the second is the malaria eradication followed by land reform which made the pressure of clever population from north and south and people ran for the land permanently settled in the valley.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

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

The study area (Hekuli Village Development Committee) is situated in the south western part of Dang valley. Most of the area of the whole VDC has been covered by the settlement of the Tharus who are more than other dwelling in the VDC. Baibang village and Hekuli village are totally Tharu villages. It is said that in ancient time Dang was ruled by Tharu king Dangisharan and the name Dang is named after his name.

According to 'Barkimar' (Asok Tharu) a Tharu literature *Pandavas* stayed in Dang before going to heaven. It is said that in ancient time Dang was lake. The legendary hero of Mahabharat, Arjun cut the mountain with his arrow in the eastern part of Dang and Bhima broke the mountain in the western side and drained the water of lake and form a fertile land. Today also we can see the way through which Arjun drained the water and it is named Arjun Khola. One typical village 'Bhiudar' is there in western dang and it is named after 'Bhim Dagar' (the way of Bhima) according to Tharu language. Dang contains great historical knowledge and as the group living here for the first time, Tharus also contain history. So the researcher being the inhabitant of Dang district has chosen Hekuli VDC to complete the research. It is easy accessibility to the researcher and easy to find out about the Maghi festival of Tharu community.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

The research is descriptive cum exploratory type of nature. It is described according to present condition of Maghi festival of Tharu community in the study area.

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

This study is mainly qualitative in nature. However some quantitative data are also included. It is evident that the successful result of any study depends upon its techniques which are used for data collection. Hence for every study the data collection techniques are most important tools to obtain reliable information. The study is conducted on the basis of primary data collected through the field study but the relevant secondary data are also used. Primary data are collected from interview according to the schedule of questionnaire and observation and secondary data are collected from published and unpublished books, articles, newspaper, reports of NGOs website etc.

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

There are 1055 households in Hekuli VDC; among them 402 were Tharus households. These 402 households are the universe of the study. Sample is determined by taking 10 percent of the total households using simple random sampling procedure. Thus 40 households were selected as the sample for the study. At first name of the household head was taken from voter list of VDC office. To make the sampling representative lottery system of simple random sampling method was applied separately from each ward in an approximated proportional basis. The households selected as the sample were interviewed using household interview schedule. The composition of universe and samples are in the basis of settlement.

### **3.5 Data Collection Method**

#### **3.5.1 Interview schedule**

For the primary data collection the households or any particular members, who were selected as the sample were interviewed using an interview schedule. Most of the interviewee members were the respondents who were household head also.

The interview schedule was intended to obtain information on household, education, marital status, occupation, land-holding, income, expenditure and other economic and cultural activities related to the Maghi.

### **3.5.2 Interview with Key Informants**

Those topics which were not covered in formal interview such as worshipping during celebrating Maghi festival, changing factors, socio-religious importance of Maghi and other more related information were collected with key informants. Altogether 10 key informants were interviewed and they are the elders, leading and educated figures like *Guruwas* and *Mahatawa*. These people were selected as the basis of their position and status inside and outside the society. The key informants were regulated during the survey to have the depth knowledge about the related topic.

### **3.5.3 Observation**

The method of non-participant observation method was used in this research to observe the Maghi festival. The observation method was needed to observe the food style, dance, custom and other activities related to Maghi festival.

### **3.6 Data Analysis and Interpretation**

The data which are collected by different techniques were classified into different groups according to their nature and edited. During editing only necessary things are kept and unnecessary things were removed. The data is classified according to their nature and characters.

### **3.7 Limitation of the Study**

This study has been conducted under time and financial constraints. This study has chosen only one VDC among the 39 VDC and two municipalities of Dang district and sample has been taken only 10 percent of the total universe of the Tharus of

this VDC. Tharus have different types of culture in Dang, Deokhuri and other parts of Terai therefore this generalization may or may not be possible to include the whole universe of the Tharus.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **SOCIO - DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTIC OF THE STUDY AREA**

This chapter is derived to provide a brief description about the location, population structure, local economy and educational features of Hekuli VDC and the general introduction of the Tharu people of Hekuli VDC.

#### **4.1 General profile of Dang**

Dang one of the five district of Rapti zone lies in the Mid- Western Development Region of Nepal. It is bordered by Phyuthan, Arghakanchi and Kapilbastu district in the east, Surkhet and Bank in the west, Salyan, Rolpa and Pyuthan in the North and by the state of Uttar Pradesh (India) in the South. It covers total area of 6480 square kilometers. (District Development office, 2008)

Dang district has two flat valleys, which are Dang and Deukhari. Dang valley is situated between the Mahabharat range in the north and Chure range in the South and Deukhari valley is situated in the southern part of Chure range. Though Dang district includes both plain and hill, but the larger area is covered with plain. It have a subtropical type of climate and the mean temperature varies between 25-40°C. Average annual rainfall is 1170.6mm. The length of the district is 90 km and breadth is 72 km. The district is drained by two main rivers Rapti and Babai with some of their tributaries. Some of the attractive places of Dang district are Purandhara Rapids, Chamere Cave, Bhote Daha, Charingya Daha. The important religious places of Dang district are Ambikeshwari, Dharapani, Bahrakune, Chaughera, Trisiddheswari, Rihar. Besides these there are many small religious places (District Profile Dang, 2008).

The district headquarter is Ghorahi. It lies in Tribhuvan Municipality which is the trading center of Dang, Rolpa and Pyuthan districts. The other trading center is Tulsipur. The other small trading centers are Lamahi, Koilabash, Bhalubang, Narayanpur, Manpur etc. It has one Sanskrit University, three campuses, one technical school, 12 secondary schools 193 primary schools and 44 private boarding schools.

According to the District Development Committee's District profile of Dang 2008, the total population of the Dang district is 364740 and male is 180385 and female is 184,355

#### **4.2 Location of Hekuli VDC**

Hekuli VDC is located in the lap of Chure Range in the western part of Dang. This VDC is located in Dang valley of Dang district of Rapti zone. It is 29 to 33km away far from Ghorahi (headquarter of Dang). Babai River flows across this village. On the South of the Babai River this VDC is located. A motorable road surrounds it. It is 8 km northwest of Tulsipur Municipality (one of the town of Dang district). There are 19 settlements in Hekuli VDC. There is a stream which is called Mayakhola which lies in the middle part of VDC. It has covered total land 4329.52 hectares (Hekuli VDC map).

#### **4.3 Boundary of the Hekuli VDC**

This VDC is situated in the Southwest of Tulsipur Municipality. On southern side it touches Rapti Highway that joins Dang and Surkhet district. On the northern side Babai River lies. Babai River is one of the major sources of irrigation of this area. On the eastern side of this VDC Motipur VDC of Dang is situated North in side Babai River and Chure range lies. In the western side, Chiregad khola and Srigaun VDC lies.

#### **4.4 Topography of the VDC**

Topographically, this VDC can be divided into two parts: 1) The lowest part 2) The highest part. Most of the parts of this VDC lie in lowest part. The lowest part is very fertile and sandy type on the Shore of Babai River. This part is situated at the height of 436 m. from the sea level. Most of the production of this area is produced by this part.

The highest part of this VDC lies at the height of 475 m. from the sea level. Most of the parts of this area is covered with community forest .Most of the houses of this VDC are of Tharu style. But some landlord 'Tharus' houses are traditional, historical and are like durbar. One building of one landlord Tharu is still like durbar. Some ancient people said that it was constructed with the comparison of 55 windows durbar situated in Bhaktapur but because of government's restriction it was completed with 54 windows. The roads are wide enough.

#### **4.5 Population**

In Hekuli VDC the total population is 6898 and male is 3401 and female is 34097, the total number of households are 1095, having average households size of 6.54 per person (Source: Hekuli VDC office) Population shows the important figure of social condition. It shows the condition of birth rate, death rate, dependency ratio, family size, sex ratio etc. If the society is socially and culturally backward there will be more child population. If the child population increases the dependency ratio also increase. It indicates where birth rate, mortality rate, dependency ratio, family structure are risen there will be lower social, cultural and economic condition. So population is the mirror of social and cultural condition. The composition of population by sex is given below in table no 1.



**Table no. 1**

**Composition of Population by sex in Hekuli VDC**

<b>Ward no</b>	<b>Total households</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total Population</b>
1	104	409	457	866
2	90	278	298	576
3	178	497	555	1052
4	125	354	377	731
5	116	371	380	751
6	214	612	618	1230
7	85	206	225	431
8	93	440	420	860
9	50	210	191	401
Total	1055	3401	3497	6898

Source: Hekuli VDC Office, 2008

The above table indicates the large variation in the population distribution in wards. It is due to the variation in area of the wards. Ward no 6 is a most populated ward as well as large in size and ward no 9 is small in size. Tharus are majority group then other castes and ethnic groups. The caste composition of the VDC is given below in table 2.

**Table no. 2**

**The Caste composition of Hekuli VDC**

<b>Castes</b>	<b>Total Population</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Tharu	3809	55.22
Chhetri	1504	21.80
Brahmins	810	11.74
Sanyasi	364	5.29
Kami	134	1.94
Damai	126	1.82
Others*	151	2.19
Total	6898	100.00

Source: Hekuli VDC office, 2008

The above table shows that Hekuli VDC is multicast and multicultural society. 55.22% of people are Tharus over here and they are the majority group.

