

Landlessness A Socio-Economic Analysis in Tharu Community of Nepal

(A case study of Gobardiha VDC of Dang District in Mid-Western Development Region)

Thesis

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Master of Arts in Rural Development

Submitted by:

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Recommendation Letter

The thesis entitled **Landlessness A Socio-Economic Analysis in Tharu Community of Nepal: A case study of Gobardiha VDC of Dang District in Mid-Western Development Region** has been prepared by Kuchhat Narayan Chaudhary under my supervision in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Rural Development, as per the format prescribed by the faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Tribhuvan University. Hence, I forward it with recommendation for approval.

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Letter of Approval

The thesis entitled " **Landlessness A Socio-Economic Analysis in Tharu Community of Nepal: A case study of Gobardiha VDC of Dang District in Mid-Western Development Region,**" submitted to the Central Department of Rural Development, Tribhuvan University, by Kuchhat Narayan Chaudhary has been accepted as a partial fulfillment for the requirements for the Degree of Masters of Arts in Rural Development.

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Abbreviation/Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ARTEP	Asian Regional Team for Employment Promotion
BS	Bikram Sambat
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
CERID	Research Center for Educational Innovation and Development
CIRDAP	Center for Integrated Rural Development for Asia and Pacific
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FMIS	Farmers Managed Irrigation System
Hs	Hectare
HH	Household
HMG	His Majesty Government of Nepal
IDS	Integrated Development Systems
IFAD	International Fund for Agriculture Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
LF	Large Farmer
LL	Landless
LRMP	Land Utilization Map
MF	Marginal Farmer
MM	Millimeter
NEFAS	Nepal Foundation for Advanced Studies
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NL	Nearlandless
NPC	National Planning Commission
NRB	Nepal Rastra Bank
RCNP	Royal Chitawan National Park
SF	Small Farmer
Sq. Km	Square Kilometer
VDC	Village Development Committee
WB	World Bank

Glossary

Addhiya: Commodity divides in two half.

Aghariya: Leader of peasant.

Ashahaniya: A part of land, where local farmers were irrigating through the FMIS.

Bataiya: A land, peasant and landowner share its production (Addhiya).

Begari: Free labour service.

Bigha: A measure of land (6400 square cubic).

Birta: A land which achieved as a job assets.

Bukraha: Landless household (Kamaiya).

Desa: Country of kingdom.

Dangaura: Tharu people who lives in Dang district since long years.

Gadhuriya: Head of family.

Guruwa: Shaman.

Guthi: A religious land.

Guthiyar: Members of Guthi land.

Jaggadhani: Landowner.

Jarhaniya: A part of land, which was irrigating through rainy water.

Jimindar: Landlord

Kachi: Thatch.

Kakandaruwa: A village leader.

Kamaiya: Bonded labour.

Kattha: A land measuring one-twentieth of a bigha.

Kissan: Middle class farmer.

Kulo: Channel (farmers managed irrigation system).

Kut: Tax (commodity paying to the landlord).

Mahato: Head of villege.

Majuri: Delivery wages labour.

Mohi: Peasant (belongs the mohiyani land).

Mohiyani: Dual land.

Pahari: Hill people.

Pahaization: Favors of hill people.

Pakki: Building or concrete house.

Parganna: Indigenous irrigation institute.

Purja: Certificate.

Raajya: State.

Raikar: Lease-hold land held on rent; land cultivated on tax.

Raiti: Peasant (Mohi land).

Sota: Dry bed.

Trihut: Mithila, in the eastern part of today's Terai.

Tikur: Three part of commodity.

Chapter - one

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Loss of land sets the level of impoverishment in involuntary displacement. The model correctly defines causality. "Expropriation of land removes the main foundation upon which people's productive systems, commercial activities, and livelihoods are constructed. This is the principal form of de-capitalization and man-made capital" (Cernea, 1997). When land lost reduces a landholding to an economical size, impoverishment sets in, though households affected in this way are often denied the assistance that would be accorded to a displaced household. Landlessness also brings about change in occupation, and in the ability to hold assets (like livestock). This reduces the food supply and the resources base used to secure other necessities (ibid).

Nepal is a multi-ethnic society. Similarly, the rural population of Nepal consists of several ethnic groups. They vary significantly in terms of socio-economic characteristics. Hence generalization of any problem cannot be meaningful in the real sense. It is the reality that all ethnic groups are not attaining some status of living. Some groups are far ahead socially and politically than other groups. There is intra as well as inter diversity in living conditions and income levels among different caste and ethnic groups.

The alarming rate of increase in the number of landless people has triggered concern among governments and policy makers worldwide, more so in the Asian countries, where the burgeoning population growth existing serious pressure on fixed resources mainly the land. Rural poverty is considered as the concomitant of the rural landlessness. Many development strategies have been adopted for alleviating rural poverty by the developing countries. Despite all the development programs and projects, which were implemented and directed toward improving the situation of the rural poor in the last few decades, the socio-economic living conditions of the poor population in most developing countries have been deteriorating.

It reveals that strategies adopted so far alleviating rural poverty have not been directed properly to benefit the rural poor. Experiences suggest that various interventions by government and NGOs designed to combat poverty have, in general failed mainly because they didn't recognize that poverty is grounded in the lack of access to resources resulting from an unequal distribution of assets of all kinds with consequent result in insecurity, indebtedness and powerlessness of the majority of rural households. Economic can grow and so can agricultural production, but without benefiting the landless and near landless.

Since Nepal is overwhelmingly agricultural and crop production is the predominant activity within agriculture, land turns out to be the most important determinant of income. There is lack of alternative source of income and employment in the rural areas. Hence, access to land largely determines the level of rural poverty (Thapa, 1990). In the case of Nepal, it is more applicable for the Terai region than in the hills and mountains. It is worth nothing that the average per capita income in non-cultivating households in the Terai is lower than the average for all farm size categories while in the Hill and Mountain regions average per capita income of the non-cultivator household is almost 40 percent higher than on the marginal farms and is even higher than on medium farms (Gyawali, 1994).

Because of its plain and productive land, the Terai region of Nepal is regarded as a granary of Nepal. However, when viewed from the point of marked inequality in distribution of productive resource like agricultural land, highest population growth rate (2.8%) among the regions, and growing landlessness and near landlessness, the problem faced here by the rural poor does not seem different from other regions. It is reflected in the fact that the majority of the rural population in the so-called prosperous Terai region has experiencing the decline in income and employment opportunities. This must be the reason that over the years the country has been adding the number as well as the proportion of the total rural population below the "poverty-line" (ibid).

Since the problems of landlessness are alarming in the Tharu community, this study concentrates on its incidence, process and current socio-economic strategies for the livelihood of indigenous Tharu people, who have been inhabited therein since very long ago. In sense, the study will adopt a new approach to the problem.

They have different culture and language. It is believed long back there was dense forest and calamity of malaria in the Terai region. Tharu has fought against wild animals and malaria and made the Terai land favorable for agriculture. After 1950s government rehabilitation programme and eradication of malaria are caused the heavy migration from Hill to Terai. The fertile land of Terai was captured. Now a days most of the Tharus are landless. The main sources of income of Tharus are agriculture and animal husbandry. They use and practice ancient means and methods in agricultural production and animal husbandry. In their leisure time from these sectors they make basket, mat, rope, pottery etc.

1.2 Statement of the Problems

Tharus live in the entire length of the Terai region of Nepal. According to population census of 2001, the total population of Tharu in Nepal is 1,533,879 which is 6.8 percent of the total population and ranks fourth in the majority order. Tharus are the largest group of Terai and

constitute 13.68 percent of the Terai population. On the basis of the population of the Tharu is growing at an annual growth rate of 2.84 percent, which is a significantly high rate of population growth (CBS, 2003).

Indigenous groups are socio-economically disadvantaged than the other groups in the society. In India 60 percent of the tribal population lives in poverty compared with rural incidence of 42 percent. Nepal lacks information on the incidence of landlessness and poverty of the indigenous population. However, studies carried out so far suggest that the Tharu are one of the disadvantaged groups in Nepal. Tharus are one of the illiterate, poor and exploited or dominated segments of the Nepalese population (Pyakuryal, 1982).

Tharu economy is traditionally associated with land. They are by tradition agricultural people. However, their access to land has been endangered after the migration of hills people to Terai in search of land and work. As a result population pressure highly increased on land and employment opportunities severely limited. At present, the problem of landlessness has become the major problem of the Terai region. Among some chronic problems facing the country over the years is the issue of landless people. There is hardly a district especially in the Terai area, where this problem has not affected. Owing to the failure to resolve the problem in time, the problem of landlessness has resulted in several adverse consequences in various fronts. This general picture of the problem may also reflect the problem of the Tharu people in some extent (Pyakuryal, 1982).

The Tharu people of the research area, present lifestyle bears witness to the past, when shifting cultivation was their main land-use strategies. The houses still have temporary character and people shift with limited effort. In the area around Gobardiha, shifting cultivation was abandoned just a few generations ago. Due to the southern shift of the Rapti River, however, villages continue to be relocated and moved away from the riverside. The importance of forests is limited to firewood and edible plants. Hunting is irrelevant as they rear livestock at their homesteads. Since the land reform of the 1960s, it is prohibited to turn virgin forests into agricultural land.

Tharu economy is traditionally associated with land. They are by tradition agriculture people. However, their access to land has been endangered after the migration of hill people to Terai in search of land and work. Illiteracy and indebtedness are at work to handicap their progress. The number of landlessness and the near landlessness labourers are increasing and fragmentation of holding has taken place. I have raised the following research questions, where I am going to look out the genuine socio-economic dimension of Tharus in Deukhuri Dang.

- a) What are the genuine causes of being landlessness of Tharus?
- b) What is the current income generation of landless Tharus? Is better than agriculture?
- c) Have they linked with the world society?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The major objectives of this study are to examine the process and causes of landlessness of the Tharu community and to present comparatively the socio-economic dimensions of the different Tharu farm-groups. The specific objectives are: -

- a) To identify and analyze the process and causes of landlessness;
- b) To identify the livelihood of the indigenous Tharu people.
- c) To assess the role of landlessness in the determination of the poverty.
- d) To suggest members to use with landlessness in Tharu community.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Studies so far on the Tharus will confine to anthropological sphere. There is virtually lack of studies on the economic problems facing the Tharus. Studies carried out in general or regional basis alone cannot present the comprehensive picture of the problem. Besides obvious regional disparities, substantial socio-economic and political inequalities continue to exist among different ethnic and caste groups in Nepal.

Despite the planned development, efforts of decades with special focus in alleviating poverty, rural and sustainable development the percentage of population living in poverty is rising. It reveals that development programme have not reached the actual poor.

Recently, government of Nepal has taken policy to uplift the socio-economic condition of the weaker sections of the society. Similarly, poverty alleviation is set as whole and sole objective of the tenth plan. In connection with such situations, a study like this concentrated on an indigenous group the disadvantage group deserves special significance.

Landlessness is the serious problem of the agrarian countries, where are people depending upon the agriculture vary majority, and there are difficult to recover growing population. It is the essential to generalize their genuine problems and alternative way of livelihood. Study of landlessness and near landlessness is indispensable for the agrarian countries like Nepal.

1.5 Limitations of the Study

As principal focus of the study to examine the socio-economic occurrence of landlessness and near landlessness people in Gobardiha VDC, ward No. 7, 8 and 9 of Tharus' in Deukhuri-

Dang district. This study is mainly an analytical and descriptive study, in view of limit time resources and scope of the study. It is limit to the following-

-) The study was based on the specific locality of indigenous Tharu village,
-) The study was conducted under time and financial constraints.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Concept

The problem of landlessness is one of the major issues, which is often discussed in the literature of economic development especially in connection with rural development of agrarian countries. There are number of studies on landlessness carried out in the context of the developing countries (ILO: 1977, Esman: 1978; CIRDP; 1987, FAO; 1987; FAO; 1988). However, the studied carried out in the context of Nepal are limited in numbers. Whatever studies carried out in the past they mostly concentrate on the specific issue of landlessness. Moreover, the literature on the Tharu community is confined only to its socio-cultural aspect.

Review of literature develops and concentrates to the relevant aspects of the problems of landlessness. They are the role of the land asset in agrarian society, the association of landlessness to poverty; impact of development programs on landless and near landless groups, different strategies design to overcome the problem and suggest recommendation in order to improve the vulnerable living condition of rural poor. The reviews section is in three parts. The first part reviews of the studies, which are done in context of the developing countries, the second part review research and studies on Nepal and the final section encompasses the studies on Tharus of Nepal.

2.2 Studies on Landlessness in the Developing Countries

Center on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and Pacific (CIRDAP) has carried out a study on the issue of landlessness in the following developing countries of the Asia-Pacific region: Bangladesh, Indonesia, Nepal, Philipines and Thailand. The study has stated that the speedy deterioration in the economic condition for a particular group of the rural poor is due to the decline of control over land by this group. Commenting upon the importance of land asset in these countries, the study writes:

"In most countries of south and south-east Asia agriculture is the predominant sector of the economy. Thus, access to the land is a crucial factor in terms of livelihood, wealth and standard of living of rural households. In most of these countries, land is considered a vital economic asset. Landlessness is often considered to be both the cause and symptom of poverty, insecurity and financial indebtedness ..."

The study, on the basis of data obtained from the above countries, reports that there is an increasing trend in rural landlessness in all the five countries. Among them, Bangladesh rank is high in the figure of landlessness where 62

percent are landless and near landless. The figure of Indonesia, Nepal, Philippines and Thailand are 27 percent, 10.4 percent, 30 percent and 10 percent respectively. The study has listed many causes of landlessness which are land scarcity, increasing population, low agricultural productivity, unequal land distribution, weak agriculture related institutions, colonial legacies and the lack of effective government policies and instruments for redistribution of land.

Attempts to reduce inequality by redirecting public investment toward 'target groups' of the poor will be partially frustrated by leakages of income to other groups. In other words, it is impossible to confine the benefits of public expenditure to specific pre-selected categories of persons. If a government, therefore, through its expenditure policies wishes to transfer a given amount of resources to the poor, it will in fact, because of leakages, have to spend a multiple of that amount.

On the other hand, assessing the radical strategy aimed at redistribution of wealth, he accentuates:

"It seems inevitable, then that the principal component of a successful attack on poverty must be a redistribution of the stock of wealth. Given that the economies of most underdeveloped countries are largely agrarian, it follows that a redistribution of landed property almost certain to be of prime importance. A land reform, in isolation is not sufficient to remove rural poverty but it is a condition sine qua non in many countries. Unfortunately, it is a necessary step that is difficult to implement, there are no easy or painless solutions to the problems of poverty and underdevelopment, and it would be disingenuous to pretend otherwise. On the other hand, to refrain from making the effort on grounds of political impossibility would be defeatist as well as historically inaccurate ..."

He further suggests - the only way quickly to increase the well-being of the poor would be through a redistribution of landed wealth, creating either small peasant farms of communal tenure systems which encourage labour intensive methods of cultivation.

In most rural areas of the Third World poverty is intimately related to the degree of land concentration. A reduction in the quality of landownership through a redistribution of landed property in favour of landless workers, tenants and small farmers would contribute directly to the alleviation of the most acute forms of poverty.

The study also argues that a redistribution of land through the creation of smallholdings is likely to reduce poverty indirectly by increasing production and

total income. Thus the study accepts the inverse relationship between farm size and output per hectare. In support of this view, the study adduces reasons as:

In a World Bank's publication, *Poverty and Development*, Ravi Kanpur (1991) views that poverty is primarily a rural phenomenon as well as primarily agricultural phenomenon. Identifying the rural poor he writes:

A related characteristic of the poor is that they lack assets. They either have very small amounts of unproductive land, or no land at all. They like human capital and are therefore reduced to selling unskilled labour, largely in an agricultural setting.

He further points out that the people who are poor also do not have an access to public services such health and education as do the non- poor – which in turn affects their income earning capacity.

Regarding the absolute poor, Gerald M. Meier in his book ' *Emerging from Poverty* ' views that the absolute poor are mainly small subsistence farmers, tenant farmers and share croppers, landless workers in agriculture, unemployed and under employed urban labours. He also points out that the most pervasive and persistent problems of mass poverty are to be found in the rural regions of the largest groups among the absolute poor, as he notes, they are not benefited from the government programs of providing cheap loans and subsidized some agricultural inputs. It is because, as Meier observes, these benefits have gone to large, labour replacing farm units, leaving the small farmer, tenant and landless labours unbenefited. Moreover the absolute poor do not have access to essential public services such as education and health. Considering such situation he stresses on the design of such strategy which benefits those people who are yet outstripped by the development programmes; as he states: the central focus of a strategy for rural development must now be on the involvement of small farmers who have not been reached by many previous programs.

