

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

A. Briefing of Indigenous People

(a) Introduction

An **indigene** is literally someone or something that is native to or originating from a given place. Therefore, when **indigenous** is used purely as an adjective, an *indigenous people* is a group or culture regarded as "coming from" a given place. In this broad sense almost any person or group is indigenous to some location or other.

As a contemporary cultural description, however, the term *indigenous peoples* has a much narrower common meaning. The more restrictive criteria as outlined need to be satisfied in order to identify an indigenous group as such in the sense interpreted here. The identification of a people as indigenous under these terms can in practice be further refined by examining the nature and status of their interactions with other communities. These other, external communities or nation-states are those having some degree of association, claim or control over the same territory inhabited (or formerly inhabited) by the indigenous group.

In this relationship the status of the indigenous people can in most instances be characterised as being effectively marginalised, isolated and/or as forming a minority, when compared to other groups from whom they are distinct, or the nation-state as a whole. They have limited participation and influence over external policies concerning their territorial, environmental and societal governance.

This situation can persist even in the case where the indigenous population outnumbers that of the other inhabitants of the region or state; the defining notion here is one of separation from decision and regulatory processes having some at least titular effect over aspects of their community and lands.

The presence of external laws, claims and cultural mores either potentially or actually act to variously constrain the practices and observances of an indigenous society.

These constraints can be observed even when the indigenous society is regulated largely by its own tradition and custom. They may be purposefully imposed, or arise as unintended consequence of trans-cultural interaction; and have a measurable effect even where countered by other external influences and actions deemed to be beneficial or which serve to promote indigenous rights and interests within the wider community.

Thus many organizations advocating for indigenous rights, and the indigenous communities themselves, seek to particularly and explicitly identify peoples in this position as indigenous. This identification may also be made or acknowledged by the surrounding communities and nation-state, although there are some instances where the identity claim is the subject of some dispute, particularly with regard to recognizing assertions made over territorial rights.

In contrast, the term **non-indigenous** might well be applied to describe these other communities; however, its application may be inaccurate or contested in some circumstances where the cultural group has or lays claim to lengthy prior association with the territory.

Some formal contemporary definitions which have been offered and widely accepted are described below.

In 1972 the **United Nations** Working Group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP) accepted as a preliminary definition a formulation put forward by Mr. José Martínez Cobo, Special Rapporteur on Discrimination against Indigenous Populations:

Indigenous populations are composed of the existing descendants of the peoples who inhabited the present territory of a country wholly or partially at the time when persons of a different culture or ethnic origin arrived there from other parts of the world, overcame them, by conquest, settlement or other means, reduced them to a non-dominant or colonial condition; who today live more in conformity with their particular social, economic and cultural customs and traditions than with the institutions of the country of which they now form part, under a state structure which incorporates mainly national,

social and cultural characteristics of other segments of the population which are predominant.

This definition has some limitations which were subsequently noted by the organization. The definition applies mainly to pre-colonial populations, and would likely exclude other isolated or marginal societies. In 1983 the WGIP enlarged this definition (FICN. 41Sub.211983121 Add. para. 3 79) to include the following criteria:

-) (a) they are the descendants of groups, which were in the territory at the time when other groups of different cultures or ethnic origin arrived there;*
-) (b) precisely because of their isolation from other segments of the country's population they have almost preserved intact the customs and traditions of their ancestors which are similar to those characterised as indigenous;*
-) (c) they are, even if only formally, placed under a state structure which incorporates national, social and cultural characteristics alien to their own.*

In 1986 it was further added that any individual who identified himself or herself as indigenous and was accepted by the group or the community as one of its members was to be regarded as an indigenous person (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1986/7/Add.4. para.381).

The draft *Universal Declaration on the Rights of the Indigenous Peoples* prepared by the DWIG does not provide a specific definition of indigenous peoples or populations. According to the Chairperson, Ms. Erica Irene Daes, Rapporteur of the Working Group, this was because "historically, indigenous peoples have suffered, from definitions imposed by others" (E/CN.4/Stib.2/AC.4/1995/3, page 3).

A definition as used by the **International Labour Organisation** (Convention No. 169, concerning the working rights of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, 1989) applies to:

both tribal peoples whose social, cultural and economic conditions distinguish them from other sections of the national community and whose status is regulated wholly or partially by their own customs or traditions or by special laws or regulations, and to peoples who are regarded as indigenous on

account of their descent from the populations which inhabit the country at the time of conquest or colonisation.

A description of Indigenous Peoples given by the **World Bank** (operational directive 4.20, 1991) reads as follows:

Indigenous Peoples can be identified in particular geographical areas by the presence in varying degrees of the following characteristics: a) close attachment to ancestral territories and to the natural resources in these areas; b) self-identification and identification by others as members of a distinct cultural group; c) an indigenous language, often different from the national language; d) presence of customary social and political institutions; and e) primarily subsistence-oriented production.

(b) Classical Antiquity

Greek sources of the Classical period acknowledge the prior existence of indigenous people(s), whom they referred to as "Pelasgians." These peoples inhabited lands surrounding the Aegean Sea before the subsequent migrations of the Hellenic ancestors claimed by these authors. The disposition and precise identity of this former group is elusive, and sources such as Homer, Hesiod and Herodotus give varying, partially mythological accounts. However, it is clear that cultures existed whose indigenous characteristics were distinguished by the subsequent Hellenic cultures (and distinct from non-Greek speaking "foreigners", termed "barbarians" by the historical Greeks).

(c) European Expansion and Colonialism

The rapid and extensive spread of the various European powers from the early 15th Century onwards had a profound impact upon many of the indigenous cultures with whom they came into contact. The exploratory and colonial ventures in the Americas, Africa, Asia and the Pacific often resulted in territorial and cultural conflict, and the intentional or unintentional displacement and devastation of the indigenous populations.

(d) Characteristics of Indigenous Peoples: Overview

(i) Population and Distribution

Indigenous societies range from those who have been significantly exposed to the colonizing or expansionary activities of other societies (example: the Maya peoples of Mesoamerica) through to those who as yet remain in comparative isolation from any external influence (example: the Sentinelese and Jarawa of the Andaman Islands).

Precise estimates for the total population of the world's indigenous peoples are very difficult to compile, given the difficulties in identification and the variances and inadequacies of available census data. Recent source estimates range from 300 million to 350 million as of the start of the 21st century. This would equate to just under 6% of the total world population. This includes at least 5000 distinct peoples in over 72 countries.

Contemporary distinct indigenous groups survive in populations ranging from only a few dozen to hundreds of thousands or more. Many indigenous populations have undergone a dramatic decline and even extinction, and remain threatened in many parts of the world. In other cases, indigenous populations are undergoing a recovery or expansion in numbers.

Certain indigenous societies persist even though they may no longer inhabit their "traditional" lands, owing to migration, relocation, forced resettlement or having been supplanted by other cultural groups.

(ii) Common Characteristics

Characteristics common across many indigenous groups include present or historical reliance upon subsistence-based production (based on pastoral, agricultural and/or hunting and gathering techniques), and a predominantly non-urbanized society. Indigenous societies may be either essentially settled in a given location or exhibit a nomadic lifestyle across a large territory. Indigenous societies are found in every inhabited climate zone and continent.

(iii) Common Concerns

Indigenous peoples confront a diverse range of issues and concerns associated with their status and interaction with other cultural groups, and changes in their inhabited environment. These challenges may be either specific to particular groups, or are commonly experienced by many such groups.

These issues include cultural and linguistic preservation, land rights, ownership and exploitation of natural resources, political determination and autonomy, environmental degradation and incursion, poverty, health, and discrimination.

The interaction between indigenous and non-indigenous societies throughout history has been a complex one, ranging from outright conflict and subjugation to some degree of mutual benefit and cultural transfer. A particular aspect of anthropological study involves investigation into the ramifications of what is termed *first contact*, the study of what occurs when two cultures first encounter one another. The situation can be further confused when there is a complicated or contested history of migration and population of a given region, which can give rise to disputes about primacy and ownership of the land and resources.

(e) Indigenous People in Asia

Indigenous populations are distributed in regions throughout the globe. The numbers, conditions and experiences of indigenous groups may vary widely within a given region.

The vast regions of Asia contain the majority of the world's present-day indigenous populations, about 70% according to IGWIA figures.

The most substantial populations are in India, which constitutionally recognises a range of "Scheduled Tribes" within its borders. These various peoples (collectively referred to as Adivasis, or tribal peoples) number about 68 million (1991 census figures, approximately 8% of the total national population). (retrived from

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/indigenous_peoples#characteristics_of_indigenous_peoples:_overview)

B. Briefing of Magar People in Nepal

Nepal, a small country with full of diversities in every aspects, is landlocked which is situated on the northern slope of mid-Himalayas with two third of land occupied by hills and mountains; it is a land of multiple cultural diversity and multiple ethnic groups which has a long complex and diverse history and the social and cultural life of people has unique features.

Magar is one of the many ancient indigenous nationalities of Nepal. It is one of the bravest of the brave community. Magar is an ethnic group of Nepal and northern India whose homeland extends from the western and southern edges of the Dhaulagiri section of the high Himalayas range south to the prominent Mahabharat foothill range and eastward into the Gandaki basin.

Large numbers of Magars live in Palpa, Tanahun, Myagdi, Pyuthan and Rolpa. They are also found in Arghakhanchi, Syangja, Parbat, Baglung, Dolpa, Surkhet, Sindhuli and Udayapur. Their ancestral land is known as Magarat. Researchers opine that the Sen Kings and Thakuris of the Magarat districts are also Magars. These facts make the Magars as one of the most pervasive ethnic groups of Nepal (Thapa, 2006:1). According to Nepal's 2001 census, 1,622,421 people identified themselves as belonging to the Magar ethnolinguistic group, representing 7.14% of Nepal's population. Magar is largest among the indigenous ethnic groups and nationally third largest group after Chhetri (15.80%), and Bahun (12.74%). The population of Magar has increased by 21.1%; from 1,339,308 in 1991 census to 1,622,421 in 2001 census.

Many years ago, Magar entered Nepal from different directions and in different time periods and at that time, there were no settlements so Magars are the people who firstly settled here (the statement does not have solid proof) (Phimala, 2059BS:18).

Late king Jayasthiti Malla sub-divided those who were not included in the existing castes on the basis of occupation what they followed. Late king Surendra Vir Vikram

Shah Dev, in 1910 B.S., has classified the castes as Tagadhori, Matwali, Pani nachalne chhoichhito halnu napanne and Pani nachalne chhoichhito halnu parne. (Thapa, 2006:1)

The Magar Raja, by name Mukunda Sena, a brave and powerful monarch, having heard of this, came to Nepal from the west with a large number of mounted troops, and subdued Hari Deva, the son of Rama Sinha Deva. His strong Magar appearance, his not wearing the thread, and his eating and drinking freely with the real Magars, all tend to prove him to be what he almost invariably claims to be, viz., a real Magar. Since the conquest of Nepal, Magars are to be found anywhere from the Sarda in the west, to the Michi on the east, but their proper habitat is west of the Nepal Valley, and there undoubtedly the best and purest Magars are found to this day in large numbers. (www.magarstudiescenter.org/selected_readings-thegurkhas.htm)

Magars, in their primary days, used to do works in mines and agricultural lands but after the stoppage of mine works, agriculture and foreign labor are the chief sources of income. They were heavily deported to the foreign lands after the permission given by Rana rulers for opening the Gorkha Bharti Kendra and that affected the community adversely. (Phimala, 2059BS:19)

The Kham Magar who live in the rugged highlands of Rukum, Salyan, Rolpa and Pyuthan districts in Rapti Zone are thought to have migrated south from Siberia because of certain shamanistic practices and other cultural features. They claim to occupy the original Magar homeland in Nepal from where migration to the south and east proceeded.

In addition to shamanistic practices possibly brought from Siberia, the northern Magar practice Tibetan Buddhism in which their priest is known as Bhusal. The social process of Sanskritization has drawn southern Magar populations to develop a syncretic form of Hinduism that combines animist and Buddhist rituals. Hindu Magar villagers recognize three classes of priest; Rama, Jaisi and Dhami.

Generally speaking, Buddhist and Hindu practices are best developed among Magars living in contact with Tibetan Buddhists and Indo-Aryan Hindus respectively. They

are less evident in Kham hinterlands particularly in rugged 3-4,000 meter ranges along the boundary between Rukum and Pyuthan-Rolpa districts. These hinterlands are geographically and therefore culturally isolated from the beaten tracks of transhimalayan trade routes and from rice-growing lowlands colonized by Hindu Indo-Aryans. (en.wikipedia.org)

More than three hundreds years ago, there were Magar kings and their kingdoms. At that time, many small states run by Magar rulers, namely, Bhumi, Dhor, Bhirkot, Jatahun(?), Garahun etc., were in Magarat, the ancestral land of Magars, and there, in the whole region, were only Magar states so they were called “Bahra Magarat”. (Shrestha, 2043BS:47)

Magars of the community settled by Bahra Magar kings at *Parakot (Sapta Gandaki)* region were later called “*Bahrpanthi Magars*”. At that time, there were many states of Magar kings, namely, *Parkot, Gorkha, Tanahun, Rishing, Palpa, Pyuthan, Makawanpur, Nishibhuji* etc. Even though there are no details of the Magar kingdoms and Magar kings, it can be perceived that there were many states run by Magar kings. (Thapa, 2047BS:47)

Magars of Nepal speak three different Magar languages- 1) *Magar Dhut Bhasa* - which is spoken in *Gulmi, Myagdi, Palpa, Baglung* etc, 2) *Kham Bhasa* - which is spoken in the Mid Western region like *Rolpa, Rukum, Salyan* etc, 3) *Kaike* - which is spoken in few *Wadas*, politically subdivisions of VDC, of *Dolpa* district only. The latter are a branch of the Magar tribe, and totally neglect the rules of Hindu purity. (www.magarstudiescenter.org /pastevents.htm)

Most of the youngest people are not interested to involve in income generating activities, they spend, most of their times in playing, singing and dancing for merry making. They are also interested for various games and join the British or Indian army because of having good physical fitness and in greed of handsome amount of salary. (Sarankoti, 2001:66)

The Magars are one of the oldest known tribes of Nepal, but their origin is not yet known. Traditionally, the Magars were Animists, but due to the influence of the *Brahmin* Hindus over time, the Magars have been hinduised to one degree or another. The vast majority of Magars has little or no concept of who God is and has never even heard the name of Jesus. (1040window.org /nepalprayerguide/day8.htm)

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Nepal is a country of multiculture, multiethnicity, multi-linguistic and pluralism and diversity is an unique feature of Nepal; it is a naturally beautiful country and people are very friendly, co-operative and honest but unfortunately, it is one of the poorest countries in the world, and the data given by the National Living Standard Survey 2060/61(BS) that is 30.85 percent population are below the poverty line. People are starving and they cannot even fulfill their bare necessities, in this case, they do not have option to stay in their village so they want to be deported to some foreign countries or from rural areas to urban areas where they can earn some money by selling their cheap labor. After the globalization, most of the domestic industries have been collapsed by international big companies like big sharks. Many I/NGOs and GOs have been trying to improve the quality of life of people who are under the poverty line. But the same people are benefited who have access to authority and are normally educated so uneducated always remains isolated.

Nepal is a country where the majority of people mainly depend on agriculture, an agrarian country. 18 percent of the total land is suitable for agriculture but it is not the answer to the low productivity. There are different factors to which farmer's productivity depends. These are fertility of land, farming system, irrigation facility, and different kinds of healthy chemicals, but all these things are inaccessible to the poor people in terms of knowledge and physical objects and the fact is that poor people are the people who do farming; not the rich and educated people. Those farmers do not know how the natural disasters occur, how chemicals ruin their lands in the long run, how the commercial farming is done, and again, they cannot afford the sophisticated technology for the transformation in farming technology; even if there were, nobody could handle it and government seems to be heedless about the importance of the investment in agriculture. Furthermore, the population growth, 2.25

is the growth rate in 2001 (CBS, 2001), is also a menace or threat, which always impedes on development, to Nepal. The pressure on per unit land is increasing day by day, it not all because of high population growth rate.

Magars are the people who suffer the most among all the ethnic groups of Nepal because all factors described above, which are not really in the favor of Magar people; they are farmers, they are illiterate, they do not have access to authority, their lands are impoverished because of different kinds of erosions, namely, air and water erosion, but they hardly know the reasons behind their low production, they have no idea about the side-effects of different chemicals. There are still many things which they do not understand but for farming, these things should be understood. They, Magars, simply just cannot relate the cause and effect relationship; that is because they are illiterate/uneducated. For transforming the technology they have been using, there is a need of a big bulk of money, which can only be invested by government but the government side is really busy on taking therapy for overcoming the paralysis.

Magars are primarily farmers and they have been practicing it for over many years. They are becoming poor and poor day by day because they are losing their land's productivity and they could not be able to find out reasons behind it; simply cannot relate the effects with its causes. Eventually, they got frustrated because they cannot earn just a bare necessity by doing farming after paying so much time and labor and becomes psychologically depressed which leads them to make an end to their traditional profession and queue on a line to get visa to foreign lands.

Most of the people in Birendranagar VDC trifle away their precious time gambling and drinking because they do not have works to do; they are free. They are busy only in a peak season; otherwise, they have to spend their time just gambling. Most of the young people of this VDC are dropped out from schools or they left it willingly. They again recycle, here, the vicious circle of the poverty. Although government has efforts on the improvement of the living standard of these people, not much change can be seen.

Being of indigenous nature, they are far more behind than people of other groups and they are among those poor people who reside on rural areas so they are poor in terms of every facility that are provided to deprived groups.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to understand social-cum-economic status of the Magar community in the Birendranagar VDC of Chitwan districts. The specific objectives are as follows:

- To understand the historical background of Magar people.
- To recognize the peculiarities of Magars' culture and traditions of the study area.
- To examine why they are lagged behind while comparing with other ethnic groups (socially and economically).

1.4 Rationale of the Study

As the study focuses on the socio-economic status of an indigenous group of Nepal, it certainly helps to reveal some more real facts of Magar people in the study area. One of the Sarankoti's research reports, which has been done in Madhyawalia VDC, entails

“The average life of Magar begins with the problem of survival and ends with the same. Majority of them inhabit far below the subsistence level and their level of poverty is not comparable with the other ethnic groups. Although the government has launched several specific programs to eliminate poverty but it is rather unsuccessful due to several factors as lack of proper supervision, monitoring and evaluation.”

The same nature of poverty is predominant in the Birendranagar VDC; majority of them are below the subsistence level. There is no study done of this study's nature, which covers the socio-economic arena of whole societal components. Therefore, the findings of the study will be a contribution to the concerned authorities and policy

makers to understand the real situation of the Magar community in the study area and simultaneously, it helps to impart the knowledge about the community to all seekers.

The study entails different variables, namely, family size, education, awareness in terms of education and health for figuring out the social status and the nature of jobs, income level, landholdings for economic status to analyze the backwardness of the Magar community.

Furthermore, it is essential to introduce in a broad spectrum to prove the cultural diversity of Nepal. Apropos, the community will be the resourceful study site for sociologists and anthropologists, which help them to widen the scope of sociological and anthropological scope subsequently.

1.5 Limitation of the Study

Every research has its own limitation and this research is also not an exception and hence incorporates the following limitations.

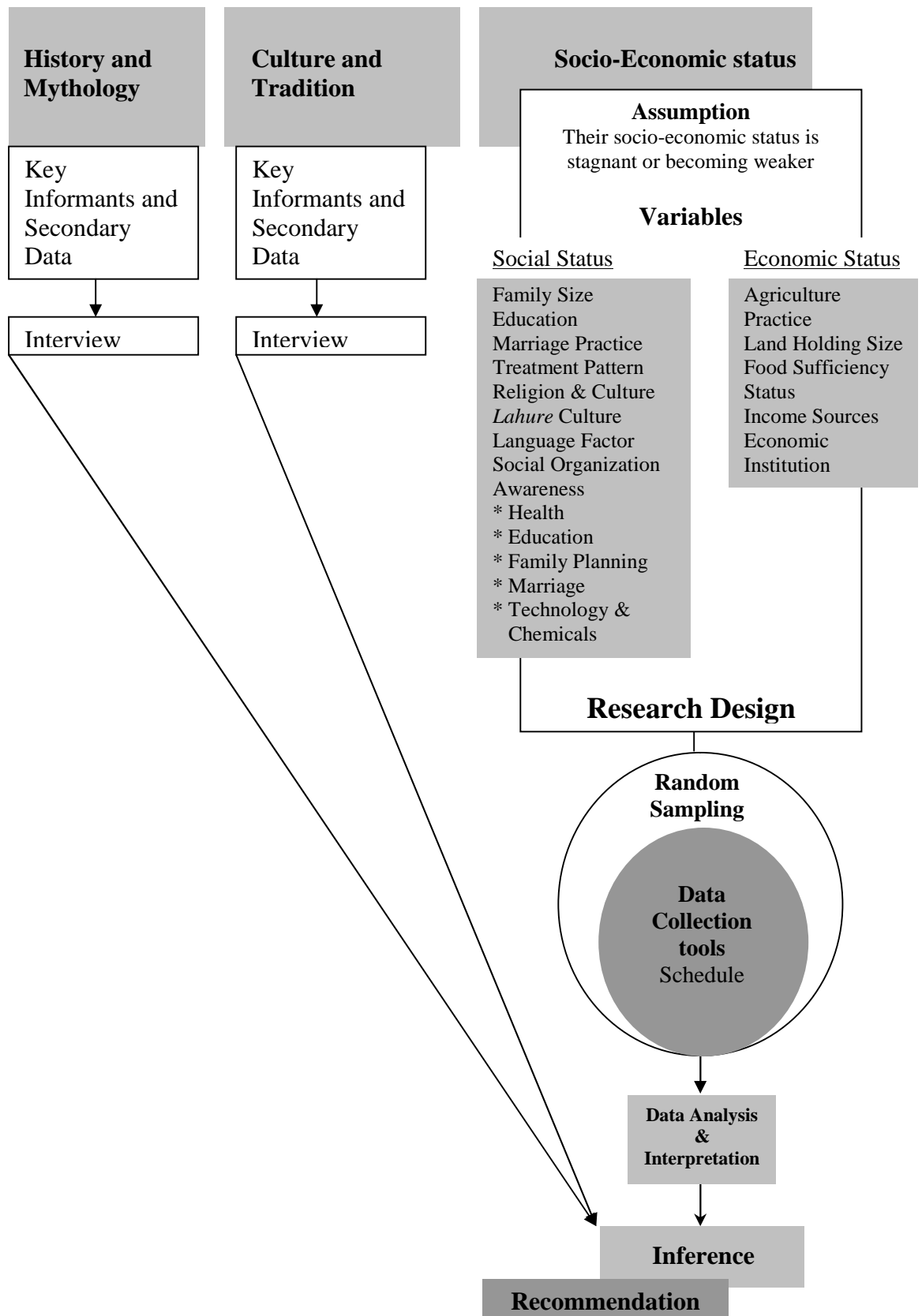
- The research was conducted only in three wards out of nine wards and hence the result of the research cannot be generalized for others, i.e. it will be rather indicative than conclusive.
- The respondents for the culture of the Magar community of the research were only those learned people, who were knowledgeable in terms of culture, and that was only for the purpose of cross validation; culture of the community were taken from a reliable source.
- Consulted thesis works might not be accurate or of sound findings because respondents may have partiality or, as a whole, not be a good research.
- The community of study area is of, especially, Pun Magar's so the research completely holds the culture and socio-economic status of Pun Magar community and cannot be generalized to the whole Magar community.
- As the term "culture" holds a vast scope, the definition of the "culture" for this research work is those rites and rituals which have been practicing for their ancestral years and simple life ceremonies and festivals.

- “Historical background” means the historical background of the Magar people in Nepal.

1.6 Framework for the Study

In accordance with the set three objectives, different variables were selected to draw out inference, i.e. the socio-economic status of the community. The measurement of the objectives with the help of variables was done in the form of questionnaire survey, observation and unformatted interview and the inference was concluded through the analysis of the collected data and relevant recommendations were given.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for the Research



Chapter-Two

LITERATURE REVIEW

“Indigenous” means someone or something born or produced naturally in a land or region, and another meaning to this term is someone or something which is native or belonging naturally to (the soil, region, etc.); the term is primarily used of aboriginal inhabitants or natural products (Murray et al., 1989:867).

Of total inhabited communities, there are 59 groups belong to indigenous/ethnic communities. Again, 59 indigenous/ethnic groups comprise of minor populated groups like Bankariya, Kusunda, Chhierotan, Kushabadiya, Raote, Surel and groups having more than million populations, for example, Magar, Tharu, Tamang, etc. Majority of indigenous people and ethnic groups are weak economically, socially, educationally, and politically. Moreover, these groups are deprived of various types of facilities. The gap in their level of development is still very significant. (National Planning Commission, 2002:570)

The Magars are found in areas to the south and west of the Gurungs, in Palpa district and adjoining areas to the west of Kathmandu valley. They were among the first Nepalese to come into contact with immigrants from India. Magarkura is the language of many of the Magars. They are skilled craftsmen, bridge-builders and blacksmiths. They manufacture bamboo panniers, baskets, and mats. (Hedrick and Hedrick, 1972:94)

‘Status’ will be used to denote ‘the rights, duties, privileges, and social worth (value) accorded to a particular role’ (Keesing, 1976:568).

The prehistory and the early history of Nepal are largely unknown. “The ancient history of the Nepaulians, like that of all other nations which affect to trace their origin beyond the date of authentic records, is clouded by mythological fables”¹. The state of Magars cannot be different (Thapa Magar, ??:1)

¹ Colonel Kirkpatrick, *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepaul*, J. Jetley, (First Published 1811), 1996, p. 255

Michael Witzel mentions "Magars were apparently known already to the Mahabharata as *Maga*, to the Puranas under the name of *Mangara*, and in a Nepalese copper plate inscription of 1100/1 A.D. as *Mangvara*."² Even in the heartland of the speakers of Western Nepali (the-*gad* area) indicate a Magar settlement that must have extended much more towards the west before the immigration of the Nepali speaking Khasa/Khas in the Middle Ages.³ These details go together with the presumption that an original population, probably of Tibeto-Burman ethnicity, lived in Nepal some 2500 years ago.⁴ From the linguistic point of view, there are three types of Magars living in Nepal. Kaike Magars living in Dolpa district who speak Kaike; Kham Magars who live in Atharha Magarat region and speak Kham; and the Magars who live in Bahra Magarat and speak Dhut Magar dialects. Many foreign anthropologists and sociologists have accomplished their studies or written books on all these three types of Magars. Therefore, it is imperative that we also look at them accordingly (Thapa Magar, ??:2-3).

M.S. Thapa Magar is of the opinion that Magars came from East Pamir of China.⁵ Likewise, many writers advocate Magars "have no legends of origin from another place." Most Magars think that they have occupied and used their land for centuries; have changed the very shape of the mountain upon which they live with their terraces; have worn footpaths connecting farmsteads deep into the soil and those stone resting platforms for wayfarers under the great roots of the banyan trees planted long ago to provide shade enclose. They feel they belong where they are, "and indeed they do", for the people fit the land and the land fits them. And not only do the people live on their land as they feel they always have, but their many 'godlings' that control life and the resources upon which life is based are at home there also and must be treated with regular sacrifices of food⁶.

² Witzel, Michael, "Nepalese Hydronomy," Harvard University, July 12, 1991, p. 18
http://nipforum.org/nepalese_hydronomy.pdf.

³ Ibid, p. 17

⁴ <http://reference.allrefer.com/country-guide-study/nepal/ancient-nepal/>

⁵ Thapa Magar, M..S., *Prachin Magar ra Akkha Lipi*, Publisher Shrimati Durgadevi Thapa Magar, Brijj Prakashan,(First Publication 2049, Second Publication 2059), p. 3

⁶ George and Louise Spindler, in John T. Hitchcock, *The Magars of Banyan Hill*; Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966, Foreword, pp. vii-viii

The origins of Kaike Magars end up with the mystical tales told and retold by local people. According to one of these stories, Kaike Magars were the sons of a woman who had fled from an unspecified village of Kalyal kingdom. She subsequently gave birth to her child, a son. The boy, when he grew up, captured an angel while she was bathing with her friends. As time went by, the son and his angel bride had three sons. These sons were the ancestors of Budha, Rokaya, and Gharti clan. The origin of the fourth major clan is different. One of the three sons was a shepherd who kept losing the same female goat every day, so one day he followed her when she wandered away from the rest of the herd. He discovered that she was giving her milk to a baby boy living in the hollow part of a bamboo tree. He brought the baby home. This boy grew up and became the ancestor of the Jhankri clan⁷ (Thapa Magar, ??:3).