First of all, it is necessary to discuss the respondent's age and sex composition. The respondents are taken males only. On the survey 6 widows were selected. Their age group lies in above 60 years and they can not involve in productive field and they are not responsible for the family's income. So they are removed from the respondent's list. The composition of age of respondents Tharus sample households of Hekuli VDC is given in table no 3 below.

) Thakuri, Sarki, Newar, Dhimal, Magar

**Table no 3**

**Age Composition of Respondents Tharus of sample households**

Age group (year)	No of Respondents	percentage
30-40	2	5.0
35-39	6	15.0
40-44	6	15.0
45-49	7	17.5
50-54	7	17.5
55-59	8	20.0
Above 60	4	10.0
Total	40	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2009

The above table shows that the distribution of age of respondents. Among 40 respondents, 20 percent are from the age group of 55-59 and only five percent respondents are sampled from 30-34 years because Tharus are living in joint family and they do not separate from their family is low aged period. The total population composition of sampled household by age and sex is given in the following table.

**Table no 4**

**The population composition of sample household by age and sex**

Age group (year)	Male	Percent	Female	Percent	Total	Percent
0-4	25	6.81	24	6.54	49	13.35
5-14	52	14.17	60	16.35	112	30.52
15-59	100	27.25	96	26.16	196	53.41
60 above	4	1.09	6	1.63	10	2.72
Total	181	49.32	186	50.68	367	100.00

Source: Field survey, 2009

The above table shows the total population of sample households is 367. The population is composed by sex 50.68 percent females and 49.32 percent males. More than 43 percent of the Tharu population are 14 years or less and the population of above 60 years is only 2.86 percent. This data shows the birth and mortality rates are greater and their health status is rather low. The average household size is 6.45 persons of Hekuli VDC.

## **4.6 Natural Resources**

### **4.6.1 Forest:**

In Hekuli VDC there are 11 community forest and all the peoples of this area are highly benefited from these forests. These forests cover nearly 127 hectares area. There are 6 private forests, 1 community forest and one school forest registered in district forest office.

### **4.6.2 Water Resources**

In Hekuli VDC most of the people use 'Kuwa' (well) for drinking water. Before 11 years ago people used to drink water of stream, rivulet and canal. But some workers who came from Jhapa dug well in easy way and all the peoples started to follow the method. For irrigation purpose there are three seasonal tributaries of Babai River, they are Chiregad, Patukhola and Mayakhola. Still some parts of this area depend upon rainwater.

### **4.6.3 Land**

In Hekuli VDC the total land mass is 4329.52 hectares. Among the total land most of the area is covered with cultivable land. Besides this some part is covered by forest, stream, road etc. Because of the lack of irrigation facilities the production is not produced to the expected quantity. The composition of the total land and cultivable land is given below.

**Table no 5**  
**Composition of Land in Hekuli VDC**

Type of land	Quantity of land in hectares	percent
Barren land	1386.9	32.03
Forest land	155.00	3.58
Cultivated land	2560.21	59.13
Pasture land	0.35	0.01
Stream land	227.37	5.25
Total	4329.52	100.00

Source: Land Revenue office of Dang district, 2005

The above table shows that most of the total land is cultivated in the study area. The percentage of cultivated land is 59.13. Cultivable land is classified into two parts called Bari (upland) and Khet (low land). For the tax collection government has divided all the cultivable land into four types like Abbal, Doyam, Sim and Chahar.

**Table no. 6**  
**Composition of Cultivated Land in Hekuli VDC**

Type of land	Piece of land	Khet in hectares	Bari in hectares	Total land in hectares
Abbal	3745	13.78	638.47	652.34
Doyam	3579	529.73	74.24	603.97
Sim	5205	1124.71	0.44	1125.15
Chahar	515	178.75	-----	178.75
Total	13047	1847.06	713.15	2560.21

Source: Land Revenue office of Dang district. 2005

#### **4.6.4 Religious Place**

In Hekuli VDC religious places like Laxminarayan temple ( Salaura ), Vasinav temple ( Salaura ), Shiva temple ( Mirauli ) and of the historical temple Sati Mandir lies in Baibang village. Sati Mandir consist historical important and recall "*Satipratha*" that was one of the social problem in our society. One of the women of Tharu community Jaivan Chaudhary's mother went sati with her husband and burnt herself in 1895 BS so this temple is named 'Sati Mandir'. Still now there use to be *mela* in every Maghi festival.

#### **4.7 Facilities**

In Hekuli VDC, there are more facilities then any other VDC of Dang district. The first '*Pradhan Panch*' Dharanidhar Chaudhary has great contribution to build the infrastructure of this VDC. He gave the donation of four *bigas* land for school and one *bigas* of land for VDC. Other facilities are:

##### **4.7.1 Education**

There is one secondary school, one lower secondary, three primary schools and one private boarding school. Because of some NGOs like *BASE*, *SUPER* etc the adults male and female are getting opportunity to be literate.

##### **4.7.2 Health Service**

In Hekuli VDC there is one government health center. The head of the health center said

all sick peoples of Tharu community used to go to witch doctors and *Guruwas* for the

treatment of their disease, if the illness do not recover then they come to the health center

This health center is highly contributing in family planning.

### **4.7.3 Transportation**

In Hekuli VDC most of the villages have graveled motor able roads. There is daily bus and taxi route to most of the villages of the VDC from Tulsipur. Tulsipur-Surkhet highway also touches this VDC. Laubasta-Mirauli, Potali-Baibang and Sukdewa- Ekali are some of the short segments of Hekuli VDC.

### **4.7.4 Communication**

For the communication there is one government post office. Besides this many CDMA phones are also available which are providing good services in communication sector.

### **4.7.5 Electricity**

In most part of the VDC electricity facility is available and some few places are in process of electricity supply. Poles are erected in all parts of the VDC and it is hoped that electricity will be supplied soon in near future.

### **4.7.6 Security**

For security, there is one police office. Besides this office other government offices like Agriculture service center, Veterinary office, Range post, Cooperative limited are also established which are providing good service to the peoples of the VDC.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **THARU CULTURE AND FESTIVALS**

#### **5. Tharu Culture**

Tharu culture is very different than that of other ethnic group. They have their own language, customs, norms, values, hand script and culture. But many of them are going too ruined due to the lack of suitable preservation. Some of the educated Tharus like Asok Tharu and Mahesh Chaudhary are trying their effort for the preservation of their culture. By the regular contact with *Pahadiya* culture, Christian missionaries and former Maoist activities, their culture is running towards destruction. In this chapter there is a description of some of the Tharu culture and festivals collected according to key informants and researcher in the study area in short.

#### **5.1 Food habits of Tharus**

Tharus food is very simple. They eat rather salty but less oily, less greasy and sour. They eat '*Kapwa*' (rice mixed with pulse) and '*Tina*' (vegetables). Sometimes they eat rice with salt, chilly and onion only. Usually they eat food four or five times in a day. They are habituated of taking food in fixed time and they can know the time without watching the watch. Their favorite foods are *Jad* (a kind of alcoholic item), *Mad* (liquid cooked item), bread, fish, chicken, meat of pigs etc. They also eat *Ghwangi* (snails), rats and wild animals like cats etc.

#### **5.2 Costumes**



The traditional dress of Tharus is ' *Jhulwa* ' (*Kurta and Bhoto*), *Paggya* (cloth worn over the head). But nowadays new generation uses shirt, pant, half pant and T-shirt. The female uses ' *Cholya* ' (upper dress) and ' *Gunyo* ' (lower dress).

For decoration female wears various different silver ornaments. They use nose ring, many ear rings, *pote* (a kind of necklace), *Tariya*, *Thokya* (worn in hands). Silver rings are used in toes. Married women make tattoo in their hands and legs.

### **5.3 Tharu Houses**

Some years ago Tharu settlements were separate and were far from settlements of other castes but nowadays they live in the same village with other castes. Most of the ancient Tharu houses are made North - South in length. They claim that they have some religious reason for doing this. They used to make one storied house. They believed that the upstairs is for '*Bhutwa*' (their god) but due to the fear of insects and snakes nowadays they are making more than one storied houses.

### **5.4 Language**

Tharus are one of the prosperous ethnic groups in language. They have their own very old language which is prevalent for many centuries. Some Tharu scripts are kept in Asok Chaudhary's house in the study area. In the study area Tharu language is dominated by Nepali language. All the Tharus in the study area speak Tharu language as mother language and Nepali as secondary language.

### **5.5 Religion**

The entire sampled household said that their religion is Hindu. But the system of belief and practice is very complex. They have complete trust upon *Guruwa*, witches, ghost, spirit and wizardry. There are also legends and myths telling the people about the creation of world and practices are not just taken for granted by the Tharus. They are also supposed to protect the people against the attack of

witches, chronic diseases and also some natural disasters.