Miton J. Esman has accomplished an analytical survey of the unpublished literature, data and estimates on landless and nearlandlessness in developing countries. In the countries covered by the survey, as Esman reports, the majority of rural household consists of landless workers or marginal cultivators whose holdings are too small or too poor in equality to enable them to earn a subsistence

livelihood from their land. On the miseries of third lives, he writes that their lives are characterized by chronic poverty, insecurity, indebtedness and powerlessness and they are frequently compelled to migrate under harsh conditions in search of work.

Esman, in his study, has evaluated land asset not merely as an economic asset rather as a mighty asset, which influences most of the aspects of rural society in the developing countries. Assessing the importance of landownership in rural setting, he sums up:

While education, political contacts and family background are of some importance; the most significant asset in rural areas is ownership and control of land. Land ownership conveys both social status and economic opportunity. It can usually be converted into political power. Political power, in turn, is frequently translated into the ownership and control of land. While it is not the only source of wealth, status and power in rural areas, land ownership is by far the most important.

He has observed that the majority of people in rural areas have not benefited from the impressive macro-economic growth chalked up by many third world countries during the past twenty- five years. Therefore, he rightly states that economies can grow and so can agricultural production, but without benefiting the landless and near landless.

Marxist analysis relates landlessness to capitalist development in agriculture (Shrestha; 1990). Small landholding peasant agriculture is regarded as a phase in the transition to the capitalist mode of production. Marx states the mechanism of capitalist development in agriculture as:

Private land ownership, and thereby expropriation of the direct producer from the land private ownership by the one, which implies lack of ownership by others is the basis of the capitalist mode of production.

Thus, land accumulation and deaccumulation has been widely accepted by Marxist analysis as a logical and inevitable socioeconomic out come of capitalist penetration into the agrarian sector.

An issue of " Rural Development " of 1986 has a FAO study on landless. FAO, the study, reports that the landless are the most underprivileged section of rural society. The study summarizes the state of landless as:

Without land the basic means of production in agricultural economics they are powerless. They have little or no access to credit, marketing systems or other services and also severe social deprivation, poor health, illiteracy and high rates of child mortality. Insecurity is the raw reality of their lives.

In an issue of " Rural Development" of 1994, International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD) argues that poverty in rural areas is created and perpetuated by a number of closely inter linked socio-economic processes. According to IFAD, institutional processes are among of them-that perpetuate rural poverty include lack of access to land, inequitable sharecropping and tenancy arrangements, poor markets, limited access to credit, inputs and technology, and ineffective extension services.

Chris Dixon (1990) has examined rural development strategies classifying them under three broad heading: technocratic, reformist and radical. He reports that most of the third world countries have adopted the technocratic approach, which aims to increase productivity, particularly in agriculture. This approach leaves unchanged the structures that maintain inequality and access to resources. Therefore, the major beneficiaries of this approach will be obviously the rich farmers.

Radha Sinha in her book entitled " Landlessness: a Growing Problem" has considered the role of land as the "provider of the last resort." She argues that the role of land as an economic asset has weight until there is no availability of employment opportunities outside the agriculture sector. The reason behind this argument as adduced by her, is that non-farm sector is less risky and more remunerative than the agriculture sector. She says that earnings from non-agricultural pursuits, mining industry, transport, business and professions are often higher than those from agriculture. She further mentions that even within the rural sector, commerce, money lending and possibly transport are more remunerative and less unstable than agriculture. She perceives the view of absorbing the rural

poor within the agriculture sector as the second best or as a transitional stopgap. She expresses it in the following manner.

Finally, he has suggested some policy implication and program areas to combat the problem of landlessness. They are tenancy reform to increase the access of the rural poor to land and other productive assets; structural transformation of the economy especially by industrialization-to create employment opportunities of the landless people; improving rural-urban balance by allocating financial and human resources to the rural sector in order to tilt the balance in its favor; credit policies to make easy access of landless to credit; supports for rural women to ensure women's participation in all phases of the development programs; and strengthen the role of Non-Governmental Organizations which can play an important role in developing organizations at the grassroots level with local-based information and planning capabilities.

2.3 Studies on Landlessness in Nepal

After the unification of Nepal, the Shah rulers (1768-1845) encouraged Indian people to settle in the Terai regions of Nepal (Dahal 1983). The main objective was to increase the revenue from the Terai, and as it was not attractive for Paharis to settle in this region, Indians were welcomed. This policy was intensified through the Rana period, and continued until 1964 (ibid: 9).

The santals, or Satars as they are called in Nepal, are one of these Indian ethnic groups who settled in eastern Terai during this period. Exactly when the first Santals arrived is unclear. According to Gautam (1994), they ' seem to have crossed into Morang in the late 1920s following the abolition of slavery there' (1977). The Santals migrated to Nepal from Bihar and Bengal for various reasons. Santals tell that their parents/grandparents were forced to leave their homes because of natural calamities like droughts and floods, or to escape political unrest in the border area between East Bengal, later East Pakistan and Bangladesh, and India. Others were tempted by rumors of the richness of the Terai. The majority used to cultivate the land of established owners, such as Rajbansis, hill-dwelling absentee landlords, army men, or Indian businessmen. The Land Reform Policy of

1964 (2021 BS) gave these tenants secure rights. Dahal states: According to Land Reform Law no tenant can be displaced from a particular piece of land where he has cultivated at least one crop' (1983:10). These tenants are called *mohis*, and the land they cultivate is called *mohiyani* land.

During 1960 this 'Indianisation policy' was followed by the 'Paharisation policy'. With population pressure in the eradication of malaria in the Tarai became attractive for the Paharis. Large numbers of Paharis, during the 1960s and 1970s, migrated to the area. After a few years, land in the Tarai, which was thought to be unending, became scarce and a resource to compete for. In most cases the Paharis won, while the original Tarai-dwellers, like Tharus Rajbansis, Dhimal, Meche and Santals, became the great losers. Many previous landowners are not *mohis* any longer. Officers at the Land Reform Office in the district center of Jhapa estimate that only 2 percent of the original *mohis* are still cultivating the *mohiyani* land (personal communication). Most Santals are today landless, working as daily wage labourers *majuris* (Buggeland, 1994).

Santals state that the denial of citizenship, as well as the economic hardship they face as landless, is their main problems as residents of Nepal. These two issues are, of course, interrelated. Turner definition of citizenship clearly states that citizenship has to do with 'flow of resources' in a society. 'Citizenship may be defined as that set of practices (juridical, political, economic and economic and cultural) which define a person as a competent member of society, and which as a consequence shape the flow of resources to persons and social groups' (Turner, 1993:2). In Nepal citizenship is a prerequisite for making any legal contract as, i.e., registering land ownership and tenancy rights. It is a supposition for civil service and for pursuing a military career. Citizenship therefore clearly 'shapes the flow of resources to persons and social groups' (ibid: 2).

David Seddon in his book (Nepal: A State of Poverty) has examined the roots of poverty and inequality in Nepal from the socio-economic point of view. Analyzing of prevailing social inequality, he argues that it is due to the combination of social factors as well as the structure of the agrarian economy of traditional form. He advances his argument as;

"Although social discrimination on the basis of caste, ethnic and gender differences plays a significant part in maintaining social inequality in Nepal, nevertheless the roots of social inequality and therefore of social deprivation, lie within the structure of the agrarian economy; characterized essentially by unequal control over land and other resources and by archaic forms of exploitation

Shrestha (1990) has argued that population is an important variable in explaining landlessness and near landlessness in societies under-going rapid population growth. He notes two major interrelated features of the eco-demographic relations of production in the Nepalese agrarian economy, which are rapid population growth and declining per capita land viability. The condition is so extreme, as he points out that Nepal has already reached a threshold in terms of land scarcity.

With the intention to analyze the inequality in the distribution of land among different classes he has used the 1981 agricultural census data and classifies Nepalese peasantry into five classes: landless and nearlandless (0-0.5 hectare), subsistence (0.5-1 hectare), small (1-3 hectare), medium (3-5 hectares), and large more than 5 hectares. According to his classification 51 percent of the households are landless and nearlandless in Nepal and they together control 7 percent of the total cultivated land. The largest landowning class, on the other hand, constitutes less than 4 percent of the households, but controls 29 percent of land. The average household landholding is 0.15 for the landless and nearlandless class and almost 10 hectares for the largest landowning class. According to his analysis, with regard to total land control, the Terai landless and nearlandless are in the worst position, with an averages holding of barely 0.1 hectare per households; in total they control less than 3 percent of the Terai's cultivated land. Commenting upon the problem of growing landless and nearlandless and its relation with population growth and scarcity of land, he writes:

The trend that is quite noticeable from the finding that nearlandlessness is on the rise throughout Nepal. Increasing nearlandless in the Terai is a clear sign that it has spread from the hills to the Terai frontier as a result of growing migration. The overall growth of nearlandlessness is directly associated with its rapid population increase and both natural and social scarcities of land. Agricultural capitalization and industrial development have been insignificant in the process of landlessness and nearlandlessness in Nepal because they are both generally absent in its

agrarian space-economy. In essence, the present finding display that the concept of eco-demographic relations of production is important it is indeed a necessary extension of the Marxist perspective to explain both landlessness and nearlandlessness in agrarian societies like Nepal.

According to Agrawal (1986), highly skewed income and assets distribution resulting in concentration of landownership, antiquated land tenure system, exploitative land tenancy system are some of the major reasons for the origin and emergence of the most disadvantage groups in Nepal. The most disadvantage groups of Nepal, according to him, include small farmers, tenant, sharecroppers, landless labours and performers of low level menial and semi-skill oriented jobs. These groups, as he argues, have generally remained bypassed by development plans and programs and therefore have remained below poverty line.

The existence of demographic pressure coupled with the law of inheritance, the heavy reliance of small farmers on private moneylenders and the high rate of interest charged on such loans, fraudulent practices and forcible occupation leading to a loss of land by the small and together to the growing of landlessness.

Commenting upon the land reform of 1964, he argues that it was unable to reverse the trend towards growing inequality in the distribution of landholding because it was basically a tenancy reform and the redistribute aspect did not get much importance. He notes that the ceilings on ownership were set at generously high levels. Thus, as he concludes, the reform was unable to arrest the trend towards increasing inequality.

Integrated Development Systems (IDS) has carried out a study entitled (Rural Landlessness in Nepal) which is based on secondary sources of data. The study notes that despite the reform measures performed so far in the country the distribution of landholding is still very skewed in Nepal and situation has not been changed much for the last 20 years. The study has listed number of causes of rural landlessness, they are demographic pressure historically defective land tenure system, ineffectiveness of land reform of 1964 heavy reliance of small farmers on private money lenders in absence of institutional sources of credit, underdevelopment of non farm sectors and migration of seasonal laborers from India due to the open boarder with it.

A CIRDAP study has stated that the extent of landlessness in Nepal, considering both the landless and nearlandless, is quite high. The study reports that the majority of the farm households in the rural areas consist of marginal and small farmers. The small size of landholding, as the study argues, is largely responsible for the poverty of the rural masses as the produce from land is insufficient to meet their basic needs. Moreover, according to the study, the widespread prevalence of the tenancy system deprives farmers of the opportunity to benefit from the new technology of production using modern inputs such as improved seeds, chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

The problem of rural landlessness should be solved within the broad framework of agrarian reform. Planned resettlement, based on non-farm activities, should be emphasized as an alternative to a land-based resettlement program. Increasing employment opportunities for the landless could be achieved through the adoption of new production technologies. The rural works programs should aim at providing employment during the slack agricultural season.

Bishnu Bhandari carried out a study on landownership and social inequality in rural community of the Chitawan district, an inner Terai district of central Nepal in 1985. In his study, Bhandari mentions that land has been the most important source of power and wealth for centuries in Nepal, but it has been distributed in highly unequal fashion. Regarding widespread land fragmentation and land accumulation in the context of Nepal, he argues that former is the outcome of population growth and the laws of inheritance, where as the latter is the consequence of poverty.

The study, which was carried out in the two communities Patihani and Dhaddaghari in Chitawan district, had collected land records in three different periods of time 1964, 1969 and 1983. The data show that total amount of land has increased by slightly more than twice, while the number of owners has increased by seven times in 19 years. As a result, the mean size of landholding has decreased from 3.1 bighas in 1964 to 1.1 bighas in 1983. This clearly indicates that the increase of available land has been outnumbered by an increase in the number of landowners. The data further suggests that not only is the average land size decreasing, but also that the land is being concentrated; which is demonstrated by

the Gini Coefficient for land distribution which has actually increased from 0.38 in 1964 to 0.55 in 1983.

The study reports that the percentage of nearlandless and marginal households have been increasing where as the percentage of landless households have been decreasing from 29.8 in 1964 to 19.4 in 1983. With regards to the numbers of nearlandless households, this increased from 17.2 percentage in 1964 to 26.8 percentage in 1983. The trend of the marginal households is similar to this one. The 28.2 percentage of marginal households in 1964 increased to 33.2 percentage in 1983. Regarding the small and medium farm households the study reports that the trend is decreasing one. The combined percentage of landless and nearlandless households was 46.2 percentage in 1983, of which 19.4 percentage were landless and 26.8 percent were nearlandless households. On the basis of all these finding of the study, one can infer that forces are working towards the marginalization in the society which will ultimately resulted in landlessness.

2.4 Studies on Tharus in Nepal

Terai is the area of Nepal where the future of the nation is envisioned (both production and population being moved here) and where the new capital has suggested to be established. It is also the area making out the border between Nepal and India. Thus, it is always of strategic importance for Nepal.

In reviewing the changes concerning land over the period 1979-1980 I shall only highlight here what appear as the key developments. By 1993 the village population had increased by about 70 percent from around 420 in 1980 to approximately 730. The Tharu still comprised about 80 percent of the population. In terms of overall ownership of the land, however, the Tharu share of village land increased to 38 percent if we count only those Tharu resident in the village. Some seven Tharu households from three other villages had also acquired land in the village over this time, and including them would bring the total share of village land held by Tharu to 40 percent. The Pahari ownership of land, combining both resident and non-resident owners, had decreased from 65 percent to 46 percent. From the early 1980s there had been a series of transactions in land with some of

the larger Pahari owners selling their lands to other incoming Pahari. At the same time, over this decade it appears that many of the Tharu who had gained *mohi* subsequently gave up their secure tenancy rights in exchange for one –quarter of the secured land, exercising their right to do so under the law. A few Tharu households also managed to buy some land, usually from their *mohi* landlord. The net result of these changes was that there were a larger number of smaller Pahari landowners, while the amounts of land owned by Tharu households also increased. This is indicated by the fact of that the proportion of Tharu households owning between one and three *bigha* of land doubled from 25 percent to 52 percent, while those owning less than one *bigha* decreased from 63 percent to 36 percent.

Another development, which has contributed to blurring the Tharu - Pahari relationship as a tenant-landlord own, is that there are two Tharu landowners in the village who rent out some of their land and have thus become landlords themselves. Both are incoming households, which have bought land and settled in the village during the last ten years. As noted above, a few Tharu households from other nearby villages have acquired small amount of land in the village and similarly one Tharu from Sukhrwar has bought some land in the neighboring all-Tharu village of Dabar Gaun. This is a remarkable development since, although, neighbors there has been very little social interaction between these two villages. For instance, there has only been one marriage between the two in living memory. Now, for the first time, a Sukhrwar Tharu will participate in and contribute to the annual agricultural village ceremonies in Dabar Goun in general, then, these various seeds in landownership have contributed to a blurring of the distinction between the Tharu and Pahari as tenants and landlords respectively, and to a limited extend there has been an interpenetration of traditional Tharu village boundaries (Krauskopff, 1989).

There is dearth of reliable information and literature of the Tharu community. Research and studies on this indigenous group are limited in both numbers and scope. Whatever there are also confined to anthropological sphere. There is absolute absence of studies on the economic problems facing by the Tharus.

Regmi (1999) has described that Tharu people are influenced with the Hindu culture, rites, rituals and marriage ceremony, and they have been little influenced to Hindu epics too. After father's death, elder son is inherently chief of the family. He states:

"... many of the traditions of the Tharus are disappearing. Modernization and financial necessity are the young to be assimilated into the mainstream Nepali culture. Once always living within their communities, Tharus are now leaving their villages to earn money."

But there occurred great interaction than before between the Tharus and the non-Tharus, the immigrants from the hill, after the implementation of malaria eradication and land reform programs. However, as he notes, these two programmes, which proved very helpful and beneficial to hill-people, proved less fruitful and unfortunate to the Tharus. They were the people of different nature and attitudes. Tharus prefer disciplined manner are peaceful and obey the rules of society while the hill people on the other hand are a freedom loving people with a material spirit dislike to remain under the control domination of others. So the first impact that took place in Tharu villages, after the immigration of hill people, according to Rajauere's finding was the decay and neglect of the village – level rules, customs and disciplines, which had been imposed up till then by the committee of the Mahaton and the Tharu household chiefs.