There is yet another myth about the Magars. According to this, the first Magar was the youngest of four brothers. The eldest worshipped Kalika and became the ancestor of the Thakuris and the youngest sacrificed a pig to Bhairabi and hence became a Magar⁸ (Thapa Magar, ??:4).

Vansittart is of the view that "the aboriginal stock of Nepal is most undoubtedly Mongolian. This fact is inscribed in very plain characters, in their faces, forms, and languages."⁹ He is also of the opinion that "the principal seat of the Magars was most of the central and lower parts of the mountains between the Jhingrak (Rapti of Gorakhpur) and Marsiangdi Rivers. That they resided about Palpa from time immemorial is well known."¹⁰

For Gary, the Magars were a Mongolian people who had migrated into Nepal in the predawn of history. Many of the other ethnic groups had legends that told how they had come to Nepal from Tibet or some other places, but not the Magars, for them, at least, history simply began and ended in Nepal.¹¹ Nevertheless, who were the real Magars—the original ones? Gary found that most likely it was the Magar community

⁷ Fisher, James F. , *Trans-Himalayan Traders: Economy, Society, & Culture in Northwest Nepal*, Motilal Banarasisass Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, India, Reprint 1997, pp. 2-3

⁸ Christoph von Furer-Haimendorf, "Chetri caste of Nepal", in Christoph von Furer-Haimendorf, (Ed), *Caste & Kin in Nepal, India & Ceylon*, Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1978, p. 17

⁹ Vansittart, Eden, *The Gurkhas*, (based upon the 'Notes on Nepal', 1895 AD and 'Notes on Gurkhas' 1890 AD), Anmol Publications, New Delhi, Re-print 1993, p. 6

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 81

¹¹ Shepherd, Gary, op.cit., p.11

which was to be found in Central Nepal in Palpa, Syangja and Tanahu district¹² (Thapa Magar, ??:2-3).

Hitchcock is of the view that “the tribe seems to have been part of a very ancient influx of Mongoloid, Tibeto-Burman speaking peoples into Nepal, probably from the north and east. It also seems probable, in view of differences between its northern and southern halves, that the tribe represents two different streams of migration.”¹³ He finds differences “especially on each side of a line that divides their homeland roughly into northern and southern halves. The Magar tribe is split into a number of sub tribes. In the southern half of the region, the sub tribes that predominate almost to the exclusion of any others are the Ale, Rana, Thapa, and Burathoki...Magars in the northern half of the area belong to a different groups of sub tribes, Bura, Gharti, Pun, and Rokha”¹⁴ (Thapa Magar, ??:5).

Sub-clans of the Pun Magars found within the Parvat and Myagdi districts, sub-clans written in *Kirat Bansha ra Magar haru ek etihasic Sharwrekshan* by Dr. Harsha Bahadur Buda Magar are: Armaja, Orpajangi, Ulunge, Kathi, Kaude, Khoraja, Gore, Garbuja, Chochangi, Chitaure, Chhochangi, Jagale, Jankati, Jugjali, Tajali, Tage, Tirkhe, Tilija, Tengi, Bhakale, Thani, Dagal, Daga, Darlami, Dudh, Natha, Namjali, Pangi, Pajansi, Pahare, Paija, Pare, Pun, Purja, Perali, Paingi, Phakami, Phiriyal, Phungalo, Bapal, Barangi, Balami, Bata, Bakas Koti, Birkali, Buduja, Baijani, Ratuwa, Rantija, Ramkam, Ramja, Ramjali, Righu, Ruha, Lamichhane, Sabangi, Sai, Saime, Same, Sijali, Sijapati, Surjebansi, Sutpahare, Sumitra, Serpuja, Soshree, Hunali, Hulungi, Hojali, Holangi. (Yeju, 2057:11)

There is a general trend of migration from west to east because the land in the west is old and overcrowded. In addition, many Magar men are skilled craftsmen in masonry, carpentry, building, stonecutting, quarrying, et cetera, and they tend to migrate in search of employment. As evidence of this, there are several sizeable Magar villages in the eastern hill areas near copper mines and slate quarries. (Bista, 1967:58)

¹² Ibid, pp.11-12

¹³ Hitchcock, op.cit., p.4

¹⁴ Ibid, p.4

The Magars are considered to be the true portrait of the Gurkha warriors, never turning back and always ready to protect the nation by taking the enemy head on. (Gautam and Thapa-Magar, 1994:39)

They spent their major sources of earnings on the feast and unproductive activities. There is no trade or industry to improve their economic condition. (Rijal, 2003:72) Most of the Magar people are lack of higher education and they are not trained with any vocational guidance. (Rijal, 2003:72)

There is high density of population in relation to arable land; however, the literacy is very low. (Ghimire, 2003:80) The nature of climate, source of water, resource availability, tool and technology, knowledge, labor system and socio-cultural value of the community have played crucial role in shaping their occupation. (Ghimire, 2003:80)

“Bheja”, an informal institution of volunteering, is especially found in Magar communities of western Nepal. (Kunwar, 2061:284) People from other groups of a dominant Magar community can also be an invited member of the “Bheja” but for this kind of members, the roles in the institution are limited; they cannot be the “Mukhiya”, the head of the institution. (Kunwar, 2061:285)

“Parma” system, a system where labor is exchanged because of the shortage of laborers especially in a peak season of farming, is very popular among Magar communities and those people who participate in “Parma” are called “Bhejeri” or “Hora”. “Bheja” makes Parma groups and mobilize them. (Kunwar, 2061:286)

A large part of Prithvi Narayan Shah’s fighting forces consisted of Magars and many are today found serving in the British Gurkhas as well as in the regular Indian army. Along with Rais, Limbus and Magars, the Gurungs also have a tradition of seeking employment in the armed forces in India and the British army. (www.suryatravel.com/people.htm)

Traditionally, Magars are farmers and stonemasons but they also serve as soldiers in Gurkha regiments and in the Nepalese army. (www.homestead.com/rshrestha/General1.html)

The agricultural economy of the Magars is largely self-sufficient. Besides many varieties of vegetables and fruits, they grow the standard food grains: maize, millet, and wheat in the dry terraced fields surrounding the villages along the higher mountain sides, and rice in the wet fields down the slopes and along the river valleys. (Bista, 1967:58)

Most of the Magars are craftsman, though some Magars, who have their own land, take up agriculture, some work as *Miher*, some as basket weaver or painter, wine keeping, engraving design of flowers by round slender bamboo pens and manufacturing Nepali paper. (Shrestha and Singh, 1987:104)

The basis of Magar economy in all areas is agriculture. Some also work as craftsmen, either as carpenters or stonecutters. However, the copper mines in the east have closed with the importation of less expensive copper sheeting from India. And were it not for their role in the Gurkha regiments of the Indian and British armies, their self-sufficiency might be endangered. Magars constitute the largest number of Gurkha soldiers outside Nepal. Every Magar village has a number of Gurkhas on active duty in India and Malaysia remitting regular money to their families, as well as retired soldiers drawing pensions from various military sources. Quite a number of Magar Gurkhas have attained the ranks of commanding officers, as Colonels and Majors, in Indian and British regiments as well as in the Royal Nepal Army. They are renowned for their honesty, discipline, and good humour, which account for their military success. (Bista, 1967:58)

The Magars of Banyan hill are subsistence farmer and buck of their food comes from maize, millet, wheat, and barely. They grow rice in irrigated lands. (Hitchcock, 1965:15)

Almost all Magar carry on sedentary agriculture with emphasis on millet, maize, and rice in irrigated land. They have strong influence of Hinduism. Their house language in Tibeto-Burman dialect is called *Magarkura*. (Hitchcock, 1965:2)

Magar people's houses are built according to the style of the areas they live in, a standard which varies from one locale to the next. Most traditional is the two-storey stone house with thatch or in some cases slate roofing. Many of the smaller houses in the western communities are round or oval in shape and washed with ochre or reddish mud. Magar houses in the eastern hills are never round and are most often white washed. They have stone walls, wooden single roofs, and are two-storied with a verandah along the front. (Bista, 1967:59)

Adapting new ideas like formation of forest management committee, saving and credit co-operatives, consumer groups for various development tasks, awareness of education, rise in the level of material life, food sufficiency, performance of small size family etc. also reflect their keenness in relative survival through changing time. (Ghimire, 2003:81)

Nepal has traditionally been dominated by Brahmins and Chhetris and the language and culture projected from the center have been those of the Hindu populations of the hill and Kathmandu valley regions. Those hill peoples who speak Tibeto-Burman languages (Rai, Limbu, Tamang, Magar, Gurung, and others) have been underrepresented in government, while the Terai populations in the south, mainly Hindus and Hindi-speakers, have also felt themselves to be poorly served in terms of the distribution of public resources (Minority Rights Group, 1997:572).

The traditional knowledge and skill based professions and employment oriented programs have benefited specially to youth, both male and female, as well as women. The public awareness was raised in the highly backward indigenous people and ethnic groups in the fields of education, health, legal matter, sanitation and environment, culture, women awareness and ethnic group identification. The course books in the ethnic languages/dialects of Bantawa Rai, Kulung Rai, Limbu, Tharu, Tamang, Baramu, Magar, and Gurung were written and informal classes were run using those books. Dictionary in the languages of ethnic groups like Bantawa Rai, Gurung,

Magar, Yakkha, Sherpa, Dura, Majhi and Sunuwar is under preparation. (National Planning Commission, 2002:571)

Over the period of the Ninth Plan, under the institutional arrangement, Indigenous People/Ethnic Group Uplift National Academy was established; however, the committees on indigenous people/ethnic group in all the 75 districts of the country could not be formed as targeted (National Planning Commission, 2002:571).

Under the human development program, the students of the indigenous people and ethnic group, who studied in the higher education with technical as well as non-technical subjects, were encouraged by providing scholarship/stipend. (National Planning Commission, 2002:571)

The long term vision is to boost up indigenous people and ethnic groups and achieve their all-round development in the areas of economic growth, education, social and cultural upliftment by maintaining ethnic diversity and mainstreaming them into national development on the basis of equality. (National Planning Commission, 2002:572)

Marriage usually takes place at very early age in various religious groups like Muslim and Hindus. Various studies have shown that increase in age for marriage helps to reduce the fertility. In the context of Nepal too, this statement is equally applicable, i.e. age of marriage and fertility has inverse relationship (Ghimire, 2003:9).

Higher fertility level is occurred who got married at the age (15-19) years and low fertility is occurred who got married at the age over 20 years. So, age for marriage should be increased at least up to 20 years to reduce fertility level in the study area. (Ghimire, 2003:47)

Family Health Survey (1996:98) showed a deep relationship between education and fertility.

Education plays a vital role for determining fertility level. While considering the education of the respondents, 12 percent were literate and 88 percent were illiterate that resulted the high fertility. So, level of education of the wife and husband,

especially the age of reproduction for women should be increased to reduce fertility level. (Ghimire, 2003:46)

Nepalese society does not allow the sexual union of unmarried people. Therefore, marriage is the most essential event in our society. Conception before marriage is not accepted. Family formation is started after marriage on the one hand and on the other hand, religious beliefs and practices in Nepal provoke individuals to marry early. Thus, marriage plays a vital role for determining fertility level. Higher the age at marriage is directly related to the low fertility of an individual as well as in the social level. (Acharya, 1993:74)

Occupation plays a vital role for increasing or decreasing fertility (Ghimire, 2003, p. 47). Due to maximum involvement in agriculture with low education level, labor value increased and that tended to high fertility. (Ghimire, 2003:47)

The Magar society practices and accepts polygamy one after another or simultaneously. A woman can marry with multiple husbands but at different times. It seems that there is no social barrier for such practices. Nevertheless, many married men and women, especially young girls and boys, might change their spouses. (Sharma, 1997:65)

A man can marry another woman, if he dislikes his first wife and keeps more than one wife. But if a woman dislikes her first husband, she elopes with another man. Her previous husband cannot compel to live with him rather he can claim a compensation of the expenditure he made while marrying her from her new husband. This cost paid by a man to his wife's ex-husband is called '*Jarry*'. Such practice is in existence even today. The cost of '*Jarry*' may comprise cash, ornaments and clothing. (Sharma, 1997:65)

Though the Magar caste does not strictly oppose the exogamy but elder persons even now have the conservative caste barrier rules. (Sharma, 1997:69)

Parents usually arrange the marriages. The parents of groom propose the hand of a bride to her parents. Magars follow clan exogamy or matrilineal cross-cousin

marriage—prescribed marriage. Wedding ceremonies usually takes place at bride's house. Mostly the engagements are solemnized before the weddings. Sometimes the girl may elope with the boy without the consent of parents or the boy may *abduct* or *capture* the girl and take her to his home. Such marriages are also acknowledged and recognized later on after the accomplishment of some rituals. In such situations, the groom brings a *Theki* --gift of food and drinks to the bride's family for *Dhogbhet* – recognition and formalization of the marriage. If the wife happens to be already married to another person, then the new husband must pay *Jari* – compensation to the former husband. The amount of *Jari* was usually set as Rupees sixty and Rupees thirty for *Sari* wife - a woman remarrying for the third time. If a *Sari* wife runs away, the husband cannot claim any compensation.¹⁵ However, such practices have now been obsolete and usually these cases end up in the courts (Thapa Magar, ??:8-9).

Kham Magar women are difficult to describe in the collective. They are widows, they are wives, they are weavers, and they are spinners. They are hard workers who weed the summer corn ten to twelve hours a day in June. They are married women who are not afraid to express their opinion in discussions with the men. They are the wives of soldiers who manage the family estate for years at a time until their husbands' return with a pension from the army. They are mothers carrying their babies in their workbaskets as they walk to distant fields. They are small girls in velvet, Nepali-style shirts with silver bangles on their ankles to protect them from evil spirits. They are teenage girls selling liquor at a fair with their friends to earn money for a new blouse.

Looked at in a general way, the prestige and power accorded to women in *Kham Magar* society varies from sphere to sphere, and even within each sphere there are different degrees of prestige and power depending upon the particular role under consideration. In the legal sphere, *Kham Magar* women are denied rights in land and family property, yet economically they are accorded a position of authority in the household that is complementary to men. Within one aspects of the ideological sphere, women are highly valued as potential child bearers and as bridges who cement the social ties between their own and their husband's lineage. Within a different

¹⁵ Hitchcock, op.cit., pp.35-41

aspect of the same sphere, they are feared as witches and are restricted from conducting household and community rituals.

Moving from the general to the particular, we see that individual women assume very different roles and are accorded very different prestige depending upon their life stage, their age, the economic stratum of their household, the presence or absence of males in the household and whether or not they are married. A woman's roles and activities also depend upon the family structure, or the residence pattern of her domestic group. Some widows control lineage property during their lifetime and make important decisions regarding the use of that property independent of men. Some women whose husbands marry polygamously return to live in their natal lineage and assume a position that is subordinate to their brother and his wife. Other polygamously married wives live as co-wives in the same household and share household tasks and decisions. Some widows remain in their husband's house with married sons after their husband's death and retain authority as female household head until their death. Others go to live with their married daughters and leave decision-making to other household members. Some women engage in considerable entrepreneurial activities and remain largely independent of their lineage kin, while others depend solely upon income from their husband's land. Thus, in every context considerable variation is possible, depending upon a woman's circumstances. All of these variations affect individual women differently. (Molnar, 1980:3-4)

Divorce is traditionally accepted among the Magar ethnic groups, although social opinion is against it. Every Magar family would wish the stability of conjugal family. As a norm, divorce is both socially and legally accepted. But their divorce process is informal as they do not go to the court. (Sharma, 1997:71)

A Magar woman, who remarried, can enjoy the same social privileges in Magar society. (Sharma, 1997:73)

Majority of people having achieved school education is in decreasing order from younger to older generation. (Sharma, 1997:104)

Shrestha and Singh (1987:105) noted that by nature Magar are jolly and they enjoy the music, singing, and dancing. They have different kinds of dance, namely, Singaru and Pasari dance. The Singaru dance looks like the peacock dance.

There are five major clan groups of Kham Magar: Buda, Gharti, Roka, Pun, and Jhankri. These clans are made up of a number of named sub-groups, each with their own myth of origin. Some of these myths relate the movement of these groups into particular valleys. A number of these myths describe that semi-nomadic movement of herders settled in their present location. (Gautam and Thapa-Magar, 1994:39)

It can be said that the Magars are a people who are socially placed in the category of the *Pani Chalnae Jat* meaning those above the water pollution level, yet not awarded a specific place in the Hindu hierarchy. (Gautam and Thapa-Magar, 1994:39)

Many Pun Magars come from the borders of Tibet and indeed there is little doubt that some of these are as much Tibetan as Nepalese. The tribe known as Thakalis, who carry on a great deal of the Salt trade with Tibet, are in close contact with the Puns and resemble them so closely that for many years they have supplied the Gurkha Brigade with numerous excellent recruits under the borrowed name of Pun. (Gibbs, 1947:19)

Magars' modes of social life and cultural values have been highly influenced by Hindu religious faiths and beliefs. Most of them speak Nepali as their mother language and use dress in Nepali ways. They use Brahman astrologers or the Pandits to perform their religious and cultural rites and rituals. They follow Hindu religion and its various dogmas. (Budhathoki, 2002:115)

Mangars or Magars had their own language and culture. *Dhami* was their religious priest. (Chemjong, 1967:77)

It was this Kirat King Bali Hang who introduced the festival of Dipavali. (Chemjong, 1967:77)

Dr. O.P. Gurung (1996) analyses relationship between natural sources management and local institutions and ritual practices of Tarami Magars have the communal worship of land, forest and water resources. They control and regulate these natural resources through the local institution like Sathari and various ritual practices like Matribhumi Puja, Pitri Puja et cetera. These rituals explicitly intended for religious purposes operate to lessen and restrict the impact on natural resources. (Budhathoki, 2002:13-14)

The Magars have little land on account of inequality and size of distribution of land. Agriculture is main occupation so they are very poor and poor people are mostly illiterate because they have no sufficient income to expend on education. They are unemployed because of the insufficient land for farming and they cannot do outside works because they lack skill due to the lack of education. (Sarankoti, 2001:65-66)

The Magar people are today organized into a countrywide network which has succeeded, to an extent, in assimilating all the Magars into a social organization which was initially established in Kathmandu district in 1985 as the Nepal Langhali Sangh, but later on, it was transformed into the Nepal Magar Association in 1993. (Gautam and Thapa-Magar, 1994:40)

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter primarily discusses on the research methods used for the whole study. Prime focus of this section is to entail the ground of the selection of the study site, research design, nature and sources of data, universe and sample selection, data collection techniques (i.e. questionnaire survey, key information interview, observation, secondary information) and data analysis procedure.

3.1 Research Design

The study entails explorative and explanatory research designs. The explorative design helped mainly to explore the history, culture and sub-castes of Magar of the study area and the explanatory research design assisted to explain the relationship among different variables for their stagnant state.

3.2 Rationale of the Selection of the Study Area

The study explicitly dealt with Magar's community of the study area. The population had its unique culture and traditions and furthermore, it had its own history of existence. Study as a whole Magars has been done very frequently but the Pun Magar's own culture and traditions have been never addressed. There were no superfluous resources, though, available; the study might help to assist further investigations.

3.3 Sources of Data Collection

This study aimed to study the culture and socio-economic status of the Magar people of the study area and tried to explore the factors behind the poor condition of the Magar people in the study area. Thus, primary data were collected through household questionnaire survey. Secondary data also used for the study, which were collected from different publications. Besides this, secondary data were used in other part of studies from different unpublished and published written documents from individuals, experts, and organization.

3.4 Sampling Procedure

The universe of the study was the whole population of the Pun Magars of the study area, Birendranagar VDC of Chitwan district. Out of 9 *wadas*, Pun Magars could be found in five Wadas, i.e. 2, 3, 5, 8, and 9 and 5, 8, and 9 were selected. From these Wadas, 50 households were sampled with random sampling; 15 households from the ward number 9, 20 households from the ward number 8, and 15 households from the ward number 5. For the culture part, key informants were selected with purposive sampling for the purpose of cross validation to the secondary data found. The history has been taken from some secondary data.

3.5 Data Collection Tools and Techniques

For the generation of primary data, questionnaire survey and key informant interview were applied. Parts of the data collected are of primary nature, which are especially for the determination of the socio-economic status of the study area, and for obtaining the data, different sorts of tools were used.

3.5.1 Questionnaire Survey

For this questionnaire survey, schedules were used which has generated the primary data for the analysis of socio-economic status of the study area.

3.5.2 Key Informant Interview

Key informant interview has been done using unformatted interview method to glean information about the cultural background of the Magar people of the study area and again, in order to cross validate the data collected through secondary data. The key informants were old people and learned ones in terms of Magar's culture and tradition in the study area.

3.6 Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data collected via different techniques and tools were, firstly, processed or edited with verification and the conclusions were drawn out after much verification/analysis. For the analysis, different kinds simple statistical tools were used as required. Different topics were discussed under different headings and for the causes of Magars' stagnant condition, as earlier mentioned, different variables were correlated to understand the major reasons.

Chapter-Four

THE STUDY AREA

4.1. A short Profile of Chitwan District

Chitwan is bordered on the west by Nawalparasi and Tanahun districts, on the east by Makawanpur and Parsa districts, on the north by Dhading and Tanahun districts, and on the south by Bihar (India). This district covers an area of 3219,454 hectares, and is divided into one municipality and 38 Village Development Committees. The district headquarters is Bharatpur.

The district is largely made up of Inner Terai hemmed in between Siwalik in the south and Mahabharat in the north. The elevation ranges from 224 to 1,945 meters. Inner Terai Plain is characterized by tropical climate while the hills surrounding it have sub-tropical climate. The temperature varies from an average minimum of 16.6°C in the winter to an average maximum of 30.3°C in the summer. The average annual rainfall is 1,512.3 ml.

The Narayani River is the main river of the district. Its tributaries originate from across the Himalayas. The other rivers are Lothar, Manahari, Rapti, and Khageri. The Bhimle, Dewi, Khageri, Munda, Mujura, Nanda Bhauju, Tamar, and Tami are the major ponds located at the different parts of the district.

Of the total land area 25.2 percent (55,279 ha) is agricultural land, 21.3 percent (46,814 ha) is under cultivation, 3.9 percent (8,465 ha) is non-cultivated land, 4.7 percent (10,417 ha) is grassland, 64.9 percent (142,422 ha) is forest, and the remaining 5.2 percent (11,336 ha) is covered by sand, gravel, boulder, and water bodies. The area under cultivation is higher than the national average while the per capita land holding of 0.13 ha is lower than the national average. Nearly 64 percent of the total irrigable land has been under irrigation by 1991.

Rice, maize, millet, wheat and barely are the main food crops; potato, sugarcane and oil seeds are major cash crops in the district. The district has annual food surplus of 24,515 metric tons.

According to the population census of 1991, the total population of the district is 354,488, of which 49.6 percent (175,656) are male and 50.4 percent (178,832) are female. The total number of households is 65,147; the average family size is 5.4. The population density is 159.8 per sq. km. of the total land, and is 574 per sq. km. of the agricultural land.

The majority of the population is Brahmin (29.6 percent) followed by Tharu (12.8 percent), Chhetri (10.5 percent), Tamang (7.1 percent), Gurung (6.9 percent), Newar (5.8 percent), Kami (5.0 percent), Chepang (4.2 percent), Magar (4.1 percent), Damai (2.3 percent) and other (11.7 percent).

The district has six campuses, 295 schools (47 secondary, 71 lower secondary and 292 primaries) and 18 libraries. The total number of school teachers is 2,211 of which 35.9 percent (793) are trained. The total number of school-age children (6-15 years) is 94,048; 97.9 percent are enrolled in school. Boys' enrollment is 103.0 percent while girls' enrollment is 92.2 percent. The enrollment of boys is more than actual school age population which may be due to the enrollment from adjacent districts and enrollment of students above 15 years of age. The teacher to student ratio for secondary school is 1:47, 1:44 for lower secondary, and 1:0 for primary. The literacy rate is 52.9 percent (65.4 percent male and 40.8 percent female).

The district has two hospitals with 137 beds, 11 doctors and 32 nurses. In addition, the district has nine health posts, 12 health assistants and 20 auxiliary health workers. There are 358 people accepting permanent family planning devices in the district. Temporary family planning methods users number 3,534. The population per hospital bed is 2,588 and per health worker is 4,727. Only 18 percent of the people are served by piped drinking water.

More than 75 percent (75.8 percent) people are engaged in agriculture. Less than 25 percent of the people are production laborers, sales workers, and professional/technical workers, clerical and service workers. There are 37 establishment (employing ten or more than ten persons) in the manufacturing sector employing 2,554 persons and contributing 96,115 thousand rupees to the value added

in the district. In addition to this, there are 1,498 small and cottage industries with a total investment of Rs. 155.2 million which employ 5,516 persons.

The district is well connected by motor roads. There are 272 km. of motor road, of which 114 km. are blacktopped, 85 km. are gravelled and 73 km. are earthen. Air service is available in two places, and airports are located at Bharatpur and Meghauli. The district has 29 post offices, (one district, seven Illaka and 21 VDC). Six post offices provide money order service. There are 2,155 telephone lines and six theatres or cinema halls in the district.

The main market centers are Narayanghat, Bharatpur, Ratnanagar, Munglin, Rampur, Bhandara, Parsa and Sitanagar.

The main export items of the district are rice, maize, oilseed and timber (Himalayan Institute of Development, 1994:467-468).

4.2 A short Description of the Study Area: Birendranagar VDC

Birendranagar VDC is located about 18 kilometers east of Narayanghat, the center market place of Chitwan district. Birendranagar VDC is bordered on the west by Chainpur VDC and Khairahani VDC, on the east by Korak VDC and Bhandara VDC, on the north by Siddhi VDC, and on the south by Khairahani VDC and Bhandara VDC.

History behind the incoming of Pun Magars in this area, this information is gleaned through oral basis. During this research, my father told me about the story behind the incoming of Pun Magars in this area. At that time, King Mahendra wanted to protect the Terai border areas from the robbers who used to come from the Indian side so the areas to the north of the Rapti river was always threatened by the menace of robbery. After the built-up of his palace in this area, now called Chitawan district, he needed protection from the robbers so then, all the ex-armies were called to shift there from other hill areas in the name called 'Bhutpurva Sainik Punarbas Company'. All the ex-armies were given lands and

they were settled on the north side of the Rapti river so that if any attacks were done by robbers, there would be ex-armies who could use weapons easily.

Later on, they were shifted from the place to this area, now called Birendranagar VDC, and they were divided into nine (9) groups, which are still alive. They were given lands but there were no measurement or demarcation of how much land who owns and later on, in 2021 BS on the petition of the villagers through Deu Maya Pun, a delegation leader of that time, to the King Mahendra, the demarcation and the allocation of the land was completed. Behind this handing over of the petition to the king Mahendra, a story is alive in the mouth of many villagers, i.e. at that time, handing over of a petition to the king was a very impossible-like job but if the petition was read by the king, that meant the petition would be executed. Deu Maya Pun, a delegation leader of the villagers, wrote a petition to the king Mahendra after getting information about the hunting tour of the king to the area. King's body guards and other people near king never let a chance to get near to the king so she, Due Maya Pun, hid herself into the jungle and waited for a chance and when the king got off from his vehicle or carriage or elephant, she made her appearance immediately coming out from the jungle and she gave her petition to the king laying her body down to the earth horizontally and putting her head down. Then, king Mahendra read the petition and executed the petition.

Then, the 9 groups were merged into a Panchayat and named Birendranagar Panchayat. The first Pradhan Pancha of the Birendranagar Panchayat was Prem Bahadur Rana Magar. The same Panchayat named Birendranagar Village Development Committee after the restoration of Democracy.

4.2.1 Climate

The climate of the VDC is cool in winter and hot in summer. The area receive precipitation mainly during monsoon (July-Sep/Oct) with little shower during Nov/Dec. The average annual rainfall is 1,512.3 ml.

4.2.2 Population

The total population of Birendranagar VDC is 13,270 (CBS 2001). Among them, 6,376 are male and 6,894 are female. With a total 2,541 households, the population density is 159.8 per sq. km. of the total land, and is 574 per sq. km. of the agricultural land.

4.2.3 Education and Literacy Rate

There are two kinds of educational institutions – private and governmental institutions. Easy access to the education but due to the low quality of education in governmental institutions, those people, who can afford, migrate from the rural areas to the urban centre for only the same purpose, i.e., better education of their children. The literacy rate* of the Birendranagar VDC is 74% among them male literacy is 83% (4590) and female literacy is 65% (4010) respectively. (*Those who can read and write and those who can only read are also included; people of more than 6 years are counted)

4.2.4 Occupation

Around 84 percent people still depend on agriculture and 16 percent are in non-agricultural business. Total household number, who involve in agriculture are 2541; among them, those who hold only agricultural land are 359 and 1205, those who hold agricultural land and also involve in poultry farming are 26, those who do agriculture-cum-bird farming are 690, those who only do animal husbandry are 56, those who only do poultry farming are 11, those who only do bird farming are 22, and those who do nothing are 172. The household numbers, who do not involve in agro-business, are 492. Among them, those who are engaged in production are 32, those who are engaged in business are 146, those who involve in transportation are 11, those who involve in service are 225, and rest of them is engaged in other activities.