After the reestablishment of Multiparty system and Republic in nation many Christian missionaries have persuaded simple minded Tharus to convert their religion into Christian and some of the young Tharus in the study area have changed their religion. Even due to the regular contacts with the Maoist raiders, some of them left their way to celebrate their own festival. Rich Tharus, while trying to upgrade their social status, they have been adopting the Hindus way of religious life. But large numbers of Tharus are seen celebrating their own traditional religion and festivals till today.

## 5.6 Deities

Tharus have many deities. They worship their deities in houses, courtyard, forest, river, *kuwa* (well), cow pen etc. If they do any new activity, they worship *Dheurar* and offer wine. According to the key informants the god and goddess of Tharus are as follows:

*Gurubaba* (main god), *Dahar Chandi (Dropati)*, *Chawahra* (four handed Vishnu), *Chanukh Chawahi* (four mouthed and four handed *Bhrama*), *Latau Mahadev*, *Khetrupal*, *Budhi dhau*, *Dakhini Bhawani*, *Panch Pandev*, *Saura*, *Maiya* (wife of *Gurubaba*), *Rikhya Narad*, *Bherwa ( Bhim)*, *Suchwa*, *Dharmarajwa (Dharmaraj)*, *Madhwa*, *Maraha* (Krishna), *Jagannathya*, *Lagubasu*, *Bagar*, *Ahura*, *Bhuyar*, *Harka Vilas*, *Jamajitawa*, *Ratnapurwa*, *Mahatau*, *Uhakri*, *Tikadhari*, *Chaudharnya*, *Rajkuwari*, *Chatibahanya*, *Bhujaunaguni*, *Labraguni*, *Tejuguni*, *Jhutroguni*, *Ultekaguni*, *Thaterwaguni*, *khetri*, *Swan Muthharni*, *Rajbansi*, *Bhedawa*, *Deuta*, *Dhanchaurawa*, *Gongawa*, *Jinguniya*, *Maduwa*, *Khabasyamduwa*, *Kheswari*, *Mahiya*, *Bhairuwa*, *Bhutathru Masan*, *Mudaha Masan*, *Dhaira Raksa*, *Dhaurakhamba*, *Purbi Bhawani*, *Bagleshlwari*, *Gabariya*,

*Kotiya, Karaiyakot, Bedelawa, Kuiyapani, Raura, Matwa, Ghodader, Sitala, Dewalmari, Kalika, Khiradevi, Aashapuri, Hinglaj, Khodiyar, Gopaldev etc.*

## **5.7 Festivals**

Tharus are very rich in culture. They celebrate different festivals in a year. Their every festival is costly because of feast. Some of the festivals of Tharus are given in short.

### **Dashyan (Dashain)**

This is one of the important festivals of Tharus. Before one month of Dashya all the young Tharu females starts dancing. Males beat 'Mandra' (madal) and help by singing 'Sakiya' (Tharu song). On the Ghatasthapana (the first day of Dashain) other castes put 'Zamara' of barley but they put seeding of maize called 'Zamara' for Dashya. The 7<sup>th</sup> day is called Saptami. On this day they wash utensils for cooking Dhikri. They sacrifice chickens and pigs on this day. If the Tharus are Dahit or Terra sub caste they provide 'Sorha Sraddha' for their ancestor. On Ostami (8th day) they go to Mahanto's house and get 'tika' of white color. Nawami (9th day) is the day of Dashya. On this day all the younger get 'tika' from elders and enjoy taking alcohol and Dhrikri. Some tenants Tharu go to their Zemindar's house for the tika. But now days it is going out of practice. Normally other castes offer tika on 10<sup>th</sup> day of dashain but they consider 10<sup>th</sup> day as "Rajako Tika" (king's day of Tika),

### **Atwari (Sunday festival)**

It is one of the important festivals celebrated by Tharu community. It is celebrated on first Sunday of *Bhadra* after moon's appearance. On Saturday Tharus take 'Dar' (food items) and remain fasting the whole day the next day. In the evening they

worship sun and *Bhimwa* (one of the brother of *Pandavs*). They assume that sun is the form of *Bhima*. They sacrifice pigs on this festival and enjoy by preparing delicious foods and sending food items to their relatives.

### **Dewari ( Depawali )**

In ancient time it is celebrated by *Dahit* sub caste of Tharus only. But nowadays all the Tharus of the study area celebrate this festival because of acculturation and modernization. They prepares '*Dhikri*' and worship '*Dheurar*' (Their home god). They enjoy by eating and gathering. Some of the well established Tharus celebrate it like other castes.

### **Ashtimki ( Krishnastami )**

This festival is celebrated on *Bhadra* in the day of Krishna *Ashtami*. Tharu females worship 'Lord Krishna'. On the eve of this festival Tharu ladies who perform *puja* eat '*Dar*' of food items like chicken, fish, meat, milk, curd etc. The next day they take bath and clean house with cow dung and mud and worship. Then they go to *Mahanto's* house, they draw pictures of Krishna and *Gopinies* and worship. They return back to their home and give fruits to their elder brother for their long life. Then again all the ladies go to their *Mahanto's* house and sing and dance the whole night celebrating Lord Krishna's birthday.

### **Holi**

It is celebrated on the full moon day of *Falgun*. It is the festival of colors. It is also the festival of fun. According to myth king *Hiranyakashyap* was the cruel and he did not believe the existence of the god and used to think that he is the incarnation of the god but his son *Pralad* was a devotee of god so he wanted to kill his son. One day he put his son into the lab of his sister *Holika* (who has taken the boon

from lord Shiva not to burn by fire) and asked to try to burn his son. But result was different, *Holika* died and *Pralad* remain alive.

Since the name of *Holika*, the festival is named *Holi*. During this festival Tharus perform *pooja*, sing, dance and eat fresh rice. They also play with ‘*Abir*’ of different colors.

### **Gurrai**

Gurrai is a special festival of Tharus only. Gurrai are of two types, one is Harrya Gurrai and another is Gurrya Gurrai. In both Gurrais they afford many chickens, pigs and pigeons.

#### **a ) Harrya Gurrai**

It is celebrated after the end of monsoon. People gather in one place and take ‘Dar’ with meat of pig, chicken, fish etc and several food items. This *pooja* is performed by *Deshbandhya Guruwa* and wish for the whole Tharu community as they have gone through several kinds of diseases and poisonous insects that they have gone during their farming period. Young boys and girls collect flower and items used in the *pooja* and immerse it into the river. In the evening *Deshbandhya Guruwa* and other village *Guruwa* perform “*Dhoopbatti*” in the *Mahantanwa*’s house and wish to be free from all types of miseries. They enjoy by beating drums and singing. From this day they are free to use drum in other festivals.

#### **b) Gurrya Gurrai**

This festival warned the Tharu people that there is no enough time for work so they close all types of celebration and drums till they perform Harrya Gurrai. This festival is generally celebrated when monsoon begins.

### **Chaitya Dashya ( Chaite Dashain )**

This festival is celebrated on *Chaitra Sukla Astami* (bright half period). This festival is performed by sacrificing chicken. *Guruwa* perform this *pooja* by bleeding the chicken which is called '*Ban Chirna Kam*'.

### **Saunya Sakranti**

This is celebrated on the first of *Shrawan*. During this festival they don't perform any *pooja*. They prepare alcoholic beverages called '*Jar*', wine, meat and various kinds of food items and eat. On this day they do not do any work on the field. They enjoy taking rest and wearing new dress and eating delicious food.

### **Barkhiya Mijhani**

It is celebrated on the first Monday when generally farming starts. It is celebrated to prevent oneself from poisonous snakes and scorpions during farming. On this festival they offer pure water called '*Jal*' and wine to their deities.

### **Hardawai**

It is celebrated in the month of *Shrawan* or *Bhadra* after the plantation of rice by all the villagers. They enjoy it after they have overcome various obstacles and difficulties during farming. It is not the festival but the Tharus in the study area celebrate it as festival. They invite all the members who helped them during the farming. On this day in the morning they kill pigs, goats etc which is called '*Jita Marne*'. They feed varieties of food and beverages like '*Jar*' (alcoholic item).

### **Auli Lena (First harvesting of new crop)**

This is purely Tharu custom only. It starts after ripening of paddy and before harvesting it. During this festival '*Gardhurya*' (head of household) takes bath and remain fasting and take a sickle and without speaking with anybody he carries a bundle of paddy with stacks and put it in the middle of the courtyard of the house.

The female takes a glass of water with burning incense and take that paddy to their *Dheurar* (deity room) and worship then they keep it in the main pole of the house. This is the ritual of *Dangaura* Tharu of the study area before harvesting.

### **Auli Utarna (last harvesting of the paddy)**

After harvesting of the paddy they leave some paddy in the north corner of their land for final ceremony. In this ceremony they sing a song and dance with beating drums and sacrifice pigs, chicken, sheep according to their economic condition. They prepare special food item and feed their neighbor and family members.

### **Pendya (Harvesting and storing of new paddy)**

After threshing the paddy by the help of the bullocks and male buffaloes this paddy is winnowed by women and stored and they celebrate this occasion. They sacrifice chicken, pigs and prepare alcoholic drinks and perform threshing and winnowing called *Pendya*

### **Chara Chahaina (Eating of new grains)**

In this festival new paddy grain is eaten by the family members. When paddy is made eatable they first sacrifice chicken to their deities and enjoy new rice, meat and drinks. Every Tharus perform this activity with delight.