He further mentions that the hill people did not keep up the tradition like voluntary labour for the maintenance of canal, bridges and streets and schedule of turn regarding the supply of canal water to the farms.

After the land reform program, as Rajaure remarks, the situation was even sadder for the Tharus. Commenting upon the situation, he writes:

As old landowners could not hold more than 28 bighas of land, they sold their excess land before the implementation of the new law, to the people coming from the hills. The hill people bought such land in small fractions from the previous jamindars. Now, they began to cultivate fraction themselves without seeking any help from the Tharu tenants or laborers, who had previously been cultivating the land for the jamindars. Thus, the Tharu tenants were deprived of the land that they had been cultivating.

Ultimately there created such situation in which the Tharus could not resist and they were forced to migrate to the far western Terai, where large areas of the forest were being cleared and thus there was a great demand of manpower to cultivate the new farms. Regarding the migration of Tharu, Rajaure basing his calculations on the 1961 and 1971 censuses, explain that while in Nepal as a whole 1961 – 1971 saw a 22 percent population increase among the Tharu, in Dang Deukhuri the increase was only from 72,475 to 79,131. In Bardia, Kailali and Kanchanpur; however, the percentage increase in Tharu population has been greater than 22 percent.

A study was carried out by Research Center for Educational Innovation and Development (CERID, 1988) in four major districts- Sunsari, Chitawan, Dang and Kailali, where Tharus live in a sizable number to examine the educational status of the Tharus. The major finding of the study are; the Tharus are educationally a disadvantaged community; large number of Tharu children go to schools from Tharu families living in mixed communities than from exclusive Tharu communities; small percentage of the Tharu children complete their education. The economic factors found responsible by the study behind the low level of school enrollment of the Tharu children are landholding and food sufficiency. The study states that landholding and food sufficiency of the family have strong relationship with the enrollment of the Tharu children.

Pyakuryal (1982) has concentrated his Ph. D thesis on the study of Tharu people which is entitled "Ethnicity and Rural Development: a Sociological Study of Four Tharu Villages in Chitawan, Nepal. Assessing the general socio-economic situation of the Tharus he sums up:

Indeed, they are one of the major ethnic groups in the Terai region and one of the more underdeveloped groups in Nepal. Their history is a story of extreme deprivation, enormous hardship and blatant class exploitation. Because of physical and social isolation from development activities in the region and from cultural contacts with other people, their superstitions, backwardness, and timidity were reinforced. As people they are generally illiterate and unschooled, they lack awareness about their rights and privileges. The gap between them and non-Tharus is very wide.

Pyakuryal had carried out his fieldwork in the eastern Chitawan - named "Tandi". The main aim of his study was to investigate the effects of different village situations in rural Nepal on ethnicity and the relationship between ethnicity and various structural and attitudinal variables relevant to the process of developmental change. Two conditions; ethnic group composition i.e. centrality/remoteness were considered to examine the developmental situation of different villages.

One among the two major finding of his study, which differs from what generally thought is that village location (centrality) is a more important conditional factor reinforcing the manifestations of ethnicity than is the ethnic composition of the village (homogeneity/diversity). It means that households in centrally located villages (irrespective of their homogeneity/ diversity) are too more ethnic than those in more isolated areas as the finding of the study tells.

The next finding of the study is that – no relationship is noted within the villages between degree of ethnicity of households and a household's to adopt new farming practices; ethnicity (in a behavioral sense) and the adaptation of agricultural innovations appear to be independent phenomenon. Pyakuryal considers this finding as indirect evidence that ethnicity does not hinder agricultural modernization and rural development and further suggests in following way:

Ethnicity that should not be viewed as a pathogenic and detrimental to social integration, indeed, perhaps it should be encouraged in order to help underprivileged minority groups like the Tharus face up to inter-ethnic competition successfully.

2.5 Studies on Tharus in Dang District

We don't know how long the Tharus have been living in Dang and Deukhuri. It is evident that small groups have migrated and settled in Dang at different periods of history, becoming 'Tharu' in the process of time, in a society which has itself changed deeply over time. Some facts tend to show a general migration from eastern to western Terai. The oldest mention of 'Tharu' as an ethnic label is found

in the eleventh century Muslim geographer Al Beruni's description of the area around Tirhut (Mithila, in the eastern part of today's Terai). We also know through historical documents that political pressure has forced those very unstable social units to move or migrate in small groups: by order of hill chieftains or even foreign colonial powers, wars and last but not least, operation and agrarian conditions.

If we don't know how long ago Tharu social units settled in Dang, we have historical proof of the suzerainty of foreign powers over the valley since at least the fourteenth century. In 1336, the great Malla king of Western Nepal, Punya Malla, gave a *birtaa* land 'for as long as the moon and the sun will last' to Jayakar Pandit in Dang valley and informed his local chiefs (some being called, like today, *mahaton*) of this new donation (Narharinath, 1999:761). Even today, old *birtaadaar* of Dang trace their ancestry to Jumla. Archeological remains in Dang suggest a development of a Hindu political center around the fourteenth century and may be earlier. Finally, the Nath Yogis' tradition points to an even older period: Ratannath, the tutelary god of Dang *desa* (country or kingdom) – whose shrines covered what could have been the Hindu kingdom of Dang in the middle Ages and whose cult in Nepal is peculiar to Dang – was a disciple of Gorakhnath, the founder of the Nath Sivait ascetic order. He probably lived around the eleventh or twelfth century and in the legendary tradition is depicted as the first king of Dang, or the guru of the first king of Dang, anyhow, as the founder of the kingdom.

Another foreign tutelage on Dang was that of the Muslims: Dang appeared as an administrative unit called *mahal* paying tribute at the time of the great Moghul Akbar (sixteenth century), a tutelage in competition with that of the hills' chieftains.

The relation between external powers and local ones appears as a focal axe to understand the Dangaura Tharu society cannot be isolated from the political control of foreign powers. Of course this control was more or less pregnant, depending on the relationship between local powers and external ones, as well as on the time of the year. For sure, very few people gestured in Terai during the malarial season and, except in winter, the Tharus had very few day-to-day

relationships with non-residents. But they had one with an external political power through land donations and delegation of political powers to local gentry.

To sum up these general statements, an ethno-historical approach seems a fundamental, in the sense of studying a minority neither as a discrete unit, nor as a pure ethnic substance. In the case of Dang, the political situation created by the subjection to alien powers more and more centralized and the delegation of power to a local elite have played an essential role. The agrarian system controlled by absent gentry delegating some of its privileges to the Tharu tenants and their representatives and, as we have seen before, a ritual system rooted in the relation to the soil and the land, are the expressions of these interactions.

We should stress here the great variety of people called Tharu and the artificial uniformity postulated by superficial earlier studies like those of the British residents in India. The Dangaura social order is deeply rooted in the *Desa* of Dang: *desa* as a region – here two rich valleys of Inner Terai producing rice under peculiar climatic conditions – and *desa* as a political Hindu unit (not necessarily stable). After the unification of Nepal, the Dang *Desa* disintegrated into several vassal estates (Krauskopff, G. 1990). Before the different land reforms which occurred after the fall of the Ranas, kings used to alienate their rights to different people through land donations, in Dang mostly under *birtaas*, *guthi* and *raajya* tenures: *birtaa* were granted to individuals, usually high caste Paharis on an inheritable basis, as we have seen in the case of Jayakar Pandit in the fourteenth century; *guthi* or 'religious foundation' we granted for the service of a god, usually reconfirmed even when a change of royal dynasty occurred; *raajya* was applied to vassal kingdoms that survived after the unification of Nepal. Those land grants should be clearly distinguished from *raikar* tenure, state-owned lands or lands on which the state levies taxes directly through its administrative officers. *Birtaa*, *guthi* and, after the Unification, *raajya*, were free of taxes, or more exactly, tenants paid taxes to the *birtaadar*, *guthiyar* or vassal king to whom the king of Nepal has alienated its right. Contrary to the situation in the Hills where *raikar* prevailed, in Dang, *raajya*, *birtaa* and *guthi* prevailed, which means that big estates developed a kind of autonomy.

The other very big feudal property in Dang and Deukhuri was that of the Nath Yogis whose main monastery is in Chaughera, in Eastern Dang. Their biggest *guthi* estate is in Jalhaura in central Dang, probably the original setting of the Naths to Brahmins from Jumla. *Birtaa* were disseminated all over the valleys (even in the Raajya itself where the Phalabang king was therefore not allowed to exact taxes and compulsory labour). It seems that *birtaa* owners didn't obtain the same political authority as the Naths and the *Raajya* (1961); *guthi* are still in use but the present communist government talks of abolishing them. The Nath Yogis of Dang still own a very big estate of *bighaa*. Other land grants have been transformed into *raikar*.

Map - 1

Map of Study Area



Finally, there were the numerous *birtaa* given since at least the fourteenth century

Source: The Kings of Nepal and Tharu of the Terai, 2000

The pre-eminence in Dang of land tenure systems has played a role in the development of the peculiar Dangaura Tharu social order: Tharu tenants didn't deal directly with the central government but with a gentry having a kind of autonomy, in a quasi-feudal system. These gentry didn't stay permanently in the valley. For instance, the Nath Yogis used to go up in the hills from April to October-November and during the Rana period; the king of Phalabang had a winter palace in Tulsipur and a summer residence in Phalahang (actually, in the twentieth century, they used to spend much of their time in Kathmandu or in Lucknow). Most of the birtaadaar used to live in Salyan or Piuthan districts. It is clear that those landlords had to delegate their own privileges to local permanent residents, which means that they have contributed to create a Tharu elite through a process of 'subinfeodation' (Krauskopff, 1989).

There was not predominantly landlessness still many Tharu families are becoming landless and near landless due to various causes but they are unable to identify other components of the landless. The people blame only the unequal land distribution but they do not think what they should do for the landlessness problem. In the study area, there is excessively population growth high even they exist it and limit resources, but socio-economy is not same. To understand socio-economic conditions of existing Tharus' family, this survey was essential. Where the different age group people living but not work same, new and different occupation supporting to change socio-economy in their society.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Conceptual Framework:

This chapter deals with the research methodology employed to collect the data required for the present study. For data collection a quantitative as well as qualitative research tools are used. And it is discussed on the following sub-heading as follows. This study is based on descriptive research. Descriptive research methods are used to collect the qualitative information from the survey. The research would describe the education, occupation, income sources, family size, types of landholding, area of land and alternative subsidies etc. and after all its impact on the socio-economic dimension of Tharu.

The data of these studies is collected from primary and secondary sources. Primary data is collected from the fieldwork with the help of various techniques of data collection. Secondary data is collected from previous studies, VDC office, published documents.

Gobardiha, Ratanpur and Madhavpur-khaira villages lies in Gobardiha VDC Word No. 7, 8 and 9 Deukhuri Dang district. There are 316 Tharus' households and 50 Non-Tharus household. Randomly 100 households (31 Percent) are selected. Head of the families are the informants of this study and they are interviewed using an interview schedule.

Various techniques of data collection have been applied to obtain different types of quantitative and qualitative data. The data collection techniques are questionnaire, observation and key informant interview, focus group discussions.

Questionnaire is based on structured and unstructured. Structured questionnaire has been used to collect primary data by visiting each household of respondents. Unstructured questionnaire for the sample households is filled up with the help of the concerned households is asked for such help.

Especially, qualitative information attempt to show like the landownership causes of landlessness and near landlessness, position of belonging land,

participation of agricultural and non-agricultural services and other issues related with socio-economic dimension etc.

Some of the intellectual and experienced persons of the field areas are used as key informants. *Aghariya, Mahato, Guruwa, Kakandaruwa* and representatives of VDC. The leaders of Tharu community are taken for discussion. Especially key informants interview is taken to cross check to the reliability of the collected data through the unstructured questionnaire and also to collect qualitative data regarding age family type, literacy, size of landholding, landownership card distribution, changes of material and non-material cultures and existing socio-economic problems in the Tharu societies etc.

Qualitative and descriptive data are divided and make tally according to different topics and calculated in percentage using calculator. The collected data is processed and statistically analyzed to make them more clear and scientific.

3.2 Universe of Sample Size and Sampling Procedures

From the census survey 316 Tharu households were counted in the study area. A sample size was determined by taking 31 percent of the population. Thus 100 households are selected as the sample units for the study.

To make the sample truly represented of the population, a mix type of sampling procedure was employed. Stratifying the population and selecting the sample from each of the strata and from each of the settlements at once in approximately proportional basis accomplished it.

As mentioned above the population was stratified on the basis of landholding into five strata namely: landless, nearlandless, marginal farmers, small farmers and large farmers. Then the samples were selected purposively from each of the strata consisted in the settlements. The reasons behind the adaptation of purposive sampling instead of random sampling were due to the small size of sample frame of different strata distributed in several settlements and being administratively more convenient the former than the latter. Necessary inquiries and consultations were made with villagers, village leaders, intellectuals and teachers along with personal observation while selecting the sample to avoid any

deliberate or built-in the sample. The composition of sample by settlements and strata is shown separating in the tables-

The strata mentioned above were defined on the basis of several studies as well as considering local landholding pattern, which is discussed in chapter VI of this study. Adapted definitions are following strata-

-) Large Farmers (L.F.): - Having more than 4 bigha's land.
-) Small Farmers (S.F.): - Having more than 1.5 bighas to less than 4 bighas land.
-) Marginal Farmers (M. F.): - Landholders of more than 10 kattha to less than 1.5 bighas.
-) Near landless (N.L.): - Landholders of 1 kattha to less than 10 kattha.
-) Landless (L.L.): - The landholding size of up to 1 kattha or assumed area only sufficient for home site and kitchen garden.

The Gobardiha Community Forest determined this land holding strata.

3.3 Tools and Techniques

3.3.1 Household Survey

Sampled households were interviewed using structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was intended to obtain information on households; demographic, education, occupation, landholding, food balance, income and resources, expenditure and others activity of economy.

3.3.2 Case Study

The case study method was used to gather information about the history of ownerships of land, landlords and tenants (*jaggaadhani purja or mohi, jimindar and kamaiya, adhiya and bataiya*). Similarly, it also used to know the past land

distribution, problems of landownership and present landholding as well as effects on socio-economic changes of Tharus.

3.3.3 Key- Informants Survey

Informal discussion focusing on the relevant aspects of the problems, were held with the key-informants. The key-informants were the elders, ex-jimindars, intellectuals, ex-kamaiya, and ex-members of local government, local community leaders and so on. In depth talks were held especially with the elders to collect historical data and to gain better understanding of the causal process of the problems. These are the people who could narrate the changing phenomena of the community overtime. The key-informants were met repeatedly during the survey period to have a greater insight into the problem under the research.

3.3.4 Focus Group Discussion

The focus group discussions were held with the landless, nearlandless, marginal farmer, small farmer and large farmer members. The problems of landlessness and nearlandlessness were discussed during the group meeting. The participants had talked in depth of being landlessness and nearlandlessness in the present time.

3.3.5 Analysis

The quantitative data gathered through household questionnaire has processed and tabulated. After the processing and tabulating the data, they were presented with the help of simple tabular analysis to be interpreted. Simple statistical tools have employed to present the data in meaningful ways. Regarding the qualitative data as well as facts and information collected through in-depth interviews, they are encompassed in the study systematically and logically.