4.2.5 Health

The scenario of the VDC is different than before there are no more easy health facilities especially in remote areas, which is far away from the main highway. The network of roads is not so well-developed between urban centre to the periphery; but not inaccessible. After the Maoist insurgency, the infrastructure of remote are slowed down and some of infrastructures have been collapsed. Except in the case of emergency, the health facilities in this VDC are accessible but the supply of sufficient medicines and well equipment are rudimentary. People equally prefer hospital treatment and local faith healers' treatment, i.e. Jhakris, which depends upon the nature of diseases.

4.2.6 Land Use

Birendranagar VDC is situated in the Terai belt of Nepal. It is a plain where the dominant activity is agriculture. In the wards, 2, 3, and 4, are very much engaged in vegetable farming and other VDCs are also primarily engaged in rice and maize farming – some do it for their domestic purpose and some of them do for commercial propose. The remarkable activities done in this VDC are the application the concept of community forestry, which has changed the deforested rural geo-physique to greenery, and the rural electrification, which makes the life of this village much easier.

4.2.7 Infrastructure

Comparing with other VDCs of Nepal, this VDC is much more facilitated in terms of road networks, though not black-topped, access to medical facilities, access to transportation, access to market place, access to media, electricity facility, educational facilities, et cetera. But the facilities are of low quality; medical practices hard to recognize by WHO; distances are not short in case of emergency; besides highway, all the roads which networks the rural areas are not provided with public transportation means (which, maybe, because of the scattered settlement style); bicycles are the dominant means to access villages, otherwise walking. Telephone facilities are available in city areas but not in rural areas and water facilities and waste

management facilities are not well managed. Overall study area cannot be said very poor but it is still poor.

4.2.8 Caste and Ethnicity

This VDC entails different castes and ethnicities and are composing the taxonomy of a different flower. As the Divya Upadesh of King Prithivi Narayan Shah, this VDC also contains different castes; Bahun, Chhetri, Magar, Gurung, Dalit, Tharu, Chepang et cetera.

Table 1: Caste/Ethnic Group Distribution of Birendranagar VDC

Caste	Population	Percent	Caste	Population	Percent
Bahun	4394	33.11	Chepang	83	0.625
Tharu	378	2.84	Magar	1771	13.34
Chhetri	1260	9.49	Kumal	9	0.067
Dalit*	1330	10.02	Darai	33	0.248
Tamang	2088	15.73	Sanyasi	212	1.59
Gurung	882	6.64	Muslim	37	0.278
Newar	519	3.91	Others**	274	2.064
Total				13270	

Source: Oxfam-Nepal and RSP-Nepal, 2004:14

* Kami, D mai, Sakri, Gaine, Ch mar, Mus h r, Dusadh/Pas wan, Dhobi, Badi, Chidimar, H lkhori, unrevealed castes.

** Gh rti/Bhujel, Rai, Th kuri, Bote, Sherpa, Sonar, Bahun Tarai, Baniya, Teli, K l war, Kanu, Majhi, Yad v, D nuwar, Kurmi, Dura, Th kali, H jam, Marwadi, Kayesth , Koiri, Rajput, Limbu, Kumhar, Sunuwar, M llah , Bhote, Südi, Dhimal, Dhanuk, Nura , Badhe, B gali, Nuniya, Rajbh r, Thami, H luwa , Br hm/B ramu, Mali, Lohar, Chh ntyal, K mar, G n ga , Rajbashi, Kusunda, Raute, Kew t, unrevealed castes.

4.2.9 Remarkable Changes in the Study Area

One of the successful stories of the VDC is the concept of community forestry. The researcher also originally belongs to the study area and he can still feel the deforested hills of the '3 group', a place of Birendranagar VDC, which is located at the ward

nimber 5. After the implication of the concept of community forest, the concept has been really helpful to check the deforestation and now, we can see the result with green flags swinging in air. Out of three, which are Kalika Community Forest, Bagdevi Community Forest, and Dudhkoshi Community Forest, some of them expands upto other VDCs but, in general, the steps has been very fruitful to the near willagers, who are predominantly farmers.

The perfect picture of the imagination of rural electrification can be photographed in this VDC. Accessible electricity means a lot comparing with the other rural areas of Nepal. It is hard to imagine that people of rural areas can have the access to so many facilities; household with no TV set is rare.



HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

5.1 Origin of Magar Tribe

The origin of Mangar tribe as mentioned in Kirat chronology is a place in the north called Shin. From there a group of people under the leadership of two leaders came to the south. The names of the leaders were Shing Mangar and Chitu Mangar. The people of the southern country called them Tangsang Thapa which means the people came from the far away north. Later on these Mangar tribes multiplied and were divided into 12 groups under twelve leaders and called themselves Barah Mangars.

The names of the twelve Mangars were Shinjali¹⁶ Thapa, Hongjali Thapa, Hungchun Thapa, Chhodey Thapa, Pudkey Thapa, Munday Thapa, Udhro Thapa, Bairong Thapa, Ishar Thapa, Barahi Thapa, Hangyung Thapa and Hangshe Thapa¹⁷.

When they came to Sikkim they settled there permanently. They built Jongs or forts or castles, wherever they settled and called them Mangar Jong, or the fort of Mangars or the castles of Mangars.

Pandit Sarat Chandra Das proves the existence of Mangars in Sikkim and Eastern Nepal.

“The legend which he heard of the Mangar tribe, and the ruins of their forts and towns in the valley of Kangbachhan river in the east Nepal is very interesting; people said that the account is correct and true.

“The upper valley of the Kangbachhan river was occupied by people of Tibetan stock and the lower valley was occupied by the Mangar tribe whose king was called Sintu Sati Shen. The Mangar king attacked the Tibetan people and ruled over them. He extracted a heavy tax from them.

¹⁶ The Limbus of Shinjali Thapa clan and Mangars of Shinjali Thapa clan claim to be the children of the same forefather, Limbu MSS.

¹⁷ MSS. Subedar Budhiraj Limbu's Collection, 1930 A.D.

“His Deputies always oppressed the people to squeeze out money from them, so the Tibetan people started to conspire against the Mangar king. One day when the Mangar chief had gone to visit the Tibetan village with many followers, they were surrounded and killed by the Bhutias. When the Mangar queen heard this sad news of her husband, she planned to take revenge on the Bhutia subject.

“She, therefore, ordered for a grand funeral observance for the honour and benefit of the departed soul. The funeral was appointed to take place six miles up river, midway between the two great villages of the Kangbachhan valley, so that all the villagers might assemble there.

After the queen’s followers had finished drinking, poisoned wine was given plentifully to the Bhutia villagers, who suspecting nothing, drank freely and all died. In this way nearly one thousand men and women died. The infants in arms were taken away by the queen’s followers. The place where this foul deed was committed was now called ‘Tongsong phug’ or the place which witnessed one thousand corpses. In consequence of this, a Tibetan army invaded several Jongs belonging to the Mangar queen. She had no preparation to fight the enemy, so she shut herself in one of her castles or Jongs, and her soldiers defended the castle for three months.

“The Tibetan soldiers then tried to compel the Mangars to surrender by depriving them of water. At last the queen aware of this intention threw all the water she had in store towards the camp. The Tibetan soldiers thinking that she had abundance of water inside the castle raised the sieze and went to a distance to watch the movement of the Mangar people. She immediately collected her soldiers and pursued the enemy. When a skirmish took place, she fell fighting nobly¹⁸. The rest of Mangars left their place of Kangbachhan valley and migrated towards South west direction and reached as far as Simang Garh situated about six miles east of present Birgange of Central Nepal. When their number multiplied they were divided into two groups under the leadership of Phalemi Khan and Yomchhammi Khan and spread towards eastern and western directions¹⁹. Phalemi Khan led his horde towards west Nepal and settled in Palpa. Yomchhami Khan returned to Limbuwan in the east and settled in Shanpur or

¹⁸ Vansitart, Eden, op.cit., p. 83

¹⁹ Phago Rai Limbu’s vansawali possessed by Subedar Budhiraj Limbu of Sinjali Thapa clan.

Chainpur and intermingled with Limbu nationals and became Limbus of Sinjali Thapa, Rana, Aley and Pun clans. Those who settled in Palpa of west Nepal were divided into Thapa, Aley, Pun, Burathoki, Rana, Gharti, Bohra, Roka, Chaohan, Konwar, Uchari, and Roho tribes and called themselves Magar, instead of the original name Mangar.

In the east Nepal and Sikkim the Mangars are so called because they were the children of Mang or Mong or Mongol people. The Chinese and Burmese people call Mang or Mong for Mongolians; and ar or arui means children. So Mangar means the children of Mongols. Most probably it can be correct interpretation, because their complexion proves that they are no other than scattered Mongolians although, before the 12th century A.D. there was no tribe in Central Asia called the Mongolians. There were many nomadic tribes called Kin, Kir, Kirait, Karakhitai, Khitai, Uigur or Hor, Manchu, Mongku, Tungut, Seljuk, Karluk, Turk, Burun, Sak, Kushan, Hun, Abar, Uichi, Kajak, Chin, Khas, Thak, Gyarung and Mangyak²⁰. They were all nomads except China. They used to live in tents and had no permanent habitat. Frequent antagonism and plundering among themselves was their main object. There was no such name Mongol in the world upto 12th century A.D.

It was only in the 12th century A.D., when Chengiz Khan called a meeting of all the above mentioned tribes, and when all the tribes also unanimously elected him to be their Gurkhan or the Khan of Khans or the king of kings, he proposed that a common name for all the separate tribes of Central Asia should be Mongol, then all the tribes unanimously agreed and from that time only, the people of central Asia began to call themselves Mongol. Chengiz Khan himself belonged to Mong Ki tribe and Chinese people used to call them Mong ku tata²¹. A branch of this race settled in Hungary in Europe and called themselves Magiar tribe²².

It appears that, long before the adoption of such name of Mongol in Asia, a brach of Manchu and Tungut migrated to Korea and Japan and made their permanent home there. Similarly, a brach of Kirait, Uigur, and Mongku tribes also spread towards

²⁰ The Mangyaks are the Limbus of Chhotharia clan who had also migrated from Mongolia.

²¹ Madhya Asia ka Itihas by Pandit R. Sankrityayan P.

²² Rev. Fr, Dounald's version.

Suchuwang or Kham, Unan, Burma, East India and Nepal. They did neither hear the name Mongol nor do they claim it to be their origin.

It is therefore, the Mangar tribe of Nepal must be from the composite group of Kirait, and Mongku, who came to Sikkim and became Mangar. There are certain lapcha tribes called Mongormu. It appears that some of the Mangar tribes might have mixed with Lapcha tribe of Sikkim and became a Lapcha Kirat people who brought sweet potatoes introduced by Mangar tribe.

There is another proof of the affinity of the Mangar and Lapcha tribe in counting number. The Mangar tribe counts one, two, three, four, five as kat, net or nis, sam, buli, banga and the Lapcha tribe says kat, net, sam, fail, fungu. These are the evidences of the residence of Mangar Kirat people in Sikkim. Not only that, but the Mangar chiefs were so active in Sikkim that they kept fighting with Sikkimese chiefs upto 18th century A.D. Sikkim history mentions that the Sikkimese chiefs tried their best to bring the Mangar chief under their power by keeping matrimonial connection with them. Chhangzat Karwang, the chief minister of Sikkim married the daughter of one of the Mangar chiefs of Sikkim and wanted to keep friendly relation with them, but the Mangars were never influenced by the Buddhist kings and ministers of Sikkim. When the Mangar chief of Sikkim understood that nothing could be expected from the Buddhist king of Sikkim they totally neglected the Sikkimese relation and the Sikkimese also dropped all the records of Mangar people from the history of Sikkim. Still there are many places in Sikkim and East Nepal called Mangar jong or the fort of Mangar tribe.

One the contrary, the Mangars of west Nepal prospered so much so that they formed a league of twelve Khans and established a state and called it Barah Mangrat, the central government of which was at Bhirkot. Khan means king in the Mangar language. Now, I write the word Magar as pronounced by Nepalese.

According to Brian Hodgson and Captain T. Smith, the league of Twelve Mangars were consisted of Satahung, Payahung, Bhirkot, Dhor, Garahung, Rising, Ghiring, Gulmi, Argha, Khanchi, Musikot and Isma²³.

Each of these twelve districts had its own Khan or king, though they had agreed by common consent to regard the Khan of Bhirkot as their Overlord.

But in the later period this system of government was ceased as the kings of Palpa, Rising, Ghiring, and Rajarkot calimed independence kings with the title of Shan Hang. Thus they were broken into two prominent Kings of Khan dynasty and Shan dynasty. They had their own language and culture. Dhami was their religious priest. Long before the coming of the Hindu influence into their kingdoms, there was a Kirat King called Balihang, who had an extensive kingdom from Pokhara to Gorakhpur and the Magars had spread from the hilly regin to the Terai region²⁴. The Mundhum mentions that it was this Kirat king Bali Hang who introduced the festival of Dipawali. The translation of the Mundhum runs as follows:

“In the ancient time the Kirat king Bali Hang of west Nepal had become very famous for his extra-ordinary knowledge of foretelling about one’s life and death²⁵. He was loved by all his chiefs and their subjects of that time. But when he himself came to know about his own time of death, he held a meeting of the chiefs and told them that at the coming dark night of the new moon of Mungshir or the last part of the month of October of that year, the god of death would come and take away his life. He told them that there would be no any possible way to escape from that dreadful night. The Kirat chiefs requested him to direct them any scheme to retain his life from that dreadful night and that they would obey him and try their best to carry out his order to save his life. Bali Hang told them that there is only one way by which if the god of death would be pleased, he may retain his life. The way is that, he added, “before the coming of that night of the new moon of that Mungsir, all the chiefs and their subjects should take bath, remain pure in the body and mind and light thousands and thousands of lights both inside and outside their houses and when the night falls all of them

²³ Vansitart, Eden, op.cit., p.84.

²⁴ Account of the Kingdom of Nepal by Hamilton, p, 171.

²⁵ Bali Hang Mundhum – Kirat MSS.

should keep on praying to god for the increase of king Bali Hang's day and save him from that dreadful night. They should not sleep that night, but keep on praying and watching the arrival of the god of death who would appear in the midst of light in the shape of the shadow of a man. As soon as people would see such sight of the shadow of a man in the midst of light, all people including men and women, old and young, and boys and girls should fold their hands and pray to him with sincere faith and with one voice for the increase of king Bali Hang's day and save him from that dreadful night. If the god of death would be pleased to hear their prayer as well as their subjects' sincere devotion and prayer for king Bali Hang's life, he may increase his life and save him from that dreadful night. If not he said that his days are completed and he would be bound to go."

When the chiefs heard this scheme, they became very much pleased and immediately circulated this scheme to all their subjects and ordered them to observe the dark night of that coming new moon of that Mungsir by keeping their body and soul pure and fast with prayer sincerely for the sake of king Bali Hang's safety. When the time of that new moon of that Mungsir came, all people including men and women, old and young, boys and girls and all the chiefs took bath and when the evening started, they lit the lights both inside and outside their houses and began to fast and pray to god for the sake of king Bali Hang's safety. King Bali Hang was hopelessly lying down in the middle of his chiefs and all the people outside and inside the palace and all people were praying very sincerely for their king. That time, just after the mid-night all of a sudden, the god of death appeared in the middle of light and in the shape of the shadow of a man. All people saw it and all of them cried out with one voice of prayer and with sincere faith and requested him to increase the day of their king Bali Hang. They wept and cried before him saying that if king Bali Hang would die, the earth would be in chaos of darkness and the people would be in great confusion. All of them requested the god of death with sincere mind to increase the day of king Bali Hang and save him from that dreadful night. Seeing such profound love of the people towards their king Bali Hang, the god of death answered them and said that although he was not the owner of life and death of a person yet he would try to save him. As soon as he said this, the shadow disappeared and the king Bali Hang also breathed his last.

All the people kept on weeping and crying and praying the same prayer of increasing the day of king Bali Hang. Early in the morning, a little after the cock crow and when the dawn started, the king Bali Hang breathed again and revived. When he came to full sense, he looked towards his chiefs and started talking. He said, “By sincere fast and prayer of good faith of yours as well as that of your subjects I am saved.” He became very happy pleased with such devotion of his subjects towards him and therefore, he gave a big feast to his chiefs and his subjects. He ordered his chiefs to inform his subjects to observe one day as the day of rejoice for the best news of the revival of their king Bali Hang from his death. They should eat, drink and make merriment on that day. He further, ordered his subjects through his chiefs that, in remembrance of this event, every new moon of the month of Mungsir should be observed as their festival day every year. They should light lights and illuminate their houses both inside and outside and remember their king Bali Hang. His chiefs also began to regard Bali raja as their Priest-king. They composed a song and sang only in the annual festival of Dipawali with the chorus, “Phailo Dewsire”, which means, we helped the priest king, which later on became Bhailo and Dewsirey. Pha-i-lo=we have helped, Dewsi=priest, Rey=king.

From that time all the inhabitants of the Kirat country (modern Nepal) began to observe Dipawali in every new moon of the Mungsir or the last week of October every year which they call Tiwar. As a matter of fact that, even at present, every Nepali knows the above mentioned chorus, specially meant for that dark night of the new moon of Mungsir and remembers the name of Bali raja which is the translation of Bali Hang and says that he was ordered by Bali raja to observe such festival.” It is therefore, quite proper to say that, the festival of Dipawali of the month of Mungsir or the last week of the month of October is a real contribution of the Kirat king Balihang²⁶ or Bali raja to all the present Nepalese national.

As the time passed on, the Shan kings extended their Kingdom towards north and east of Palpa and the Khan Kings extended their kingdom towards north and east of Bhirkot.

²⁶ An account of the Kingdom of Nepal by Hamilton, p. 171.

When the Hindu missionaries began to spread Hinduism in the western Nepal, the Shan king of Palpa was the first of all converted into Hinduism and became a Hindu Rajput king and claimed his decent from Sen Family of India. His name was Chilla Rai. Similarly, when Hindu missionaries approached the chief of Bhirkot who was of Khan Family for conversion; he refused them and remained a pure Magar king. His name was Khan Chha Khan which means the king's son king. The Hindu missionaries then approached the second prince whose name was Mechha Khan or the youngest son king. The missionaries gave him hope that he would also be a king like his elder brother if he would accept Hinduism. So he consented them to convert him into Hinduism. Thus the second prince of Bhirkot also became a Hindu Rajput and his religious priests made him king of Nuwakot of Barah Mangrat. He was succeeded by Jaya Khan, Micha Khan, Bichitra Khan, Jagdeo Khan and Kulmandan Khan. From the time of this king he changed his family title from Khan to Shah, which carries the same meaning as king. The descendants of king Khanchha Khan of Bhirkot though refused to accept Hinduism and agreed to abide by their own tribal culture, yet he with all his subjects were so much influenced by Hinduism, that all the Magar tribes ceased to follow the teaching of their own tribal priest and followed the doctrine of Hindu priests in matter of birth, marriage and death ceremonies and those officials of the courts of Shan kings and Khan kings of Palpa and Bhirkot who could afford for conversion into Hinduism, became Hindu Rajputs and called themselves Kshatris. In this way the Magar kings and their officials were converted into Hindu civilization²⁷. Yet in the middle of 18th century A.D. king Prithivi Narayan Shah was very proud of calling himself the king of Magrat. He has said in his Ditya Updesh, "Mangrat ko Raja mai hung", I am the king of Mangrat²⁸. Lieut. Col., E. Vansitart has also mentioned in his book called Gurkhas, that, "the famous Prime Minister Bhimsen Thapa was the descendent of Magar Thapa family, as was also General Amar Singh Thapa"²⁹. It is a known fact that the late Great King Prithivi Narayan Shah of Gurkha State had extended his kingdom east and west by the strength of these Magar armies.

The Magars or Mangars are divided into twelve tribes called Thapa, Rana, Ale, Pun, Burathoki, Gharti, Bohra, Roka, Chaohan, Konwar, Uchai, and Jhakri and each tribe

²⁷ Hamilton's Account of the Kingdom of Nepal – 1819, p.240.

²⁸ Ditya Updesh – Prethiviko by Jogi Narhari, p. 13.

²⁹ Vansitart, Eden, op.cit., p.67.

is subdivided into many clans. Among them Thapa tribes are more in number. The Rana class of Magar tribes belonged to the same stock of Thapa; but when they were separated from their original group and lost for three generations, they settled in a place called Gurkha and called themselves by the name of Rana which means chief. Thus the habitat of Rana Magar became the Gurkha village. Later on the Khas people came from Kumaon and Garhwal and mixed with the Magars and became one with them till they were not converted into Hinduism.

Although all the Magars follow Hinduism yet the Pun Magars of Tibetan frontier are still in Buddhist religion and follow their tribal rites at their birth, marriage and death ceremonies.

Some of the Magar clans are as follows:

Thapa Magars

Baral, Balami, Baraghari sinjali and Bagale Thapa consists of Atghari, Satgahari, Palungi, Darlami, Punwar, Setu, Singe, Roshala, and Kala.

Gaha Thapa consists of Badchha, Chidi, Gora, Khan and Malangi.

Reshmi Thapa consists of Dangale, Gore and Thapa.

Saru Thapa consists of Jaurup, Japarluk Jhenri and Paneti, besides these, Gurbachan, Purbachhan, Tangbachhan, Simai, Pithakote, Singali, Uchai, Pulami, Marunchan Ramjali, Lamchhaney and Kalikotey.

Rana Magars

Assami, Arsami, Aslami, Bangling, Chumi, Charmi, Gharmi, Gyangmi, Kharka, Eypachaki, Lungeli, Makkim, Pali, Panti, Rilami, Ruchal, Chitorey are famous.

Pun Magars

Birkali, Baijali, Phungali Namjali, Balali, Tajali, Thakali, Sain, Sanangi, Sothi are famous.

Burathoki Magars

Balkoti, Deobal, Gamal, Karal, Ulange, Karmani, Pahari, Jujali, Pojonge, Thami, Ranju are famous.

Ale Magars

Argheli, Bili, Changi, Hiski, Hungchun, Lamjel, Limial, Roho, Rimal, Rakhal, Suyal, Sirpali, Sarangi are famous.

Gharti Magars

Baima, Banjali, Bulami, Dagami, Galami, Gamal, Kalikote, Masrangi, Pahari or Panre, Para, Phagami, Rangu, Rawal, Rijal, Same, Sawangi, Sene, Surai, Sinjapati, Talaji, There, Tirukia, Ulange and Wale (Chemjong, 1967:70-85).

5.2 A short Glimpse on the History of Pun Magars

The ancestors of Pun Magars were considered to be migrated from the east of Pamir to the north of the Indian along with other tribes. Though the sharp time of the migration cannot be found, historians consider it to be before 2,800 years ago.

After the migration to the Indian continent, Mongolians, who migrated from the east of the Pamir and Aryans, from the west of the Pamir, settled there and then introduced religion; nomadic life style seemed to be faded away. (About the religion, the writer of this article claimed Pun Magars to be Buddhist because he supposed that Pun Magars were Mongolians were Buddhist. But the researcher could not find enough supports to state it to be true.)

When they started to settle there with well managed settlements and then, initiated a religious or cultural war between different groups of people. After 9th century, around in 1200 AD, Muslims captured the northern part of India and many Buddhists convents and monasteries were destroyed and many monks and followers were slaughtered; many people changed their religion. That is the reason Pun Magars have still some remnants of Muslim religion, i.e. Pun Magars do not touch pigs and while worshipping their “Kul Deuta”, ox used to be sacrificed and Chamar, a bunch of cows’ tail, is still offered.

After the take-over of the Muslims in the north part of the India, Pun Magars migrated to Rudu Khola, Pakhapani et cetera of the west Nepal and scattered in Karnali and Gandaki basin of west Nepal and later on established there own states as 22 se 24 se rajyas.

At that time, king was selected through the free competitions where each candidate used to present there physical strength, wisdom, and skill via different games, such as running, jumping, breaking bull eye by arrows et cetera, and whoever would get the best remarks would be the king of that year. There were no ownership upon lands and people made a Goth, a small temporary hut-like structure made up of leaves and woods. They used to make utensils carving woods and they used to get metals from mines to make Hasiya, a kind of grass cutting tools, Khukuri, Spears, Ghunyatro and bows and arrows as their prime weapons.

For food, they usually went for hunting and they also used to collect wild vegetables, such as mushroom, wild fruits et cetera. They had domesticated animals which they used to keep in Goth and they used to shift the Goth in accordance with weather and climate. For clothing, they used to shift the Goth in accordance with weather and climate. For clothing, they used to weave themselves, namely, Gada, Lophyang et cetera. Up to that time, numbers and alphabets were discovered but those people of Pun Magar tribe were unaware of that.

And in 1910 BS, there was a constitution of the united Nepal and which started to dominate harshly the culture and tradition and even the language of other tribes, among them Pun Magar’s language was also a one. The constitution, forcefully,

compelled those tribes to change their religion and wanted them to speak in Khas Kura.

People of many tribes were forced to change their caste and made them wear Janai, a sacred thread of Hindu religion, forcefully. The ruler of that time made the caste discrimination prosperous. The caste discrimination is prevalent everywhere in Nepal. For example, out of five martyrs, one was saved just because he was a son of a Brahmin, Tanka Prasad Acharya, in 1996 BS.

Pun Magar of Magdi, Gulmi, Arghakhanchi and Baglung of west of Nepal were banned to speak in their own language, Khamkura, and if anybody offended it, he would be fined of Char Paisa. Whoever in Limbu community did not want to change their caste wearing Janai was fined of Dui Prasa. Privatizing the ownership of lands, owners were taxed in accordance with their caste.

For Newars, 'Chhipo Chhapo', for Sarkis 'Sujero' and all tribes and castes were taxed 1 Rupiya 13 Paisa. Due to that autocracy of then ruler, many tribes lost their own cultural and linguistic identity.

In 1800 BS, when Prithivi Narayan Shah got victory over 22 se 24 se rajyas, the troops destroyed all the records of the history of then kings of 22 se 24 se states so the history of then kings of 22 se 24 se states so the history of Pun Magar's is still missing (Yeju, 2057BS:12-15).

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

6.1 Social Status

6.1.1 Distribution of the Respondents by Sex and Age group

Respondents of the study area have been categorized taking age as an indicator and the groups cover the ages from below 20 to 70. The resulted groups, thus, are six, namely below 20 years, 20-30, 30-40, 40-50, 50-60, and 60-70. Though, the female respondents are less in number and show a kind of biasness; the researcher is conscious about this fact, it is not the truth which seems to be; it is rather females themselves put the name of their husbands instead and sometimes, they were not willing to take this interview because of hesitation, maybe.

The following table illustrates more information about the respondents by sex and age groups.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Sex and Age Group

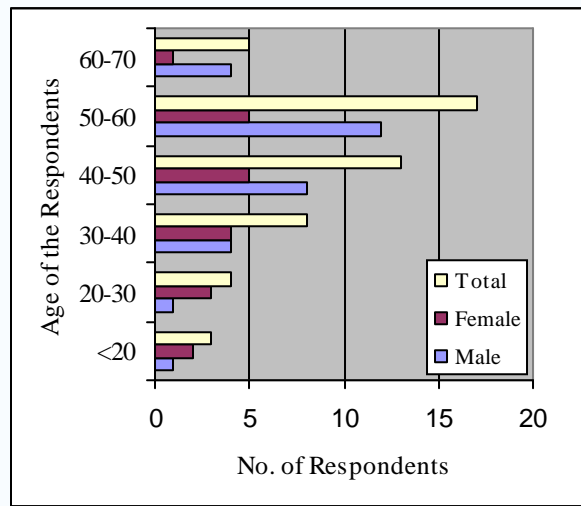
Age	Sex		Total	Percent
	Male	Female		
<20	1	2	3	6
20-30	1	3	4	8
30-40	4	4	8	16
40-50	8	5	13	26
50-60	12	5	17	34
60-70	4	1	5	10
Total	30	20	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006

Analyzing the distribution of the respondents, people of the below 20 years were the least (6%) in terms of the number of respondents when the highest number (34%) of respondents of the age group 50-60 was because of the absence of young people in the

villages, who were out for earnings in the big cities or in the foreign lands (50% of the total respondents's households). According to the responses, most of the people were farmers; although sometimes that was not sufficient for them not because the low fertility but, of course, because of the rain which sometimes did not pour down on time, and they had been depending on agriculture for their livings since they resided this area from Parbat.