### **Gharrai (Thatching houses)**

It is one of the special types of ceremony celebrated only in Tharu communities. Tharus of the whole villages thatch all the houses commonly and after completing the thatching they celebrate commonly sacrificing pigs and chickens.

### **Bagar pujana**

It is celebrated once in two years. In this festival they sacrifice sheep and worship 'Baraha' (god of animals). They emerge fire by rubbing woods which is called new fire. They cook rice, meat on this fire and eat only by males. The left things in this feast are buried in the cow pen.

### **Badka Pooja**

Sometimes some rich Tharus celebrate this festival. At that time they sacrifice nearly 100 chickens, goats, pigs, ducks and pigeons and invite their relatives and worship in '*Bhoyar*' (common worshipping place). Because of acculturation and modernization this festival is slowly undergoing.

### **Guriya Gurahi**

They celebrate this festival on the day of '*Nagpanchami*'. On this day they prepare verities of fried gram and lentils. In the morning they worship all the home deities and special snake called '*Lagu Bashu*' offering milk and feed the guest by offering fried lentils and alcohol.

On this day adult male Tharus prepare a kind of colorful stick and adult females make doll (*Gurahi*). At the evening they go to their nearest bushes and throw that doll and ask to carry away all the sins. At that time males hit those bushes with their made sticks and eat grams and lentils brought by the females. They throw the remained lentils and gram mixing with grass on the roof the deities' home and on the roof of their own home.

### **Aghani Purnima**

It recognized as '*Gharpooja*' and '*Mundan Pooja*'. It is one of the greatest festivals in Tharu community because it is related with the existence of the Tharu community. They worship '*Maharsiya*' and '*Kalahiya*' as their major gods. *Maharsiya* group worship by distributing fruits and sweets whereas *Kalahiya* group



worship by sacrificing animals. Some of the Tharus said that it the affiliated culture of Bramin.

Especially children of 2 to 6 years have to throw their hair baldly. So the children of these ages take bath and bald their head. They worship gods and also offer that hair to the god. They feed their relatives and neighbors and relatives. On this day new clothes are offered to the children.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **MAGHI AND ITS FUNCTIONAL IMPORTANCE**

Maghi festival holds the cultural and ethnic identity of Tharus. It is the biggest festival of Tharus so they are celebrating it with great enjoyment and fun from the ancient period to this modern period. Tharus celebrate this festival as different means like New Year, liberty day (freed from landlords), coordination and cooperative day etc. They enjoy it by offering gifts to their sisters and daughters. During this festival they prepare varieties of food and beverages and enjoy by dancing ‘*Maghauta*’ dance, singing ‘*Dumaru*’ song and play *madal* and duff.

Maghi festival has great social and religious importance. It provides not only fun, entertainment and enjoyment to the Tharu peoples but it creates love, cooperation, coordination among the Tharu people and Tharu society. It teaches moral lesson of respect, kindness, love, hospitality etc. Mostly it is celebrated from 27 Poush to 1<sup>st</sup> of Magh. Among these days the day of 1<sup>st</sup> Magh is taken as the main day of Maghi festival. This day is also called ‘Makar Sakranti’ and according to them no one should sacrifice any type of life on this day.

Most of the Tharus depend on agriculture for their economic source. It is their main occupation so all the Tharus complete their agricultural works and be ready for celebrating Maghi festivals. They collect sources for celebrating Maghi

festival. Some families who are very poor they borrow money from their neighbors. Before Maghi every head of the family gather to *Mahatawa's* house and discuss for the budget for pork and meat. The responsibility to provide sufficient meat to every family is upon *Mahatawa*. This system represent ancient model of humans where the leader used to distribute the hunted animal to all the members in Tharu community. If any members of any family is out of the community for any purpose they come back home before Maghi. Before Maghi starts all the Tharu women go for fishing and make it ready for Maghi. Tharu males seem busy in killing perk during Maghi. The moment of killing pork is so different. They call it '*Sikar*' (hunted animal). First they leave the pork free and kill it by hitting with some pointed weapons called '*Bhala*'. This moment remind people the ancient hunting style of ancient people in hunting and gathering age.

Before a month ago Tharu communities prepare all the materials needed for Maghi. They prepare *jad* of *Anadi* (special rice), *Rakshi* (a kind of alcohol), firewood, mustard oil and leaves of *Malu* (a kind of plant) for preparing plates of leaves. They divide different groups for dancing and singing. During this festival fish items are most essential so they do fishing and dry it for Maghi use. '*Dhikri*' is the most famous food items of Maghi festival so all Tharus prepare floor of soft rice for preparing '*Dhikri*'. Besides these *Murahi*, *Khichadi*, *Tilko laddu* etc are the famous food items of Maghi festival. The previous day of Mahgi is called '*Jitmarna Din*'. On this day especially they sacrifice pigs together on *Bhalomansa* (respected person) or *Barghariya's* (the elder member) house and take according to their need and capacity. On the same day in the evening they dance singing '*Dhumaru*' song and dance '*Chokara*', '*Maghauta*' and '*Jhumara*' dance. On the same day Tharu women prepare all the Maghi food items like bread of *anadi*, *Murahi*, *khariya*, *Tarul*, *Sakharkhanda*, *Bhanta*, *Kerako Taruwa*, Boiled rice and *Khichadi*. On this day they go to their neighbor's house and taste *jad* and meat which are also called '*Maghak Tippa*'.

Maghi is the economic month of the year for the Tharus. Every Tharu waits this month for any new activities, like marriage, breaking of house, selection for the land host etc. Most of the Tharu families are poor and had few land for cultivation so they depend on other's land for cultivation so this is the appropriate month for Tharus for every activities related to land like selection of the landlord and more. That's why Maghi has great importance in Tharus life.

### **6.1 The way of celebrating Maghi festivals**

On the previous day of Maghi all the family members gather together and share sorrows and happiness of the whole year. They have drink of different alcoholic items, *Dhikri*, wine and Sikar (meat of pork).

On the day of Maghi most of young and adult male members get up with the sound of cock and go to two joining point of the river for holy bath. Women remain busy so they bath in the nearest wells and taps. On this day especially couples who don't have child go to the holy bathing points and have bath and pray for children. Before they take bath they take copper coin and sink down and leave that coin inside the river. After their bath they offer flowers and water to the statue of stone god and put *tika* on their forehead. During this time the eldest put *tika* himself and then offer *tika* to the younger and give blessing. During this time Tharus put *tika* of white flour of rice and then they return to their house. The returning groups after bathing are called '*Murkutbas Jaina*'. After they return home they perform especial task called '*Nisrau Kaharne*' in which they put five-five handful of rice, salt and especial black pulse in a special pot called '*Dhakiya*' and offer it to their married sisters and daughters. They offer this *Nisrau* to their married sisters and daughters by adding some more amounts on the day of '*Maghi Dewani*'. After offering *tika* from their elders of their family they go to the elders

of their society to offer *tika*. This system remove the enmity created during farming time and helps to establish peace and coordination in the society. The next day of Maghi is called '*Maghi Dewani*'. On this day brothers go to their married sister's house to offer *Nisrau*. On this day all the married sisters wait their brothers excitingly. This system strengthens the relation of brothers and sisters.

During Maghi festival for one week from *Jitmarna Din* all the members and workers remain free from their work. They dance and sing different songs for the whole week. They go to different houses to dance. Wherever they go the owner of the house offer coins and rupee on mat and the funny activity is the dancer has to pick up that money from backside bending their body. *Maghauta dance* is performed between brothers and sisters or boys and girls.

## **6.2 Food Items of Maghi Festival**

Tharus prepare different varieties of food items in different festivals. *Kapuwa*, *Dhikri*, perk meat and *Khariya* are the major common food items of all festivals. There may be some differences between the food items living in different parts of Nepal but some items like fish, *ghonghi*, are common among the Tharus in every parts of Nepal. Mostly Tharus do not take spicy food. Normally they take garlic, onion and chilly. The short description of Tharus food items prepared in Maghi festival are given below.

**6.2.1 Dhikri:** It is the most important food items of Maghi festival. Besides Maghi it is prepared during *Dashain* and *Dewari*. It is made by paddy flour. It is steamed so it digests easily. There are five types of *Dhikri*. They are *Lamba Dhikri*, *Gulyar Dhikri*, *Bwajha Dhikri*, *Diya Dhikri* and *Lathi Dhikri*.

**6.2.2 Kapuwa:** It is another popular food items after *Dhkri*. Especially it is prepared in turn of pulse. The gravy types prepared by paddy flour are

called *Kapuwa*.