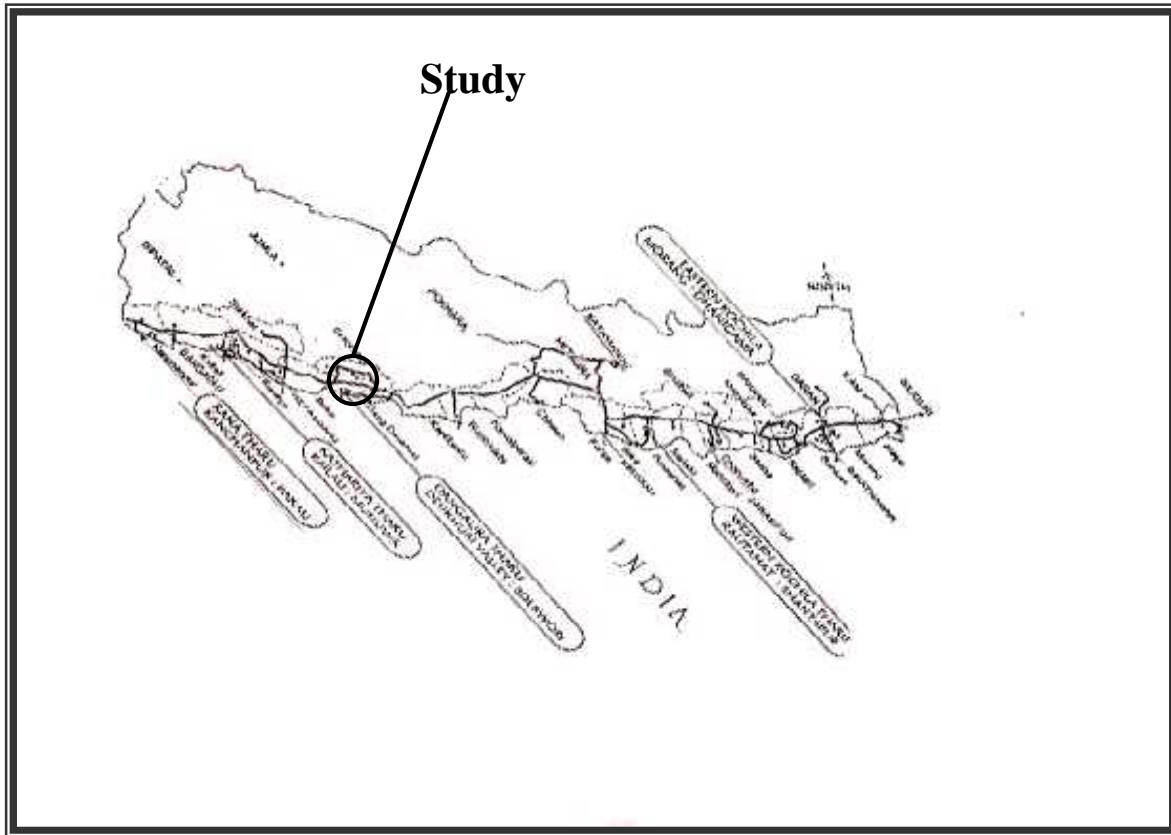
INTRODUCTION TO STUDY AREA

4.1 Study Area

The survey took place in Gobarediha VDC, Ward No. 7,8 and 9 (82° 37' 43" E, 27° 48' 37" N), Deukhuri Dang District. The village, a dense and elongated cluster south of the Rapti River, is situated at 270m altitudes at the foot of the hill ranges in Nepal, two hours' walk away from the main road. The Tharu, one of the largest ethnic groups in Nepal, inhabits it. Tharus speak own language and have developed a unique culture characterized by a close relationship with nature. Because of the relative isolation of this subtropical low-land belt (Terai), a previously malaria-infested jungle avoided by other people, the Tharu remained the least known group in Nepal until recent times (Gurung, 1994; Krauskoff, 1999; Srivastava, 1999). Their present lifestyle bears witness to the past, when shifting cultivation was their main land-use strategy. The houses still have a temporary character and people shift with limited effort. In the area around Gobardiha, Ratanpur and Madhavpur shifting cultivation was abandoned a few generations ago. Due to the southern shift of the Rapti River, however, villages continue to be relocated and moved away from the riverside. The importance of forests is limited to firewood and edible plants. Hunting is irrelevant as they rear livestock at their homesteads. Since the land reforms of the 1960s, it is prohibited to turn virgin forests into agricultural land. Unlike other farming systems in Nepal, Tharu agriculture is less dependent on monsoon rains, as the villages are situated close to major rivers facilitating irrigation. Moreover, rivers are important for fishing, a core element in the Tharu way of life (Bjoernsen, 2002).

Map - 2

Tharu Settlement Areas in Nepal



Source: The Kings of Nepal and Tharu of the Terai, 2000

This survey was conducted in the villages of Ratanpur, Gobardiha and Madhavpur and surrounding villages in the Dang Deukhuri valley of southwest Nepal. The population of these villages is approximately 2168 people. To get to Dang from the capital city of Kathmandu, one takes a ten hours bus ride on the East-West highway. The bus stop is in the roadside from the Sisanaya village. From there, it is a two hours walk across fields and rivers to the villages of Ratanpur, Gobardiha and Madhavpur.

Ratanpur, Gobardiha and Madhavpur is home to a community of Tharus which is a unique ethnic group of Nepal. Their language, facial features, colorful clothes, communal living style, form of dance, and ritual set them apart from other

Nepalese. Today, the Tharus inhabit the Terai, the southern stretch of land running across Nepal from east to west, bordering India. The Tharus are somewhat of a mystery because their origins have not been substantiated. Although different theories exist, there is no unanimity of opinion about where these people came from (Rahm, 1995).

4.2 Physical and Socio-Economic Profile of the Study Area

4.2.1 Concept

The Deukhuri valley, where this survey was conducted, is a three hours bus ride from Lumbini and Kapilvastu, the theorized origin of the Tharus. The Tharus are farmers by occupation and renowned for their honesty by other ethnic groups of Nepalese. Because the villages are relatively close to the highway, which links them to the capital city, influences of the West are considerable. The people, however, are still governed by a subsistence way of life that coincides with the cycles and rhythms of nature. Tradition and ritual thrive. Despite their reputation for honesty, or perhaps because of it, the Tharus have been one of the most exploited groups in Nepal. Equal opportunities in education, land ownership, and employment do not exist for the Tharus. An archaic and inhumane system of ownership exists, the jimindar system, by which the Tharus are virtually slaves. They work other peoples' land or give an overly high percentage of their own crop to the landowner (Shrestha and Singh, 1992). Despite there advertises the Tharus remain a proud people, rich in their own tradition, beliefs, and rituals.

The people in Ratanpur do not own their land. It belongs to a group of people called Yogi. The Tharus farm the land and give part of their crop to the Yogi. They are considered servants and have to pay tax on the land as well (Rahm, J. 1995). The Mahato is the chosen Tharu leader who oversees the village. Villagers come to him with problems, and he gives suggestions to villagers. He has been doing this for the last 35 years. He explains that this system is very difficult for the Tharus because they can never own their land. Twenty people live in his household. He feeds his family and is able to sell some lintels, mustard, black gram, wheat, turmeric, and cilantro at a local market. He constantly worries,

though because the landowners are demanding more and more of his crops each year, and he cannot afford the rising tax. The villagers face so many problems. He cannot say what they are. They change from morning to day to night (Rahm, 1995).

4.2.2 Physical Setting

Gobardiha, Ratanpur and Madhavpur lies on the Gobardiha VDC in Deukhuri-Dang, these villages are only study site located in the southern plain known as the Terai. The villages are the dense and elongated clusters located south of Rapti River at 270 m above sea level where the Gangetic plains of India meet the foothills of southern Nepal (Siwaliks). The indigenous people of the Terai, called Tharu, inhabit the villages. As they have lived isolated in the dense malaria jungle avoided by other people, they have remained the least known group in Nepal (Gurung,1994; Kraukoffs, 1999, Srivastava, 1999). Until recent times, their livelihood was based on shifting cultivation and fishing. The wide Deukhuri Valley offered fertile land for rice, maize, barley, lentils and mustard. After the land Reform act of the 1960s urging the Tharu to sedentary agriculture, they lost their relative wealth and are now among the poorest who cannot even cover their food requirement from subsistence farming (Kraukoff,2000; Panjiar,2000). Tharu live in a world of local ghosts and spirits and conserved their own ceremonies and religious festivities although they are strongly influenced by Hinduism (Mueller-Boeker,1999).

4.2.3 Climate

The climate of the village is tropical with the hottest period from April to June leading up to the monsoon. The monsoon covers between mid June to mid September. During the monsoon the weather is cooler but very humid. Towards November the weather becomes cooler still; with the nights being cold, until February. From March the hot season begins again. The village is covered with thick layers of mist which last for three to four hours in most of the mornings from

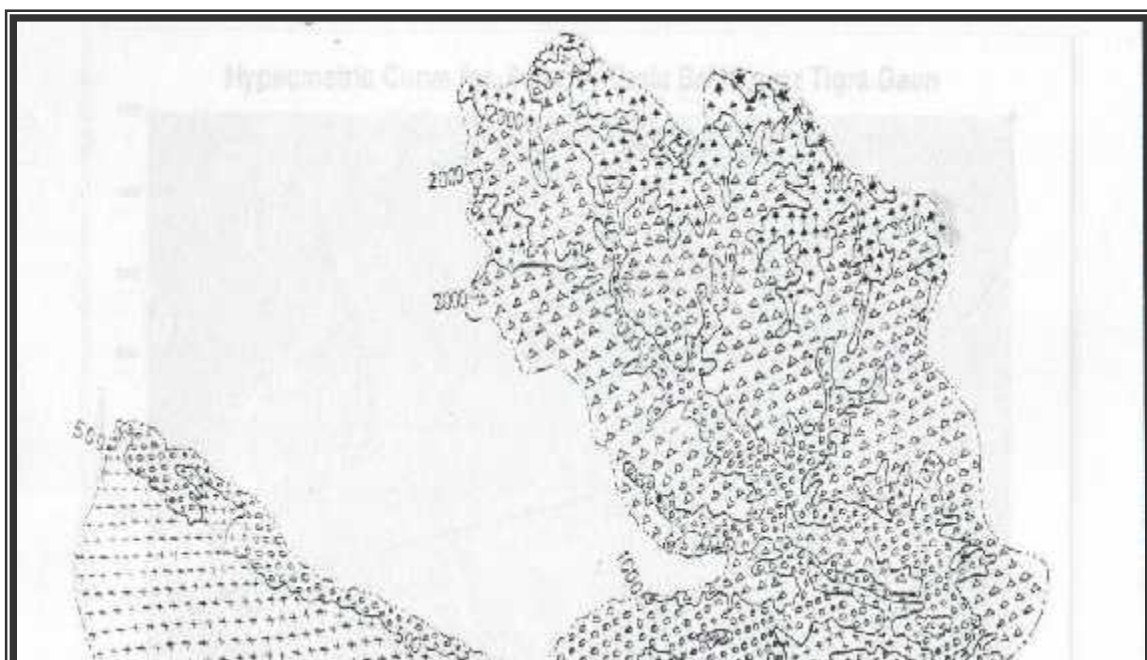
late October to the middle of February. The village experiences violent windstorms of short time in the April. Most of the annual rainfall of 1500mm occurs during the distinct rainy season (June to August), with maximum temperatures of 44⁰ C (Manandhar, 1997). In the dry season, interrupted by few days of rain, the minimum temperature drops to 5⁰ C.

4.2.4 Topography

The survey area is located in inner Terai ecological region and slopes from northeast to southwest. The average drop per kilometer is 2.75 meter. Surface drains and streams intersect the area. The prominent among them are Supaila Sota, West Rapti River, Chimchime Sota and Khaurahuwa Sota. These act as drains during monsoon season.

Map - 3

Topography Map of Rapti Basin



Source : Sagar Manandhar, A Catchments of West Rapti River, 1997

Source: Rainfall-Runoff Analysis with Morph metric Characteristics of West Rapti, 1997.

4.2.5 Natural Resources

Water: The West Rapti River and Supaila *Sota* are main sources of irrigation water of the village. These irrigation water resources cannot meet the demand in the village. Almost 20 years before, there was a Farmers Managed Irrigation System (Bardkapath *Parganna*) for the *Ashahaniya* land, now it is not functioning.

The Supaila *Sota* is very important for the irrigation of *Jarhaniya* land, but it is seasonal and small water resource. Therefore, it is not sufficient for the village, even useful than Rapti River. Khaurahuwa *Sota* also important for the irrigation of *Jarhaniya* land. It is also small and seasonal, and it could not occupy large area. Therefore, usually farmers depend on monsoon water.

Forest: The southern part of study area, there is foothill and it covered by dense of forest. There is forest resources existing in two different one is Government controlled forest and community controlled forest. From the forest they have achieved fuel wood, timber wood, medicinal herbs, fruits and grasses for the livestock and themselves.

Land: The Deukhuri valley falls within the category of Valley land (V) under Land utilization Map LRMP. The land system and land capability also indicates that the command area is almost wetland followed by the dry land and mixed land. The command area is composed of active and recent alluvial deposits formed as plains, fans and aprons. Ancient river terraces also-form major portion of the landscape. The feasibility study report has mentioned that the dominant soils of the areas are Ustochrepts, Haplustalfs and Roustalfs with dominants soil texture being silt loam. The command area is well drained with slope 1° to 2° and average soil depth is more than one meter, which is suitable for irrigated agriculture. The soil consists of average Ph value 7.53, 1.8 percent organic matter and 0.085 percent N₂. As per the field investigation, told land is moderately suitable for irrigated agriculture.

4.2.6 Demographic Aspect

According to household survey of Gobardiha Community Forest 10/2061, the total population of survey areas 2168, of which the total number of males and females is 1132 and 1036 respectively. There are 316 households in the village. Average size of household is 6.8. The age wise distribution of the population is given in the table 1

Table - 1
Population Composition by age Group

Age Group	Total Population		Total	Percent age
	Male	Female		
0 – 10	201	192	393	18.12
10 – 20	210	209	419	19.32
20 – 30	207	198	405	18.68
30 – 40	176	166	342	15.77
40 – 50	138	139	277	12.77
50 – 60	112	85	197	9.12
60 – 70	63	36	99	4.56
70 - Over	25	11	36	1.66
Total	1132	1036	2168	100

Source: Gobardiha Community Forest Office, 2061 B.S.

The table indicates that the percentage of dependent, below 20 years, is 37.44 percent, which is quite high. This also reveals an increasing trend of population in the future.

There is mainly two types of settlements cluster and scattered. The old settlement is cluster and new settlement is scattered. The landless Tharu resettled toward into the virgin land after free from the bounded labour system in 2057 BS. Most of the land of the village, more than 90 percent is under cultivation and well populated. The more concentration of population is found old settlement and new settlement is found in public land, some marginal farmers and house divide family are also changed their old house. In this way, there is scattered settlement is increasing rapidly. The typical Tharu villages, landless settlements in public land have cluster settlements, while hill-immigrants are widely scattered settlement

(Bhatta, 1996). The distribution of household population in table No 3 of surveyed village represents density of population.

Table - 2
Distribution of Population and Household

S .No.	Villages	Total Household	M ale	Fe male	Total Population
1	Ratanpur	84	276	270	546
2	Gobardiha	193	704	632	1336
3	Madhavpur	39	152	134	286
		316	1132	1036	2168

Source: Gobardiha Community Forest Office, 2061 BS

4.2.7 Education

According to the Statistics Bulletin 2061/62 BS, 59 percent are literate people in the district, where as female 46.9 percent and male 69.3 percent. This is higher percent rather than national literacy rate of 54.1 percent. However there is variation between the male and female literacy level. Among the villages two primary schools and one higher secondary school are enhancing literacy rate of the villages. There are no private schools all are community, and a primary night school at the Gobardiha village where is poor and engaged students come at night school, which is crucial for the poor family and the bounded labourers, because they should earn money for the normal survived. Some time there was informal education classes conducted for the adult and women by the NGOs, therefore usually adult male and female can read and write their name and speak Nepali. Table No. 3 showed formal education (Primary School Passed) achieved people at the village, where as female literacy percentage is low than the male.

Table - 3
Formal Education Achieved Population

Sex	Total Population	Literate population	Percentage	Illiterate Population	Percentage
Male	1132	763	67	369	33
Female	1036	470	45	566	55
Total	2168	1233	57	935	43

Source: Gobardiha Community Forest Office, 2061 BS

The school enrollment of student is very high, there is 95 percent school aged children are enrolled during 2062 BS. District Education Office and many other educational institutions are effectively working for the campaign of "Education For All." But, secondary education student enrollment is lower than the primary school students, there are poverty is main cause of students dropout and class repetition. So, there are high percentage students are not successful to complete secondary education. This is the main cause of less enrollment of higher secondary school. Table No. 4 showed students enrollment in the different level of school educations.

Table - 4

Students Enrollment in School

S. No.	Level of Education	Boys		Girls		Total
		No.	%	No.	%	
1	Primary education (1-5)	64	1	56	1	20
2	Secondary " (6-10)	87	1	49	1	36
3	Higher Secondary " (11-12)	5	3	4	2	9
Total		86	3	29	3	15

Source: Gobardiha Community Forest Office, 2061BS

4.2.8 Economic Aspect

The economy of village is predominantly rural and agrarian. According to national census of 2001, about 59.1 percent of economically active population is engaged in agriculture sector. Most of the people are subsistence farmers. A substantial proportion of the households do not own land. *Majuri* (daily wages laborer system) is second major income of landless and near landless people. Encroachment of landless people into forestland and public land is common sense in the village. All of these suggest controlling population growth, developing non-form sector and improvement and diversification in agriculture for the uplift of village economy.