Figure 2: **Distribution of the Respondents by Sex and Age Group**



Based on: Table 2

6.1.2 Analysis for the Determination of the Social Status

This heading entails all variables decided before to measure the social status of the Magar community and that is, mainly, the awareness level of the Magar people in the study area in terms of different aspects. Awareness is the main factor, as the researcher assumed, to flow development in because awareness eases the implementation of the project; for the most important point, it initializes the concept of development through own family for own family.

As the Keesing wrote in 1976, 'Status' would be used to denote 'the rights, duties, privileges, and social worth (value) accorded to a particular role' and it is the appropriate time to envisage the accurate result through this concept. Putting the barrels of guns on the back of people will not work any more, people, therefore, must realize the values of the factors to which the policy makers always suggest to be the

key factors to development and the awareness brings the realization which makes them capable to relate things accurately; people, then, become self-driven.

Figure 3: **Relationship between Three Factors**



Community development through community level; development of community through community people, a concept to development which helps people of ground level to promote their living standard themselves. Ehat a sector in an outer set can do is just to promote the awareness level of the local people through different medium and eventually, it helps to establish a cycle of human development through making people self-driven.

Precisely, people after being realized that they have to do themselves for them and development builds up psychologically which envisages the real development. That is why, awareness is supposed to be the key factor to measure the social status of the people of the Magar community and furthermore, status is a term which itself measures the level of development in many aspects directly or indirectly.

6.1.2.1 Awareness Level and the Real Practices

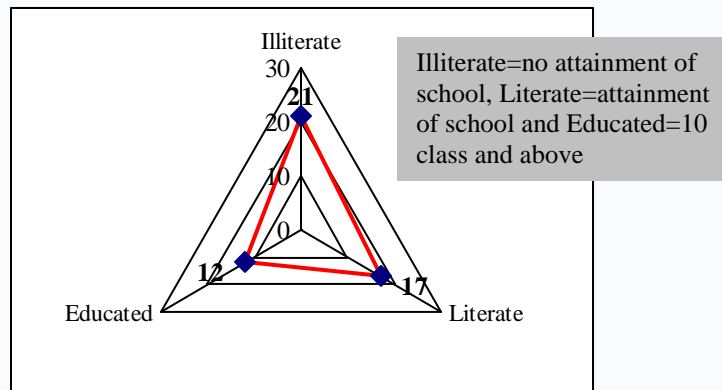
6.1.2.1(A) Educational Awareness and their Status

For the determination of the educational awareness, 50 respondents were in a random sampling interviewed and the following result is obtained.

All the children, who were at the age of school going, were found to be going to school except those who were above than 22 years were found to be left their schools willingly in their school days and all of them know the importance of the education which was they answered in a statement that is for the better future of their kids. What they wanted their kids to be in future was explicitly well educated.

Though the status of their own educational attainment was very low (Figure 4), they responded that they would educate their children any how; even more there were many Magar people migrated to the centre (27.5%) just to make their children well educated through the more quality education in the city area. As in other ethnic groups, gender discrimination hardly existed in this community.

Figure 4: **Educational Status of the Respondents**



Source: Field Survey, 2006

6.1.2.1(B) Knowledge about Family Planning and the Family Size

The knowledge about family planning was surprisingly best (100%) and all the respondents answered that they knew what it was and how it controlled the fertilization temporarily; what they responded was condom as a temporary means to check the fertility and for the protection against HIV/AIDS (95%) and only 2% of the respondents got it wrong responding as only the means of protecting fertilization; not for the HIV/AIDS.

While they were asked that if the knowledge about sex and condoms had to be disseminated to the children, they responded positively but they have never given the

lessons of sex education themselves to their kids because of the hesitation; as the culture has forbidden these stuffs to do overtly.

While checking whether the knowledge, in practice, was implemented or not, 50 households were interviewed and the following result was obtained through the analysis of the collected data. (the joint family and the nuclear family were dealt separately)

Mathematical calculation,

For joint family,

Average children number per family =

Arithmetic mean (\bar{x}) = $\frac{x}{n}$ (where x = sum of the observation & n = number of observation) = 2.66

Average family members per family =

Arithmetic mean (\bar{x}) = $\frac{x}{n}$ (where x = sum of the observation & n = number of observation) = 7.91

For nuclear family,

Average children number per family =

Arithmetic mean (\bar{x}) = $\frac{x}{n}$ (where x = sum of the observation & n = number of observation) = 2.11

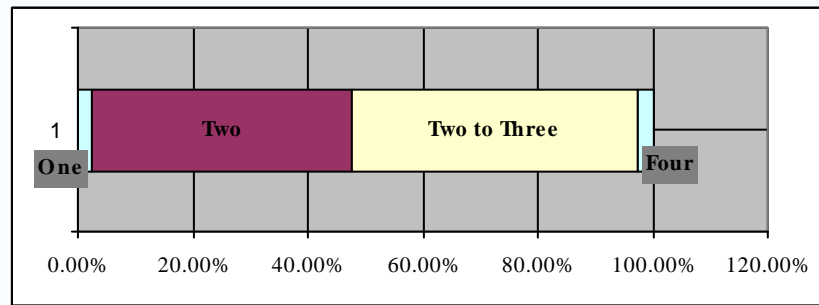
Average family members per family =

Arithmetic mean (\bar{x}) = $\frac{x}{n}$ (where x = sum of the observation & n = number of observation) = 3.87

The above mathematical calculations have given good results; that means the implication of the knowledge was good and one of the reasons behind this knowledge about family planning in the people of the community was easy access to the media.

In the course of interview, they were asked a question 'How many children do they think a couple should have?' to estimate their knowledge and the data collected have given the result as follows:

Figure 5: **Opinions of the Respondents to the Number of Children a Couple should have**

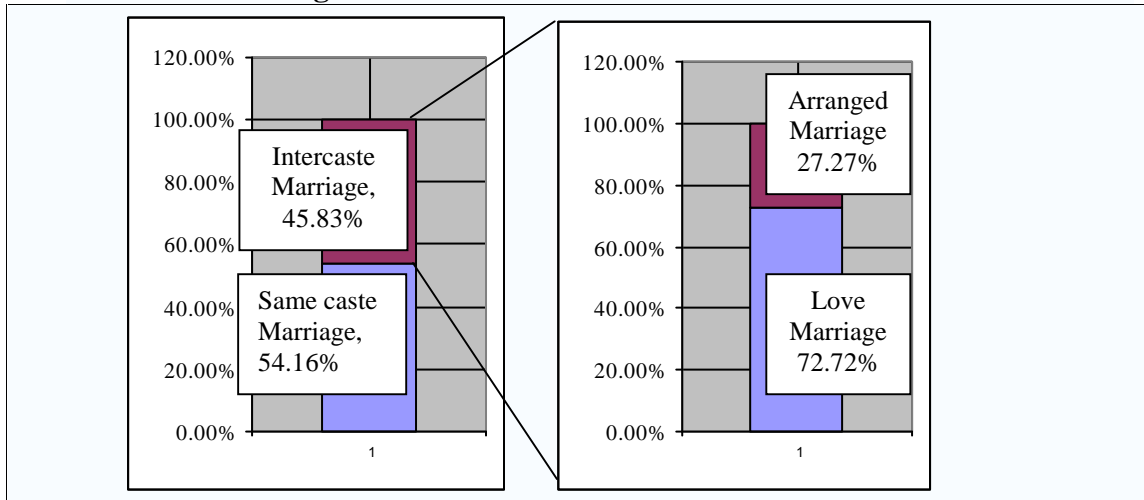


Source: Field Survey, 2006

6.1.2.1(C) Marriage Practices

- Marriage was responded as a private affair and they would not go against the choices of their sons and daughter, if the case was not untouchable.
- Intercaste marriage was not taken as a problem, although they preferred the same caste marriage. They responded that, firstly, that would be slightly difficult to accept other castes as their in-laws because they have always assumed that their sons and daughters would marry a girl or a man of the same caste but they answered easily that they would never hate their in-laws only because of their belongings to different ethnic groups. Among the respondents, 45.83% (Figure 6) of the respondents have already faced the intercaste marriage and out of 45.83%, 27.27% of the intercaste marriages were arranged marriage.
- In the community, two kinds of marriages were dominant – love marriage and arranged marriage. Among the households surveyed, 51.85% of the whole have already experienced love marriage and 48.14% of the whole have arranged the marriage.
- Among the whole respondents, only 10% of the male respondents were found to be married with more than one because of the deceased of the first wife or the elopement of wife; no females could be found remarrying.

Figure 6: **Intracaste Marriage, Intercaste Marriage and Types of Intercaste Marriage**



Source: Field Survey, 2006

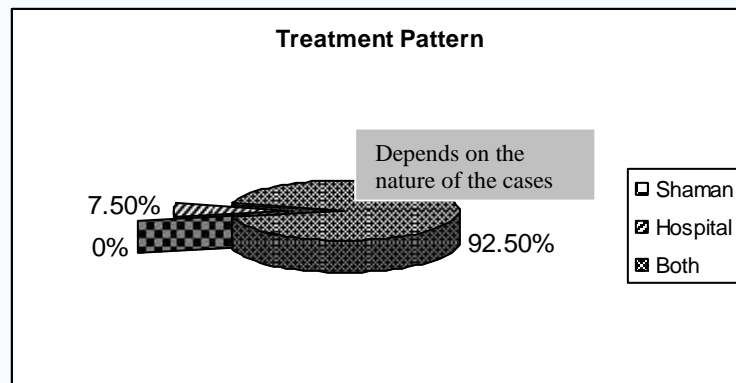
6.1.2.1(D) Treatment Pattern

Though not an easy access to the hospitals and health post, it is considered as an easy access compared with other remote areas of Nepal. It took 1 hour by foot to get treatment in a private/government health post from anywhere of the VDC but there were other means of transportation, mainly, bicycles.

Magars are supposed to be following shamanism and that means they believe in shamans or local faith healers. During the survey, all the respondents were asked the question ‘Do you visit to the shaman or hospital, when your family members get sick?’ and the results were as follows:

- Out of the whole respondents, only 7.5% respondents said that they would prefer to visit to the hospital rather than to the shaman because of no faith.
- And a big portion (92.5%) of the whole respondents said that it was the nature of the case which decided where the patients had to take first.
- No respondents (fig.7) would prefer to depend on only local faith healers, Jhankris.

Figure 7: Treatment Pattern in the Study Area



Source: Field Survey, 2006

6.1.2.1(E) Knowledge about Technology and Chemicals

Overall, the knowledge of technology was found to be, obviously, minimum because of the illiteracy. But some of them were found to be using tractors; but no more than tractor and a huge portion (70%) of the respondents were found using chemical fertilizers and chemical pesticides; only 30% of the respondents have not used the chemicals because they have had satisfactory harvesting with their traditional fertilizers.

All the respondents were aware of the disadvantages of these chemicals. They specifically did not know the knowledge about the disadvantages but they knew that it would harm the environment and the human/animal health.

6.1.2.1(F) Religion and Culture

All those interviewed were asked about their religion, only a small portion (10%) of the respondents answered as being Buddhist but their parents had been Hindus when they somehow, reading books and listening to their peers, came to know about their origins as from Mongolia and they became convinced with the reasons illustrated that if they were from Mongolia, they would be Buddhists and simply became religious apostates. During the survey, the researcher was convinced that they were confused about their religion and they did not actually know to which religion they belong to and responded as what made them convinced or what they felt was right.

Many people have been kept telling that they were Buddhist so the simple and straight people just became convinced but they never searched for reasons behind the statement and as the truth is no one knows to which religion Magars belong to because of the missing of history. Leader-like people of Magars, maybe, have been disseminating different opinions about the Magars on the behalf of Magars but there was a big gulf of differences between the receivers and the senders so what they wanted to give that might not be received as in the exact form they thought.

Box No. 2

I myself have felt these kinds of gaps between senders and receivers many times. Once, I acknowledge, the position of women was very pathetic and even now, the dominant sex of the society is male but the 'Rule of law' pervades in this era which has led women to the power where they are no more pitiable and pathetic; they envisage a reality that they are important components of the machine which would help to achieve the dream of our nation. But, unfortunately, many women can be found taking the concept as the males are their enemies; not associates. Many women who have knowledge about gender discrimination can be found partial when they come to the justice; although they pretend to be impartial. Through the survey I have done, I envisage a menace of the ethnic conflict, if the hatred for the Brahmanism goes high. Once again, I acknowledge that I am not a sociologist/anthropologists; neither a learned person in terms of all these topics so I apologize, if there is some misunderstandings. This work is explicitly of educational nature. That does not mean Magar people are not dominated without good reasons; they are or, better say, have been and we must find an acceptable weapon to fight back.

When Magar people were asked whether their culture had to be learned by their offspring or not, they answered unanimously that their offspring had to know their culture. Simultaneously, they worried about their culture might be lost someday because this has been gleaned by their oral tradition so many educated Magars have been trying hard to save their culture in the written form.

In the Magar (Pun) community, two kinds of dances are unique; these are *Madale Maruni* (*Saraswoti barnaune*) and *Sorhthi* (*Hai halne*) dance. In the *Madale Maruni*, a pair of male dances pretending and attiring as a male and a female in which the commencement part of the dance is called '*Saraswoti barnaune*'. While *Saraswoti barnaune*, the *Maruni* sings a kind of *Mantras* on the beat of the *Madal* which is played by the *Madale* and some especial people, who sometimes tremble and people say '*Deuta chadhyo*', start to tremble with the song and to make them calm again, the *Madale* plays the *Madal* in an another kind of beat which is called '*Tal pharkaune*'. In

the month of Chaitra, people of the whole village build up a fund and organize a big Puja (worshipping) called '*Bhume Puja*' where all the god and goddesses are worshipped. In this Puja, '*Saraswoti barnaune*' takes place. (this kind Puja was not in practice in the study area then)

In *Sorhthi*(*Hai halne*) dance, people give blessing in the form of songs pronouncing the name of different gods and goddesses which is happened in some ceremonies of happiness; Gunio Cholo, marriage, Chewarpas et cetera.

They have own attires and ornaments which are worn in some especial ceremonies. The Magars of the study area wear the ordinary *Kachhad* or wrap-on-loincloth, a *Bhoto* or a shirt of vest, a *Boku*, and the usual Nepali *Topi*. The women wear the *Phariya* or sari-like dress above the ankles, *Chaubandi Cholo* or a closed blouse and the heavy *Patuka* or waist band or girdle and the *Mujetro* or shawl like garment. The ornaments are the *Mundri* on the ears, *Bulaki* on the nose and the *Phuli* on the left nostril, the silver coin necklace and the *Pote* with the *Tilahari* gold cylinder. Some are seen to wear the *Kalli* on the ankles but it is out of style nowadays. Magar males do not wear ornaments. The amulet or locket necklace is worn by the Magar girls. The bangles of gold and glass are also worn on their hands along with the *Sirbandi* and *Sirphuli* on their heads. These are large pieces of gold beaten in elongated and circular shapes.

Religiously, the true portrait of the Gurkha warriors, Magars have no specific place in the Hindu hierarchy. Magars are placed in the category of the *pani chalne jat* meaning those above the water pollution level. A Brahmin can drink water given to him by a Magar but cannot eat the rice cooked by the same Magar. This is the religiously offered status of the Magar people.

6.1.2.2 Lahure Culture

The *Lahure* culture is very much dominant in the Magar communities, which makes them out of the country for most of the active ages of the life so they become lagged behind than Arya people who resides their whole life in the country and becomes

dominant in the ruling side; though it is not the sole reason. The same kind of *Lahure* culture could also found in the study area.

The tradition of going to the Indian or the British Armies is the one which is causing the Magar people to become vegetablished since they have set a trend and anyone who is not in the army is useless or no good is the feeling these people have. The girls are also interested in marrying a soldier than an ordinary farmer from among the community. Even today this tendency to go to *Lahur* meaning out of the country as a soldier, is very much strong among the Magar boys and cause of the Magar identity to stagnate. However, this is also a strong source of income for those rural people who have no education and can procure money to fulfill desires like their children's marriages, only joining the armies where they are paid to do work and not to think much. (Gautam and Thapa-Magar, 1994:pp.38)

These authors visualize the exact scenario of the *Lahure* culture in the Magar community. Lahure culture, though not a completely wrong trend, strengthens the economic status of the Magar people. When the trend is tested for the long term, the result will be undesirable and people started to feel it and cannot help to fight against Brahmanism which has been dominating the Nepali society. This is definitely a kind of new and growing good culture of the Magar people.

6.1.2.3 Language Factor

According to Fisher, Kaike is an unwritten Tibeto-Burman language, distantly related to Tibetan and other Tibeto- Burman dialects spoken elsewhere in Nepal.”³⁰ He further explains the complexity of the language as follows: “Using a list of 100 basic words I found that Kaike shared 49% cognates with the Tibetan dialect spoken in Tichurong 49% with the very closely related Tibetan dialect spoken in what Snellgrove calls " Inner Dolpo," 35% with Kham, and 23% with Magar.”³¹ He concludes that, “In nine of the thirteen villages, Tibetan is spoken; one village (Riwa)

³⁰ Fisher, James F., op. cit., p. 21

³¹ Fisher, James F., op. cit., p. 208

is Nepali-speaking; in only three villages (Tarangpur, Tarakot, and Tupa)—and nowhere else in the world—is Kaike spoken.”³²

David E. Watters has been a known figure in the contribution of the study of *Kham* language of Magars. According to him, the Kham is a Tibeto-Burman language spoken in the upper valleys of the Rukum, Rolpa, and Baglung districts of Mid-Western Nepal by more than 50,000 people. Scattered populations also exist in Jajarkot, Dailekh, Kalikot, Achham, and Doti. The language should not be confused with the Tibetan *Khams* of eastern Tibet. The majority of Kham speakers are Budhas, Puns, Ghartis, and Rokhas—all classified ethnically as subtribes or clans of the Magar tribe. It should not be assumed *apriori*, however, that because speakers of Kham are Magars their language too is a dialect of Magars. Kham and Magar are vastly different languages. Thus, to avoid confusion with Tibetan Kham, and to link the language with the ethnicity of its speakers, the language has sometimes been referred to as Kham-Magar.³³

Watters narrates, "Kham is known to Nepalis of the region as “Khamkura,” which, roughly translated, means *Kham-talk* or *Kham-speech*. The word *Kham* itself is of obscure origins and means simply *language* in its broad sense, and *The Language* in its strict sense. In Mid-Western Nepal, where Kham is spoken, the Nepali use of the *Kham* or *Khamkura* has the more generalized meaning of a local, non-Nepali dialect. Consequently, at least two other languages in the region, Chantyal, and Kaike, have received the Nepali appellation *Khamkura*.”³⁴

The study of languages has sometimes been useful in determining the historical settlements of the people in Nepal. As Witzel explains that the Magarat "extends from the Bheri in the west to Burhi Gandaki in the east and is fairly uniform in its nomenclature: river names invariably end in *-ri* or *-di*. The names in *-ri* are found in the western part, that is in Kham territory, the names in *-di* in the eastern part.”³⁵ The

³² Ibid, 23

³³ Watters, David and Nancy Watters. 1973. *An English-Kham, Kham-English Glossary*, Kirtipur Nepal: Summer Institute of Linguistics and Institute of Nepal and Asian Studies cited in David E. Watters, *A Dictionary of Kham (a Tibeto-Burman language of Nepal)*, Manuscript, p. 1

³⁴ Watters, David E., *A Dictionary of Kham (a Tibeto-Burman language of Nepal)*, Manuscript, p. 1

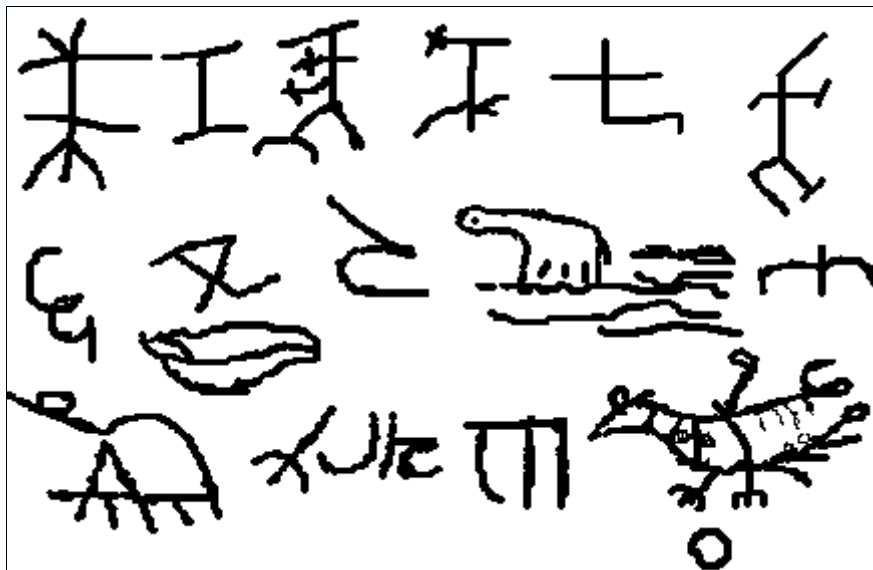
³⁵ Witzel, Michael, "Nepalese Hydronomy," Harvard University, July 12, 1991, p. 18
http://nipforum.org/nepalese_hydronomy.pdf.

River *Ba-bai*, to the south of the Bheri, may have a Magar name as well: *b y, b yh* is a Kham Magar word for 'river'.³⁶ (Thapa Magar, ??, p. 7-8)

Whatever the previous studies say Magar (Pun) people claims their own language which is supposed to be collapsed due to the harsh dictatorship of the ruler after the unification of Nepal. Some Magar people have accepted the *Kham Kura* to be their language but they themselves cannot speak the language and the reason behind this is that Magar people of the Parbat, Baglung et cetera were banned to speak their own language and later on, all Magar people of these areas forgot to speak their own language and started to speak Khas Language (Chapter 5.2).

Some signs were found written on the walls of a cave of Mahabhir, the place where Karpakeli Baba, an ancestral god of Magar (Pun), was supposed to be trapped for 12 years; it comes when Jhakris tells the *Okha bakhan*.

Figure 8: **Historical Inscription found in the Caves of Mahabhir of Kaphal Dada**



Source: *Yeju, 2057 BS, p. 12*

These signs were collected by Harka Bahadur Garbuja, Bhoji Bahadur Purja, and Sher Bahadur Garbuja. These signs show the possibility of the existence of Pun Magars own different language. But the extensive study on this topic must be done.

³⁶ Ibid.

Pun Magars having no own language, in existence, and speaking Khas language will definitely represents them no more unique, if the some aspects of culture of the Pun Magar people are excluded from them.

6.1.2.4 Social Organisation

Gautam and Thapa-Magar wrote, “The Magar people are today organized into a countrywide network which has succeeded, to an extent, in assimilating all the Magars into a social organisation which was initially established in Kathmandu district in 1985 as the *Nepali Langhali Sangh*, but it has been transformed into the *Nepal Magar Association* recently in 1993. The main objective of this organisation is to unite and develop the Magars socially and culturally in the context of today’s changed situation.” (Gautam and Thapa-Magar, 1994: 40)

Pun Magar people of Chitwan district organized through an association called *Pun Samaj Sewa Samiti* and it has given an attempt to unite and develop all Pun Magar people of the Chitwan district socially and culturally.

6.2 Economic Status

This sub-heading describes the economic status of the Magar people of the study area (Birendranagar VDC) which will definitely help to understand the constraints and necessities for the development of the community. This analysis part assists to relate different variables playing in the community.

For the analysis of the economic status of the study area, type of income sources, and land holding were set as variables where the type of income sources entails all the means of income sources and land holding shows the authority over some land which eventually helps to preserve their rights, privileges making them realized of their duties to the society and keeps their social worth constant.

6.2.1 Agriculture Practices

Most of the people of the study site were farmers and they have been doing the practice since they migrated to this site. No households could be found which directly or indirectly did not depend upon agriculture.

The study area practiced agriculture in a very traditional way that made only their families sustained; no chances of being commercialized. Farmers of the area have sta-

Box No. 3

In the ward number 9 (Amilopani) of the study area (Birendranagar VDC), at the time when the survey was held, many fields were empty even if the time of planting because of no rain. Some people, who could afford water Rs. 100 per hour, had water on their field and planted paddy.

One of the farmers, a retired Indian army, of the area named Subedar Tek Bahadur Pun said “The goddess of forest is angry with people of that area because people have started to become much sinful.” to his colleagues about the reason behind not raining and suggested to organize a Puja for the goddess of the jungle.

Another farmer named Deu Bahadur Ale of the local area told that even if they purchased water and made the field watered superfluously; that wouldn't remain more than three or four days and the produce from the groundwater was also not good as compared to the produce of the rain water.

rted to use different sorts of chemicals; pesticides, insecticides, chemical fertilizers, et cetera, because these farmers had no escape from the menace of the insects and through different means, especially friends, came to know about these chemicals so started. But a big portion of the farmers never used chemical fertilizers; instead of that these farmers used dung of animals and it was also a reason of animal husbandry. Though they did not use the modern boons of science and technology heavily; mostly it was because they could not afford, they have started to use these things, chemical fertilizers and pesticides, gradually and what they have been using mainly was tractor as a modern tool.

These farmers have been producing mainly rice and maize but some parts of the study area also have been producing millet, wheat, and mustard oil. The major seasons were rainy and winter. The crops of the rainy season were rice and maize while, in the winter season, wheat, mustard oil, millet were planted. These all farmings were just for their living; meaning subsistence farming.

Table 3: Cropping Calendar of the Study Area

Major Crops	Planting Month	Harvesting Month
Rice	Asadh	Kartik
Maize	Baisakh	Srawan/Bhadra
Millet	Srawan	Kartik/Mangsir
Wheat	Mangsir	Chaita/Baisakh
Mustard Oil	Ashwin	Paus/Magh

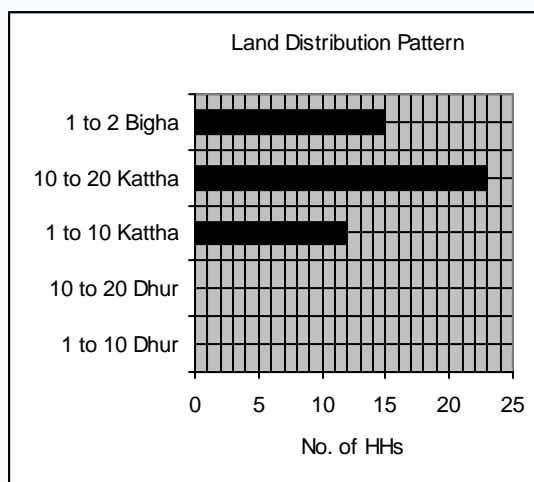
Source: Field Survey, 2006

According to the cropping calendar, rice was sown in Āsādh and was harvested in Kartik and Maize was sown in Baisakh to harvest in Srawan/Bhadra. These were the main crops producing in the study area but other crops as tabulated above were also sown and harvested, though they were not the dominant crops in the study area. Somewhere of the study area, Magar people were also attracted to the vegetable farming but can be said negligible.

6.2.2 Landholding Size of the Households

All the respondents of the study site owned lands but size of the land was different from one another; some held big lands and some held very small lands. But no respondents were found to be landless.

Figure 9: Land Distribution Pattern of the Study Area

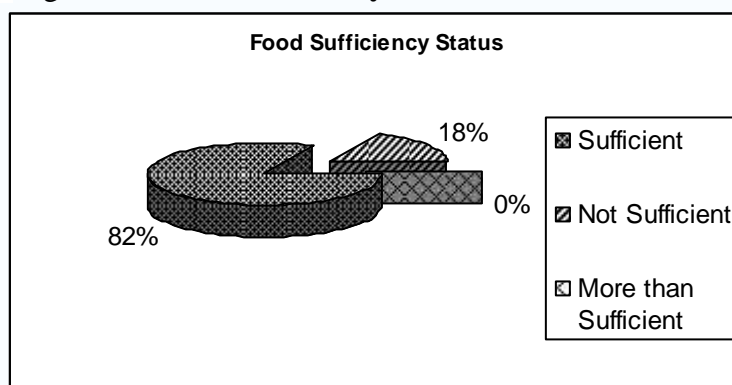


Source: Field Survey, 2006

The chart shows that the 10 to 20 Kattha³⁷ was the most common land holding size and besides this, 1 to 2 Bigha³⁸ was the next most common land holding size.

6.2.3 Food Sufficiency Status of Households

Figure 10: Food Sufficiency Status of the Households



Source: Field Survey, 2006

³⁷ 1.5 Kattha is equivalent to 1 Ropani and 20 Dhur is equal to 1 Kattha

³⁸ 20 Kattha is equivalent to 1 Bigha

While asking about the food sufficiency, during the research, most of the respondents responded positive, i.e. 82%, and only 18% of the respondents said 'not sufficient'.