- 6.2.3 Kanjuwa:** It is liquid food item. It is prepared by stale liquid rice called '*Maad*'. It is sour in taste.
- 6.2.4 Khariya:** It is one of the most popular food items of Maghi. It is prepared by black pulse and wheat flour.
- 6.2.5 Barya:** It is prepared by paddy flour. Thick bread is cooked in oil.
- 6.2.6 Amchur:** It is prepared by drying mango in sunlight and adding salt and chilly.
- 6.2.7 Tilaura:** It is one of the most popular items of Maghi. It is prepared by special material called *Bheli* and *til*. It is sweet in taste so mostly children like it very much.
- 6.2.8 Ghongi:** It is a kind of snail found in lake or ponds. Tharus take it as vegetable. It is believed that Tharus developed the capacity to fight with Malaria because of this food.
- 6.2.9 Jar:** Among alcohol category Jar is the most popular one. They prepare three types of *Jar*. They are *Sadha Jar*, *Anadi Jar* and *Jhol Jar*.
- 6.2.10 Raksi:** Another alcoholic item is *Raksi*. They use *Raksi* to remove the Poison of snake and scorpion. They assume that it kills the germs of stomach.
- 6.2.11 Poeak Saag:** It is a kind of green spinach. This *saag* is cooked with a special material called *Siltung*. It is very soft and very tasty.
- 6.2.12 Gangata:** It is a kind of insect with eight legs and two long jaws. Its vegetable is very nutritious.
- 6.2.13 Machari (fish):** Like the varieties of fish, there are different varieties of fish items. The taste is also different according to the varieties of items. It is believed the capacity to fight against the Malaria is developed by taking fish items.
- 6.2.14 Paktha:** The dried meat of perch, fish is called *Paktha*.



Raksi and Dhikri  
Gangta

Machari, Saag and

## 6.2 Tharu Dances in Maghi Festival

Tharus celebrate different festivals during the whole year and they perform different dances during different festivals. They have differences dances performed in different period of time in a same day. *Barmasya* dance is common dance performed in whole year. Besides this *Jhumra*, *Sakhiya*, *Katghorik*, *Lattahawa*, *Mungrahawa*, *Hudungawa*, *Jharra*, *Maghauta*, *Baraka*, *Chokra*, *Tarwar*, *Maharawa Devi*, *Fagu*, *Birhaina* etc are the major dances performed by Tharus in different festivals. Mostly they have *Guruwa* in most of the dances and

he leads the whole team. The number of dancers is managed according to the necessities of the dance. Some of the major dances performed during Maghi are:

### **6.3.1 Maghauta Dance:**

Maghi is the major festival of Tharus and Nepal government has declared public holiday

for this festival. The special dance performed during this festival is called *Maghauta*

dance. It is performed by combining both male and female. In this dance one person plays *madal* and one or two persons dance. In one side male groups and in another side female groups stand and sing. It is started from *Barghariya's* house and later they go to every Tharu houses. The house owner offer rice, food items and money. In landowner's house the dancer pick up the money with mouth bending to backside.



Traditional Maghauta Dance

### **6.3.2 Barmasya Dance:**

This dance is performed during farming all the year. Besides this they perform this dance

in most of the festival. In this dance one performs *madal*, one dances and two groups are

divided for singing songs.



Traditional Barmasya dance

### 6.3.3 Saaru Dance :

This is also one of the dances performed during Maghi. Mostly it is performed during happy moment.



The traditional Saaru Dance



### 6.3.4 Latthehawa Dance

The dance performed by taking single or double stick is called Latthehawa dance. It is very popular dance in Tharu community. Two or three persons play *madal* and group of people dance with a great excitement. They don't use song while performing this dance. They just perform with the music of the *madal* only. There is one leader in backside and forward to lead the group. There is *Guruwa* to protect the performers from any wrong



Latthehawa Dance

### 6.4 Mahgi Dress and Jewelry

The traditional Tharu dress is in extinguishing condition. Especially the dress of females like *Lhanga*, *Cholya*, *Angiya*, and *Gonya*. Besides it the traditional jewelries are also going to disappear. Its costly to prepare traditional dress and they are not able to collect jewelry because of poverty. Some of the jewelries of Tharu women according to their body parts are:

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 1. Forehead | <i>Golden tika</i> or <i>Normal Tika</i>                          |
| 2. Hair     | <i>Silver Sagiya/ Jura</i> or <i>Magauri</i>                      |
| 3. Nose     | <i>Golden Bulaki, Nathiya, Phephi</i> or <i>Phuli</i>             |
| 4. Ear      | <i>Silver Bir, Marwadi, Aeiram, Turki</i> and <i>Golden Lurki</i> |

- 5. Neck *Silver Humel, Gataiya, Kansehari and Sutiya*
- 6. Hand *Lakhak Churiya, Kaanchak Churiya, Baju, Chadiya and Pachel*
- 7. Leg *Silver Bichiya, Chara, Pairi and Runjhanu*



Traditional Jewelries of Tharus used in Maghi

### 6.5 Maghi Songs

Like different dances performed in during festivals, they have different songs. Mostly their songs represent sorrow, pain, happiness that they face during their life. Some parts of the Maghi songs are

1. *Sister: mayeri kokha dadu jalam paili, jalam paili;  
dharti mata tuhar saran aili*

*Brother: baras din aina maghak mahina, maghak mahina  
aasis lena dena chalan rahena.....*

This is one of the very popular song sang during Maghauta Dance. During this dance males and females make two rows opposite to one another and sing this song. In the above song sisters show the respect and love to their brother and

brothers also describe that it is the time to have blessing and enjoyment with the senior members of the family.

During this festival married women love songs like

*2. daiya ek samaya man re ,  
re piya laike sutun bhar bhaiya sirhane,  
nadiya kinare jhalar ek rukhawa phulan phule aakase  
tute phul gire chatiyanpar choliya man dag lagawai  
daiya ek.....  
Saparori bahini lalit piyara  
Saparori bahini lalim laga  
ghasarmasar telawa lagayila  
jharara bahini muriya jhara  
satar satari bahini mahiya chocha  
latara majalari asa jholiya napara  
maghak bichari bich sedura dara  
baharak bichari.....*

In the above song married woman expresses the internal feeling that they have with their husband. They can not express their feeling because of their busyness because of household and agricultural work. They express their feeling during Maghi festival. They compare their life with the flower and express that it is going wastes with out any achievement. Just the spot of the flower remains in their life. Beside this unmarried females wish to have a sindur (symbol of marriage) after Maghi.

*3. saki ye ho! maghak pili guri jar, saki ye ho!  
kaha main lagaiyu aam imaliyare ha, kaha lagaiyu  
saki ye ho! Kaun pani chitu dhani dar saki ye ho!*

All the older sing this song while going for holy bath. During their old age they like to build some infrastructure for their generation. They wish to plant *Aam* and *Emili* (fruit plant) not for them because their age is going to over but they wish to do all this for their younger so that they will have a better life in future.

4. *saki ye ho! maghak pili guri jar, saki ye ho!*  
*baba ki sagarawa bhuriya lahan gainu ha, baba ki sagarawa*  
*saki ye ho! topiya chutal pani ghata, saki ye ho!*

All the older remain so sensitive towards their forefather that they left their cap during bowing their head for to honor them. They offer different varieties of food items in memory of their ancestors. They offer different food items to their ancestors so that they don't have to remain hungry in heaven.

5. *saki ye ho! Maghak pili guri jar, saki ye ho!*  
*Bangalinaka betiek satarangi choliya, bangalinaka betiek*  
*Saki ye ho! Topiya chutal pani ghata, saki ye ho!*

The above mention lines describe the feelings of males towards the females. One beautiful lady is there in my village and she knows black magic. The decoration she has made is adding extra beauty. The feeling of decoration is equal for every girl either she is poor or rich. The beauty and the decoration she has done are beyond the description

6. *saki ye ho! maghak pili guri jar, saki ye ho!*  
*Bangalina betiek turambu main tagari, bangalina betiek*  
*Saki ya ho! More piya dehala dubarai, saki ye ho!*

These lines describe that other females feel jealousy for the beautiful lady of the village whom all the males wish to get. They claim that they are more beautiful than her. Females try to attract their beloved towards them. The males ask their beloved that they are in full intoxication and still they did not understand their

feelings.

7. *saki ye ho! Maghak pili guri jar, saki ye ho!*

*Nahi main bailanu, nahi main chailanu, nahi main bailanu*

*Saki ye ho! Nahi hantha maranu main san, saki ye ho!*

Here, the female (who is the most beautiful one) give explanation about the blame of black magician. They exclaim that they speak and care to keep the heart of the males but instead of that they are blaming them. It's the day of independency so it's not the day of sorrow but it's the day of enjoyment.

8. *saki ye ho! Maghak pili guri jar, saki ye ho!*

*Sendura le mangunu baba sendura nai le delya ha!*

*Sendura le mangunu baba*

*Saki ye ho! Sendurak karan baba chori debu deshwa tuhar, saki ye ho!*

In the above mentioned lines the females demand for their rights with their father. They claim that they have citizenly right for to fulfill their right and desire. They wish to get married and settle their life but their fathers do not understand all these feelings.