4.2.8.1 Agriculture And Livestock

a. Agriculture

Since the village is endowed with fertile cultivable land, farming has been the main economic activity of the people. Cereal crops dominate agriculture in the village. Since the whole Terai is called the 'granary' of Nepal, the village also produces in surplus quantity. The farming system is somewhat mixed as applied both the primitive and improve method. Farmers have been practicing chemical fertilizers, high yielding varieties and pesticide and insecticide in their farms. One of the important change occurred in the farming system of the village is increasing use of tractor instead of bullocks. Few rich farmers in the village have owned the tractors, which are hired by other farmers. Tractors are used in several farming activities such as ploughing, puddling and leveling of farm and threshing of rice and wheat. However, other farming activities planting, weeding and harvesting are still performed manually.

The main cereal crops farmed in the village are paddy, wheat and maize. Paddy that is grown one time a year in lowland has quite production and land coverage, followed by wheat and maize. Beside the cereal crops, other agricultural

crops which are grown in the village are mustered, potato, pulses, and leguminous crops.

Since cereal crops dominate the agriculture of village, horticultural crops and vegetables are not found for marketing. Though they are the possible sources of income but are limited to home consumption due to the strong inclination of farmers towards cereal crops. The main fruits planted in the village are mangoes, bananas, jackfruits and guavas. Cauliflower, cabbage, radish, Spanish, brinjal, chilly, tomato, potatoes etc are the main vegetables cultivated in the village. Very few numbers of farmers have started growing vegetables to sell in the market.

b. Cropping pattern

The different types of land determine cropping patterns. The cropping pattern in the village is associated with two types of land forms *Jarhaniya* and *Ashahaniya* separated by the local people, according to use of land. Jarhaniya land is initially depends on the monsoon and farmers using it for rice plant in the monsoon but *Ashahaniya* land was used pre-monsoon for rice plantation. There was a Farmers Managed Irrigation System (*Badkapath Parganna*), and farmers were cultivated an indigenous rice plant that was called *Ashahan Dhan*. So it named *Ashahaniya* land. Since cutting down the *Badkapath Parganna Kulo* System, there is not any irrigation systems, so, this land has not any irrigation systems, so it is depends on monsoon at all.

Table - 5

Cropping Pattern in the Study Area

S. No.	Rotation of Crops	Types of Land
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1.	Paddy - Wheat	Jarhaniya Land
2.	Paddy – Lintel and Mustered	Jarhaniya Land
3.	Maize - Mustered	Jarhaniya Land
4.	Maize - Wheat	Ashahaniya Land
5.	Maize – Mustered and Lintel	Ashahaniya Land

Source: Field Study, 2006

As the above table shows that the *Jarhaniya* land is associated with paddy, wheat, mustered and lintel of a year. *Ashahaniya* land is associated with maize, lintel, mustered and wheat.

c. Livestock

Livestock is an integral component of farming system of the village. Most of the farmers have kept some animals. Holding of livestock varies with the holding of land. People keep buffaloes mainly for milk purpose. Cows are also kept for milk and for ploughing fields. There is not commercial milk station, and enough consumers, so they used for themselves.

Goats, chickens, pigs, sheep and ducks are raised for meat. Landless people also kept them poultry rising, it is becoming popular in the village, as some farmers have run poultry farm as in improved way.

d. Extension and service agencies

There is a district level Ayurveda center and a veterinary center located in the Gobardiha village. At the Ayurveda center, there are two technicians a senior Ayurved doctor and assistant doctor. They are providing free health service to the local people and veterinary service center as working to control animal-diseases and publicize improved varieties of livestock. There is a co-operative institution located in Gobardiha village which supplies fertilizer, seeds, insecticides and pesticides and agricultural tools, improved seeds to farmer and also lends loans to

farmer in small amounts. And, there is a nursery it provides different species of plant for the local people.

e. Transportation and communication

The village is accessible by gravel road transportation in all seasons. There is regular service from Kalakate to Gadhawa. At the Kalakate gravel road linked with the East-West Highway. The entire village is facilitated by muddy road. The means of transportation include bicycle, motorbike, tractor and other light vehicles. Among them bicycle is widely used, tractor is used to specially for the carrying loads and plough fields. There was a telephone and post service centers, it is centralized at the local market Lamahi.

f. Irrigation

There is lack of all-season irrigation facilities in the village. *Jarhaniya* land irrigated when there is water in the sources Supaila and Khaurahuwa *Sota* (khola). These irrigation systems can irrigate very limited areas in post monsoon. Both types of land is made of sandy-clay soil, it is very good for the agriculture, we would be able to manage permanent irrigation system, farmers livelihood will be improved as well as better.

4.3 Description of Tharu Settlement

4.3.1 Concept

Tharus had settled in the region, which is rich in land, forest and water resources. It is evidenced by their close proximity to forest or amidst of forest on the plain areas in the vicinity of rivers and streams. It may be due to the agriculture as their livelihood as well as their keen interest in fishing. They have established themselves on the lower paddy land, however, houses are built at slightly elevated adjoining upland. The upland, besides for the house, is used for cowshed, courtyard and kitchen garden.

Tharu settlements are more clustered. It is so because Tharus prefer to live in close contact with their relatives. They live in the cluster which includes from five or six to thirty or more houses. They share courtyard and passage in common. Indeed, such type of living of the Tharus indicates a sense of harmony among the villagers. Tharus tend to seclude their settlements from the settlements of other ethnic groups. However, in course of time, due to the lack of site to built houses nearby old settlement as a consequence of population growth; selling of land to non-Tharus and influence of non-Tharus have led them to live in mixed settlement far from their old settlement.

Tharus generally, set their houses, length-wise either north-south or east-west direction, with a wide street between the two rows of houses. Tharus, usually build their houses, with thatched roof, using material, available locally in the forest nearby the village are considered economy to construct. Walls of the houses are made of stick with mud plaster on them without ventilation is the dominant feature of Tharus houses which make distinct them from the houses of others. The shape of house is rectangular and the size of it is determined by the type of family as well as by the economic standard of the family. Recently, some rich Tharus are influenced by other people have built cemented building in modern design. One can see modern houses along with the typical houses in some of the Tharus settlements in Gobardiha.

4.3.2 Setting of The Settlement

Ratanpur: This village is endangered from the river cutting of West Rapti River. In northern side Rapti river is very close of the village, southern side is new settlement, there is living migrated people (hill people) that is called Dhairahni village, east side there is Mahadeva village and west side Gobardiha village, these both villages are predominantly Tharu ethnic group. The Tharu farm the land and give part of their crop to the Yogi. They are considered servants and have to pay tax on the land as well. *Mahato* is the village leader of Ratanpur village. Villagers come to him with problems and he gives them suggestions. He feels very difficult for the Tharu's because they can never own land and constantly worries, though,

because the landowners are demanding more and more of his crops each year, and he cannot afford the rising tax. The villagers face so many problems. He cannot say what they are. They change from morning to day to night (Rahm, 1995).

Gobardiha: Gobardiha village, Gobardiha VDC, Deukhuri-Dang, Western Nepal. It is also located in the southern part of Rapti river, it is very old settlement of Tharus. There are different classes of Tharu people living since many years such as *jimidar* upper class, *kissan* (middle class farmer), *raity* (marginal farmer) and *bukraha* (Landless farmer). The *jimidar* have enough land, they do not work at the field themselves, *kissan* have subsidies land and they do themselves, *raity* have do themselves but not belong own land and *bukraha* they do *jimidar's* work as *majuri* and *kamaiya*.

Madhavpur: This village is very close to the forest. There are 39 households and entire population 286 of the village. It had sifted from the river side of West Rapti river. Its ancient name was Balapur, when their village had cut by the river, then they live there. People of this village have few own lands, so *majuri* is second subsidies of the villagers.

A PROFILE OF THE THARUS

5.1 Social Context

Tharu, an aboriginal of the Terai region, live in the entire length, of it. They have been living there since the unknown past. The origin of the Tharu is still mysterious as they are many contradictory views about it among the anthropologists. Amid of the so much uncertainty, a scholar define the Tharu tribe as-the 'forest people' came from many regions at different times to seek the peace and shelter of the jungle; the environment then moulded them, over a very long period of time, into groups of special people, all of them called the Tharu.

Initially, Tharu were the forest dwellers. They have established their settlements by clearing the forest. They used to live in the areas of less interaction and inaccessible to other people. They live in cluster which include the house of their close relatives. However, due to the population growth and other economic factors, some Tharu families are found to be settling away from the main cluster and some non-Tharu living close to the Tharu cluster.

Large extended family is one of the characteristics of traditional Tharu society. The concept of large family in recent years is gradually changing. In the study area, nuclear families are becoming popular. The change can be the outcome of population pressure, poverty, landlessness and influence of non-Tharu people. Women are less discriminated in the Tharu society than in other non- Tharu society. The family is directed and managed by household chief who is called *Gardhuria* in Tharu dialect. All of the families in a settlement are united in a social origination of an informal type. The leader selected for it is called *Mahaton*, *Aghariya* or *Kakandaruwa*. There is no relation of this body with government bodies. When some conflicts or problem arise in the Tharu community they are settled by the *Mahaton* or *Aghariya* or *Kakandaruwa*. All Tharu families trust him. It is the responsibility of the village leader and to mobilize villagers for the construction and maintenance of village level facilities like streets, canals and other public functions. The direction, decision, and suggestions discharged by the

village leaders are obeyed by all the villagers. Usually, the responsibility of village leader is given to a rich Tharu landlords (*jimidar*). This post is the period of Rana rule, were appointed in the post of *jimidars* a local level tax-collecting agents. This system gradually lost its importance in the Tharu community after the migration of non-Tharus in their locality. In the study area it is not into existence.

Tharu have their own social customs, traditions and culture. They speak their own Tharu dialect. The Tharu way of life differs from that of the migrants from the hills. Tharu observe a number of feast and festivals. Meat and alcoholic drinks are important items of the feast. Considerable amount of money is spent on such occasions. Tharu dress very simply as they wear very little and light clothes. However, they are highly influenced by the dresses of other non-Tharus groups and as a result are discarding their traditional dress and changing to garments of modern fashions.

Tharus are regarded as simple, peaceful, honest and less-aggressive than hill migrants. They are educationally and socially backward people. As a consequence of their innocence and illiteracy they have been exploited largely by the non-Tharus migrants in trickily ways. The attitude of the Tharu towards education in recent years is positively changing (Meyer, 1995).

5.2 Economy

Tharu economy is basically a subsistence economy. All members of the family are employed in agricultural activities in the traditional Tharu society. In fact agriculture is not only the economic occupation but also a way of life for them. They devote most of their time in farming activities. Protection of crops from wild animals and birds in the past was the most challenging job for them as their farmlands usually located in the middle of forest or close to it. Thus in addition of day work they had to watch their fields even in night to protect the crops from wild animals.

Tharu economy in the past before the migration of hill people into Deukhuri Dang was an indigenous tribal economy. Agricultural production was mostly for self-consumption. There were few things for sale. In the study area, lintel and

mustard were cultivated as cash crops which were exported to local bazaar Lamahi, Krishnanager. They used to buy salt, cloth, metal and other necessary items. Once time Koilabas (a market at Nepal-India border) the traders who brought these things at the village in winter season. Thus, trade at that time was often. Rice is main crop cereal crop was cultivated mainly in the primitive way of broadcasting and the yield was low. Livestock was an integral component of farming system. Cattle, sheep, goats etc. were kept in large numbers, as there was no shortage of pastureland. They obtained building materials, grasses for thatching and firewood from the forests. Indeed, though there was hardship, the Tharu economy in the past was sustainable in large extent.

With the execution of the resettlement programme and development of transportation the traditional Tharu economy nearly collapsed. Population pressure highly increased in the land and other natural resources. Manufactured goods dominated the village market. The consumption patterns of the Tharu changed by the influence of hill migrants. Land, which was unsaleable, became saleable asset. The role of money increased in the rural economy. The economy gradually changed into mixed one which is partly subsistence and partly commercial.

With the changes in economy, there was also change in agrarian relation of the Tharu community. Until the resettlement programme and few years after it, agricultural production relation was determined by the two groups-landowners and landless bounded labours. The bounded labours were called *Kamaiya* in Tharu dialect. The bounded labourers had worked whole time for the landlords and in return they got some stipulated amount of grain and kitchen garden to grow vegetables. In the Tharu community of study area, most of the land was under the control of the jimidars and their relatives. The large plots of jimidari land were cultivated by the bonded labour. The jimidars used to keep many pairs of ox to cultivate their land. The bounded labourers were those families with no land or had lost their lands because they were unable to pay taxes or they had fallen into the debt of jimidars.

But as the resettlement program executed, population pressure increased highly. As a consequence, there did not remain any pastureland which was abundant in the past. The jimidar became unable to keep more oxen. The

extended large families of the landlords be separated. They also sold excess land and keep land of manageable size. The landlords freed the bonded labourers in wages which are being available in cheap rates. They saw that the latter is economical and there were no fears of claiming tenancy rights on land. Thus, the bounded labour system nor tenancy of any farm, all farming jobs are carried out by local agricultural labours.

MAGNITUDE, PROCESS, CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF LANDLESSNESS

6.1 Magnitude of The Problem

6.1.1 Conceptual and Measurement Issues

The concept and the measures of landlessness may vary from country to country, depending largely on the way it is defined and on the variations in socio-economic setting of each nation. Thus, " the magnitude of the problem of landlessness and near landlessness often depends on the definition adopted by the researcher. There are at least four major concepts-accesses to land, income, employment in agriculture and the poverty line " individually, or in combination with another, used in identification of the landless or near landless (or agricultural labor households) and the estimation of their numbers. Each of these concepts has its own limitations.

There is ambiguity regarding the definition of landlessness in Nepal. The definition of " rural landless" cited in different studies are not clear or not based on any sound reasoning and differs substantially from each other. Due to the differences in the definition of landless employed by various studies, estimates made by them also vary in wide ranges. However, the findings of these studies except that of Central Bureau of Statistics indicate an increasing trend of the problem and almost all studies report a higher percentage of landlessness in the Terai than in the hills and mountains.

The Central Bureau of Statistics of Nepal, based on its agricultural sample censuses, has shown a declining trend of rural landless households (1.42% in 1961, 0.95% in 1971, and 0.37% in 1981). The census defines (operational farm holding " as an area of more than 0.01 hectare. It seems unable to capture the actual situation of the problem as several other studies report considerably high incidence of landlessness.

Zaman, while evaluating the impact of the land reform program in Nepal, estimated 7.8 percent of the rural households as landless by designating operational land holding as those above 0.12 hectare. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) in 1982 reported that between 1961 and 1971. The number of landless households including those owning less than 0.10 hectare increased from 11.9 percent to 17.9 percent. According to the 1974 ARTEP mission report, 23 percent of the sample households in the Terai were landless.

The sample survey, conducted by the National Planning Commission (NPC) (1977), which defined rural landless households as those with no land for cultivation but with a homestead or house site being used as kitchen garden estimated 10.35 percent rural households as landless.

6.1.2 Extent of Landlessness in the Study Area

As seen above, there is lack of standard criterion for measuring rural landless. In such context, considering the definitions provided by the NPC, Zaman and ADB as well as landholding patterns in the study area, the landless households are defined those who have holding of less than 0.15 bigha (0.10 ha.). Besides landless households, the landholding households were classified into four groups namely near landless, marginal, small and large farm households.

The concepts of nearlandless and marginal households were adopted from a study by Singh in context of land scarce countries of south Asia. Singh defines nearlandless as those with less than 0.4 hectares (approximately 0.6 bighas) and marginal as those with 0.4 to 1 hectare (roughly 0.6 to 1.5 bigas). The definition of small farm (1.5 - 4 bighas) was adopted from survey by the Nepal Rastra Bank. And the households those having holding above than 4 bighas were termed as large farm in local standard (NRB, 1980).

A Census survey of Tharu households in the study area was conducted to find out the magnitude of the landlessness and other farm groups in the Tharu community. The finding of the survey is presented in the table.

Table - 6

Number of Landholding Groups

Household Groups	Numbers of Households			Total HHs & Percentage	Total Population
	Ratanpur	Gobardiha	Madhavpur		
Landless	9	59	0	68	336
Nearland	25	41	7	73	402
Marginal	36	60	26	122	789
Small	11	14	6	31	343
Large	3	19	0	22	298
Total	84	193	39	316	216

Source: Field Survey, 2006

6.2 Process and Causes of Landlessness

This section examines the process and identifies the underlying causes of landlessness in the Tharu community of Gobardiha. The problem of landlessness originated with the integration of tribal land of Tharus into the land-administration system of the state. Before then, the Tharus had their own tribal society of primitive stage, which was free from any kind of state intervention. Primitive type of agriculture was their main occupation. They had adopted shifting cultivation in the certain area within their access. Since the introduction of agriculture, the Tharus became concentrated in certain area and developed it further in course of time. Hence the nomadic characteristics, which can be a source in losing permanent land ownership of tribal groups, did not exist in the Tharus of Gobardiha. The land of the Tharus has been continuously controlled by state since the Rana rule. Therefore, the process of landlessness can be explained in two stages of period – during Rana rule till the Resettlement Programme in Deukhuri valley and post Resettlement Programme. In other words the process of landlessness can be viewed in terms of two specific periods namely pre Resettlement Programme and post Resettlement Programme.