No respondents could be found 'more than sufficient'; that was because they did subsistence farming with traditional methods.

6.2.3.1 Analysis of the 'Food Sufficiency Status'

This survey found no respondents having 'more than sufficient' status; high sufficiency status. That was because of no commercialization of the farming and even if they wanted it commercialized, it was hard to be because of different factors which range from the farmer's literacy to the government interest.

Analyzing the data taken through the survey in the study area, the variables behind the sufficiency and not sufficiency can be described as follows:

A. Nuclear Family

(i) Good Sufficiency Status,

Mathematical calculation,

Average family members per nuclear family =

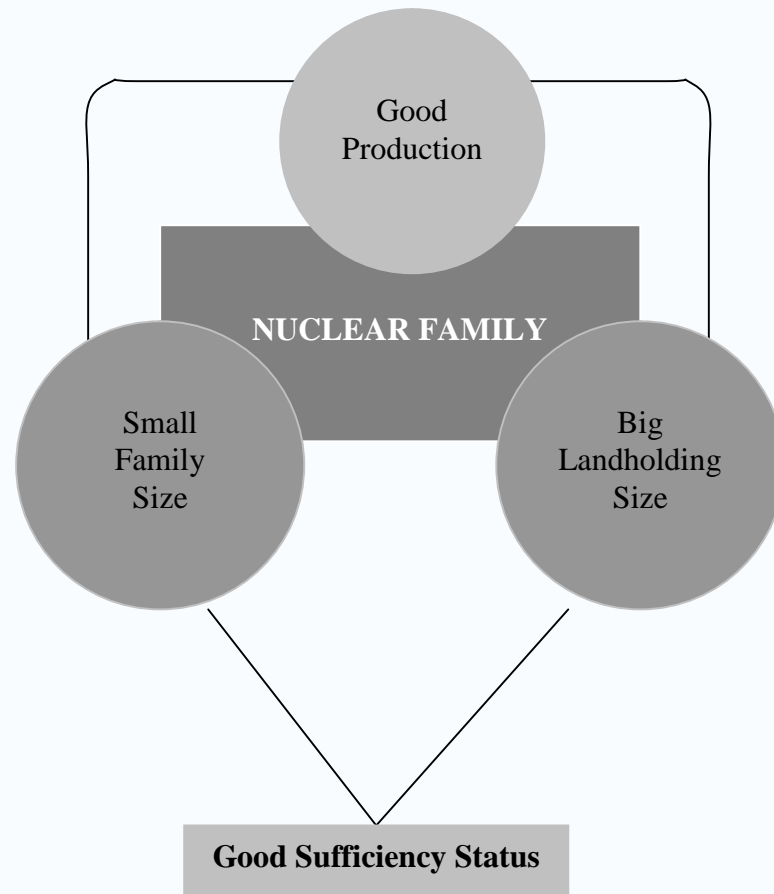
Arithmetic mean (x^*) = x/n (where x = sum of the observation & n = number of observation) = 4

Average land holding per nuclear family =

Arithmetic mean (x^*) = x/n (where x = sum of the observation & n = number of observation) = 21.94 Kattha

Those respondents who put themselves under the heading 'Sufficient' having a nuclear family were those people who had 4 average family members and 21.94 Kattha average land holding size. That means if a nuclear family, it definitely represents a small family, had a big land holding size and the production was normal, the food sufficiency status would be good.

Figure 11: Variables for the ‘Good Sufficiency Status’ in a Nuclear Family



But it also depended upon different factors and the major one, in the study area, was that the study area was not irrigated and most of the people depended upon raining for the agriculture practices which sometimes did not pour down at the right time.

(ii) Low Sufficiency Status,

Mathematical calculation,

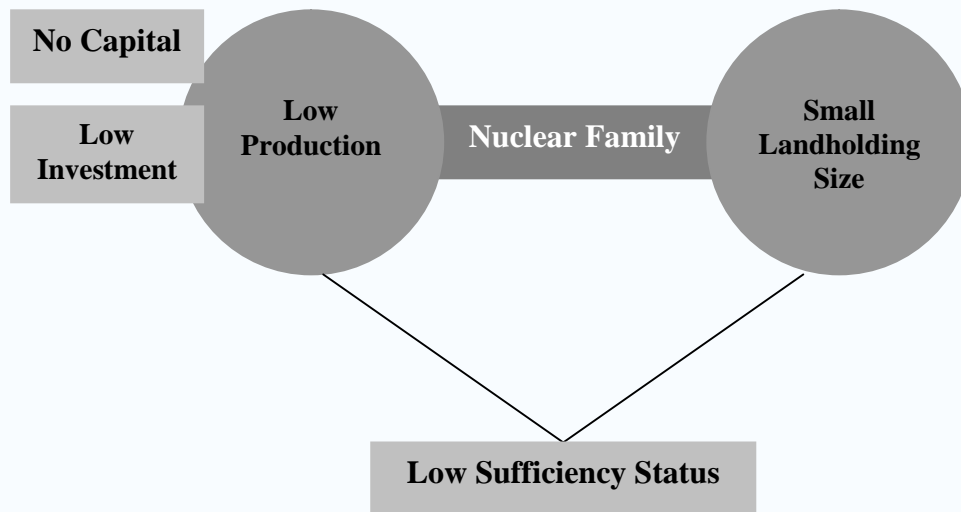
Average family members per nuclear family =

Arithmetic mean (x^*) = x/n (where x = sum of the observation & n = number of observations) = 4

Average land holding per nuclear family =

Arithmetic mean (x^*) = x/n (where x = sum of the observation & n = number of observations) = 3 Kattha

Figure 12: Variables for the 'Low Sufficiency Status' of a Nuclear Family



These people had small land holding size and the family size was 4. That means they had not sufficient land to sustain their family and for the increase of the production, they did not have enough resources; capital. So, only escape was to go foreign lands as cheap labourers.

B. Joint Family

(i) Good Sufficiency Status

Mathematical calculation,

Average family members per joint family =

Arithmetic mean (x^*) = x/n (where x = sum of the observation & n = number of observations) = 7.47

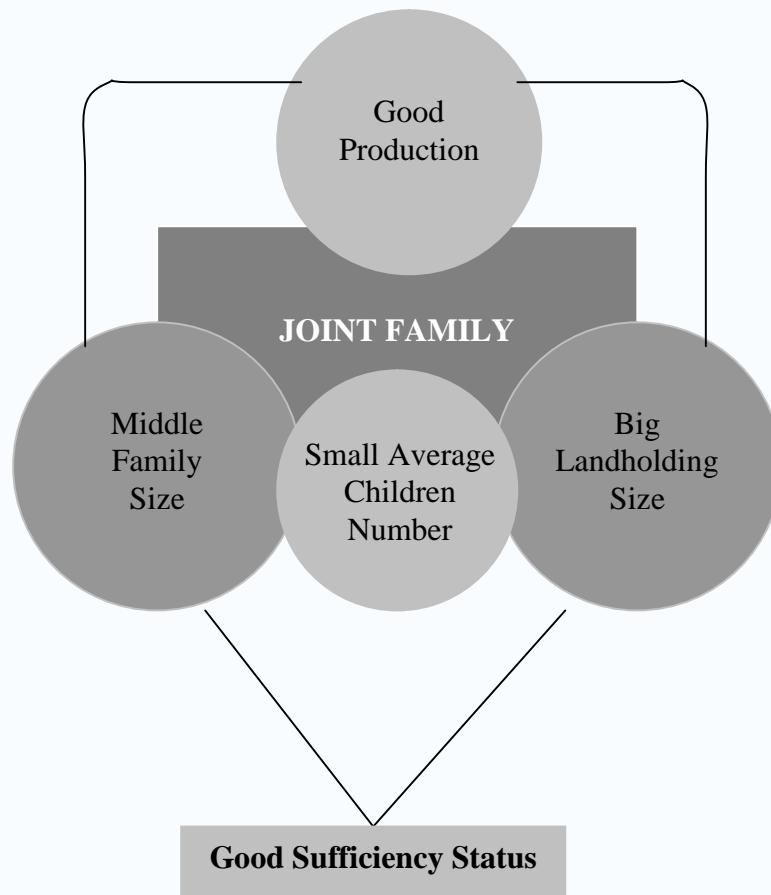
Average land holding per joint family =

Arithmetic mean (x^*) = x/n (where x = sum of the observation & n = number of observations) = 22.11 Kattha

Average children per joint family =

Arithmetic mean (x^*) = x/n (where x = sum of the observation & n = number of observations) = 2.41

Figure 13: Variables for the 'Good Sufficiency Status' of a Joint Family



Those people, who had a joint family having 7.47 family members on an average and they owned 22.11 Kattha land on an average per family and again, had 2.41 children on an average, were the people who had 'Good Sufficiency Status' because of the medium size family (7.47) and big land holding size (22.11 Kattha) and furthermore, the average children number was also very small (2.41) which made the family full of manpower. The relationship between average children number and the manpower of the household was inverse.

(ii) Low Sufficiency Status

Mathematical calculation,

Average family members per joint family =

Arithmetic mean (x^*) = x/n (where x = sum of the observation & n = number of observations) = 9.25

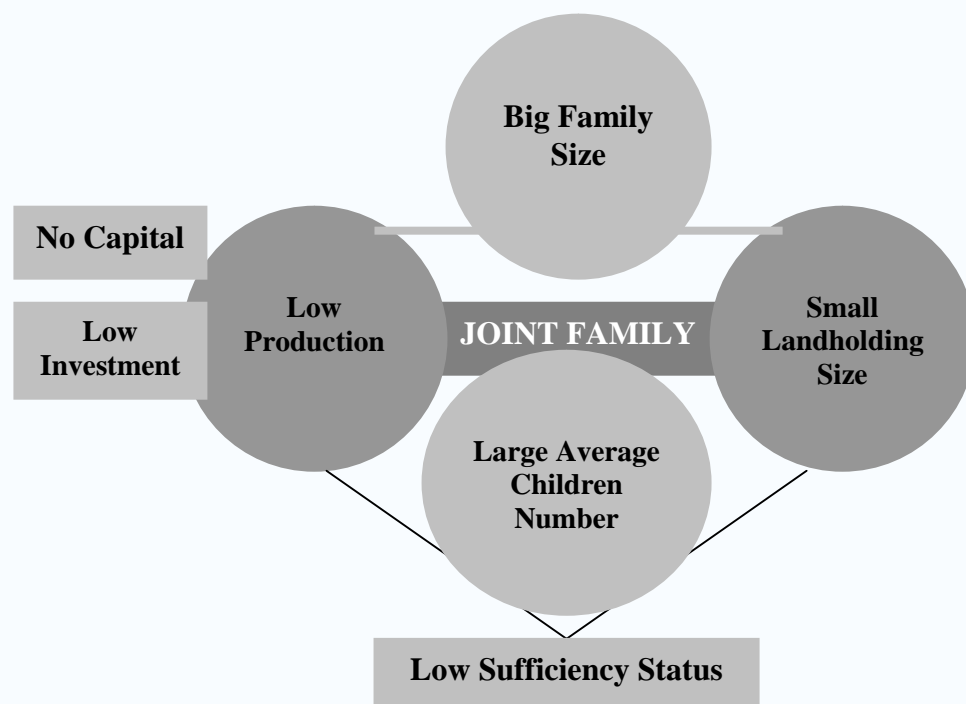
Average land holding per joint family =

Arithmetic mean (\bar{x}) = x/n (where x = sum of the observation & n = number of observations) = 12.25 Kattha

Average children per joint family =

Arithmetic mean (\bar{x}) = x/n (where x = sum of the observation & n = number of observations) = 3.75

Figure 14: Variables for the 'Low Sufficiency Status' of a Joint Family



These people had low food sufficiency status because they had small average landholding size per family (12.25 Kattha) which made these people unable to produce sufficient foods and again, they had no capital to produce more foods within the limited field so only way to escape the poverty was going foreign lands to sell cheap labour, large average family size per family (9.25) which made them full of manpower, if the average children number was very small but unfortunately, the average children number was high which also made them unable to produce sufficient foods.

6.2.4 Income Sources

The major income sources of the family in the study area were agriculture and Foreign Service, which includes all types of works in the foreign land. While doing survey, many people were found doing other kinds of works as well, i.e. labour in nearby cities, carpentry and house building, teaching, and driving.

Different kinds of works which Magar people did as the result of survey are tabulated as follows:

Table 4: Sources of Income in the Households surveyed

S. No.	Types of Works	No. of Respondents
1.	Agriculture*	21
2.	Foreign Labour**	2
3.	Both (1+2)	18
4.	Teaching	2
5.	Others***	7

Source: Field Survey, 2006

* agriculture plus animal husbandry

** all types of works in the foreign lands

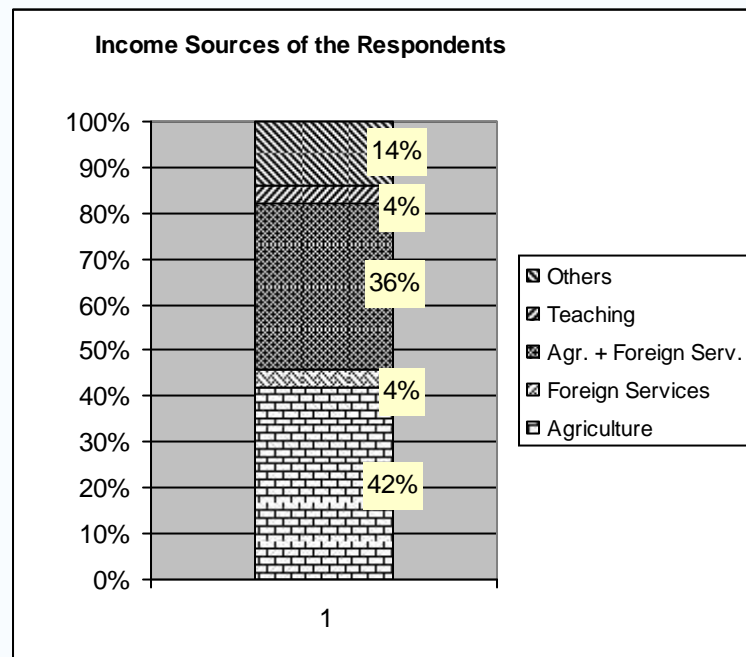
*** carpentry, house building, labour nearby big cities, and driving

Nearly half of the population (42%) depended on agriculture which entailed animal husbandry as well, 4% of the whole respondents depended upon only in foreign services while the next biggest portion (36%) of the respondents depended on both sources (agriculture and foreign services) and only 4% were in teaching profession. 14% were found to be engaged in different works.

In the community, no families except some of British armies and people holding good jobs in foreign lands responded that they could spare money because of different reasons prevailing there in the study area. All the respondents answered that in their opinions, economic condition of the study area was medium; neither rich nor poor.

The above description can be illustrated via percentage bar diagram as follows:

Figure 15: **Different Sources of Income in the Study Area**



Source: *Field Survey, 2006*

A group of respondents whose ages range from 55 to 70 were mostly found to be ex-army of Indian or British and they get pensions from the government of India and the British. That was also a kind of strong income source which helped to sustain many families.

Excluding the female respondents, while taking the measurement of the respondents to find out how many of them were ex-army, the researcher found 62.96% of them were ex-armies and only 37.03% of them were not ex-armies.

6.2.5 Economic Institutions

The communities of the study area did not have knowledge about 'Bheja'. They have never heard of it.

There people practiced two kinds of informal economic institutions, i.e. '*Dhikuri*'³⁹ & '*Kosh Uthaune*'⁴⁰. 45% of the total households were found to be engaged in '*Dhikuri*' and 30% were in '*Kosh Uthaune*'. There were people (25%) who did not involve in *Dhikuri* and in *Kosh Uthaune* either.

But the '*Parma*' system was in practice and people exchanged the manpower which fulfilled the lack of enough labourers.

³⁹ *Dhikuri*, a kind of group where every body invests certain amount of money and the collected money is taken by each candidate in a ceratin interval of time but the taking process is just opposite to the process of auction, where people take the lowest amount.

⁴⁰ *Kosh Uthaune* (fund building), a kind of economic activity, where small amounts of money are collected from the people, who are in this program, and the collected fund is distributed to the people on interest. The collected interest is distributed to the people who are in the program.

6.3 Cultural Peculiarities

6.3.1 Myth of Karpakeli Baba

The story goes like this. The name of the ancestral god of Pun Magars from the patrilineal side is karpakeli Baba who is generally referred to as Kul Deuta in Nepali. The name of his father was Hansa and his mother's name was Hanseni. Nobody can say where they lived, but the Pun Magar people unanimously agree that the place should be somewhere in Karnali Zone of western Nepal.

As soon as Karpakeli was born, his parents asked Kalo Jaisi, an astrologer, to find out the location of the stars and planets on his birth and to forecaste his future. The astrologer told that Karpakeli was born in an inauspicious time called "Satmul". He further told that Karpakeli would leave his ancestral home and would settle in a different place far away. The astrologer further told that he must be treated well because that could bring changes in his life. A maid woman named Jasmati has taken care of him when he was a child.

As told by the astrologer, Karpakeli left his parents when he was very young and wandered different places. At first, he begged for his living, but later, he started to help people with raising cattle, sheep, goats or even farming. People liked him because he was a hard working boy. It was interesting that, whoever he worked for, the household was blessed with abundant crops and animals. Therefore, people tried to keep him in their house, but he never did stay in one house for a long time. He moved from one house to another house, from one place to another place, and so on. Another reason people liked him was good in singing and dancing by beating a small drum called Damphu.

Once Karpakeli worked for a Brahman, the highest caste of the Hindu religion, taking care of cattle. The numbers of cows increased in the herd and the Brahman was happy with him. There were healthy cows in different shades of colours. One day, the cows went too far grazing, and did not have time to come back to their place in the evening. The Brahman became so angry with Karpakeli that he beat him on both cheeks with his hand. Since Karpakeli was innocent, he cursed the Brahman. He said, "O Brahman! You beat me without any fault of mine. Therefore, I curse you.

Listen, when Kaliyug (Iron Age of the four ages as described in the Hindu mythology) comes, let your people eat meats and drink alcoholic beverages as the people from the lower caste do. Towards the end of Kaliyug, let your people even sell your Vedas (religious books of Hindus)”. Then he left the Brahaman’s house.

One day, Karpakeli arrived at the fair of Kumbha, wandering many places. As people were returning to their homes from the fair, he met two daughters of Dhumba Dhumbini named Himala and Phimala. The girls were so impressed that they fell in love with him. (Some people refer to the name of Himala as Raimasini and say that both sisters were married to Karpakeli at the same time). After living some time in the house of Dhumba Dhumbini, he married Himala. Dhumba Dhumbini gave a yak’s tail, of white and black colour, to the couple as their wedding present. While he was living there, Karpakeli remembered his parents and decided to leave with his wife for his home.

It had been twelve years he was wandering. When he got to his home with wife, his parents became very happy. The mother was so excited that milk from her breast started to flow. Karpakeli, though a married young man, sat on the lap of his mother as a child and drank from her breast. That was the reason people in some villages pretend as if to be drinking from their mother’s breast when they bring a new bride to their home.

As it was forecaste by Kalo Jaisi, Karpakeli again decided to leave his home. He started towards the east with his wife and arrived at Beni, the present day district headquarters of Myagdi district. He crossed the Kali Gandaki river from there and moved to different places like present days’ Banskharka, Gharamdi, Kuepani, and Ramche, where there were only big forests. He spent his time hunting animals in the forest, extracting honey from wild bees, and catching Paha (a particular kind of frog that people eat) in the stream. At that time, his wife became pregnant. She asked for something sour to eat. He went to a higher elevation where a sour wild plant called Chulthi Amilo could be found and brought some to her. Himala enjoyed eating the stem of Chulthi Amilo. It was from that time women like to eat sour foods when they are pregnant.

Himala gave birth to a son in her due time. They named the son Ramchan. After that, she became pregnant almost every year and gave birth to nine sons, in total. As soon as she gave birth to the youngest son, she died of an illness. Karpakeli was very sorry to lose his wife and was in trouble. He was very anxious because he was not getting ideas as to how he could raise his nine-sons. He spent his days crying. Seeing the great problem of his son-in-law, Dhumba Dhumbini decided to give their youngest daughter, Phimala to Karpakeli. Thus, he was married to Himala's sister, Phimala. Phimala shared the burden of Karpakeli and started to take very good care of the family. Karpakeli, with his nine sons, was glad to have her.

Wandering in a nomadic life, Karpakeli arrived at Kaphaldanda with his family. This village now is in Myagdi district of Nepal. They found wild animals and bees in abundance there. There were also lots of nettle bushes (which could be eaten as a vegetable) to eat. Therefore, they decided to settle there and built a house near by a natural spring called Nigalpani of Kaphaldanda. (A few years ago, a landslide swept away Nigalpani.) Life was not so bad for them there.

As the time went on, the sons became young men. They were attracted to their stepmother. So they made a plan to kill their father and marry her. According to plan, they went to hunt a tiger. They asked their father to wait in a specific place and went to drive the huge tiger of the jungle towards him. They had thought that the tiger would not leave their father alive. However, when the tiger went close to Karpakeli, he killed the tiger with a single shot of his arrow. The plan of the sons failed.

They made another plan. They planned to take their father to Kali Gandaki river for fishing and throw him in the river. Thus, they asked their father to go fishing. When they got to the river, Karpakeli started to catch fish, going in the middle of the big river. The river did not sweep him away. The sons were angry in their hearts, seeing that their father could not be killed easily. Therefore, they started to make some other plans that would not fail.

They planned to take their father to extract honey from the cliff of Mahabhir (a huge cliff) of Kaphaldanda and cut the rope ladder when their father would be hanging down to the hives. They requested their father to go extracting honey from the bee

hives in the cliff. In order to make sure there sure there was enough honey in the hives, he sent his sons to see if the nettles bush in the Sisne Khola (a river) and Pangro (a tree) in the jungle were blooming. The sons came back and told that the nettle bush and the Pangro tree were already blooming. Then, he sent his sons to find out if the Chichankote bird and Gorkhe bird started singing. The sons came back and told that the birds had already started singing. Karpakeli sent the eldest son, Ramchan, to go to Mahabhir and check the number of bee hives. Ramchan came back and told that there should be about one hundred hives in the cliff. Karpakeli did not believe him so he sent the youngest son Kul to the cliff. Upon this returning, Kul told that there must be at least sixty bee hives. Thus, Karpakeli made sure, after a thorough investigation of nature, that it was the right time for extracting honey.

The first thing they needed to prepare for extracting honey was a rope ladder called Parang. Karpakeli sent his sons to ask for bamboo of different varieties such as Deunali, Malingo, Ghure, Chiple and Tite so they could be the rope for the ladder. When they went to Deunali bamboo, it said, “There will be many shamans in Kaliyug. I need to be their Gaja (stick the shamans use to beat their drum). Therefore, I cannot be the ladder.” Then, they went to ask Malingo bamboo for help. The Malingo said that it was going to be Bhakari (a long mattress-like sheet made from bamboo strip that is used for roofing cattle shed) in Kaliyug and could not be the rope for the ladder. The Ghure and Tite bamboo said that they could not help because they were destined to be used as roofing materials for a house in Kaliyug. Finally, Chiple bamboo accepted to be the ladder rope for them.

They needed pieces of strong wood to put in the ladder they were making. The pieces of wood they used to make the ladder were called Aglo. Karpakeli sent his sons to ask the Sirmu tree. The Sirmu tree said, “I need to be the windows and doors of the people in Kaliyug. Therefore, I cannot be Aglo in your ladder.” Then they went to ask the Phalat tree. The Phalat tree said, “People will use me for making things such as Halo and Danra to plough their field. Therefore I cannot help.” In the same manner, the Kharsu tree told that it was to be fed to cattle and the Phulchus tree to be the bars to build houses in the age to come and so refused to be Aglo for the ladder. Finally, a Bhakimlo tree agreed to help.

The father and the sons made two long and strong ropes from the strips of Tite bamboo. They put firmly the pieces of the wood of Bhakimlo (Bhakeulo) tree in between the ropes. Thus, they made a rope ladder to reach down to the honey hives. They prepared one manna rice, cow milk and a cock to offer to the god of the cliff. Before he left, he said, “Look, I am going to extract honey from Mahabhir. If something happens to me, and I die, check my Thenkro (case that is used to put arrows in). if you see blood coming out of it, I will be dead.”

First of all, they worshipped the cliff, offering cow’s milk, rice grain and sacrificing the cock they had brought. Then, they tied one end of the rope ladder in a tree on the top of the cliff and dropped down to the bee hives. Then, he asked his eldest son Ramchan to climb down the ladder. Ramchan told that he was acrophobic. (The cliff of Mahabhir is about 1000 ft high.) Then Karpakeli asked the second son who also gave the same answer. None of the sons became ready to go down to the beehives as they had planned to send their father down alone. Therefore, Karpakeli decided to climb down the ladder himself. When he got close to the bee hives, he smoked them with tree bark and bushes he had taken with him. Then, he started extracting honey and put it in the cage which was tied to a rope on the top of the cliff.

A small bird called Maha Chari (honey bird) flew there and asked Karpakeli for some honey. Karpakeli did not give it at first. Then the bird promised to tell bad news to him. Karpakeli gave some honey to the bird in order to know what the bad news was. After eating enough honey bird said, “Your sons have planned to kill you. As soon as you are done with the honey extraction, they will cut the other end of the rope ladder that is tied up to the tree and kill you. Therefore, send combs without honey to your sons and store the combs with honey in the cave there in the middle of the cliff for your later use. As soon as you finish extracting honey, move to the cave and be safe.” It was only after listening to what the honey bird said that Karpakeli knew why his sons had refused to climb down the ladder. Karpakeli believed the bird and blessed the honey bird to eat honey always. The honey hunters say that even today, no matter where they go to extract honey, a honey bird always comes there to eat honey. After that, Karpakeli started to store combs full of honey in the cave in the middle of the cliff. He sent only the combs without honey to his sons. The sons yelled from the top of the cliff why there was no honey in the combs. Karpakeli said loudly, “This is not a

year for honey. All the combs are empty.” After getting all the honey combs in the cave, Karpakeli moved there and took a rest. When the sons asked him if he was done extracting the honey, he said, “Yes.” The sons then cut the other end of the rope ladder. The sons saw the ladder swing down to the base of the cliff.

The sons were happy to see the ladder going down to the base of the cliff. They thought they killed their father and went back to the home. They told their stepmother, Phimala, what had happened and pretended as if feeling very sorry. When she heard the news, Phimala first went to see if blood was coming from the “Thenkro” (arrow case). She found no blood coming out so she did not believe the sons. She started waiting for her husband for many months.

Many months passed by and Karpakeli did not come back. Phimala wondered if her husband was still alive. Finally, she had to believe that her husband was not alive anymore. According to traditional custom, she went into a mourning period called Kiriya basne for twelve years. The sons had their own plan. They came upon an agreement to hold archery (Bhejo khelne) competition. It was decided that whoever hit the bull eye (Gunjari Phorne) would marry their stepmother. They went on trying to hit the bull eye for twelve years without any success.

On the other hand, Karpakeli was spending his days in the cave eating the honey he had stored. The honey storage finally ran out and he was in trouble. As time passed by, he was so hungry that he started eating his own flesh from the arms and thighs. He did not die even after he ate most of the flesh of his own body. He called upon the god for help. Hearing the plight of Karpakeli, the god sent a white monkey to rescue him. The white monkey sat on the top of the cliff and dropped his tail to Karpakeli and said, “Hold on my tail tightly. I will pull you out from there.” Karpakeli did not believe the monkey and refused to do what he was asked to do. Therefore, the monkey left. After that, a crow flew near him. Karpakeli requested the crow to fly to his house and tell his wife that he needed her help. The crow refused to help him. He cursed the crow to live on eating human excreta which the crows in the mountains still do. After some time, he saw some ants wandering near him. He repeated the same request to the ants. The ants also refused to help. Karpakeli cursed the ants, “You will

always be poor and spend all your life searching for food.” That is why the ants are always seen busy gathering foods for their stores.

Finally, the god from heaven sent a couple of vultures named Khakapati to rescue Karpakeli. The vultures flew to Karpakeli and requested him to ride on their back. Karpakeli was not sure what to do. So he said, “If you bring a big rock from Kali Gandaki river on your back, I will believe you.” The vultures went to the Kali Gandaki river, held their wings together, and flew back with a huge rock. That made Karpakeli believe in the vultures. The vultures held their wings together and asked him to sit on it. Then, they flew to a place named Galeshwor on the bank of Kali Gandaki river and took a rest. Karpakeli quenched his thirst there. He told that the place would be a sacred place in the future. Now days, every year in the month of December, people go there for a pilgrimage. From there, the vultures took him to a flat place in Rakhu village and then to Thapana of Kaphaldanda.