9. *saki ye ho! Maghak pili guri jar, saki ye ho*

*aasauak sal diyeri sendura mahanga huila ha, aasauak sal diyeri*

*saki ya ho! Aagu sal dehabu sindura besal, saki ya ho!*

These lines express the internal feeling and the guilty that a father faces if he is not able to find the suitable bridegroom for his daughter. He tried to find out the best bridegroom for her daughter but he is not able this year. So he tries to convince his daughter saying he has great desire to see her as a bride and offer turnip as a marriage religious custom. But he is sorry for that and next year he promise to do that.

10. *saki ye ho! Maghak pili guri jar, saki ye ho!*

*Nathiya le manganu baba nathiya nai le delya ha nathiya le manganu baba  
Saki ya ho! Natiek khatir baba chodi debu desawa tuhar, saki ye ho!*

The above mentioned lines express that they want to spend free life with their liked ones. They wish to use nose ring. They are so emotional towards their youth that they feel their life as boundary and wish to set free from the boundaries of life and have a free and peaceful life with their desired ones.

*11. saki ye ho! Maghak pili guri jar, saki ye ho!*

*Aasau ak sal diyari nathiya mahanga bhaila h, aasauak sal diyari*

*Saki ya ho! Aagu sal dehabu nathiya singlar, saki ye ho!*

*Gini chorp diyari desawa hamar, saki ye ho!*

*Aagu sal dehabu sindura besar, saki ye ho!*

In reality these lines point out the problems and the pain that older face. They hardly manage their economy for their family. They are not able to provide ring and cosmetics to their child this time but they will try to fulfill it next time.

*12. saki ye ho! Maghak pili guri jar, saki ye ho!*

*Angina baharat tutali barhaniya, angina baharat saki ye ho!*

*Lachakala deura mora karahiya, saki ye ho!*

The above lines mention that when any lady gets married. The environment and the situation are completely new for her. She was free in her parent's house but when she got married her responsibility increases. She has to face lot of trouble at that time brother in law and sister in law are the supporter of her. Especially brother in law remains close to the new bride. She expresses all the problems and sorrow with her brother in law. During Maghi she expresses that he (brother in law) is intoxicated but she is tired of work and sweeping the yard. Her waist is

paining because of heavy work

*13. saki ye ho! Maghak pili guri jar, saki ye ho!*

*Ladiya kinar deura puranak patiya, ladiya kinar deura, saki ye h!*

*seki daro deura maora karahiya, sakiye ho!*

*Saki ye ho maghak pili guri jar, saki ye ho!*

*Tura gainu deura puranak ptiya, tur gainu deura sakhi ye ho!*

*Gari gaila deura mahin rasa katawa, sakhi ye ho!*

In these lines the daughter in law expresses the pain and troubles that she faces during the life time. She expresses that there is no one to understand her actual feeling. Only a person who is a bit close to her is brother in law. So she try to express the whole pain with him so that he can help her.

*14. Sakhi ye ho! Maghak pili guri jar!, sakhi ye ho!*

*Gora tora dekhu pawali tora dekhu, gora tora dekhu sakhi ye ho! Nahi dekhu tora*

*mahina rasa katawa, sakhi ye ho!*

*Sakhi ye ho! Maghak pili gurijar, sakhi ye ho!*

*Jangha tore thake saiya waha tore lage dhuna, jangha tore thake saiya, sahki ye h*

*Kahari dewa saiya mahin rasa katawa, sakhi ye ho!*

*Sakhi ye ho! Maghak pili guri jar! Sakhi ye ho! Saiya more kahai mahin rasa katawa,*

*saiya mora kahai sakhi ye ho! Saiya mora bedana harile, sakhi ye ho!*

Really these above mentioned lines express the entire feelings of the married females. They try to express to their pain to their husband but he never understands. Brother in law is the closest person in their life. So they tried to keep their pain in front of their husband with the help of their brother in law.

In a dramatic way married female is trying to show their internal pain. First she told her brother in law to bring a needle for removing the thrown but he did not understand and could not find the needle and called his elder brother. The husband tried to find out the thrown but could not find and said that there is no thrown. Then the wife said that there is not and thrown that could be seen. He should try to find out the internal thrown of her. The pain and sorrow that she is facing are the biggest thrown in her life and he should understand it.

### **6.6 Social importance of Maghi festival**

Festivals are one of the important parts of Tharu society. As indicated earlier, they celebrate various types of festivals according to their own way on different days. Maghi is one of the biggest festivals and is celebrated with gathering together and mutually. So it has more social importance than any other festival celebrated by Tharus.

It can be said that Maghi festival helps to bring social integration because during the time of feast, dancing singing Tharu people gather together in a place and interact with each other and enjoy themselves by eating, drinking and dancing. This brings the concept of 'we' feeling and encourage the sense of communalism.

On the day of Maghi, all the Tharus gather together in the house of *Pradhan*, *Bhalomansa* and *Barghariya* and discuss their early work and future plan. They share their sorrow and happiness. Kamaiyas discuss whether they will continue their work with same land owner or they will change their land owner.

During the time of farming they have enmity with other Tharus for irrigation and other agricultural issues. During Maghi they forget all the enmities and invite them for feast and other activities. This activity removes the enmity and brings harmony and develops social integration.



The second day of Maghi is called '*Maghi Dewani*'. On this day all brothers go to their married sister's house to offer *Nisrau*. On this day all the married sisters wait their brothers excitingly. This system strengthens the relation of brothers and sisters and keeps family and relative integration.

Mostly Tharus are workers so they remain busy all the times in different tasks so they get less time for cleaning and bathing. They take bath in name of holy bath that helps them to remain neat and clean. On the day of Maghi all the Tharus gather in one place and select the '*Gardhuruwa*' (head of the village), '*Aghariya*' and *Kakandar* (the guard of the village). This process shows the cooperation and tolerance in the society. On the day of Maghi all the Tharus go to their relatives and lineage's house and greet, bless and wishes. This task strengthens the relativism and lineage.

Most of the Tharus are landless and they are working as '*Kamaiya*' in landlord's house. This is the day of selection of the new landlord or to continue the old landlord. So this day has great importance in their life because from this day there will be great changes in their life so this day has great social importance in their life.

Tharus enjoy this festival by eating, dancing and singing and with blessings which brings some positive changes and satisfaction in their life. This festival also plays important role in social integration, family integration and also to improve the relation of husband and wife. So this festival has great social importance.

### **6.7 Cultural importance of Maghi festival**

This festival helps to preserve their traditional culture because on this day they worship their ancestral deities. They worship their ancestors. They worship

'*Pandavas*' (characters of *Mahabharat*). We see five pillars in Tharus yard. These five pillars are incarnation of *Pandavas*.

This day is related to the event of *Mahabharat*. The Tharu literature book '*Barkimar*' describes that their ancestor '*Gangewa*' died on this day. From this day the sun goes towards Northern Hemisphere. Tharus assume that Northern Hemisphere is god's area. Whoever dies during this time gets place in god's palace.

The '*Barkimar*' of Tharus describes that during the war of *Mahabharat*, *Arjun* (the legendary hero of *Mahabharat*) hits many arrows to '*Gangewa*' (one of the ancestor of Tharus). There was not a single place in *Gangewa*'s body without arrows. But he was blessed that till the time the sun goes to Northern side, his life is endless. During that time he gave spiritual knowledge to the saint and others. When the sun went in Northern sides then he left his life. Tharus are Hindu but the way of worshipping the god and the belief towards the god is different than other castes.

'*Bhagbhat Gita*' one of the religious book of Hindus says that one of the king *Bhagirat* got meditation for a long time and brought '*Ganga*' (the god of river) in the earth for to give relief of his ancestor. Still now there is a place in west Bengal of India where *Ganga* joins with ocean. On this place there celebrates a great fest on every Maghi day because the king *Bhagirat* had given fire to his 60 thousands ancestor here. So every Tharus try to take holy bath here to show devotion towards their ancestors.

Tharus take the inspiration and the knowledge given by *Gangewa* in their life. The knowledge given by *Gangewa* leads their life towards success. The inspiration given by the *Gangewa* exactly matches with their life and they try to apply the suggestion given by *Gangewa* practically in their life. Some Tharus claim that

sacrificing birds and animals in the name of festival and drinking alcohol is not the sprit of *Gangewa*. He said that in every birds and animal's body god is living so to sacrifice them is to make god unhappy.

In the study area some Tharus describe that the way of offering money to the river is to memorize their ancestor. Whereas some said it is the devotion towards '*Pandavas*'. During their forest life once they were separated with each other. *Bhima* the elder brother of the *Pandavas* offer money to river and they met with each other because of that money.

The holy bath especially in river and streams, the tradition of offering money during bathing, the way of offering *Nisrau* to the sisters and daughters, the way of getting *tika* from the elders, all these activities continue their culture and tradition that their ancestors had continued. So this Maghi festival has great cultural and religious importance.

During the holy bath first they take two copper coins and sink into the water and leave those coins inside the water. After the bath they take a pot of water, coins, flower and colored rice and worship the idol of the stone. On this day the couples especially who don't have child, they go to some holy places and wish for children. It is believed that doing this on Maghi day fulfills their wish.

We can say that Maghi festival has its own types of rules and regulations. All the Tharus must follow these rules and regulations to bring social integration and preserve Tharu traditional socio cultural life. Hence, Maghi festival of the Tharus has socio- cultural importance.