Landlessness and near landlessness, like poverty and inequality, are the result of a complex interaction of topographical, socio-economic and political forces operating over centuries and it is difficult to disentangle the causes from one another of indicate their relative importance. Landlessness is a multidimensional problem, which arises due to several factors operating simultaneously in society. The determining factors of landlessness and their effectiveness may vary from society to society. Even within a society the causes as well as their extent of operation may differ among the various ethnic groups. It all depends upon the environment to which the farm family belongs (Singh, 1982).

In view of these facts, the causes, which have led to landlessness of the Tharu community, are identified and discussed in this section of the study. However, the complexity of the problem and the lack of research studies on the state of high incidence of landlessness in the Tharu community it is very difficult to identify precisely the causes which-indeed, requires extensive knowledge of several disciplines of social science. Nevertheless, attempts are made mainly on the basis of information obtained in the field to find out the principal causes of landlessness in the Tharu community (Bhandari, 1985).

6.2.1 Resettlement Programme

Rapti Valley Multipurpose Development Project implemented in Dang disdriect in

the late 1950s was the first planned resettlement program of Nepal. It was initiated with an objective to rehabilitate the landless and homeless people-the – flood victims of 1954. The program had distributed land of varying size ranging form 4-50 bighas. The ultimate goal of the project was to exploit the land resource in order to raise production to solve the food scarcity of the capital, the Kathmandu city. As the government eradicated malaria in the region large number of people from hills migrated here. Within the few years the region, which was inhabited before then only by the malaria immunized Tharu people be overcrowded by the hill-migrants so much that the latecomer did not obtain the plot of land. Though

said that distribution of land would be confined to landless and homeless people the majority of the beneficiaries were the clever and well to do people.

Formulation as well as implementation of the resettlement program showed that the socio-economic condition of the aboriginal Tharu an objective was not considered. As a result it benefited only the non-Tharus hill migrants leaving the socio economically deprived Tharus unaffected. Though the main objective of the programme was to distribute land for the homeless and landless people it did not act so regarding the Tharus people. However the Tharu people were also offered to take the plot of land, only few progressive landlord Tharus obtained it. The Tharu families which were landless and working as bonded labours were in the most want of land but could not obtained it. It is because, for the families which had no capital and implements necessary to cultivate land a mere offer of land certainly would not be sufficient.

Indeed, the resettlement program was hill-people oriented and less publicized among Tharus who themselves are self-concentrated people and less inclined towards any changes occurring in the society. Therefore without some efforts from project side, they themselves hardly approach to any programmes however it is beneficial for them.

Besides this, due to their ethnocentric nature they highly prefer to live in the clusters of their own race in the locality separated from other non-Tharus groups. Therefore, the Tharu families who were in want of land also hesitated to take the plot of land as the plotting system of the resettlement program which had scattered plot of farms did not meet the requirements of the traditional Tharu settlements.

Thus, the resettlement program, on the one hand, could not solve the problem of landlessness of the Tharu community which was the outcome of the *Jimidari* system and other historical conditions, and on the other hand, made the problem further worse as it did not left any lands for the cultivation for Tharus in their locality by distributing all the available lands to hill-migrants. The high incidence of landlessness in the Tharu community at present is in fact the consequence of the resettlement program imposed on the tribal land of the Tharus without due considerations of theirs future need.

6.2.2 Social Interaction

Before the implementation of the resettlement program the Tharus of Chitawan, Dang and Deukhuri valley were living in social and physical isolation. At that time, social-interaction was impossible as the valley was predominantly inhabited by the malaria immunized Tharus. Due to the fear of malaria, only in the time of winter, the ruling elites and businessmen made occasional visits. The valley, therefore, was like a forest island mostly inaccessible to other people and completely uninterested socially and economically. The Tharus were little known to outsiders and vice-versa. They had a close, indigenous and subsistence economy.

Along with the execution of resettlement program social interaction became effective as the large number of people of different ethnicity started to settle and farm in the valley. The migration was acted so massively that within the few years the migrants outnumbered the indigenous Tharu population. It is due to the fact that besides the migration through the planned resettlement program, people, in large numbers, voluntarily migrated into Chitawan, Dang and Deukhuri valley in search of land.

In the first instance, as a consequence of the social interaction, there existed significant changes in the socio-economic activities of the Tharus. Due to the pressure of additional population, uses of natural resources such as land, forest etc. previously by the Tharus alone has been severely limited. The traditional subsistence peasants economy gradually transformed towards a mixed one where the produce is grown not only for the self-consumption but also to sell in the market. The commercialization and magnetization of the indigenous economy accelerated the flow of manufactured goods in the rural areas. Selling of land so far was rare became frequently saleable asset.

Such changing circumstances were well perceived by the migrants while the Tharus were ignorant of them. Majority of the migrants were the Brahmin and Chettri, who are considered the high status, influential and clever people of Nepal. Tharus, on the otherhand, are widely recognized as the innocent, naïve and honest people. In the interaction, and thereby in the competition between the advanced

migrants and backward Tharus the farmer obviously outstrips the latter in most of the fields. Hence, it necessitates the protection of the weaker section of population. Unfortunately, the resettlement program did not act so. As a result, in the beginning years of the migration, the Tharus were largely exploited by non-Tharus migrants. This has substantially resulted in the marginalisation and landlessness of the Tharu farmers (Regmi, 1978).

Several stories can be heard regarding the alienation of land from Tharus to non-Tharus migrants. Being the foremost settlers, Tharus had occupied most of the land of best quality especially suitable for paddy cultivation. On the other hand, land distributed by resettlement programme was mainly the upland. Therefore, the farmland of the Tharus tempted the migrant people. The migrant people concentrated their efforts to acquire the parcels of Tharus land. As already mentioned that the migrants are the clever, more advanced and foresighted people while the Tharus are simple, peaceful, illiterate and backward tribe who have been living in long isolation. Several tactics were employed by the non-Tharus to acquire the Tharus land of high potential value in cheap price as it was just come into sale first time along with the migration. An example may be cited to illustrate the manner in which the land was alienated from Tharus to non-Tharus migrants.

After the migration of few years, a migrant of Brahmin ethnic with a hidden purpose of acquiring land approached to a Tharu who had then ten bighas of land. He treated the Tharu very well as he was his close relative. He showed eagerness to help the Tharu in his need and trouble. The migrant used to lend money. Thus he won confidence of the Tharu. By nature, the Tharu regarded him as a good friend and accepted his suggestion without any doubt. The migrant, on the otherhand, was looking to lend him money and in turn to take his land. For which lending money in very small amount was non-possible. At the same time, the simple living Tharu was not in much need. In such context, the migrant framed a plan according to which he encouraged the Tharu to build a new house, in order to raise his expenditure intentionally, in modern style of brick wall and iron sheet roof by saying that there would be shortage of thatch grass in coming days. He went himself to Forest Office to get permission for timber as the Tharus then hesitated to contact any officials. The migrant also lent money time to time. After the completion of the house, the migrant submitted his account of lending by

compounding interest at high rate. The Tharu who was already dominated by the migrant accepted it but was unable to pay the accumulated amount of debt. As a result, he had to be exempted from the debt of the migrant by giving three and half bighas of land which was also assessed at a very cheap rate.

Another aspect of the impact of social interaction is the demonstration effect prevailed in the Tharus community. Before the resettlement program, the Tharus were living in a very simple manner. They were simply clothed people who rarely used manufactured goods. At that time, the role of money in the Tharu economy was very much limited. But along with the execution of resettlement programme and development of transportation and communication, the primitive Tharu economy rapidly changed into market-oriented economy in which cash transaction is a must.

Concomitant of it, there existed changes in the socio-economic living of the Tharus. They discarded their traditional clothing. They began the consumption of manufactured goods available in the local market. This all needed cash-earning sources of income. What they had was the farmland. To meet their cash transactions they started to borrow from the hill-migrants. The hill migrants were equally interested to lend them as the Tharu were very honest and they could pay the loan by selling their land asset. Furthermore, the Tharus who had land were supplied clothes and other consumer goods on credit by the village shopkeeper. The illiterate Tharus were severely exploited by the shopkeepers as they charged very high price for things and high interest rate on the credit-amount. Obviously, the Tharus failed to pay the debt of shopkeeper and money lender. In such way many Tharu families had lost their lands by paying the debt borrowed for consumption purposes.

Above discussion leads to the conclusion of the social interaction resulted into the deterioration of the Tharus as they were dispossessed of their land property.

6.2.3 Population Pressure

In addition to the historical and socio-economic factors, the problem of landlessness in the Tharu community is further aggravated by the increasing population pressure in the Chitawan, Dang- Deukhuri valley has been a continuous phenomena which is resulted very soon in the shortage of cultivable land. Therefore, the growing Tharu population lost its access to additional land. According to Population Census of 1971, the population of Tharu in Nepal was 495881 and ranked sixth among various ethnic groups, while it reached to 1533879 in 2001 CBS. Which is 6.75% of the total and occupies fourth position. On the basis of the census 1971 and 2001, annual population growth rate of the Tharu is found to be 2.8 percent. It is a very high growth rate of population. In the scarcity of cultivable land, population pressure on land resulted in low land-man ratio. The per capita holding for the sampled population is only 0.11 hectares (CBS. 2001).

In the lack of alternative opportunities in non-farm sectors, the population growth cause and perpetuate rural poverty by increasing pressure on limited land available for cultivation. When the families cannot subsist from their productions they likely to fall into debts. Indebtedness compels the households to lose their lands. This is the mechanism that is operation towards landlessness of the Tharu community.

6.3 Effects of Landlessness

The effects of landlessness in the Tharu community are wide and deep. The landless are most vulnerable group of rural people. They lag behind in every field of socio-economic life. Their socio-economic characteristics in a comparative way are presented in the chapter VII of the study. In this section of the study, a general scene of the living conditions of the landless people and the problem of poverty associated with them are discussed.

6.3.1 General Scenario of the Landless In the Study Area

As already mentioned nearly half of the Tharu households are landless. Majority of them have no home site. As a consequence, they have established

themselves by encroaching into the public and forestland. One of the settlements lies in the flood disaster area, as it is located in the low-lying lands nearly the riverbanks. They live in the poorly constructed houses that are too small in comparison of their family size. Nuclear family is preferable for landless than the extended family. Children of the landless family though go to school do not complete even the primary level of education. As they grow up, they have to earn for them.

Most of the landless Tharu are agricultural labour. Their access to non-farm jobs is negligible. Village-level skilled works are performed mostly by the migrated occupational castes. Uncertainty and insecurity of employment is the main hardship of the landless people. Only in the seasons of planting and harvesting, all of the family members get opportunities of employment. Wages are low in other seasons. Women get low wage than the man-worker. Due to the migration from hills to Chitwan in search of work and with the growth of landless population, labour supply is exceeding the demand, which is resulted in rising competition for work and declining wages. No access to institutional credit is another hardship of the landless family. Moreover, they are unable to get loans from money-lender as they are asset less it is risky to lend them for the money-lender. Thus, earning from wage labour is only the source of their income.

6.3.2 Incidence of Poverty

The poverty line derived for Nepal by the Basic Needs Programme of the Government is Rs. 5.40 per capita daily income at 1985/86 prices. The equivalent level of poverty line at 1994/95 prices is Rs. 13.76 per capita daily income. This line is adopted to study the incidence of poverty in the study area.

From the analysis of income data, it is found that about 72 percent of landless households have per capita income below the poverty line, which is about 64 percent of the total poor households.

Table – 7

Structure of Poverty Line by Farm Size Group in Sample Households

Farm Size Group	Households Below Poverty line	Households Above Poverty line	Total
Landless	27	3	30
Near Landless	16	4	20
Marginal Farmer	20	15	35
Small Farmer	1	9	10
Large Farmer	-	5	5
Total	64	36	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006

The pressure on the land has led to systems of exploitation in the Terai. Here we presently find the most severe deforestation in Nepal (Skar, 1992). However, most Nepalese do not seem to take this seriously, as the environmental complaints are mostly coming from the more densely populated middle hills. While the environmental resources are exploited in a destructive way, so are the human resources.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF SAMPLE HOUSEHOLDS

7.1 Demographic Feature

The sample household is 100 and among the total population is 711 where as total male is 361 and female 350 respectively. Thus the dominance of male over female is pronounced in the sample population, which has resulted in sex ratio of 104. The sex ratio is found significantly high than the sex ratio for the Tharu population of Dang district, where are sex ratio 98 according to population census 2001. Table 8 reveals the age group composition of sample population.

Table - 8

Demographic Position of Sample Households

S. No.	Age group	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
1	0 – 1 (Infant Group)	1	5	6	6.49
2	1 – 5 (Early Child Group)	2	1	3	11.67
3	5 – 15 (Child Group)	2	2	54	21.65
4	15 – 30 (Matured Group)	8	1	69	23.76
5	30 – 60 (Adult Group)	4	3	67	23.48

6	60 – Over (Old Group)	4	4	9	12.95
	Total	61	50	11	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2006

The age structure present that almost 40 percent population is younger, which implies that large percent of population is dependent and recently more than 23 percentage population indicates more fertile. The average household size of the sample households in the survey area found mean average 6.54. Table 9 shows that the patterns of family size and the corresponding numbers of households.

Table - 9
Pattern of Family Size

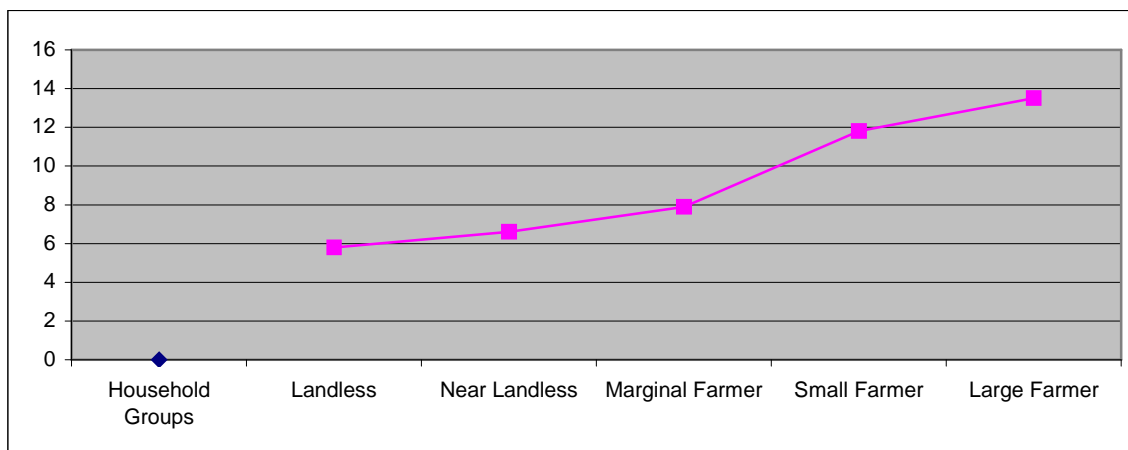
S. No.	Family size	Household Numbers	Total Population	Percentage
1.	1 – 4	37	131	18.45
2.	5 – 8	39	265	37.27
3.	9 – 12	13	135	18.98
4.	13 – 16	8	120	16.87
5.	17 – Above	3	60	8.43
Total		100	711	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006

The data on family size reveals that majority of Tharu households consists small numbers of family members as 76 percent of household have their family size is less than 8. Table 9 shows the average size of different groups of both landless and landholder households, where as nuclear family is preferable.

Figure - 1

Average Household size of Landless and Landholding Households Groups



Source: Field Survey, 2006

Among the five different groups only the large and small farmers have family size is bigger than the average household size of sample households. The figure 1 presents close relationship between the family size and size of landholding as decreasing proportion of family size is in the landless and near landless family. Where as small and large families are joint family, which reveals increasing consequences of near landlessness and landlessness in the future.