Kaphaldanda created a rock with nine corners and a tree named Banjho at Thapana. He rested there for some time. The tree is not there anymore, but the nine-cornered rock is still there at Thapana. People, who pass by the rock, offer flowers and coins there. Karpakeli asked the vultures to take him to the spring of Nigalpani near his house. After they took him there, Karpakeli blessed them, “May you live a life of one thousand years and be able to see the carcass of dead animals from high above the sky. Be the one to eat a carcass first.” That is how vultures became able to spot carcasses no matter how high they are flying.

Karpakeli hid behind a tree near that spring and waited for his wife to come. After some time, his wife came with a water pot. As she was filling her water pot, Karpakeli made the water muddy to draw her attention, but Phimala was oblivious. She looked up towards the spring and saw a black bird named Kalchounra there. She said, “You are not treating me well because you think that I am a widow. Therefore, I curse you. From now on, you will spend all your life along the river bank.” Karpakeli again made the water muddy when she started to fill her water pot. Phimala saw a bird named Male Dhupini flying off from the spring. She cursed the same to the Male Dhupini bird. Because they were cursed by Phimala, both types of birds are seen these days nesting and living along the bank of mountain streams.

Finally, Karpakeli put his ring in the spring that took it and dropped it in the water pot. When Phimala saw something dropping in her water pot, she took it in her hand. To her surprise, she saw her husband's ring. The ring made her sure that her husband must be hidden around. So she walked along the trees looking for her husband. When she found Karpakeli looking like a skeleton, she started crying. Caressing her, Karpakeli asked his wife to keep quite. When Phimala asked him to go the house, he said, "If I go to the house during the day, my sons will come to kill me when they see me alive. Therefore, come to get me at midnight. Bring a stick, a Soli (basket) with Namlo (strip) and a cover all made of Bet (a kind of bamboo) to carry me. Do not forget to put nine mana (about four kg.) of grains in the basket. Do not let anybody see you when you come to get me." He further instructed his wife that he should be taken into the house down from the roof.

Phimala went to the house and prepared everything as her husband had instructed. The sons went to bed on the ground floor after they ate their food. As midnight approached, she sneaked from her house towards the spring. She put Karpakeli in the basket and carried it to the house. Slowly, she took her husband into the house through the roof. At that time, the eldest son heard some strange noise upstairs and went to see what was there. He could not see what was going on there but Karpakeli gave him a big slap on his cheek. Silently, the son went back to his bed. When his brothers asked why his cheek was swollen, he just said, "A bee stung there."

The nine brothers had not quit the archery competition trying to hit the bull eye. As usual, they left for the archery after they ate their food. After they left, Phimala made some flour soup for Karpakeli. He felt some dizziness after eating the soup because he was eating grains after twelve years. When he felt a little better, he asked his wife where the sons had gone. Phimala explained everything about what they had been competing for. Knowing the vice attempt of his sons, Karpakeli became very angry with them. He asked his wife to bring his bow and arrow and make a small hole towards the wall where the sons were doing archery. Since he was very weak, it was difficult for him to stretch the string of the bow. Pointing towards the target, he released his arrow which went straight and hit the bull eye.

The nine brothers hurried to the target to find out who had hit the bull eye. They found that the arrow belonged to none of them. They were puzzled as to where that arrow came from. The eldest and the youngest son examined the arrow carefully and declared that it was their father's arrow. The second son also agreed with them. The others, however, did not accept that claim. They began to ask how a dead person could shoot an arrow.

Karpakeli arrived in the meantime, looking for his sinful sons. All of them dropped their heads, seeing their father alive in front of them. The eldest and the youngest son went to their father and asked for forgiveness. So did the second son, but the others did not say anything. They remained silent, with their eyes and heads down. Karpakeli cursed the six sons from the third to eighth to be the diseases of syphilis, gonorrhoea, herpes, scabies, etc. the six brothers made a big fire in the jungle and jumped over it. Thus, they became different diseases to give trouble to human beings.

Karpakeli forgave three sons, the first, the second, and the last one. He blessed the first son, Ramchan, and the youngest son, Kul, to be the ancestral god of Pun Magars. He ordered Ramchan to protect the fire place and Kul to protect the main pillar of the house. He ordered the second son to be the god of "Khala" (the place where people put their harvest for drying) and ordered him to protect people's grains.

Karpakeli spent the rest of his life with his wife living in the forest at around Kaphaldanda. Ramchan and Kul lived together a nomadic life. Later, Pun Magars people living in that area decided to worship Ramchan and Kul. They asked the two brothers, "O Ramchan and Kul! We would like to offer you two animals, one with nine horns and the other with two horns. It is upon you to select one each." The youngest brother Kul asked his brother to choose first because he was older. Thinking that the animal with nine horns must be bigger than the one with two horns, he chose the nine-horned one. Later, he found that his was a cock with nine points on his comb and his brother's was a bull. (Some people say that it was a lamb instead of a bull. However, many Pun Magars believe that their forefathers used to worship their ancestral god with a bull. It was much later when the influence of the Hindu religion increased, and the Hindu rulers banned sacrificing bulls, that Pun people started to

worship with a lamb or goat. However, they still offer hairs from the tail of a bull when they worship Ramchan and Kul).

Ramchan felt sorry about getting the smaller animal in his share. Seeing his elder brother unhappy, Kul said, “Do not worry, brother. Only a couple of people will come to worship you at midnight. So you will get to eat the whole cock by yourself. However, I will be worshipped in the dawn so I need to give my share to all of the guests who come to the house”. Ramchan agreed with what his brother said. From that time, people worship Ramchan at midnight and Kul in the dawn.

Thus, Pun Magars had started the worshipping of the ancestral god. The worship is carried out mainly in the full moon day of June. However, it can be carried out at other times of the year, too. Three or five Pade (persons who make arrangements for worship) feast for the preparation of the worship. They make a small makeshift hut in the field for worshipping. They follow certain rituals for the worship. They sacrifice a cock at midnight in the fire. The cock must be eaten at night. Then at dawn, they worship Kul by sacrificing a lamb. The blood of the lamb is sprayed on the main pillar of the house. All the villagers are invited to the worship. They cook the meat of the lamb or goat and eat.

The Pade carry the materials used for worshipping into the house. A village shaman is requested to find if the worship went well or not. The shaman starts his rituals beating either a drum or a bronze plate with a stick and tells all the stories in details as written here. As he goes on telling the story of Karpakeli, he finds if the Panre did something wrong. It is very interesting that what he finds comes to be true. We do not know how it happens, but it is true.

The guests spend the whole night listening to the story of their ancestral god around the fire. People have worshipped this way for generations (www.magarstudiescenter.org).

6.3.2 10 Karmas of Life

10 Karmas of life, which must be performed during the life time of a Pun Magar, are described below:

I) Garbha, the Womb/Foetus life

A conceived period through which a child becomes ready for the outside world after 10 months and life of 10 months is called womb/foetus life.

This is the first Karma of any member of a Pun Magar community. When both the parents are considered to be “Moharmi lageko”; during this period, they are not allowed to execute any Pujas, a ceremony when the god is worshipped, but they are allowed to do Puja of goddesses. If they offend, they will be punished according to the law of the community.

II) Being born, Janma linu

This is the second Karma out ten Karmas according to the belief. After the birth of a baby, the following rites must be executed (a) according to own tradition, Pitra, something offered to Bayu, the eldest spirits of the house, is offered to with lighting incenses. But the offering to Bayu must be executed before the cutting of the navel string of the child.

III) Cutting of Navel String or Umbilical Cord

Leaving three fingers' distance from the navel of a child, the umbilical cord is cut with the help of sterilized tools within 10 minutes of the birth and the placenta is buried somewhere inaccessible. After the cut of umbilical cord, Sutak, a period of impurity, starts.

IV) Chhaithau jagaune

In the evening of the sixth day from the birth of a child, Diyos, a kind of candles, are lighted because, according to Pun Magars' religious belief, on that evening, god comes to decide the fate of the baby. On that day, Shastika, god of fortune, is worshipped and for that 1 manna (1 pound weight of corn) rice grains which is poured on a Thal, a circular and flat utensil, especially, used for eating rice, and a Diyo is lightened and again, fruits, Bheti, an offering of money, papers and pens are put on the same Thal. Prashad, a mixture of fruits or other things which have been offered to the god and distributed to the visitors of the Puja after the completion of the Puja as a blessing of god, is prepared and is distributed to all the visitors until the night of the sixth day but after the dawn of the next day, the Prasad cannot be eaten by people of another Gotra, divisions within the sub-clans, because then after Sutak starts.

V) Nwaran

According to the religious belief, Nwaran is a ceremony when the house is purified from the Sutak and that is done after the 11th day of the birth. In this ceremony, the child is taken out from the house along with fruits and other Prasad, when the child is worn a Kandani, a kind of rope which goes on round the waist and Tunas, a kind of rope, are tied on the hands and feet and on neck.

Gahut, urine of cow, or instead of which, if not available, Sun Pani, water dipped with gold and Pathi, a kind of shrub, can be used for purifying house. For this purpose, Gahut or Sun Pani is sprinkled on the house.

VI) To name the Child

After ten days of a child birth, s/he is named according to the Ghadi, Pala (a form of time in eastern astrology) of the birthday.

VII) To feed the Child Rice; Bhat Khuwai

According to Pun Magars' religious belief, rice is fed to a female after 5 months and for a male child after 6 months. On the contrary, scientists have different notions on the beginning of rice-eating age of a child, which is 4 months.

In this ceremony, an astrologer decides the day of "Bhat Khuwai". The following points must be taken under consideration, while celebrating the ceremony.

- A crowing rooster is sacrificed at the fire place/oven/fire pit on a name of Kul Devata, the youngest son of Karpakeli Baba namely Kul.
- 3 mannas (1 manna = 1 pound weight of corn) cooked rice is put on a Tapari, a bowl-shaped vessel made up of Sal leaves.
- The sacrificed cock is cooked but one whole thigh of the cock is cooked without being chopped.
- Uncooked rice and milk are mixed and is offered to Pitri or Bayu, supreme spirit of the family who still suppose to protect the house from evil.
- For "Bayu Barmase", spirits of elders who have already died but they are supposed to live in the same family protecting the family from evils and checking his present descendents doing acts against family rules, all recipes prepared at home are offered putting these all on leaves and for "Aase Gase", male and female witches, and "Chhyaune Bhyaune", ghosts and evil spirits, all recipes are offered putting these all on a Tapari, a kind of bowl made up of leaves of Sal, which is kept on a nearby roads or footpaths.
- These offerings must be made by the houses' Mukhiya, the head of the house.
- After giving the child bath, the child is attired by new clothes.
- A silver bangle or "Pancharatna", a bangle which is made up of five different metals, is given to wear to the child from the side of child's maternal home.
- Putting one manna (1 pound weight of corn) rice grain on a Thal, a Diyo is lightened and with different fruits, the Thal/Thali with rice and Diyo are put on a Nanglo, a flat and circular vessel which is especially used for husking rice.
- The mother keeps her child on her lap pointing towards the direction prescribed by the astrologer.

- For a male child and a female child, a virgin boy or girl are selected respectively according to the horoscope and name. the process is called “Nam rashi milaune”.
- Keeping prepared foods nearby, the selected virgin boy or girl makes him/her taste the foods with putting “Tika”, a mixture of rice grains and curd which is stuck on forehead with blessings.
- Then, it is elders’ turn to make the child taste foods putting Tika with blessings.
- On this occasion, Sudeni, a woman who helps in the time of delivery of a baby and takes out placenta and cuts the umbilical cord, is made happy giving a nice feast.

On this celebration, all guests, who are invited, are fed in accordance with own status.

VIII) Piercing Nose and Ear

Out of 10 Karmas, this is the eighth Karma. It has its own value in Magar community. If somebosy does not perform this Karma, water offered by these people will not be accepted, according to the tradition. While performing this Karma, there is no compulsion of organizing any Puja, worshipping ceremony. This Karma can be performed anytime; there is no certain age or time, but this Karma must be performed before Chhewarpas, a celebration in which a child is brought under the regulations and limitations of the etiquettes of this caste where the child is supposed to perform everything keeping himself/herself within the limitation of caste’s regulations.

IX) Chhewarpas (Chudakarma) or Guniocholo

Before Chhewarpas or offering Guniocholo, the child is considered to be free from all the restrictions set by the caste. That is why, the Chhewarpas (Chudakarma) or offering a Guniocholo is performed to bring the child under the regulations and limitations set by the caste. This celebration is done for making the child aware of his restriction and making him honest to his tribe. This Karma is performed in the odd age of a child, i.e. 3, 5, and 9 or in the age of 6 on an auspicious day decided by an astrologer.

Things which must be taken under consideration are:

- Deciding as auspicious day.
- Hair of the body must get cut by the selected person.
- The body is, then, purified by giving him a bath.
- Putting 1 manna (1 pound weight of corn) rice grain on a Thal, a Diyo is lightened.
- Fruit, Tika made up of curd and rice grains, Roti (a kind of Nepalese bread) et cetera, are put on a Naglo.
- Different stuffs, which are decorated on the Naglo.
- The boy is kept on a purified place or in a cows shed.
- White Bhangro (a large piece of white rectangle garment on which the opposite corners are knotted in order to give it a shape of bag of the back where Magar people used to keep things like Hasiya, Namlo, breads et cetera) and Topi (a kind of cap) are attired.
- “Nam Jureko Manchhe”, a man selected through a traditional process, brings the baby from the shed making him sit on his shoulder and music is aslo played.
- About 3 times, the boy is asked to touch the things which he likes the most among the whole stuffs put there for this purpose.
- The types of things he touched will decide what kind of Karma he will do in his life. This is a belief of a Magar community.
- He is, then, blessed by elders putting Tika (a mixture of rice grains and curd) on his forehead. But the number of people who put Tika on his forehead must be odd.
- Roti (a kind of flat, circular local bread made up of wheat flour), and fruits are put on the boy’s Bhahgro and ordered him to share and play with friends.
- After completing the ceremony, there will be a feast and in the course, some people also take blessings from the elderly people of the village on this happiest moment of coming of their eldest son and the ancestral dance is also danced. Blessings from Madale and Maruni (while dancing Maruni Nach, man who takes the part of the male dancer and Madal player is called Madale and man who disguises himself to a woman is called Maruni) is also taken for the child.

- In case, the father of the child is not present in this ceremony, another closest relative of the child executes the ceremony but the permission of the child's father is necessary. If all possibilities are null, the maternal uncle takes the child without notice or pre-information to another secret place and shaves the child's head.

Offering of Guniocholo

When a daughter is of 7 year old or more; but the age must be odd, the mother gives her daughter a Gunio (a kind of skirts chiefly used to wrap round the middle) and Cholo (Nepalese national attire of woman which nearly similar to blouse in terms of place of wearing). In this ceremony, a mother gets a new Gunio and Cholo and gives it to her daughter saying, "Ok, darling! From this day on, your Guniocholo Chudakarma is over". If, in case, mother is not available, the Chudakarma (Guniocholo) must be executed by her maternal house.

X) Marriage

Tenth Karma of life called marriage which is really significant in terms in value in society. According to the religious belief, the marriage practice must be done within the own caste. The main characteristic that distinguishes the Magar people is the matrilateral cross-cousin marriage pattern which is preferred and compulsory. In this matrilateral cross-cousin marriage the mama or maternal uncle's daughter is the exclusive marriageable property of his nephew or bhanja. Thus, this man's sister's son or banjha has to marry his daughter. Should the daughter wish to marry elsewhere, then the father (banjha's mama) must ask the bhanja if he has any objections and if the permission is given then only can she marry elsewhere. This is a social and traditional injunction that is strictly adhered to even today. This example clearly illustrates the edogamous nature of the Magar society (Gautam and Thapa-Magar, 1994:29).

When a boy gets enough maturity to marry, boy's family starts to search a compatible bride for their son. If the boy's side likes a girl, horoscope and different things are matched and if the mathematical result is positive and all are agreed,

Baihapatta (a kind of agreement between boy's family and girl's family) will be made. While going to bring the bride, the groom's side must bring the following things with:

- According to the practices of own villages, Saimundri (Jewellery).
- Dudhelo Dastur (a kind of payment where a mother is given some amount, i.e. 1 Rupaiya (Nepalese currency) and one chothi (a long wooden vessel) locally brewed wine for being mother and for nourishing his bride's life).
- Pichhako Dastur (tax like a payment) to bride's father (one chothi, a long wooden vessel, locally brewed wine, are automatically considered to be agreed) to bride's brothers.

All above mentioned gifts are accepted by bride's family and they give permission to take their daughter to groom's house. On an auspicious day and time (according to Nepali culture, they say it – Bibaha ko Lagan Ghadi), a ceremony called “Dulahi Ghar Bhitraune”, in which a bride is formally accepted as a family member, is executed. Before this ceremony, a pair of Batti (threads made up of cotton) is put on a Pala (a part of a traditional candle where oil is poured) and lighted throughout the whole night and this ceremony is called “Ratri Jagaune”.

Process of the Ceremony – Dulahi Ghar Bhitraune

Bride and grooms are attired on traditional attires. Grooms put a Khukuri on his waist and a Theki (a wooden vessel where curds are kept) full of curd is carried by bride with the leaves of Maya (a kind of plant). The procession leaded by a virgin girl with a Kalash (a traditional vessel especially for welcoming and avoiding bad stars when someone is beginning travel) and the girl is followed by the bride and again, bride is followed by grooms and then, other people reach the door of the grooms' house. And on an auspicious time, the girl with Kalash firstly enters the house and bride puts her one foot inside the door when elders shout saying, “Din Bho” (the day or time has come) and simultaneously, bull or goat is sacrificed; while the head of the family (Mukhiya) offers Dhaja (long but small in breath banners of garment especially of red and white colour) to Kuldevta (the youngest son of Karpakeli Baba –Kul) and all other gods and goddesses whom the family has been worshipping and a cock is

sacrificed for offering Pitri (elders' spirits who are already dead but still supposed to live with the family protecting the family against evil spirits). After the entering of the bride into the house, groom is supposed to bring back home his mother who hides somewhere else outside the house. The groom satisfies his mother with an extravagant offer. After the entrance of the bride, she takes an oath as "From this day on, I belong to your Kul (nearly similar to family tree) and the groom puts Sindur (a kind of red powder/vermilion, which signifies the pride of a married woman in Hindu culture) on the parting in the hair pronouncing a request that is "From this day on, you belong to my kul (family) and I hope, you will execute all your responsibilities honestly and keep the prestige of our Kukulani (family)".

Putting Tika on the Forehead of Bride and Grooms

Commencing from the hands of the selected virgin boy, all of elders of the family put Tika (blessing) on their foreheads and other elderly persons invited put Tika on their foreheads preaching blessings. But according to the rule, the number of people putting Tika on their foreheads must be odd and then, feast starts.

Meeting the In-laws

This meeting with in-laws can also be called "Dhog Bhet Phukaune", a ceremony where groom goes to meet his in-laws with gifts. The couple is supposed to take the following things with while meeting:

- Roti, a kind of Nepalese local bread, and locally brewed wine.
- Thigh of bull or goat.
- One Dhoro or Pheta (a long piece of white garment which is used to wrap on head exactly in the same manner as of Indian Punjabis).
- One Sarjam clothes, Mujetro (a coverlet or a sheet especially used by women), Chola (Nepalese national attire of woman which nearly similar to blouse in terms of place of wearing), Gunio (a kind of skirts chiefly used to wrap round the middle), and Petticoat for bride's mother.
- Clothes or money to other immediate close relatives for declaring grooms' relation to him/her; which is also called Saino Sojhaune.

These gifts to groom's in-laws are distributed by the relatives of groom. After completing this ceremony, while returning to back home, bride's family gives the new couple some seeds of grains.

X.1 Types of Marriage in Pun Magars

According to Bogardus, "Marriage is an institution for admitting man and woman to family life". Various social customs and traditions, in Nepal, are associated with marriage practice and social customs or laws specify as to whom, how and when one should marry and these differ from society to society and from one sub-group or class to another one. In this way, Pun Magar has its own way.

Two kinds of marriage can be found in Pun Magar's society which are considered to be common, viz., the arranged marriage, Magi Bibaha, and love marriage, Bhagi Bibaha. Though not in practice, a kind of abduction marriage could also be found in Pun Magar's community more than 90 years ago, which are described below.

a) Abduction Marriage

around more than 90 years ago, there was a different kind of marriage to which people were accustomed with than what prevails in the present communities. At that time boys, after being matured enough to marry, were asked to select the girl who he likes and boys used to say to their parents about the girl who he lokes (or he was ordered to marry someone who is liked by his parents). After the decision of which girl, some people from the side of the boy started to follow the girl and when they found the girl alone in a jungle, where she went to fetch fuel woods and grasses for her animals, she was abducted and then, she was brought to the house of boy. After bringing her to the boy's house, some elder people from the side of boy went to the girl's house and said to her parents that their daughter was bitten by tiger, Tapai ko chhori lai Bag ko Bangara lagyo, and soon they realized that their daughter had been abducted from the jungle. Then, within three days, people from the boy's side had to go to girl's house for a formal talk of marriage with carrying a Chothi, a wooden vessel, of three bottles of Raksi, locally brewed wine and after the talk, other rituals were performed; Ketu lai bhitraune, a ceremony where a girl is formally accepted as a daughter-in-law, Pitra

chadhaune, a special ceremony where some offerings have to be made to the eldest spirits of a house, and Bhoj Bhater garne, a feast. Then after, the girl's parents and other relatives were met with many gifts in accordance with their demands; this ceremony was called Dhog garne.

With time the system of marriage has been changing, many factors, especially migration, are considered to be responsible. Many Pun Magar people, who have been migrated to Kathmandu, Pokhara and to the Terai belt, are influenced by the culture of Indo-Aryan community and adopting their culture.

b) Arranged Marriage, Magi Bibaha

boys, who are mature enough to marry, are asked by their parents to choose a girl and after choosing a girl, his parents decides a day and with some kinfolk and senior people, his parents move to the house of the girl at night. They told the reasons behind their coming to the parents of the girl and the talk starts between two parties where the girl is also signified and can express her verdicts upon the topic. The talk may last an hour or a night or several days but the decision of marriage is done only after their agreement on the topic. After getting a marriage decision, all the people, who are attending the talk, are sponsored Raksi by the boy's parents and they, boy's relatives, bring the girl to the boy's house and marriage ceremony begins. Deciding an auspicious day for marriage, the bride enters the home of her husband; keti bhitraune, Pitri are offered; Pitra chadhaune and the couple take Tika from elders. After all these ceremonies, a feast is organized according to their own status.

After celebrating the feast, some people from boy's side go to meet the girl's parents and relatives with offering Raksi, locally brewed wine, Sel Roti, a circular ring made up of rice flour mixing with ghee, sugar and other ingredients, flesh or goat and new clothes as gifts and the ceremony is called Dhog garna jane. Bride and grooms with bridegroom's parents, sisters and brothers, and close relatives, they go to the girl's house and they offer some gifts to the couple. In this way, the marriage ceremony is celebrated. This kind of marriage is still predominant in Pun Magar's community.

c) Love Marriage

This kind of marriage is a completely new trend and is dominating Pun Magar's community rapidly. Boys and girls get closer in different functions and parties which are organized by the community and they fall in love and then, they make a marriage.

6.2.3 Death Rituals

When a man is going to die, he is kept by a plant called Tulashi, a Hindu's sacred shrub, and water, where Saligram (a kind of black stone) is dipped, is given to the man.

If any female dies before the three days of her menstruation, she will be bathed with the water of 108 Muls (springs/origins) and then, the death ritual is executed. If any child dies before the age of 3 years, s/he will not be burnt; instead of that, s/he will be buried and impure period is only upto 3 days.

A. Things to do after Death

- After the immediate death of a man, the body is showered and kept the body on a That (the ground where a man died) smeared with dung, on where Kush (a Hindu's sacred shrub) is put and the body is lain directing the head on north and the corpse is covered with new garments.
- 1 manna rice grain is put on a Thal and a Diyo is lighted.
- The corpse is showered by Cheli (distant and own daughters) and is smeared with oil.
- Pinda of a mixture of rice and milk is given with touching head, both sides of shoulders and both palms; simultaneously, the name of the dead man and Gotra (sub-division of sub-sept, which is kept secret).
- The main entrance, Sanghar, of the house is smeared with dung and Kush, a sacred plant, is put on the smeared place and the corpse is lain on. The corpse is tied on a wooden/bamboo structure and is covered with a white coverlet and Pitamber, yellow garment used to cover the corpse; it is supposed more sacred than the white one, (a new trend, usually only white coverlet is used). Flower

garlands are offered. Pinda (a rice ball) is offered at five places and those Pindas are offered saying, “Pinda has been offered to a being named Pantha (the name of the deceased)”. By doing this, those spirits, who have become ghosts/evil spirits because of some mishaps, would not haunt the deceased. Bhumi (land) and the god of land named Adhithata are considered to become happy by being offered Pindas.

- The corpse is carried on the shoulders by the dead man’s sons; two in each side-front and back, of the bamboo structure carrying each ends, i.e. left and right. If sons of the deceased are not available, other immediate relatives will carry to the cemetery/Ghat. According to our religious belief, while taking the corpse to cemetery carrying on own shoulders, sons are supposed to be free from all debts of father.
- On the half way, land is smeared with dung, a process of purification, and a piece of Bush is put on the place and the corpse is lain on it. On the fifth place (as mentioned above), Pinda is offered saying, “For the spirit in the forms of ghost, Pinda has been offered”. This Pinda protects the body of the deceased from evil spirits (Pichas, Rakshas, and other Bhutprets).
- Then after, the Lashlarya (a bamboo structure where the corpse is tied at five places) is carried again; while carrying the corpse, head of the corpse must be directed towards home and the feet must be directed towards cemetery.
- The corpse is lain in a way that makes the head directed towards north.

B. Necessities immediately after Death

- Bamboo/Wood
- Raw threads/raw Choya (thin and long sliced pieces of Nigla, a kind of bamboo used for making handicrafts).
- A white coverlet/sheet of 5 meters to cover the deceased.
- Clothes of Pat (a kind of plant bark of which can be used to make ropes and clothes)
- White clothes for the route to cemetery
- Layo (a mixture of paddy, maize, pulse, money et cetera) for scattering on the way to cemetery
- 1 manna and Bheti (offerings wrapped in a piece of garment)

- Dung, Kush (a sacred shrub), milk, Akshata (a mixture of curd and rice grains), leaves
- An Ankharā (a vessel to drink water) of copper
- Mustard oil (2 litres)
- Tools to cut
- Camphor incense, Ausike incense, match box
- Woods of Shreekhanda, Chandan, Pipal, Tulasi, and Palas
- Shankha/Conch shell (an musical instrument, especially for religious purposes) for blowing on the route
- Shaving machine for Koropatra (the person who executes Kriya, death rites, of the deceased; especially deceased's own sons)
- Woods to burn the corpse (400 kg)

C. Making a Pyre ready

Clearing the ground, where a pyre is supposed to be prepared, is drawn by Kush, a sacred shrub, a rectangular shape on and within the rectangle ॐ (Om) is written. For the death rituals of the deceased, the piece of land is bought from nature mother while some money is put inside the drawn rectangle on the ground and “Oh, nature mother! Please, provide this piece of land for (name of the deceased and Gotra are pronounced)” is said. Then, a piece of soil is taken out with index finger and thumb and water is sprinkled. On the same place, a small fire place is prepared and fire is made where the god of fire named “Karbek” is worshipped with flowers and Akshata and Howan (an activity in the process of Puja/worshipping when different sorts of materials are thrown into the fire pit) is done with Pindas and Agni (fire) is prayed, “Oh, Agni! You mean the only form of every aspects of ghosts so this being living in this earth died and please, make a favour taking him to heaven.”

After the Puja/worshipping, woods of Shreekhanda, Chandan, Pipal, Tulasi, and Palas are put on the fire place and a pyre is made ready. After being ready, the corpse is rounded the pyre thrice and then, is put on the pyre.

A Pinda is offered on the palm of right hand of the lain corpse saying, “A Pinda has been offered to Suthak”. Another is offered for Pret (spirit) on the above-mentioned five places.

D. Dag Batti

While doing this, gold/gold-rubbed coin (money) is put in the mouth of the corpse with firing camphor incenses by the deceased’s son. If the son is not available, deceased’s own brother will perform the Dag Batti and after doing this, water is given to the corpse carrying Kush, a sacred shrub, on the hand through the right thumb.

If the death does not fall in Panchak, the above mentioned process will be following and the son rounds the pyre thrice carrying a Mashal (a club-like structure with fire on one end; an ancient torch light) and the pyre is put on fire.

E. Silence Making

Before putting fire on the pyre, about a minute, silence is made by all Malami (funeral goers) on a name of the deceased.