## **6.8 Functional Importance of Maghi**

Maghi is very important festival for the Tharus. They observe it with great

enthusiasm. They entertain and enjoy with meat and liquor. Maghi is celebrated once in a year and it creates fun and enjoyment among the Tharus. Maghi is the first month of the year for Tharus. So it holds the most important figure in Tharus's life because it is the economic month for Tharus because they finalize their financial transaction in this month. Whenever Tharus have to do any important task like house division, marriage, selection of the landowner and leavening the old Zamindar, Tharus wait for Maghi. Most of the Tharus are poor and agriculture is the main source of income of the family and they spend most of the time in field, so Maghi is the appropriate time for them. Before some days of Maghi all the household heads gather in Mahatawa's house and estimate the budget and the amount of perk meat needed for their individual family. It is the responsibility of the head of the village to manage pork for all the villagers. Really this task of Tharus creates integration, cooperation and coordination among the villagers. Before one month ago women remain busy in preparing different food items. The environment during the preparation of food items creates closeness among the Tharu females. Tharus who have gone in other places for earning also return back during this festival and remain completely free from their busy life. So Maghi give recreation to the Tharus. Usually Tharus rear cattle for their agricultural activities so houses of Tharus seems dirty but they completely clean houses and surroundings during Maghi. This process helps to protect them from the attack of different diseases. On the day of Maghi all the Tharus go to river and have a holy bath. During bathing they offer money to their ancestors. This task preserves Tharu culture and shows respect towards their forefathers. On the day of Maghi people believe that they get rid of sins that they had done knowingly and unknowingly during their life. They try to get bath in holy places. This task is adding some contribution to preserve holy places of Nepal. The way of 'Dhok Lagne' (touching the feet with head) shows respect towards the senior citizen and elder. Some times humor and fun is also created during it. One of the respondents recalls one incident of Maghi. Once when he was offering Dhoka (touching the

feet with the head) his hair is hooked into the nail of the elder and he was not able to get up for some time. Later the elder lady is able to remove his hair from her nail, he was feeling so shy that he ran away from there. These types of enjoyment create recreation in Tharus life.

Nowadays Tharus organize different program, concert and shows and collect some funds by showing their performance. They utilize this amount for social development and for the development of infrastructure. So Maghi has great social importance Maghi festival also holds many cultural importance and Tharus perform different cultural activities during Maghi (are mentioned in cultural importance) festival. These activities help to protect their traditional culture and to give continuity to the culture. Government has declared national holiday of the day of Maghi so this festival plays an important role in Tharus life. They are free for celebration on this day. Some landless Tharus put their pain that it is very difficult for them to celebrate Maghi because of economic crisis. They don't have sufficient money for the celebration and buy meat. To observe this festival even the poor Tharus have to take loan because they are unable to meet this heavy expenditure and their economic status goes down gradually. Some of the people became millionaire by selling the name of Tharus (Ramesh Rawal), but the condition of the Tharus is still same like before. At present also they are like Kamaiya. Maghi festival has great functional importance in Tharus life.

### **6.9 Changing pattern of Maghi festival T**

There have been going some significant changes in the Maghi festival of the Tharus. It is because they started observing the Maghi festival through other's especially Pahadiya'

manner. At present they do not observe Maghi festival according to their tribal rules. They started to observe other Hindu's festival too and following the way of their celebration.

Regarding the changing process of cultural system Ramesh writes 'To say that a socio-cultural system is a logical, integrated, functional entity does not imply that its parts interact in perfect harmony, without stress or strain. In absolutely static communities this might be true. But cultures change, and the parts of a system change at different speeds; consequently, perfect integration and perfect fit are impossible' (Ramesh, 1973:73).

Speaking about the changes of Maghi festival of Tharus of the study area, it can be said that due to the contact with high castes Hindu people and influence of Pahadiya culture, Maghi festival has undergone some significant changes. For example previously Tharus of the study area used to celebrate in an expensive way. They used to invite all the relatives and neighbors because it was compulsory. But now they do not even invites all the relatives also. It is because of political influence and the cause of enmity with the peoples or relatives because of land, farming and many other reasons.

Previously they have their own special dress for dancing during Maghi festival but they have given it up. They used to dance in group with especial dress. They used to sing especial song and dance but nowadays they are influenced by pop and filmy song and use them during Maghi dance. Previously they used to go different houses and dance as their culture but now they dance in different houses not to protect their culture but to collect money because they demand certain amount from the householder.



### Changes in dressing and dance patterns at present

On the second day of Maghi all the villagers used to go to *Mahatawa's* house carrying vegetables, alcohol and different Maghi food items called “Harjauki Puraina”. But now days gradually this system is given up because of not good relation with the *Mahatawa* because of the political influence.

Tharus also take Maghi as the festival of fun and enjoyment. Tharus drink alcoholic items during this festival. But nowadays in the name of Maghi Tharus drink much amount of alcohol and play cards. These are some social problems in the name of Maghi. Sometimes some criminal activities happen in Maghi.

Some Tharus try to copy their neighbors and try to celebrate Maghi in an expensive way beyond their capacity so some Tharus borrow money from the landlords. Later on they can not pay the amount and forced to sell the land. Especially poor families are affected by this system. They borrow amount from different sources and fall in loan.

Now let's discuss the causes of these changes. The main cause of these changes is the economic status of the Tharus. The poor economic condition has been one of the features for change in Maghi festival, because the growing poverty of the Tharu people is not able to afford much more for celebrating this festival and

forced to celebrate it in a different way than their previous celebration. Naturally they have to cut down the expenditure and so on. Secondly, the contact with Pahadiya people has also encouraged some changes in the Maghi festival of the Tharus. Due to regular contact with outsider people there occur some changes in their activities such as way of living, dress pattern, food habits, celebration, dance songs and the pattern of observing the Maghi festival.

Previously Tharus people were isolated people when Terai was covered with forest and affected by Malaria. Hence, they have their unique type of way of life. But after the eradication of malaria, people of hilly area migrated to this area and influenced the Tharu people and their life. Due to the regular contact with other castes they left some tribal festivals and started to observe other's festivals for example *Tij* is the festival borrowed from the Pahadiya people.

The ten years Maoist movement has also brought great change in Tharus life. Maoist mostly raised the problems of the backward society like Tharus and able to achieve the support of Tharus. This period has brought lot of changes in Tharus life. Now Tharus are conscious about their rights and their scope in the society. They have learnt to deal and interact with the problems so the suppression by the landlords has decreased to some extent.

Moreover, the development of technology, the traditional culture of the Tharus of the study area has been affected. Due to transportation facility they also started to go outside and started to practice different ways of life. They also started to visit holy Shrines, Hindu fairs and *Jatra*.

At the same time, the musical instruments of the Tharus which were used during the time of festival have also under gone some significant changes. Previously they only used Dholak but now they have also started to use other musical



instruments like *Band, Sahanai, Damphu* and so on.

And at the same time the duration of celebrating festival is also shortened. Except some important festival like *Dashain*, they do not observe other festivals for many days. It is because of economic factor.

At last we can conclude that Tharu festivals of the study area have undergone some significant changes. The cause of these changes are because of the increasing poor economic status, influence of Pahadiya people and the development of transportation facility, communication and other facilities that have affected the way of living style, dress pattern, food habit, and the way of celebrating the festivals.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION**

#### **7.1 Summary**

Tharu are forth largest ethnic group of Nepal who scatter in the 24 districts of all the Terai and inner midland of Nepal and in the past, they deforested and cleared the land and made it productive into farming.

There are the great controversies in the origin and ethnic-history of Tharus. But there is not any controversy that they settled during thousands years ago and they settled by making Tharu kingdom in Dang and its capital was Sukaura Village many Tharu king ruled and Dangi Saran was the famous and authentic of there.

The major objectives of this study were to examine the way of celebrating Maghi festival and present the culture of Tharus. Hekuli VDC of Dang district was selected for the study. The size of 40 households was determined by taking 10% of the population. Informal discussion with key informants, observation and interview schedule were the instruments of the field survey. Both descriptive and exploratory research designs were followed in the study area.

Tharus of Hekuli VDC are found backward in the field of employment and education. 33.65% of the people are dependent and only 2.86% of people are above than 60years old so their health status is also poor. 72.5% of the Tharu families live in joint family & average household having the size of 9.17 person, 41% are married and their average age at the time of interview is 35 and educational status is higher (87.82% for male and 72.84% for female) than the national level due to the contribution of local NGOs but is shown harassed picture of higher level (above SLC) is 1.63% of the total population. Their mother language is Tharu and they speak Nepali as the secondary language.

Tharu culture is very old and more prosperous. Their festivals are various types but due the bad habits of usage of more alcohol, it pulled them slowly backward by socio economically. They practice Hindu religion with complex system to beliefs and practices. Tharus worship various types of deities and their deities are commonly called '*Butuwa*'. They believe in *Guruwa*, ghost, witches and wizardry.