7.2 Education

At the survey of sample households have 43 percent household heads were literate. Anyway, literacy rate of household heads is low rather than the whole population of sample households. The whole population of survey area 61 percent male and 39 percent female were literate and it is higher than the national literacy rates of population census in 2001 (54.5 percent male and 25 percent female). Field survey data reveals decreased gender disparity (22) rather than national census 2001 (29.5). The literacy rate of total sample population was found 56.39 percent respectively. This literacy rate reveals that the more positive attitudes in formal education of the Tharus at survey area. There is satisfactory literacy rate of age group 15 – 30 than the older groups of sample households and 5 – 15 age groups also more than 80 percent were enrolled in the primary and secondary school. Table No. 10 indicates educational attainments in sample households' population-

Table – 10

Educational Attainment of Sample Population

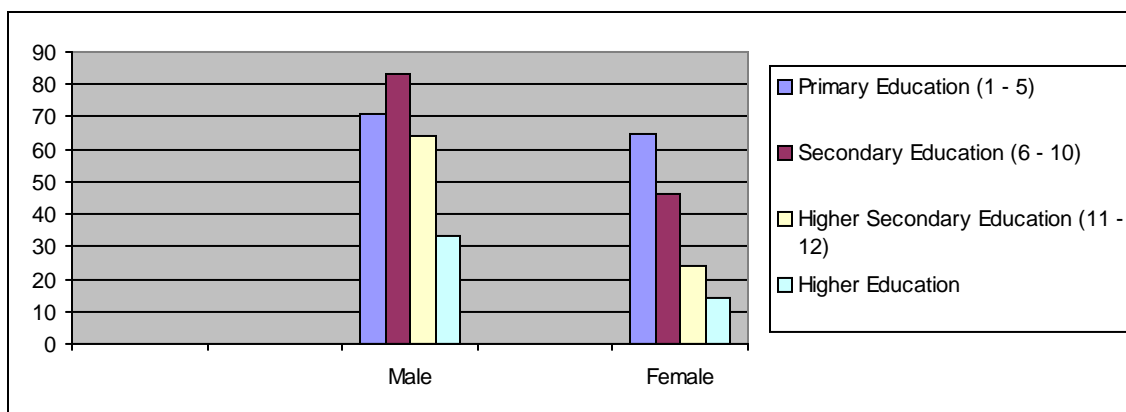
Description	Total Number	Male	Female	Percentage
Illiterate	310	102 (33%)	208 (67%)	43.60%
Literate	401	245 (61%)	156 (39%)	56.40%
Total	711	347 (48.8%)	364 (51.2%)	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2006

Table 10 reveals educational attainment of sampled population. Where as male 61 percent literate and female 39 percent, field survey found gender parity on the education 20. It is higher than the national level. Usually, landless and nearlandless households female are illiterate and small and large farmer household female are literate. The large farmer female have achieved higher education and small farmer female have literacy education and landless and nearlandless female have not live regular in their home, therefore they avoided literacy education and they became illiterate.

Figure 2

Educational Status of Sample Households



Source: Field Survey, 2006

The Figure 2 presents primary education enrollment was almost equal, but secondary, higher secondary and higher education is more not equal enrollment of male and female. In Tharu's prejudice philosophy also son is inherent and they save or continued their generation in the future but daughter do not live permanently or they will leave their maternal house. Therefore they do not invest their property for their education and girls looks mature faster than boys and they married early than boys, these were the main causes of gender discrimination in education sector of sample households.

7.3 Economic Characteristics

7.3.1 Occupation

The occupational structure of sample households is studied by classifying the occupation into main and subsidiary. The occupation in which majority members of a household are employed is taken as the main occupation and the occupation in which less members of household are employed is termed as the subsidiary occupation. In a case when the members of household are equally employed in two different occupations the one which yields higher income is considered as the main and the other one as the subsidiary occupation. Table 11 shows main occupation of sample households by landless and farm household groups.

Table - 11

Engagement in Major Occupation of Sample Households

Occupation HH. Groups	Agric ultural Labo urs Or Majuri	Fa rming	N on- Farm	Jo bs Business	To tal
Landless	24	1	2	3	30
Near Landless	15	2	2	1	20
Marginal Farmer	30	3	1	1	35
Small Farmer	9	1	-	-	10
Large Farmer	2	-	2	1	5
Total	80	7	7	6	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006

Table 11 reveals that the maximum numbers of households having agriculture as their main occupation and the family members earn livelihood mainly working as agricultural labours in their own land or wages. The figure shows that the 80 percent of households were employed in agriculture as for crops plantation or harvest and field preparation. For the agricultural labours landless, near landless, marginal farmer and small farmers were engaged in high percent

than the large farmers. The large farmers, who have the enough land for the cultivation, but they do not work as main occupation, most of the members have jobs and large business. Very few percent of landless, near landless, marginal farmers were engaged in non-farm occupation. The percentage of households having non-farm occupation, but their status was very low actually; they were working in India as Industrial labours. The large farmers were occupied higher position of jobs in the Nepal Government and some were in Western Country too. Therefore, large landholders not involved at the agricultural productions.

The poor farmers could not earn enough by their main occupation they should do subsidiary occupation for the livelihood. The table no. 12 presents data on the subsidiary occupation of sample households by landless and landholder household groups-

Table - 12
Subsidiary Occupation of Sample Households

Occupation HHs. Groups	Non-Farm		Agricultural Labour or <i>Majuri</i>	Far ming	N o Subsidiary	Total
	Jobs	Business				
Landless	6	2	4	5	13	30
Near landless	3	-	10	2	5	20
Marginal Farmer	7	3	19	5	11	55

Small Farmer	4	2	2	1	1	0
Large Farmer	2	1	-	-	2	5
Total	2	8	35	13	2	00

Source: Field Survey, 2006

The table 12 shows that the 78 percent of households had subsidiary occupation, where as the 35 percent households had agricultural labour or *majuri* (wage labour). Second 22 percent of households had jobs, 13 percent had farming and 8 percent had business. By the field survey found the landless and near landless households were engaged in agricultural labour or *majuri*. At the leisure time, they move neighbor districts and country Indian border district for the wage labour (*majuri*). Thus, they begin to practice interaction with out caste people. As the subsidiary occupation landless, near landless, marginal farmers were done low levels of jobs like peon, police and industrial labours. There were some households had small farming occupation like goat rising, fishing, poultry farming for the cash earn and this subsidiary occupation depend upon the younger and very older family members. But the small and large farmers had worked higher post of jobs like teacher, bank accountant, officers etc.

7.3.2 Landholding And Tenure Status

The field survey had took 32 percent households for the sample survey of the study area, where was 30 percent, 20 percent, 35 percent, 10 percent and 5 percent of landless, near landless, marginal farmer, small farmer and large farmers households. Table 13 reveals unequal land distribution of the Tharu tenants at the Dang districts.

Table -13

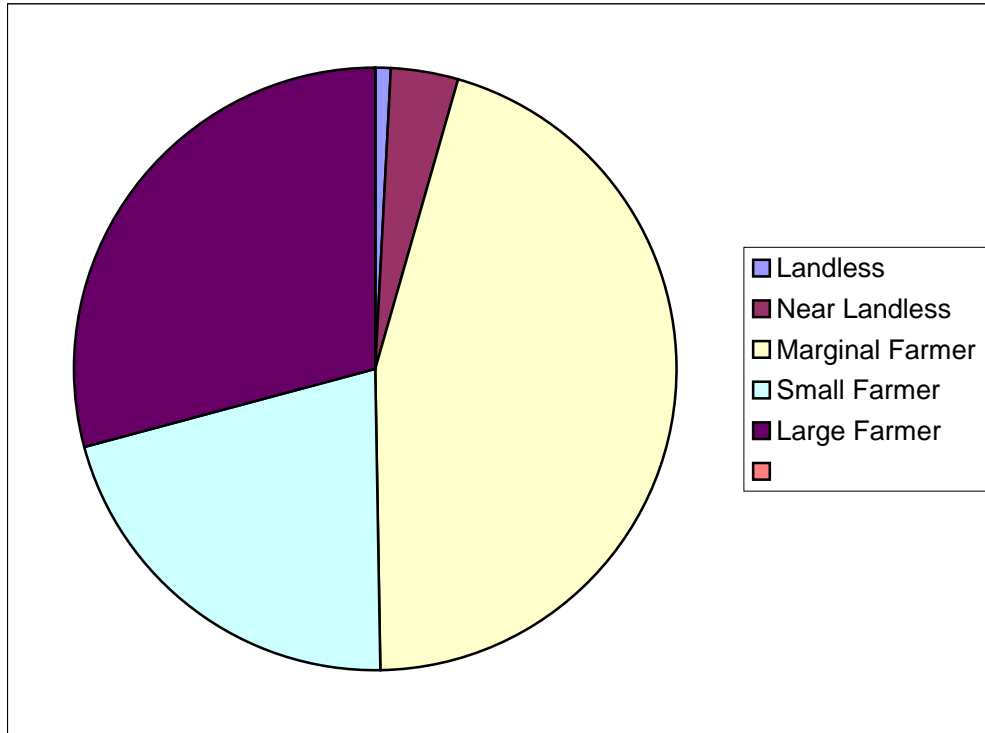
Land Tenure Status of Sample Households

Household Groups	No. Of Households	Total Land of Households in Bigha	Average Land Tenure in Bigha	Percent
Landless	30	0.975	0.0325	0.92
Near landless	20	3.75	0.1875	3.50
Marginal Farmer	35	48.5	1.38	45.27
Small Farmer	10	22.7	2.27	21.19
Large Farmer	5	31.2	6.25	29.12
Total	100	107.125		100

Source: Field Survey, 2006

Table 13 reveals land tenure status of sample households. Where 50 percent landless and nearlandless household have 4.42 percent holding land and 5 percent of large farmer have holding land is 29.12 percent. Marginal farmers and small farmers have occupied 45.27 percent and 21.19 percent land which is seen large but not large because their family size is big than landless and large farmers households.

Figure 3
Land Distribution Pattern of Sample Households



Source: Field Survey, 2006

The average size of landholding for the sample households had found to be 1.07 bigha. According to national census of agriculture, 2001, the average size of landholding is 0.176 ha for Nepal and 0.207 ha for the Terai region. Thus the average size of landholding of sample households is found close to that of the Terai. The table no. 13 shows that about 50 percent of households had less than 1 bigha, which is covered the 4.42 percent of total area of sample households. The survey found 45.27 percent of landholder was Marginal Farmer Group. They were highest percent of landholders as well as households. The large farmer groups were existed very few percent at the field area, but they covered very large areas of land. The sample household data presents 29.12 percent of land for the 5 percent of households. Figure 3 reveals unequal land distribution of sample households in the study area.

7.3.3 Food Supply Situation

Table 14 reveals the state of food supply. For this purpose, excluding the landless households, remaining, and farm households of the sample household had taken the food supply in the study area.

Table No. - 14

Food Supply of Farm Households

Food Supply HH. Groups	Self-sufficient	Deficit		Surplus	Total Households
		Up to 6 Months	Above 6 Months		
Near Landless	2	6	1	-	20
Marginal Farmer	15	1	2	6	35
Small Farmer	4	1	-	5	10
Large Farmer	-	-	-	5	5
Total	21 (30%)	33 (47.14%)		16 (22.85%)	70 (100%)

Source: Field Survey, 2006

Excluding the landless household there was 47.14 percent households had food deficit, if landless households include, the food deficit problems will be too grave. It can show more than 60 percent households sever by the food deficit. Among the farm household groups food deficit problem is found more than 58% in near landless and marginal farmer households.

Furthermore about 60 percent of near landless households had food deficit more than 6 months of a year. Thus the food supply situation reveals that near landless mostly and marginal farmers partly seen unable to meet food requirements from their land. On the other hand, small farmers livelihood standard was better than the marginal farmer and near landless households. The field survey found 40 percent households had self-sufficient by their own production, 50 percent households had surplus and only 10 percent households had up to 6 months food deficit.

7.3.4 Holding of Livestock

Livestock is an integral component of agriculture in rural areas. It is an alternative income source of rural people from which small landholders and even landless households may be benefited if they are provided with extension services and other essential supports. Hence, possession of livestock also reflects the economic status of the householders in some extent. Table No. 15 presents the holding of livestock among different household groups.

Table No. - 15

Livestock Holders of Different Households

Groups \ Livestock	HH. Landless	Near landless	Marginal Farmer	Small Farmer	Large Farmer	Total
Cattle	8	12	25	12	7	64
Buffalos	14	20	52	18	5	111
Goat/Sheep	23	11	35	6	15	90
Total Livestock	45	44	122	36	27	274

Averages	1	2	3.	3	5	2
	.5	.15	2	.6	.4	.63

Source: Field Survey, 2006

The field study had found the most of households had not any livestock and some were kept for the purpose of cultivation. Therefore there was only 2.63 average livestock in the sample households, because some landless households had not stay regular in their permanent home, some had not manpower to look after and some had lack of grazing land. The small farmer and large farmer households had more family member, so they had kept more livestock for purpose of milk, meat and cultivation.

The condition of poultry and pig rearing was found similar in landholding households and landless households. Every households had one or more than two pigs, hens and ducks. Some farmers had kept as farming for the main occupation.

7.3.5 House Type And Holding Of Household Assets

The well being of people can simply measured by the condition or types of houses in which they live. Similarly, household assets including some consumer's durable also reflect the living standard of households. Table No. 16 shows that the housing condition of different household groups. According to the table, majority of households had thatch roof on the house it was called *Kachhi* houses and few houses were made by the concrete it called *Pakki* house as well.

Table No. - 16

Types of Houses Design and Household Holding in sample

House	HH. Groups	L	N	M	S	L	Total
	Type of	andless	ear Landless	arginal Farmer	mall Farmer	arge Farmer	

Thatch House	30	18	29	55	-	82
Concrete House	-	22	66	55	55	18
Total House	30	20	35	10	55	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006

In the study area there was thatch and concrete type of houses. Table 16 reveals house design holding households. Thatch house is cheaper but not strong and it should repair soon and concrete house is expensive and it is secure from fire and storm. Survey found landless families have not concrete house and large farmer all have concrete house.

7.3.6 Income

The income data is enhanced with some limitation, it is the reality that rural households do not keep record of their incomes. Hence information largely depended upon the memory of respondents, which may resulted both in underestimation and overestimation. Keeping these factors in mind, best efforts were made during the collection of the data. However, interpretation of the results presented here still may require additional caution.

Table No. 17

Annual Average Income of Sample Households (in Rs.)

Average Income	HH. Groups					
	1 0,000 – 20,000	2 0,000 – 30,000	3 0,000 – 40,000	4 0,000 – 50,000	5 0,000 – 60,000	A bove – 60,000
Landless	4	21	5	-	-	

Near Landless	2	8	6	4	-	
Marginal Farmer	1	6	2	5	2	
Small Farmer	-	1	2	3	2	2
Large Farmer	-	-	-	-	-	5
Total household	7	3	3	1	4	7
		6	4	2		

Source: Field Survey, 2006

Table 17 reveals annual average income of sample households. Field survey found 36 households have Rs. 20,000 to 30,000 average incomes which is highest numbers of households existing in same income. There are twenty-one landless households and eight nearlandless households. More than Rs. 60,000 incomes only 7 percent households and it is highest income of sample households.

Table - 18

Average Distribution of Annual Income in Sample Households

Household Groups	No. of Households	Total Income	Average Income	Percentage	Total Population	Per capita Income
Landless	30	877300	29243.33	20.34	159	5518
Near Landless	20	673444	33672.2	15.62	122	5520
Marginal Farmer	35	1392057	39773.05	32.28	242	5752

Small Farmer	10	6 18348	6 1834.8	14.36	119	5 196
Large Farmer	5	7 50221	1 50044.2	17.40	69	1 0873
Total	100	4 311370	4 3113.7	100	711	6 063.81

Source: Field Survey, 2006

Table 18 reveals the distribution of annual household's income in sample households. All of the sample households were classified in same way like landless, near landless, marginal farmer, small farmer and large farmer on the basis of annual income. For the quality data generation, researcher had practiced to include equivalent in cash to all commodities of income. The average annual household income calculated from the table no 18 comes to be Rs. 43113.7. As seen from the table no 18, the marginal farmer households was 35%, it is highest number among the sample households and their household average incomes also seen high than the other household groups. Actually, it is not more different than landless and near landless households, because their family member size was great than them and inactive members as well. But large farmers income had seen quite high among them. Even their family size also big or joint, they had more land permanent jobs, large business or good infrastructure. Other hand, landless, near landless had worked as a wage labour in the agriculture farms, building constructions so on. They comment, it is very cheep and difficult to find regular. They said wage labour discrimination between male and female. Table No. 18 presents the small farmer, we can know them as middle class of a village, their household average income is seen high than the landless, near landless and marginal farmers but per capita income is low, occurred due to semi unemployment, educated unemployment and big family members.