F. Panchak

Nakshatras from Dhanista to Rewati; there are 27 Nakshatras in accordance with eastern astronomy and they tells you certain periods of time, are called Panchak. Whoever die in these Nakshatras, namely, Dhanista, Shatwisa, Purwabhadr, Uttarsada and Rewati, are cremated in accordance with Panchak Bidhi/method; otherwise, it is supposed that for the deceased, it will be hard to take another birth in this earth.

There are two kinds of Panchak:

- a) If the death is in Dhanista Nakshatra and the day is of 60 Ghadi (24 hours = 60 ghadi; 60 pala = 1 ghadi; one Nakshatra is of 60 ghadi but it is not necessary

that 60 ghadi falls within a single day) and the death is after 30 ghadi, Panchak is certain.

Then, for this, effigies are made by wrapping 5 Kushs, a sacred shrub, in cotton, oat flour is smeared, and the whole is dipped in ghee. And first effigy on head, second on left eye, third on left hand, fourth on navel and fifth on the toes of two feet, which are brought near to each other. On each of these five places, Pindas are offered putting on leaves.

Mantras for offering Pindas:

I. For head	“Pretbaha”
II. For eye	“Pretshakha”
III. For hand	“Pratep”
IV. For navel	“Pret Bhumip”
V. For feet	“Pret Harta”

While offering Pindas, these mantras are pronounced and the effigies are burnt.

- b) If the death is in Shatwisa, Purwabhadra, Uttarsada and Rewati Nakshatras, effigies will be made by wrapping 4 Kush in cotton which are mingled with raw threads and then, are soaked in ghee. Each of these four effigies is put on two hands and two feet with Pinda putting on leaves.

Mantras for offering Pindas:

I. On right hand	“Pretshakha”
II. On left hand	“Pratep”
III. On right foot	“Pret Bhumip”
IV. On left foot	“Pret Harta”

All the effigies put on two hands and two feet are burnt serially, first of right hand, second of the left hand, third of right foot, and fourth of left foot. After this Panchak Bidhi (method), son of the deceased makes fire on the pyre and then, “Ghiu ko Dhar” means pouring of ghee on the pyre is done while doing so, “Ye maya, somaya”, a mantra, is pronounced.

G. Shaving Heads

Ignoring nail, armpit's hair growth, and short Tuppi, a small bunch of hair left at the back of the head as of Pundit, all hair of the body of the sons of deceased are shaved. The sons, who complete the death rites of the deceased, take bath after being shaved and do not mingle with others; remain isolated and wear new white cloths. If the son of the deceased is not available, the funeral and all death rituals will be performed by the deceased's brothers/brother-in-laws and they will be performing all rites.

After burning the corpse, all funeral goers take bath and water is offered upto 108th times on a name of deceased. While returning from ghat on the half way, all malami (funeral goers) step on a stone, which is pressing a plant full of thorns, by their left foot; each at a time. When they arrive near to the house of deceased, they touch fried corns and smoke/cloud of incense.

H. Sas Thapne

On the evening after the return from the ghat (cemetery), 'sas thapne', knowing what the deceased will be in his next birth, is performed by the deceased's son-in-laws. For this purpose, different varieties, which used to like by the deceased, are prepared and fine powder of ashes is evenly distributed on a Nanglo (winnowing fan) which is placed on the main entrance so that nobody can ignore it before entering into the house through main entrance. The Nanglo (winnowing fan) is covered by a Doko (an open-mouthed cylinder made up of bamboo) with the help of a rope in a manner so that when a man pulls the rope attached with the Doko, the Doko tilts back opening the mouth half.

All people keep quiet and all lights are switched off and a man with rope pulls the rope so that the Doko opens half and another one keeps all prepared varieties. Then, a man whistles and calls the spirit of the deceased by his/her name and says that foods are ready; come in.

All keep quiet and the spirit comes with different kinds of sounds and then, all lights are switched on. Then, the Nanglo, which is covered with Doko, is brought inside the

house and the footprints on the evenly distributed ashes will tell that what s/he becomes in her/his next birth.

I. Koro Basne

‘Koro basne’ means a period of 13 days when different activities are performed for the sake of pacifying the departed soul.

Koro basne period starts from the ghat where the corpse is burnt and koro basne Manchhe, the person performing death rituals on a name of the deceased; especially sons of the deceased, stays on the place of the house where the man died laying straw of rice and in case, rice straw is not available, oat straw can also be used in stead. Whatever garments he used that must be of raw wools; others are not allowed. While staying in Koro, 1 manna rice grains is put on Thal (a kind of plate) lighting a Batti (a lamp) and a piece of raw salt is put on a Kapani (a small plate like vessel, where oil is poured) for the purpose of purifying the lamp.

J. Kriyakram (Death rites) up to 13 days

On the first day, Koropatra (the person who performs the death rites of the deceased) remains in Chhatrabas (fasting and staying on straws) and on the second day, Dhukudi badhne (a small semi-sphere structure of soil is made within a rectangle drawn on a ground; the structure of the soil is called Chauka). Chauka of 1 feet breath and 4 inches height, which is of semi-sphere structure of soil, is made mixing with Kush and on the south of this Chauka, Batti (a lamp) is lighted on the name of the deceased and Pinda of 2 days on the name of Pret (spirit of the deceased) is given. The Pinda is prepared by Koropatra (the person who performs the death rites of the deceased; especially sons of the deceased) himself, which is prepared by cooking rice in cow’s milk. The same process of offering Pinda continues up to 10 days. On the second day after offering Pinda, Koropatra accepts Koromana (corns, fruits, and different items provided by relatives). He does not use anything prepared from the stuffs of the house because all the stuffs of the house is polluted. On the tenth day after offering Pinda, the Chauka is broken down by pushing it with heads of the sons, who have been performing Kriyakram of the deceased. The event is called ‘Dhukudi Phorne’ and is

performed by Koropatra. After this Dhukudi Phorne, all the brothers of the deceased are free to eat salt.

If any sons of the deceased are outside the country, they must reach the house before the tenth day of koro basne and immediately, they get their shaved and dressed themselves as Koropatra and participate in Dhukudi phorne. Otherwise, they have to perform Thade Kriya (same as koro basne but in Thade kriya koropatras do not have to offer Pindas) up to 10 days. On this eleventh day of koro basne, 16 Risis (learned sages) are worshipped and Pret (spirit of the deceased) is offered a Pinda and five cooked grains of rice. Then, 365 pieces of Duna (a kind of bowl made up of only one leaf; if the bowl is made up of many leaves, it will be Tapari) and 365 pieces of Dattiwan (stem of a plant) are made flow into a river pronouncing the name and gotra of the deceased; while flowing the items, water is taken up by the Duna and poured down into the river and then, a piece of Dattiwan is made flow. In the same manner, 365 pieces are made flow into the river on the name of the deceased for 365 days. If the month is the Purusottam month (a sacred month of Hindus), instead of 365, 395 pieces of Duna and Dattiwan are made flow in this month. On the twelfth day, according to custom, Pinda of the great grandfather of the deceased is cut by and Pinda of the deceased is transferred to the Pinda of the deceased's grandfather. On the thirteenth day, according to the religious belief, a Hawan Puja (a worshipping where a fire pit centered on a mandap, altar or an area decorated by Pundit with different with different coloured powders, and Puja/worshipping is performed throwing different items on a fire of the fire pit) is organized. On this day, Kriyakram is ended.

After performing Hawan Puja:

- Dan Dakshina (gifts) are offered to Kutumba (brother-in-laws, and nephews) and cheli (daughters, nieces, sisters, and Phupu meaning father's sisters)
- Chelibeti (daughters, nieces, sisters, phupu) offer new caps and clothes to koropatra.
- Gaidan
(a gift to brahmin or Kutumba, who helps to perform the kriyakram, and the gift entails a cow, clothes (a cap, a shirt, a pant, a shoe, and an umbrella), utensils (Kasaudi, karai, thal, glass, kachaura/bowl, plates, dadu/ladle, and

paniu/serving spoon of copper or brass), ochhyaune saman (things for sitting on, gundri/a hand-made mat, mattress, bed sheet, pillow and quilt) and money.

On the 45th day from the death of the deceased, chelibeti (daughters) light batti (lamp) and lightens the night and by doing this on the name of the deceased, chelibeti are supposed to be free from the debt of mother and father.

After one year of the death on the same thiti when the man died, sons of the deceased offer Pinda of the year and lights batti and this makes the spirit on a right direction to heaven.

6.2.4 Religion

“...the Magar are animists, but due to the influx of the Brahmins from the Indo-Gangetic plains through the ages, the impression of these learned Vedic scholars and their Caucasoid features seem to have made a great impact on these simple Magar folks thus gradually being manipulated into the acceptance of the religion called Hinduism. Today the Magar are the most Hinduised tribe in the country. They worship the Hindu Trinity – Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva and the host of other deities in their pantheon both Hindu and local.”

Dr. Rajesh Gautam and Asoke K. Thapa-Magar, *Tribal Ethnography of Nepal*, p. 34

“...Buddhist and Hindu practices are best developed among Magars living in contact with Tibetan Buddhists and Indo-Aryan Hindus respectively.”

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indigenous_peoples

“...Traditionally, the Magars were Animists, but due to the influence of the Brahmin Hindus over time, the Magars have been Hinduised to one degree or another.”

<http://1040window.org/nepalprayerguide/day8.htm>

“...The vast majority of Magars has little or no concept of who God is and has never even heard the name of Jesus.”

<http://1040window.org/nepalprayerguide/day8.htm>

“...as other Hindus worship local materials, Magar people worship Sun & moon, rivers, lakes, ponds, trees, Nag s (snakes), earth (Bhumi), & winds (spirits). So, it can be said that Magars love nature and are really mingled with nature.”

Krishna Bahadur Kunwar, *Poverty & Community Development*, p. 284

“A network of Magar kingdoms once controlled the entire region, but the arrival of Hindus in the fifteenth century brought swift political decline and steady cultural assimilation.”

www.travelingo.org/asia/nepal/nepal-western-hills/guide/50214

“Although all Magars follow Hinduism yet the Pun Magars of Tibetan frontier are still in Buddhist religion and follow their tribal rites at their birth, marriage and death ceremonies.”

I.S. Chemjong, *History and Culture of the Kirat people*, p. 84

“Over a century ago Brian Hodgson wrote that the Magars are in the main Hindus only because it is the fashion.”

Dor Bahadur Bista, *People of Nepal*, p. 62

“...historically the Tarangpur (Dolpa) Magars - neither a full-fledge Hindu caste nor unalloyed Tibetan Buddhists, but always at the mercy of outsiders, who were one or the other had to defer, serially or simultaneously, to both Hindu and Buddhist sources of power, prestige, and influence.”⁴¹ For Fisher, “Buddhism and Hinduism are historical accretion. The Magars and other Tibeto-Burman groups were apparently neither Buddhist nor Hindu originally.”⁴² Like tribes elsewhere in South Asia, the Magars of Tarangpur “live on the fringes on Hindu society, but unlike most of these other tribal peoples, they also live on the fringes of Buddhist society. Tarangpur is culturally convoluted, geographically isolated, and socially ingrown.”⁴³

The preference in Tarangpur of Dolpa district, according to Fisher, is not of one religion over another but a preference for politics over religion, because politics is inextricably bound up with the core of Tarangpur life, namely, the pursuit of power, status and wealth. The key to securing these lies in the hands of the Hindu modernists the national elite in Kathmandu and their functionaries in outlying area, who are

⁴¹ Fisher, James F., op. cit., p. 34-35

⁴² Fisher, James F., op. cit., p. 208

⁴³ Ibid, p. 14

directly and explicitly attempting to integrate Tarangpur into modernist Hindu political and economic structures. There is no comparable pull from the north. Ironically, the mountaineers of Tarangpur look up to the lowlanders. Rather than either 'Sanskritization' or 'Tibetanization,' a process of religious triangulation is under way. For the descendants of the few high caste Thakuri families who settled, intermarried, and were hence 'Magarized,' the process is even more complex. The indigenous cult, centered on local mountain deities, has been overlaid with Tibetan Buddhism, and Hinduism in turn has challenged this.⁴⁴

Thapa Magar, Govinda P., *Magars Through the Eyes of Western Writers: A Socio-Anthropological Review*, p. 6-7

Magars can be found following Hinduism and Buddhism but the proofs in terms of their aboriginal religion are still missing; no or little study in terms of religion of Magar people has been done. This little study does not claim but only try to decipher the path to mystery; explicitly for the purpose of the dissertation.

Going through the work of Chemjong in *History and Culture of the Kirat people*, it is crystal clear that Magar people were influenced much more by both doctrines of religions – Hinduism and Buddhism; those who resided along the borderline of the Tibet were influenced by Buddhism and those who sustained the harsh overtaking of Hindu kingdoms in the lower hills and plains were willingly and unwillingly become apostates and followed Hinduism.

On a work of Dor Bahadur Bista in the form of book named *People of Nepal*, some interesting points have been pointed out about the Magar's religion – acculturation of culture. The book entails a statement of Brian Hodgson which states that Magars are in the main Hindus only because it is the fashion. Judging this statement, an example is really compatible to illustrate here and that is, while doing research, some interviews were intentionally done in a group so that respondents might be influenced by different factors, they might feel inferior than his/her peers so s/he responds in the same manner as of others who are supposed socially superior. Some people becomes Buddhist changing their religion from Hindus only because some people, who are supposed to be more aware, read some books of Magar Association and found out that

⁴⁴ Ibid.

they belonged to Buddhism and they just follow it; no clarifications needed and others follow it just these people says. Not a surprising trend in the history of Sociology/Anthropology because it believes that cultural change happens through different mechanisms, namely, innovation, diffusion, cultural loss, and acculturation.

The author also wrote, “The majority of Magars are Hindus, and as such they have Brahmin priests who lead them in the same pattern of religious practices as the Brahmin-Chhetris. With exception that Magars do not wear the sacred thread, they are in every other respect exactly the same as the Chhetris in their attitudes and behaviour. The fact, however, that there are Magars living near Buddhists in the districts of Myagdi and Dolpo who have adopted Buddhism suggests that it is largely a question of association.” That means it suggests that people if accepts a trend in a majority, people of minority will sooner or later accept the trend. The author again discusses about the association of Magars with the Khas and writes an another interesting situation illustrated by Hodgson who, in his book named *Origin and Classification of the Military Tribes of Nepal*, writes that although Magars still retain their vernacular tongue, tartar faces, and the like, through association for generations in the military service under the predominant Khas, and through the commerce of Khas males with Magar women, the Magars have acquired the Khas language, though not to the oblivion of their own, and Khas habits and sentiments, but with sundry reservations in favour of pristine liberty. Association with the predominant Hindus, Magars might have been influenced and culture changes might have taken place. But these reasons might not be sufficed to understand the lost of original culture of the Magar tribe.

There are lots of proofs already mentioned in the sub-heading *Origin of Magar tribe*, including that Magars as a tribal group do not have a well defined position in a strictly stratified caste structure, which suggests that Magars are not originally Hindu.

In the magazine named *Yeju* published, “And in 1910 BS, there was a constitution of the united Nepal and which started to dominate harshly the culture and tradition and even the language of other tribes, among them Pun M g r’s language was also a one. The constitution, forcefully, compelled those tribes to change their religion and wanted them to be Hindu and wanted them to speak in Kh s Kura.” Again, writes,

“Pun Magar of Magdi, Gulmi, Arghakhanchi and Baglung of west of Nepal were banned to speak in their own language, Khamkura, and if anybody offended it, he would be fined of *Char P isa*. Whoever in Limbu community did not want to change their caste wearing *J n i* was fined *Dui Pr sa*. Privatizing the ownership of lands, owners were taxed in accordance with their caste.” These historical materials suggest us acculturation through force, which happened especially when Prithivi Narayan Shah got victory over 22 Se 24 Se Rajy s (kingdoms). This part of glimpse of the history also seems convincing that Magar people were forcefully made to follow Hinduism and they were deprived to speak their own language; instead they were compelled to speak Kh s language. That is how some clans of Magar people lost their own language forever. Analyzing this part of history, the statement still stands promising pointing out different facts, for example, despite the existence of various religions in the country, it is until a few months ago, called a Hindu kingdom which is directly a kind of suppression of predominant factor. Another ridiculous fact is that the syllabus of the culture study in Master Degree of Arts which only entails the Hindu religion.

For declaring them to be Buddhist originally, there are not such convincing proofs; neither the practices, which are still supposed to be their own culture, do match the culture of Buddhist nor anywhere inscribed that they followed Buddhism originally. They are supposed to be migrated from Mongolia but that is solely not enough to prove that they are Buddhists.

“Characteristics common across many indigenous groups include present or historical reliance upon subsistence-based production (based on pastoral, agricultural and/or hunting and gathering techniques), and a predominantly non-urbanized society. Indigenous societies may be either essentially settled in a given location or exhibit a nomadic lifestyle across a large territory.” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indigenous_people)

It is, at least, clear that Magars, indigenous people, are people as described above and they do not have own written cultures as of Hindus. Being a Magar myself, it is more reasonable to me that Magars are animists and doctrines like of Hinduism and Buddhism could not be expected from these indigenous people because far from the

main stream of the human civilization, they were living isolated from the outside world and this is proved when it comes to the topic of ‘discovery of alphabets/words’; they were unknown about these things; but that does not prove that they did not use to have their own alphabets/words. For instance, there are still some tribes in existence isolated from the technocratic world in the Andaman Islands called the *Sentinelese* and *Jarawa*. They are unknown about the commercialized, technocratic, industrialized, and politically and religiously fragmented world. They have own culture and natural resources which suffice to fulfil their necessities and amusements daily. There are also many tribes suffering from the colonizing or expansionary activities of other societies, for example, *Maya people* of Mesoamerica, who would one day lose their originality, if sociologists/anthropologists were not out there to write down about them. The same kind of encroachment might have taken place so that they started to lure into the more nicely furnished doctrines of other religions rather than sticking on the same unwritten practices, which were themselves started not to accept as a religion because it became so common to them as Kul Puja for new generation of Magar people, who never realize that it is a part of their religion and unique to other doctrines.

On a book named *Tribal Ethnography of Nepal*, writers have suggested that they have culture which has been evolved through centuries. “...is gleaned from their oral tradition. Unlike the other traditions of different tribes the Magar tribe does not have these traditional injunctions and customs made at a sitting by a group of people but it has evolved through centuries of situations and circumstances through which the Magar have passed and gradually changed into the form they are seen as today.” So, these religions can be said evolved with the human civilization where the alphabets/words were discovered. At that time, Magar people were busy on hunting their daily necessities and they were really unaware about the outside world. They might have lived in the jungle as *Chepangs* and had own unique culture as of many indigenous tribes of the world. They used to live in jungle or near jungle so they could fulfill their daily necessities easily. They would worship nature, like Magars still worship nature in many forms; they worship sun and moon, rivers, lakes, ponds, trees, Nag s (snakes), earth (Bhumi) et cetera. So, they are near to the statement which presents Magars as animists and followers of shamanism. In case of Magar’s religion, it is naïve to say that they are Hindus or Buddhists because the foremost thing,

according to history, is that they became Hindus after the emergence of Hindu missionaries in the 22 Se 24 Se Rajyas (kingdoms).

They have their own culture far earlier than the emergence of Hinduism and Buddhism in Nepal, I believe. The Buddhism entered into the Nepal through Tibet while there were numerous kingdoms in Nepal, called 22 Se 24 Se Rajyas (kingdoms) and the villages/kingdoms near to the borderline of Tibet were heavily influenced by Buddhism.

Excluding all practices from Magar people, which belongs either to Buddhism or to Hinduism, remaining would suggest that Magar people are animists and they follow shamanism; my inference to the discussion which might be unintentionally influenced by biasness or which might be incomplete in terms of study. So, as already acknowledged, it only tries to demystify the original religion of Magar people.

6.2.5 Festivals

This heading only includes those festivals which are celebrated by Hindu Magars; it is reasonable to present reasons behind this restriction are – (a) the study is of limited natured scope within the study area, (b) within the study area, Magar people are mostly Hindu and they are mostly Pun Magars so the festivals celebrated by Pun Magars will be presented as of Magars. No misunderstandings will be encountered by the readers, I hope.

One of the unique festivals of Magar is Kul Puja which has its own significance among these indigenous people.

Kul Puja

The Kul Puja of the Magar people is one of great importance to them this is gleaned from their oral tradition. Unlike the other traditions of different tribes the Magar tribe does not have these traditional injunctions and customs made at a sitting by a group of people but it has evolved through centuries of situations and circumstances through

which the Magar have passed and gradually changed into the form they are seen as today.

“...worship of the Kul Devta commenced somewhere in the seventh century and due to the fact that their Kul Devta Barha troubled them a lot so according to the Jhankri and Dhami of those days the people got together and began to propitiate the Kul Devta and that is how this has come to pass.”

Dr. Rajesh Gautam and Asoke K. Thapa-Magar, *Tribal Ethnography of Nepal*, p. 34

“...the worship involves propitiating Siva and all the deities worshipped by that family.”

Dr. Rajesh Gautam and Asoke K. Thapa-Magar, *Tribal Ethnography of Nepal*, p. 34

Only a kind of Kul Pujas does not represent the whole Magar. As the culture of Magar people varies from clan to clan, it is naïve to put all Magar under one heading. According to the history, all Magar people are considered to be originated from the same ancestor but as it known that culture is of dynamic nature; though the rate is slow in the case of non-material culture.

“Culture is a symbolic and dynamic system.”

Indra Bilash Paudel, *Socio-Cultural Factors in Development*, p. 151

It is more pleasant to hear that Magars are animists and there are still lots of activities remained survived enduring the harsh acculturation. History has not revealed the original religion and language of many Magars. According to the history, Hinduism, due to the influence of the Brahmins from the Indo-Gangetic plains through the ages, the impression of these learned Vedic scholars and their Caucasoid features seem to have made a great impact on these simple Magar folks thus gradually being manipulated into the acceptance of the religion, and Buddhism, due to the influence of Tibet border lining villages started to accept the religion, are practiced in Magar communities which is because of acculturation by the colonial power.

“...animals like bulls or pigs are slaughtered so as to be able to present shares to the various groups that are involved in this group.”

Dr. Rajesh Gautam and Asoke K. Thapa-Magar, *Tribal Ethnography of Nepal*, p. 35

Not surprising to present differences among the clans of the same caste group in many aspects but it is rather logical to illustrate the deviations when it comes about religion. For instance, the above mentioned reason behind Kul Puja does not match the reason behind the Kul Puja of Pun Magars.

Another point which illustrates some contrasts between Thapa Magar and Pun Magar, i.e., Thapa Magar uses pigs even in their Kul Puja, whereas pig is untouchable to Pun Magars.

All these discussions verdict and support the statement for not including all Magars under one heading when it comes under the discussion of culture.

Kul Puja can be done only once every three years and so it is followed. It is done on the full moon of the month of Jes \square t \square hā, Jes \square t \square hi Purn \square ima. It is performed on a pristine hill or on the paddy field building a Than or shrine and while performing the Puja, three Pujaris (priests) do not speak with each other. Jes \square t \square hi Purn \square ima is a festival to Pun Magars. According to the myth, on the same night of the Jes \square t \square hi Purn \square ima, Pun Magar's ancestral god, K r pakeli Baba, was carried to the home by three Pujaris (priests) from the cold-watered Pādhero (underground spring) keeping him in a Soli (a kind of oko but bigger in size and does not have holes on surfaces as of oko) of *Bet* (a kind of flexible bamboo used for handicraft making), carrying by Namlo of *Bet*, hiding by *Bet*'s Supo (Na glo), and using *Bet*'s stick. For some reasons, if the Jes \square t \square hi Purn \square ima is missed, the Puja can be performed on the Ujeli Pākshā or Shuklā Pākshā (15 days after no moon or Kris \square n \square P ksh) of any months. On the day of Puja, all people of the same inheritance, Bāsh , and neighbours are invited.

Before doing this Puja, Bayo B rmase (elder's spirits who have already died but worshipped for protecting the house from evil spirits) and moon and god and goddesses of moon are worshipped, according to the custom. If those people, who are executing this Puja, have any Bh kk l (a kind of Puja promised to god or goddesses after fulfilling his/her wishes), they must perform it before doing Kul Puja.

A. Jäd □ Rakhne (preparing liquor for the Kul Puja)

While organizing Kul Puja, the first thing to do is preparing Jäd (a local liquor prepared out of cooked rice mixing with M rcha, yeasts) which is very essential because the Jäd/Chhya g. Jäd/Chhya g is kept for fermentation mixing with M rcha (yeasts) a week earlier estimating the number of guests. This duty is of the female head of the house and she is called “*Chhema*”. The day when rice is kept for fermentation, Chhema goes to the Pādhero (underground spring) and takes a bath to become unpolluted and fetches water and keeps the cooked rice for fermentation mixing with M rcha (yeasts) while doing this she does not talk and mingle with other people; remembers only Kul Devta. There should not be any kind of disturbances or turbulences while keeping Jäd □ which is called “*Jolchi*”.

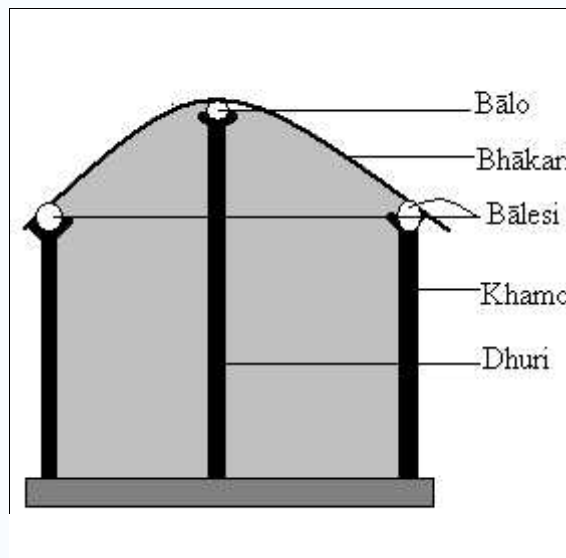
Three days earlier than the day of Kul Puja, Jäd/Chhya g of 3 mana rice is fermented for offering to the Kul Devta and the fermented rice for Jäd/Chhya g is put on leaves of the *Ru Ru* tree (leaves of this tree give off a pleasant smell while burning the leaves smearing ghee on it), which is piled on a white garment, and the raw Jäd/Chhya g is wrapped with the same white cloth which is hanged somewhere in the house; this job is executed by the male head of the house in the same manner as Chhema does without being Jolchi (disturbed). Jäd/Chhya g is divided into nine masses and is kept in the Than (shrine) but in case of Purja (a sub-clan of Pun Magar), they divide it into 18 masses; the reason behind this difference is as follows:

“Out of nine brothers, the eldest Ramchan and the youngest Kul, after being blessed from Karpakeli Baba (the ancestral god of Pun Magars), started to roam in jungles hunting and gathering livings (see chapter six; myth of Karpakeli Baba). After long time, some Purjas found them in the jungle and began to request them to come to their house and live there. But these two brothers did not agree with their proposal so the Purja people offered them a nice proposal of serving with nine-horned (roosters) and two-horned (lambs) and they agreed. Because of their success to bring their Kul Devta to their house, they divide Jäd/Chhya g into 18 masses.

B. Making a Than (Shrine)

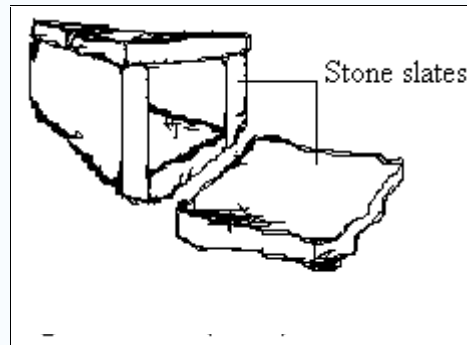
Than or shrine is built on a pristine hill or ground or clean area. Firstly, a Got^h (a house-like structure) is made with Bh kari (a big mat made up of the *Choya*, sliced-pieces of the stem, of *Tite Ni gla*, a kind of bamboo). While making Got^h, B lo of the Dhuri (for making a Got^h, 9 B los, logs, are needed and out of 9, 4 are of the same size and the above end of these B los is of 'V' shaped and are called Khamo which supports B lesi, two logs lying on the the 4 Khamos with the support of the V-shaped ends. There are two longer Dhuris, which are longer than Khamos and stand in between the left and right Khamos so that while Bh kari roofs the Khamos and Dhuris, it takes a convex shape; Figure 16) is projected out a measure of three hands (a length from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger) because the Kul Devta sits on it and watches the guests; according to the belief.

Figure 16: One sided View of Goth



The Got^h is walled on every side leaving only one side open so that the surface could work as a door. Within that Got^h, a Than (shrine) is built by 5 big stone slates; one for base, one for roof, and three for walls, and one big stone slate is put just in front of the door or open side so that while *Than Ut^hhaune* (ending part of the Kul Puja), the Than is closed by the same big stone slate which is actually used for burning Dhup (incense).