In the study area, there are not found and landless and homeless families of Tharus

but most of the Tharus have a few land & this land is not sufficient to their joint families, so 77.5% of Tharus take some land in 'Adhiya'(crop sharing system) from the landlords. The entire respondent's occupation is agriculture and average household income of sampled households is Rs. 61517.48 and the expenditure while celebrating festivals in a year is Rs. 54182.27 and 77.5% of the Tharus have food deficit from their own land in some or more month during a year but most of the Tharu family are cable to remove food deficit by taking 'Adhiya' land from the landlords and working as wage laborers like a mason, carpenter and in farming sectors.

There is seen the rising and falling condition of socio-economic life of Tharus. So many factors involve changing Tharu's socio-economic life and culture. The falling factor is tax collection system of Rana regime. Since this system started their land status became low, eradication of Malaria. since this time other people migrated to Terai, abolition of 'Brita land program, land reform program, usage of more alcoholic drink and expenses in their festival that lower their health status and economy, rounding type of migration, lack of applying the means of family planning, lack of awareness and educational status, traditional agriculture and livestock's, their family type and structure pollution growth, child marriage polygamous marriage "*Jari system*" etc and the rising factor are tenancy right, establishment of multi party system, helping of NGOs, rising educational status and awareness, liberation of '*Kamaiyas*', distribution land to each *Kamaiya*'s family for the settlement, contact with Christianity and Maoist party etc.

## **7.2 Conclusion**

Nepal is the land of various caste, creeds and ethnic groups. Among the various ethnic groups of Nepal, the Tharus are one of the indigenous tribal groups of Terai Nepal. Tharus are the mongoloid people, who came to Nepal-from Tharu of India.

According to above findings Tharus are socio-economically backward. Their backwardness started slowly day by day since the regime of Rana rule up to the land reform program of the government. After the land reform program they gradually progressed day by day. Due to low educational status, lack of awareness, traditional way of farming system and traditional culture of Tharu like superstition, belief of Guruwa, ghost, witches, sorcerers and wizardry, usage of more alcoholic drink in their festival and at the arrival of guests, excessive expenses in marriage, death, birth and religious function etc have worsened their socio-economic and cultural condition.

The governmental program of land reform, tenancy right and liberation of *Kamaiya's* or bounded labor, distribution of land for the settlement of the *Kamaiya's* or bounded labors' families and the program of non governmental organization's to exert reform in different field like education, health, skill development training etc have become some positive prospect but these are not enough to raise socio-economic and cultural condition of Tharus.

Like the other people of Nepal, Tharu people have their own culture. Festivals of Tharu are a part of Tharu culture. Mainly they observe Maghi, *Holi*, *Dashyan*, *Atwari*, *Dewari*, *Ashtimki*, *Gurrai*, *Chaitya Dashya*, *Saunya Sakranti* etc. festivals.

ssssDue to the contact with other outside people as well as Hindu emigrates from hill, Tharu culture been highly influenced by Hindu culture. Though each is not associated with religious myth they have also socio- cultural importance. For example in a Maghi festival all the Tharus gather at the *Mahatawa's* house and discuss their yearly farm work.

Every festival has its own rules and regulations and the exact way of celebration. All the Tharu people must obey them to bring social integration and preserve

Tharu traditional culture. Due to poor economic condition, contact with other people and development of modern technology Tharu festival has undergone some significant change. For example food habits, dress pattern, way of observing various festival and way of living.

Maghi has great importance in Tharus life to maintain peace, cooperation, harmony and social order because it is only that festival that can remove enmity among the different Tharus created during interval of time. It keeps great significance in economic sector also because it is the physical year in Tharu community. All the financial activities relate with this festival. It holds great importance for Kamaiyas also because the dealing with the owner and the landlord is finalized in Maghi festival. Besides these Maghi is one of the important parts of Tharu culture. So it plays an important role in the preservation of Tharu culture and religion.

## **References**

Acharya, Baburam, (2010 B.S.): *Tharuko Mul Ghar Kahan*, Nepal Sanskritik Parishad Patrika, year -2, Issue -3, Kathmandu, Nepal.

Baral, Ishwor, (2009 B.S.): *Tharu Jati Ra Tinko Sanskriti*, Nepal Sanskritik Parishad Patrika, year -2, Issue -1, Kathmandu, Nepal.

Bhatta, (1977): *Natural History of Nepal*, (vol.2) Sajha Prakasan, Kathmandu, Nepal.

- Bista, D.B. (1980): *The Peoples of Nepal*, Kathmandu, (4<sup>th</sup> edition), Ratna Pustak Bhandar, Kathmandu, Nepal.
- Bista, Dor Bahadur (2034 B.S.): *Sabai Jatako Fulbari*, Sajha Prakasan, Kathmandu Nepal.
- Chauhary S.L. (1999): *Socioeconomic Condition of Dangaura Tharus*, M.A. Thesi Central Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Tribhuvan University.
- Carnegy, P. (1868): *Notes on the Races, Tribes and Castes Inhabiting the Province of Avadh*, Lucknow, Oudh Government Press India.
- CBS, (2000): *Statistical Pocket Book*, Central Bureau of Statistics, Kathmandu
- CERID, (1988): *Annual Report 1998*, CERID TU Kathmandu, Nepal.
- Crooke, W. (1896): *The Tribes and Castes of the North Western Provinces and Oudh*, Calcutta, Office of Superintendent of the Government Printing of India.
- Macdonald, A.W. (1975): *Essays on the North and South Asia*, Ktm, Ratna Pustak Bhandar, Kathmandu Nepal
- Mechi Mahakali (2059 BS): *A Monthly Newspaper*, Published from Dhangadi, Nepal.
- Nevill, H.R. (1904): *District, Gazetteers of the United Provence of Agra and Oudh*. U.Zu Natintal Allahabad, U.P. Government Press India.
- Pyakurayal, K.N. (1982): *Ethnicity and Rural Development: A Sociological Study of Four Villages in Chitwan, Nepal* (PHD thesis).
- Rajaure, D.P. (1977): *Anthropological Study of Tharus of Dang-Deokhuri*, A dissertation submitted to the Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies, TU.

Rakesh, R.D (1994): *Cultural Heritage of Nepal Terai*, Nirala Publication, New Delhi, India.

Srivastava, S.K. (1958), *The Tharus: A Study in Culture Dynamics*, Agra University Press India.

Tharu, Ashok (2056 BS), *Lawa Bihan*, Tharu Yuba Publication Kathmandu.

Tharu, Asok (2056BS): *Lawa Bihan*, Chaumasik, Dhangadi Press.

Tharu, Asok (2058 B.S.): *YugBoudh Daily*, Aswin 25, 2056, Yugboudh Press Dang.

“Kopila” (2056 BS), *Lawa Bihan*, Tharu Yuba Publication Kathmandu.

Chaudhary Runchuram,(2065 BS), *Gorakshya National daily*, Gorakshya Press Dang.

Rawal Ramesh, (2065 BS), *Janadisha National Daily*, Express Color Press New Baneshor, Kathmandu.

[www.ethnologue.com](http://www.ethnologue.com)

Land Revenue Data of Dang district, 2005

MODEL QUESTIONNAIRES FOR RELEVANT RESEARCH  
TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY  
CENTRAL DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY /ANTHROPOLOGY  
KRITIPUR, KATHMANDU

QUESTIONARE FOR HOUSEHOLD SURVEY

Name of respondents:  
Village:

Date:  
ward. No:

**Section A: Family**

1. How many members are there in your family?
2. What types of family do you have?



3. What is the number of children in your family?
4. What is the main source of economy of your family?
5. How much land do you have?
6. What is the number of family members who can participate in earning process?

### **Section B: Festival**

7. What are the festivals that you celebrate?
8. Is Maghi your most important festival?
9. For how many days did you celebrate Maghi festival?
10. Which day is the most important day? Why?
11. To whom did you invite in Maghi?
12. Why do you celebrate maghi?
13. What is the food items prepared in Maghi?
14. What do you do during Maghi randomly?
15. About what topic do you discuss in Maghi?

### **Section C: Economy**

16. What is the yearly income of your family?
17. How much did you spend in a year for festivals?
18. How much did you spend for Maghi?
19. Do you burrow money for Maghi?
20. Do you do anything to show other during Maghi? If so what is it?
21. How do you celebrate Maghi?

MODEL QUESTIONNAIRES FOR RELEVANT RESEARCH  
TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY  
CENTRAL DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY / ANTHROPOLOGY  
KRITIPUR, KATHMANDU

KEY INFORMANT'S QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of the respondents:  
VDC:

Village:

Date:  
Ward No:

1. Which community do you belong with?
2. Have you ever participated in Maghi festival?
3. What is the source of your knowledge about Maghi?

4. Does Maghi have any religious myth?
5. For how many days is Maghi celebrated? What is done on each day of Maghi?
6. What are the food items of Maghi festivals?
7. Do you think that maghi has any religious important?
8. Is Maghi has any social importance?
9. What are the other festivals celebrated by Tharus?
10. What role does Maghi play to solve family and social problem of Tharu community?
11. Is there any effect of technology and modernization in Maghi festival?
12. What is the difference between traditional way and modern way of celebrating Maghi?
13. Is there any loosing ritual of Maghi during the period of time?
14. Do you know any maghi song?