There was agricultural production found very low, it occurred due to lack of irrigation facilities, traditional agricultural systems, not commercialize and actual farmers had not own land.

7.3.7 Expenditure

Like the income generation, there was difficult to obtain documented records of the yearly expenditure for primary data generations. Illiterate household heads, lack of documentation habits, negligence to keep records and uninterested to give actual information etc. had made more complex to collect genuine expenditure records. So, required data had collected on the basis of respondent memory. For the quality measurement researcher had used many comparative options to convert commodities into the cash in local price as best.

Table - 19
Annual Expenses in Sample Household

HH Groups Average Expenses (%)	L andless	N ear L andless	M arginal F armer	Sm all Far mer	L arge F armer	Grand Total
Food &	7	6	6	52.	3	60.

Clothes	3.46	7.33	3.12	59	9	26
Education & Health	3.06	7.92	1.65	19.84	2.8.71	13.42
Social Affairs	1.3.26	1.5.84	1.5.53	11.90	1.0.25	13.71
Infrastructure Development	3.06	3.96	5.82	9.92	1.5.38	7.18
Others	7.16	4.95	3.88	5.75	6.66	5.43
Total	1.00	1.00	1.00	100	1.00	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006

The survey found highest expenditure of sample household is in basic needs. Which is table 19 presenting that, but very few percent of households were investing for the infrastructure, education and health. For the education and health, data shows that landless and near landless households were expending very few amounts, but small and large farmers had found high.

7.3.8 Comparative Analysis Of Income And Expenditure

The table no. 19 reveals a comparative data on household income and expenditure of sample household. According to the table no.19 reveals, there is maximum household have deficiency, and few households have surplus by comparing the overall average income and expenditure of households. The table showed that the large farmer had surplus and near landless, marginal farmer and small farmer had deficiency.

Table - 20

Comparison of Income and Expenditure in Sample Household (in Rs.)

Household Groups	Annual Average Househ old Income	Annual Average HH Expendi ture	Surpl us(+) Defici t (-)	Per household Surplus (+) Deficit (-)
Landless	877300	894841	- 17541	-585
Near Landless	673444	680179	-6735	-337
Marginal Farmer	139205 7	143381 8	- 41761	-1193
Small Farmer	618348	623295	-4947	-495
Large Farmer	750221	731465	+187 56	+3751
Overall Average	431137 0	434605 7	- 52228	+1141

Source: Field Survey, 2006

Table 20 reveals landless and large farmer household have economic surplus and near landless, marginal farmer and small farmer have deficit because they have large family, unproductive manpower and they do not have to leave their village, therefore very incomes from the outside, just they engaged into the farm land. But large farmer have enough land and educated too, they have respected jobs and then they are to save enough property and landless family have small family members and work and eat there so their wage is remain.

7.3.9 Borrowing

This topic is originated to discuss on the state of borrowing in the study area. Borrowing system was important cause of the landlessness of the Tharu farmers discussed by previous researcher in different places of Tharus in Nepal. Backward Tharu could not afford all the purpose from their income and they took loan from the landlords or financial institutions, but did not able to return those debt. Therefore, they lost their land under the debt.

Table No.- 21
Borrowing of Different Households Groups-

Household Groups	Borrowing Households and Source		Tot al Amount	Non- HHs. Borrowing
	Instituti onal	Non- institutional		
Landless	-	4	236 0	26
Nearlandless	1	5	730 0	14
Marginal Farmer	4	6	125 0	25
Small Farmer	2	1	137 90	7
Large Farmer	1	-	119 00	4
Sub Total	8	16	366 00	76

Grand Total	24	366 00	76
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Source: Field Survey, 2006

Table 21 presents to the debt in the sample household of different groups. There were altogether 24 households had borrowed Rs. 36600 in different sources and 76 households had not any debt. The field survey found the landless household had few amount debt and large farmer had big. The landless and nearlandless households had taken loan for the purpose of food consumptions, marginal and small farmers had taken for the agricultural inputs and social affairs and the large farmer had took for the purpose of modern technology. Among the debt farmer, 8 households had took loan from the institutions and 16 farmers had took from the non-institutional. In institutional source of borrow, deposit is necessary but the landless and nearlandless have not enough land, so they couldn't use that facilities.

Chapter - Eight

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND CONCLUSIONS

8.1 Summary

* Landlessness is the root cause of poverty in the rural agrarian economy, where the rural people employed as main occupation in agriculture and subsidiary also based on agriculture. The farmland was main infrastructure of the rural agrarian people.

* The major objectives of this study were to examine analytically the problem of landlessness in the Tharu community and to present comparatively the socio-economic characteristics of the different Tharu farm groups.

* The Gobardiha VDC of Deukhuri valley Dang district was selected for the study. The sample size of 100 households determined by taking 32 percent of total households. Informal discussion with key-informants and structured and unstructured questionnaire were the instrument of the field survey.

* Under the impact of migration of hills' people, river cutting the farmland and family break down have been brought many changes in the traditional socio-economic conditions of the Tharu community.

* The study found that the landless family holding the land (0 – 1Kattha) are 21.51 percent households, nearlandless family holding the land (1 Kattha – 10 Kattha) are 23.9 percent households, marginal farmer holding the land (10 Kattha – 1.5 bigha) are 38.60 percent households, small farmer holding the land (1.5 bigha – 4 bighas) are 9.80 percent and large farmer holding the land (more than 4 bighas) are 7 percent.

* The origin and evolution of the process of landlessness of the Tharus has its strong association with the historical socio-economic and political situation under which they were highly exploited by the rulers. The problem was later aggravated by the factors like resettlement programme, social interaction, land degradation, population growth as well as family break down.

* Encroachment into forest and public lands, poor housing condition, lack of counseling and access to credit, uncertainty and insecurity of employment, low literacy etc. are general effects of landlessness in the study area.

* A poverty line of 16.61 percapita daily income in 2004/2005 of sample households. The study found percapita income of the landless family's Rs. 34.70, nearlandless family's Rs. 45.24, marginal farmer family's Rs. 23.76, small farmer family's Rs. 43.66 and large farmer family's Rs. 157.57. Due to partial employment and low productive agricultural farm have made them poor.

* The analysis of the socio-economic characteristics of the sample households concludes that the landless belong to the lowest stratum of the society and they are followed by the nearlandless. These group earn their livelihood from agricultural labouring for wages.

8.2 Conclusion

The problem of landlessness was emerged historically in the form of bonded labour system is massive in the Tharu community. Then, there was appeared *Jirayat* land (controlled by *Jimidar*) during the Rana period. At that time *Jimidar* had got the authority for tax revenue from the Central Government of Nepal, and there were each villages had a *Jimidar* or *Mahato* and many small farmers in the village. The small farmer had cultivated the *Jirayat* land and some villagers had *Guthi* land. Instead of farmland, they paid them commodity, cash and free labour, commodity paying was called '*Kut* or *Adhiya, Tikur*', Cash paying was called '*Pot* or *Kut*' and free labour was called '*Begari*'. The whole village of Ratanpur had belonged the land with Narhari Nath Yogi, it was a religious institution of Dang district. Gobardiha and Madhavpur village was existed *Jimidar* and *Raity* system, where was three-fourth part land belonged the landlord and one-fourth part land belonged the *Raity*. Where were existed 17 households were landlord and 176 households were *Raity*.

The Land Act 2021 BS. was attempted to provide landownership to the *Raity* or poor farmer and as for arranged *Mohiyani* tenant system. Land Act 2021 BS also unable to solve landlessness, the old tenant (Tharu) had become *Mohi* of landlord,

but lacked of citizenship they couldn't save *Mohi* tenant land at all. Where the Tharus had deforested that agriculture land at the first time, but now they are landless.

After eradication of malaria in 1950s, the hill migration became endangered for the tribal group of Tharus. The tribal Tharus lost their land many ways with them, such as: under the debt, selling land in cheap price and deception by them. Still there were many households going to landless and near landless very soon by family division and river cutting the land.

The field survey found two significant causes, they were family-break down and river cutting the land made them landlessness in the field area. Now there are found 21.51 percent of landless households and more than 23 percent, 38 percent near landless and marginal farmer, which are very near to reach landlessness, because the landholder family size is big than landless.

Consequences of landlessness, they have linked with Non-Tharus in different places, when they reach there for the purpose of wage labour. For the wages they moved many Indian cities and villages, capital city of Nepal, many other cities and villages. At that time they adopted many western knowledge and cultures vis-à-vis properties. Before 1950s the Tharus had isolated, due to malaria infections, but now no malaria infection, so there are living many ethnic groups of people. Which is fostering them social, cultural interactions, movements, interrelations and many changes.

8.3 Suggestion

Governmental and non-governmental programmes are implemented to improve socio-economic conditions of the Tharus community. This study suggests some recommendations to reduce the problems of landlessness and nearlandlessness as well as overall upliftment of Tharus'.

* Livelihood Forest Farming

The concept of livelihood forest farming is eligible to improve landless and nearlandless farmers' economic standard. There were various medicinal plants and

some endemic also, therefore it is possible to develop market oriented agro-forest farming.

* Access to Credit

Landless and nearlandless Tharu people are avoiding to access credit fund because they have not deposit proportions. Therefore, easy access to credit form institutions should be ensured in order to operate the schemes of their target. It is necessary to adopt the concept of lending without collateral security and intensively supervised lending procedure help to the asset less people.

* Irrigation Facility

Provision of irrigation facility is important because it besides large and small farms, benefits marginal and even nearlandless farms by allowing employment for them in multiple cropping systems and cultivation of marketable crops by intensive methods. It helps to check the landlessness of these groups.

* Delivery Wage Labour

Most landless and nearlandless people are working delivery wage labour, but they have not regular works and fixed wages which is avoiding to promote their economic standard. Therefore, fixed wage labour and continue working jobs can be uplift them. Foreign labour employment is better to them.

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Appendices - I

QUESTIONNIRE FOR HOUSEHOLD SURVEY

Household No.: -

Ward No.: -

Name of Village: -

1. Name of household Head:

Age:

Sex:

2. Name of Respondent:

Relationship to Household Head:

3. Types of House:

Pakki

Kacchi

4. General Particulars about household Members:

Age:	0-4	5-16	17-60	Total
Male:				
Female:				
Total:				

5. Education-

Education	Male	Female	Total
Illiterate:			
Simply Literate:			
Primary:			

Secondary:			
S. L. C.:			
Higher			

:

6. Have you any children? What are they doing? Why?

No. of children: Work: Reason:

7. Family's Occupation:

Agriculture Agricultural Labour business Service
Others

a. Which kind of occupation, where you do?

Same village: Out of the village: Type of work:

b. How much do you earn each month? Is it enough for the whole year?

Yes: No: Income Price:

c. If not enough, what you do?

d. Subsidiary Occupation:

Occupation Involved Family Members Monthly Incomes (Rs)

8. Except the agriculture, what kind of skills do you know?

Yes: No:

a. If yes, when you do that?

Type of skill: Always: Partial:

b. Is it better than agriculture? How is it?

Yes: No: Cause:

c. Have you any constraints for your skills?

Yes:

No:

d. If yes, what is it? How it will be make possible?

9. Description of Agricultural Farming and Animal Husbandry:

a. What crops do you produces in your field?

Crops	Production (quintal)	Per Unit Value in Rs.
Paddy		
Wheat		
Maize		
Pulses		
Others		

b. Which and How many livestock do you keep?

Description	Nos.	Description	Nos.
Buffalo		Cow	
Ox		Goat	
Sheep		Chicken	
Duck		Others	

c. Did you sell any animals or poultry birds last year?

Description

Quantities (nos.)

Per Unit Price Rs.

d. How much animal product did you sell last year?

Description	Quantity	Per Unit Price (Rs.)
Milk		
Ghee		
Meat		
Eggs		
Others		

10. Do you yield enough foods from your product to eat a whole year?

a. If no, for how many months is it not enough?

b. How do you meet the grain requirements for these months?

Selling asset

Working as daily earner

Borrowing

Others

c. If surplus, how much is it:

Paddy in (qtls)

Maize: "

Wheat: "

Pulse: "

Others: "

11. Description of land holding:

a. How much land was inherited to you?

Bigha Kattha Dhur

b. How did you loose holding the land?

I. By selling

II. By division among sons

III. By unable to exempt mortgaged land

IV. By others

c. If sold, give the following description:

When How much land Reason for selling

d. If lost by mortgaging:

When How much land Reason to give in mortgaging

e. If your land in mortgage now?

Bigha Kattha Dhur

f. If others, when and how did you loose your land?

Date: Cause: Bigha: Kattha: Dhur:

g. Do you work in other's field for wages?

Yes: No:

h. If yes how many members of members of family work for how many days /years and at what rate of wage?

Nos. months days wage(Rs.) Per day

i. Do you bought new land? Where and When?

Date: Rural: Urban:

12 Family's Annual Expenditure:

Description	Expenditure(Rs.)	Description	Expenditure
Food		Fuel	
Cloths		Agro-tools	
Medicine		Tradition	
Education		Others	

13. Have you debt anywhere?

a. If yes or no-

Source	Amount (Rs.)	Interest Rate
Purpose		

14. Have you planned any scheme to improve your socio-economic condition?

15. What is the main economic problem that you are facing now?

16. How do you assess your life-standard in yourself? How?

High: Medium: Low: Reason:

17. In your opinion, how can the problem of landlessness be solved?

18. What are you feeling from changing your life? Is it better or not?

19. What kind of suggestion can you give to your future generations?

Appendices – II

Income and Expenditure of Sample Households –

1. Landless Households –

S No.	Household Size	Annual Income Rs.	Annual Expenditure Rs
1	5	28150	27650
2	5	29200	28350
3	7	32050	32050
4	6	30360	30360
5	4	26530	24930
6	4	25100	24100
7	5	27330	27000
8	3	22600	18500
9	9	45000	45600
0.	7	34800	34800
1.	4	23600	23600
2.	4	24000	24000
3.	11	58800	59300
4.	5	26500	26500

5.	1	6	32400	32100
6.	1	2	15000	12634
7.	1	5	28000	28000
8.	1	6	35000	33800
9.	1	5	28430	28230
0.	2	5	29000	28500
1.	2	5	30100	29000
.	2	4	24300	24300
3.	2	5	27250	27250
4.	2	8	42100	42760
5.	2	6	30000	30000
6.	2	5	26300	26300
7.	2	3	21000	17800
8.	2	6	28900	28900
9.	2	2	15000	12840
0.	3	7	30500	30600

2. Near landless Households –

S. No.	Household Size	Annual Income Rs	Annual Expenditure Rs
1.	6	33100	33100
2.	5	29500	29500
3.	6	34500	34500
4.	2	12800	12800
5.	8	44000	45160
6.	12	64240	66300
7.	6	33120	33120
8.	5	25800	25800
9.	10	54200	55100
10.	4	24080	24080
11.	3	18274	18274
12.	8	43900	45000
13.	4	22020	22020

14.	6	3275 0	32750
15.	4	2080 0	21535
16.	5	2670 0	26700
17.	4	2186 0	21860
18.	7	3870 0	38700
19.	9	4900 0	49790
20.	8	4410 0	44100

3. Marginal Farmer

No.	S. Household Size	Annual Income Rs	Annual Expenditure Rs
1.	5	28760	28600
2.	8	46516	53516
3.	7	40000	39000
4.	6	34512	34512
5.	6	35100	34100
6.	6	35900	41761
7.	5	30300	29600
8.	10	58520	58520

9.	9	50768	49000
10.	12	70300	84140
11.	6	29860	29860
12.	5	30900	28000
13.	4	28000	28000
14.	7	45600	45600
15.	5	30638	29000
16.	3	19256	14500
17.	7	41000	48500
18.	8	48380	47380
19.	13	78776	86776
20.	6	30000	29500
21.	3	20100	18900
22.	8	46100	46100
23.	4	28200	25100
24.	5	28760	33300
25.	16	88500	99800
26.	7	45246	44600
27.	6	35177	34400
28.	5	26300	30900
29.	8	47150	47150
30.	7	38600	38600
31.	1 0	50520	61000
32.	2	22100	15500

33.	4	21000	20000
34.	5	24400	29000
35.	9	50800	49600

4. SMALL FARMER

No.	Size	Households	Annual Income Rs	Annual Expenditure Rs
1		13	70548	70548
2		10	50960	60960
3		12	60352	60352
4		13	65580	72850
5		9	55108	48108
6		14	68744	68744
7		10	51960	50926
8		8	53568	42500
9		12	60000	58800
10.		18	81528	89507

5. LARGE FARMER

No.	S. Households Size	Annual Income Rs	Annual Expenditure Rs
1.	20	217460	209150
2.	18	175714	185380
3.	7	77211	70300
4.	14	152522	148275
5.	10	127314	118360