Figure 17: Than (Shrine)



Than (shrine) is made of that much size, which, at least, occupies a space where 9 masses of Jäd/Chhya g can be kept. Around the Than (shrine), 9 Lingos (trunk of bamboo) are made ready.

C. Materials required for the Puja

Three Pujaris (priests) worship the Kul Devta in the midnight of the Jes□t□hi Purn□ima without talking. Therefore, all the materials required will be made ready on the day before.

Materials required for putting in Sosārma (T□heki or a wooden vessel)

- i. Swāg Pote (white Pote meaning a white necklace of small numerous beads which symbolises a woman married) – for S ntudev (Thumma)
- ii. Knife, dagger or Khurāge Aäsi (a tool for cutting) – for god of corns
- iii. A bunch of leaves of Ru Ru (a tree)
- iv. Jäd in a T□heki (a wooden vessel) – for Kul Devta

Materials required for putting in oko (a vessel weaved by Choya, thin long vertical pieces of Tite Ni gla bamboo)

- i. Chi n (a pile of corns) of 9 manas – for Kul Devta
- ii. One M rch (a yeast ball for fermentation) – for the god of M rch

- iii. Bāsnautāo (clothes) of a measure of three hands (a measure of from elbow to the tip of the middle finger) – for R imaseni (the first wife of K rpakeli Baba and the eldest sister of Phim la)
- iv. Aksh ta (rice grains) of 3 manas – for Phim la (the second wife of K rpakeli Baba and a younger sister of R imaseni)
- v. Bheti (offering) of 9 P isa – for the 9 sons of K rpakeli Baba
- vi. One B tti (a thread made up of cotton) on K p ni (part of Diyo where oil is poured) – for the 9 sons of K rpakeli Baba)
- vii. 9 Shil (thin rods for piercing pieces of meat used when making barbaque) of pierced meat
- viii. One sword – for 9 brothers
- ix. A bow and an arrow – for K rpakeli Baba
- x. A target of Bh kimlo (a kind of wood) – for K rpakeli Baba
- xi. 9 Lisnu (a trunk of medium size where steps are made) – for 9 brothers
- xii. One P rä g (a rope of Tite Ni gla of which two ends are kept parallel so that small sticks of Tite Ni gla can be put in between these two sides unfolding little bit the ropes of the two sides) – for harvesting honey
- xiii. Gop (a vessel to collect beehives) – for collecting honey
- xiv. A Chhani (honey purifier) – for separating out honey
- xv. A Rota (a kind of belt) – to tie around the waist
- xvi. Dabilo (a tool made up of wood used for separating honey from the combs) – for separating honey
- xvii. Tägo (a instrument for catching Gop) – to catch the Gop
- xviii. Dop (a short spinter of wood, one end of which is sharp) – for hammering it on the crevices of rocky hills
- xix. 5 leaves of the Ru Ru (a tree) – for Seule Jhäkri (shaman)
- xx. A feather of Gārudā/Sun Giddā (a kind of vulture which is golden coloured on its neck) – for K rpakeli Baba
- xxi. Three G ja (a turnk of Ni gla which is rooted up with its root so that the root portion can beat the Thal, a plate) – for M ite - Ritāhe Jhäkri (shaman), shaman used by K rpakeli Baba
- xxii. A necklace of the ox tail's hair – for S mjh na (remembrance)
- xxiii. Sholi of Bet bamboo – for K rpakeli Baba
- xxiv. Supo (a Na glo) of Bet bamboo – for K rpakeli Baba

- xxv. Stick of Bet bamboo – for K rpakeli Baba
- xxvi. A Shila (stone) – for G rud□/Sun Gidd
- xxvii. Woods for *Hāsh l gaune* (a process where woods are fired making straight under the honey combs; it is supposed that if there is no pollution period for the people firing woods and s/he believes in Kul Devta, the smoke from the fire will go straight to the honey combs; otherwise, the smoke never reaches the combs; it diverges on the midst to honey combs.) – for blowing smoke to the comb while honey hunting
- xxviii. Sunpani (gold dipped water) in Ākh ra (a jug) – for sprinkling Sunpani to the Than (shrine) to make pure
- xxix. Nine pairs of Dh ja (sacred banners of red and white colour) – for nine brothers
- xxx. Nine Rot□i (a ring-like bread) – for nine brothers
- xxxi. One pair of Dh jas is tied on Dhuri before starting the Puja (there are two kinds of Dhuris; one *Din Ko Dhuri*, which is referred by the astrologer, and one is simple Dhuri; the Dh ja is tied especially on the *Din Ko Dhuri*.)
- xxxii. Leaves of Ru Ru (a tree) – for the purpose of incense
- xxxiii. T□at□nu (crossed two sticks one end of which are earthed and in the same fashion, many crosses are serially managed where, on the top of these crosses, grasses are kept for animals and on the lower portion of the cross, animals are tied), Damlo (a rope used to tie the animals), and grass of Ru Ru (a tree; leaves of which smell while burning) – for Kamdhenu cow
- xxxiv. One mana (1 pound weight of corn) rice grains, Bhet□i (gifts), and a pair of Dh ja – for putting in Soli
- xxxv. A rooster – for the eldest Ramch n
- xxxvi. One Häse-Gore (a white lamb) – for the youngest Kul

D. Bringing Home the K rpakeli Baba

Above mentioned materials must be ready by the day before Puja. After the dark, three Pujaris (priests of Magars) go to the Pādhero (underground spring) taking a Soli and a Gagri (a vessel to fetch water from taps) for bringing a Shila (a black stone) and

water from that Pādhero. Talking between them is not allowed. Without other's notice, these Pujaris (priests- one virgin boy, usually below 13 years of age and two people of the same Gotr) take bath and washing the Shila (stone) with the water of Pādhero, they put it in the Bet (a kind of bamboo)'s Sholi, a kind of oko but bigger in size, and the Sholi is covered with Supo (a Na glo) of Bet which is carried by again a Namlo (a knotted rope where a stripe is placed to put on the forehead while carrying something) of Bet (a kind of bamboo) and the whole is covered with white sheet while bringing back to home carrying a Bet's stick on one hand. After the part of Puja finished, incense of Ru Ru's leaves are burnt on a name of Ramch n inside the house where a rooster is asked a permission for being sacrificed; the process of asking permission is called m nchha nchh , when water and ksh ta (rice grains) are taken on a palm and the palm is rounded around the rooster and the water and ksh ta are splashed on the rooster. The process is repeated up to three times and the rooster flutters its body which means permission is granted, if the rooster does not flutter in three times, then the process will be continued up to 5 or 7 times but normally a rooster flutters within three times. After the permission of the rooster, people take it to the Than (shrine) taking other materials necessary.

E. Puja/Worshipping Programme

- i. N u khe Rekhi (five vertical lines and on it four horizontal lines are drawn)
- ii. N u (9) Rotis (ring-like breads) fried on both sides are prepared; there are two kinds of Roti (bread) – one is fried only on one side (called kohoro Roti) and another is fried on both sides (called Dohoro Roti).
- iii. The bulk of Jād/Chhya g is divided into 9 masses.
- iv. Nine pairs of Dh ja are tied on 9 Lingos; one in each Lingo around the Than.
- v. On a one corner of the Than, Dhar (milk) is offered and on another corner, Sas (water) is offered.
- vi. On a big stone slate just in front of the Than, incense of the leaves of Ru Ru (a tree) is burnt

F. The eldest Ramch n is worshipped with a Rooster

Nearby the fire pit, N u Rekhi (nine lines) are drawn and one pair of Dh ja is offered with burning incense to the eldest Ramch n. Then, as already mentioned, the rooster is asked the permission for being sacrificed, m nchha nchh , and the rooster is sacrificed on a name of the eldest when the blood of the rooster is offered in the fire pit leaving the Than without blood. The flesh of the rooster must be eaten by the priests alone and the remnants/leftover cannot be shared; that must be brunt in the fire pit or buried in the earth. Then after, the fire pit is washed and smeared with dung and soil called Lot aune and the Puja of the youngest Kul is started.

G. The youngest Kul is worshipped with a Lamb

A pair of Dhāja, Jād in a Chōt hi (a wooden vessel), salt, chilly et cetera are brought to the Than (shrine) with a lamb and the lamb is m nchha nchh . On the first crowing of a bird called Dudde/Dhupeni, the lamb is sacrificed on a name of the youngest Kul and the *Patra* (an organ) and the Aüt hi (liver) are kept on a vessel. Then, skin of the lamb is stripped from the body and heart and testicles; all of these organs are put in the Sholi. Nine pieces of meat are pierced on nine Shil (thin rods), one on each, for nine brothers. All other internal organs are cooked which is called Hepaji/Pr sad (the blessed offerings). The lady called Chhema go to the Than (shrine) with Jād and asked for permission to get into the Than. Then, Chhema asked the Pujaris (priests) for Hepaji with offering a sweet Jād. The Hepaji is distributed to all guests with the sweet Jād.

H. kha b khan (the Story of Kul Devta) by Jhākri (Shaman)

All the materials gathered for this Puja are checked by the Jhākri whether the materials are according to the demand of Puja. After a nice meal of all guests, the Jhākri tells the story of the Kul Devta to the guests.

I. Than (Shrine) Utthaune

It is an ending ceremony of the Kul Puja when the male head of the house picks the masses of the Jäd; 3 and 3 in two times and then, only 2 masses are picked leaving one in the Than (shrine). The female head of the house spreads her Phin/B rko (a kind of shawl which is worn by knotting the two ends of the same side; it goes around the neck and down to the armpit of one arm) and the male head of the house picks the masses saying “S h a – S h a ” meaning summons of good luck. After picking all masses leaving only one behind, the door of the Than/Shrine is closed with the big stone slate just in front of the door of shrine, where incense is burnt, promising “the door will be opened after three years” and all the materials are picked. The male head of the house carries the Sholi and rounds the fire pit thrice and after doing that, all moves to the house. Before entering directly into the house, people round the house thrice making it on the right side. The masses of Jäd offered to the Kul Devta and N u Sita (Dohoro Roti) are distributed to all guests as Pr sad (the blessed offering). In this way, the Kul Puja is ended.

They (Hindu Magars) celebrate all the Hindu festivals like Maghe S nkranti, Sraw ne S nkranti, Teej, Ch it D s i, B isakh Purnima, Kushe usi, Jānmā Ās t hāmi, D s i, Tihar, and such. They worship the Hindu god and also other female deities representing fertility and power - Chān d i, Deurali Maē, Kalika, Bhāwani, etc.

The D s i festival is celebrated by the Magar people and this is the time when they offer blood sacrifices of pigs to their deities, especially the female *Sh kti* and they drink alcohol and make merry. Families visit their *mul* or main houses and wear *tika* from the hands of their elders or parents and meet their relatives and kin after an interval of a year. The significance of the D s i period among the Magar people is one where the Lord has given them time to let out steam after the whole year's suppression and to make up on the time lost during the year with separation of the kin. People travel from one place to the other carrying gifts or *Koseli* which are essential when going for *tika*.

It is said that the custom of playing Bh ilo in Tihar is a tradition started by the Magar king Balihang who lived in the west of the country of which the eastern border was Pokhāra, the southern border Gorākhāpur, the western one being Pyut han and the northern border G lkot.

Magars worship the same gods and goddesses as Brahmāns and Chhetris: Visṇu, Māhadev, Ramāchandrā, Krisṇā, Gāṇesh, Lākshmi, Sārāswoti, Bhāgāwāti et cetera. They observe the same festivals of D s i, Tihar, Sākranti, and others, in addition to which they celebrate a number of tribal occasions, festivals for worshipping clan deities, and other gods and goddesses. Many Magars join the Hindu Kali festival of Gorkha at the door of the temple of Kali. Bhātā Brahmāns are the temple priests, while Bohra Chhetris and Bhusal Rana Magars are the attendants of Kali.

Dor Bahadur Bista, *People of Nepal*, p. 62

As above-mentioned, Hindu Magars celebrate all the Hindu festivals; that make sometime no differences between them and Bahun & Chhetris as both are Hindus and celebrate all Hindu festivals in the same manner. The D s i festival is also celebrated by Magar (Pun)s but it is little bit different than of Magar (Thapa)s because Magar (Pun)s never offer blood sacrifices of pigs which are untouchable to Magar (Pun)s and have no specific reasons behind the celebrating the D s i festival; they just follow the reasons as described by Brahmins.

6.2.6 Dress and Ornaments

The Magar of the low hills wear the ordinary K chh d or wrap-on-loincloth, a Bhotō or a shirt of vest and the usual Nepali Tōpi. The women wear the Ph riya or sari-like dress above the ankles, Ch ub ndi Cholo or a closed blouse and the heavy Pātūka or waist band or girdle and the Mujetro or shawl like garment. The higher altitude Magars wear an additional Boku similar to the Gurung shepherders and the ones living in Tarakot area even wear the Tibetanish Chhuba. The ornaments are the Mundri on the ears, Bulaki on the nose and the Phuli on the left nostril, the silver coin necklace and the Pote with the Til h ri gold cylinder. Some are seen to wear the K lli on the ankles but it is out of style nowadays. Magar males do not wear ornaments but some are seen to have earrings or silver and gold hanging from their ear lobes. The amulet or locket necklace is worn by the Magar girls and women of the lower hills and the high altitude ones wear these made of silver with Muga stones imbedded in

them. The bangles of gold and glass are also worn on their hands along with the Sirb ndi and Sirphuli on their heads. These are large pieces of gold beaten in elongated and circular shapes. (Gautam and Thapa-Magar, 1994, p. 39)

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This chapter entails the summary of the whole research, conclusions drawn, and recommendations from the researcher for the welfare of the Magar people in the community who have been living there with only few feeble options. The data found through the field work visualize the real scenario of the study area.

7.1 Summary of the Research

In this research, for the data collection, three *Wadas*, i.e. ward no. 5, 8, & 9, were taken where Pun Magar communities could be found and 50 households, as described in the conceptual framework, were sampled out who could represent the whole households in accordance with the concept of random sampling method.

Description of the culture was done with secondary data which was consulted with key informants, as described in the conceptual framework, for the purpose of checking faults.

For the determination of the social status of the communities, different variables were selected (see Chapter 6.1) and awareness level in different factors were tested and the awareness level of the people was matched with the real practices. The data taken were scrutinized, analyzed and the prime factors for the happening were presented diagrammatically.

Although their educational status was very low (see fig.6), they were found to be very conscious about the education of their children; 27.5% of the respondents migrated to the city area just because they wanted their children quality education.

All the respondents were found to be quite good in terms of the knowledge about family planning and condoms but in terms of HIV/AIDS, there were 2% respondents who had no knowledge about condoms for HIV/AIDS protection.

There were respondents who had sound knowledge about family planning and preferred to have only 2 or 3, which is the maximum limit, children. About marriage, people preferred once in a life and only 10% of the whole were found to be married more than once because of the deceased of the first wife. Marriage in the same caste was not the compulsion; they showed very flexibility saying that '*Marriage is a private affair*', if the case was not of untouchables, though they preferred the same caste.

92.5% of the whole respondents were found, who would like to visit to hospitals and shamans, depending on the nature of the case and only 7.5% of the whole were found not believing in shamans.

A huge portion of the respondents (70%) were found using chemicals, though irregular and in a little amount, and they were found to have very little knowledge about new technologies for the modernization.

Most of the Magars (90%) were found following Hinduism, though the practices were not in the same strict way as Brahmins follows, and only 10% of the whole respondents were found following Buddhism but they were become Buddhists recently after the realization through reading books that they were Buddhist originally. All respondents wanted their kids to be well acquainted with their culture.

For the purpose of finding the economic status of the community, different variables were measured and analyzed (see Chapt.6.2). Major crops of the community were rice and maize but people were found to be producing mustard, wheat and millet as well. They did double cropping per annum.

The pattern of land distribution went from 1 to 10 Kattha to 1 to 2 Bigha. There was no vast unequal land distribution; some families (18%) had really low landholding size including other factors (see Chapt.6.2) and that brought them under the low food sufficiency status. But the overall food sufficiency status was determined by the intervening variables like amount of rainfall because the independent variable like irrigation facility is not available there.

42% of the whole respondents depended upon agriculture solely but there were 36% of the respondents; they depended upon agriculture as well as foreign services (see fig.17).

No family except some family of British armies and holding good foreign services responded that they could spare money.

They had two kinds of informal economic institutions, namely, *Dhikuri & Kosh Uthaune*. These institutions also helped to these people for getting little more relief from the economic problems.

Overall, the social status of the Magar (Pun) community was good, though the educational status was not satisfactory, which was not the sole factor to fix the status of any community, and the economic status of the community was good but rather sensitive because it was of very conditional nature, which could be disturbed as in this planting season, there were no raining for the plantation and many fields were seen bare.

7.2 Conclusions

The whole study is a trying to bring the culture unveiled in front of the people who do not know much about the Pun Magar people and to analyze the reasons behind their backwardness. The study area has been chosen Birendranagar VDC in the Chitwan district. Through the much analysis of the data taken from the study site, following inferences have been drawn out. These are:

1) Social Status

- Awareness level in terms of education was good enough because there were 27.5% people who have migrated to the city area to get quality education for their children, though their own educational status was very low. They seemed committed to educate their children and they all knew the value of education.

- Overall, the knowledge about family planning and HIV/AIDS was good among the Pun Magars of the study site because the average family members per joint family was 7.91 and per nuclear family was 3.87 (see Page 56) which was not a big size and the knowledge about HIV/AIDS was because of access to different media.
- There were no gender discrimination; it is one of Magar society's unique and best features, which ensures equal rights to both sexes.
- About marriage, they were found to be really flexible, though they preferred of the same caste. They responded it as a private affair but simultaneously, they were found to be rigid in the case of untouchables.
- A large proportion (92.5%) of the respondents visited hospitals and shamans (*Jhakris*) depending upon the nature of cases. That means they were enough aware about the differences between the shamanism and the medicines.
- Around 70% of the people were found using chemicals but they could be said that they had little knowledge about chemicals because they were illiterate and even if they were, they could not read English language and other Indian language like, *Hindi* itself, *Urdu*, *Telegu*, *Madrasi* et cetera; even many people could not read Nepali language. So, they definitely misused the chemicals. There were other reasons behind it; *through my survey about 'advantages and disadvantages of chemical pesticides' in the same study area for the project report, I came to know that people of the Ward numbers 3&2 have been involving in vegetable farming for many years and they were quite well acquainted with these chemicals so distributors of the area, namely Sajha and other private shops, have started to stop telling about all precaution which must be taken while using these chemicals. With this race, most of the Magar people of the Ward numbers 5, 8, 9, & 3 were just new costumers of these chemicals so the trend definitely does give good result to the newcomers. These Magar people have just heard of it that it brings lot of disadvantages because they responded that these chemicals were poisons.*

- Due to the missing of an important part of the Magar history, people have no idea whether Magar people are Hindu or Buddhist or simply animist or something different than people guessing. But in the study area, while doing survey, 10% people were found to be Buddhists but unfortunately, they had no solid proofs and even a single good reason why they became Buddhists forsaking the Hindu religion. These people said that they read books and found about the reality that they were from Mongolia so they thought that they were Buddhist originally but that reason does not suffice to say Magars are Buddhist originally. People were found to be nurturing a kind of hatred against Brahmanism because of their domination in the country; not against the Hinduism. A kind of culture is growing in the Magar community which is if anybody talks about Hinduism that person will become ‘*Bahunbadi*’ (meaning who follows Bahun’s rule). This kind of hatred might give a powerful doctrine for standing against all other doctrine and might create ethnic conflicts. “Unity is something for good reasons; groupism is something which brings devastation.” Within the country, responsible people must address the psychological depression among Magar people due to the pervasive nepotism and corruption of bureaucracy which has been handled by Brahmins; political domination to other ethnic groups including Magar group is a kind which has been practicing in this country. Therefore, every ethnic group must be addressed so that they do not have to struggle for their recognition. (*I might fail to convince the readers and for that, I apologized*)
- Magar people are becoming more conscious about their culture and traditions. They are confused about their religion and most of the exclusive part (remained left) of the Magar people, *Madale Maruni* (*Saraswoti barnan*), *Sorhathi dance* (*Hai halne*), adding the precious jewels to the Nepalese ethnic diversities has been fading away slowly. So, these heritages must be preserved.
- Among Pun Magars of the study area, they communicated with *Khas Kura* and they claimed that they had their own language which has been extinct after unification of Nepal (see Chapt 5.2). Not having own

language brings them under the domination of Brahmins and Chhetris to the some extent.

2) Economic Status

- Some people (18%) have low landholding size and they fall under the low food sufficiency status because of low production which is because of low landholding size and for increasing they have no resources, capital, in the case of nuclear family. But in the case of joint family, low land holding size, low production, big family size, and large average children number are the main variables playing to determine the economic condition of a family. They have traditional way of farming so every one in the study site produces the same amount of crops depending upon the nature of soil and the landholding size but if somebody holds small land size that means s/he produces low produces from the land and falls under the low food sufficiency status. But the condition is still miserable in terms of facilities for agriculture. They have no irrigation facility so they depend upon rain falling and if rain does not pour on the right time, which will be a great loss for the year. So, the nature of farming is very dependable upon the rain falling. That is not good. The condition was happened in the study area while doing survey.
- For 42% of the whole respondents, agriculture is the sole factor of their survival except pension for those who are ex-armies. As already mentioned, big landholding size is the main factor for the good food sufficiency status. There are 36% of the respondents who have another option for escaping the trap of poverty, i.e. Foreign Service. So, the economic status of the people is medium which means they are neither rich nor poor. They can fulfill their bare necessities. But this is also conditional, if a family has its member in the foreign land or has some pension holders, the family can survive; otherwise, the condition will be miserable because they are not educated but the coming generation will be educated than the people of this generation and of earlier generation. From the next generation, if these Magar people do not become educated, it will hard to even survive them because the difficulty for being recruited

into the Indian and British armies and getting into the foreign land which are the one of main sources of income in this community. (see fig. 17)

- There are two kinds of informal economic institutions, *Dhikuri* & *Kosh Uthaune*. That definitely shows a kind of good practices which helps them to uplift their economic status.

7.3 Recommendation

- 1) The social status is overall good and in terms of educational awareness, other aspects of the education, i.e., good culture must be supplied to the offspring so that they can be good citizens; it is supposed that the culture within the family is not good so though good awareness, good results cannot be found. The reasons behind this are *Lahure* culture which makes young Magars heedless on education, role of mother and father for nurturing the children, no good psychological support for the children in the education et cetera.
- 2) This generation people who directly or indirectly involve in agriculture must be made literate through different projects.
- 3) The government should address the dependent nature, rain falls makes the paddy fields planted; otherwise remain barren, of the agriculture and the bulk of people depending upon the agriculture solely. There are no facilities of good quality agricultural inputs and modern agricultural tools.
- 4) The transformation of agriculture must be started to avoid losing manpower and for that, appropriate investment with sound supervision system must be implemented.
- 5) Many precious manifestations of Magar people are fading away gradually which must be restored immediately through the appropriate projects.
- 6) Politically, all the ethnic groups of Nepal must be addressed so that they do not have to fight for it which might bring the ethnic conflicts.
- 7) Nepotism and corruption in the bureaucracy must be addressed immediately and the indigenous groups, like Magars, must be given priority practically.
- 8) For the most important thing, Maoist problem must be solved and it is not a big problem, if the leaders really want.

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Annex I

QUESTIONNAIRE

Socio-economic status of a Magar community: a case study of Birendranagar VDC, Chitwan, Nepal.

Researcher's Name: Bijay Pun

Questionnaire

Name:

Age:

Educational attainment:

Marital Status: MA UMA

Religion:

Family type: NU JT

Occupation: Major _____

Family Member:

Minor _____

Female –

Male -

1. How many children do you have in your family?

(a) Male

(b) Female

2. Do they all go to the school?

(a) Yes

(b) No

If no, who do not go to the school?

Why?

3. Have any of your children stopped going to school?

(a) Yes

(b) No

If yes, why?

And haven't you compel him to go to school?

4. What do you think the importance of education?

5. What do you think the age of marriage for your sons and daughter?
 - (a) For sons, _____
 - (b) For daughters, _____
6. Have your daughter already been married?
 - (a) Yes
 - (b) No
7. Is that a love marriage or an arranged one?
 - (a) Love marriage
 - (b) Arranged marriage
6. Is that an inter-caste marriage?
 - (a) Yes
 - (b) No

If yes, how did you react?
7. How do you feel, if your daughter-in-law belongs to other groups?
8. Do you hate her just because she belongs to other groups?
 - (a) Yes
 - (b) No
9. Who do you think your son should marry with?
 - (a) Of the same caste
 - (b) Any caste, that makes no difference
10. What will you do, if he marries a girl of other caste?
11. How many children do you think a couple should have?
 - (a) One
 - (b) Two
 - (c) More
12. Have you ever heard of family planning?
 - (a) Yes
 - (b) No

13. What do you think it is?
14. Do you have a television set in your home?
 - (a) Yes
 - (b) No
15. Do you all watch advertisement of condoms together while it is on the midst of television soaps or you just skip it?
16. Do you have any idea what is the advertisement of condoms about?
 - (a) For family planning
 - (b) For the protection against HIV/AIDS
 - (c) For both of above
 - (d) No idea
17. What are the main sources of income in your family?
 - (a) Agriculture
 - (b) Working in foreign countries
 - (c) Others
18. Many Magar people are going abroad. Why do you think they are going?
 - (a) Unemployment
 - (b) To earn more money
 - (c) Others
19. Do you think it is a good trend?
 - (a) Yes
 - (b) No
20. They are deporting to the foreign land because they have no lands which they own. Do you agree?
 - (a) Yes
 - (b) No
21. They have no chance to get jobs in Nepal because the system is in the hands of Brahmin and Chhetris. Do you agree?
 - (a) Yes
 - (b) No

22. Hindu religion just belongs to Brahmins and Chhetris. This is not Magars' religion. They made Magars follow the Hinduism. Do you agree?
- (a) Yes
 - (b) No
23. Which religion do you think you belong to?
- (a) Hindu
 - (b) Buddhist
 - (c) Others
24. Have you changed your religion, when you realize that you belong to a different religion?
- (a) Yes
 - (b) No
25. Magars are animists and they follow shamanism. Do you agree?
- (a) Yes
 - (b) No
26. Do you visit to the shaman or hospital, when your family members get sick?
- (a) Shaman
 - (b) Hospital
27. Nowadays the agricultural produce is decreasing and that is affecting the Magar people adversely. Do you agree?
- (a) Yes
 - (b) No
28. How much land do you own?
- (a) Bigha |....
 - (b) Kattha |....
 - (c) Dhur |....
29. Is that sufficient for your family?
- (a) Yes
 - (b) No
30. Do you have modern sophisticated equipments for your farm?
- (a) Yes
 - (b) No
- If not, why?

31. How is the condition of production in your land?
 (a) Best (b) Better (c) Good (d) So-So
 (e) Bad
32. What kind of produces do you produce in your land?
 (a) Rice (b) Maize (c) Millet (d) Wheat
 (e) Others

33. How far does the produce make your family sustained?

Months

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
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34. Do you sell your produce?
 (a) Yes, I do. (b) No, I don't.
35. Have you ever heard western countries can produce enough farm products even in a small land area?
 (a) Yes
 (b) No
36. How do you think they are able to do so?

37. Do you have any other income generating options besides agriculture?

- (a) Yes
 (b) No
 If yes, specify:
 (a) Animal Husbandry (b) Business (c) Labour
 (d) Others

38. Do you use chemical fertilizers and pesticides?

- (a) Yes
 (b) No

39. People say that heavy use of chemical fertilizers and pesticide can ruin the quality of soil and pesticides adversely affect the environment and health in the long run. Do you agree with the statement?

- (a) Yes (b) No

40. What do you want your son to become in future?
41. Do you participate in the programs organized by Magar associations?
 (a) Yes
 (b) No
 If not, why?
42. What do you want your daughter to be in future?
43. How much do you think your children know about your culture and tradition?
44. Do you think it is necessary to be well acquainted with their own culture?
 (a) Yes
 (b) No
45. How much do you know about your culture and tradition?
46. How do you think the economic condition of this Magar community?
 (a) Rich (b) Medium (c) Poor
47. What kind of informal financial institutions do exist in this community?
 (a) Bheja (b) Dhikuri (c) Others (Specify)
48. How much money do you spare per annum?

Thousands (Unit)

1	2	3	4	5
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Additional Information:

Annex II
PHOTOGRAPHS



A. Schedule Survey



B. Key Informants



A. A typical Magar House



D. A Settlement of landless People



E. Kalika Community Forest



F. A River dried in the Rainy Season