

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

The caste system has oppressed Dalits for many ages. Though the whole Hindu society has been contaminated by the caste system, the main sufferers are Dalits, with untouchability who face an estimated 205 forms of discriminatory practice in their daily life in Nepal (Bhattachan 2003). So the caste discrimination and untouchability have been entrenched and imposed mostly on the Dalit community. In the 2011 census of Nepal, the Dalit population consists of 13.2% of a total population. In Nepal, there are three communities that have Varna system with untouchability: (i) Hindu and Buddhist Newars – who speak Nepal Bhasa (Newari) and who are concentrated in the Bagmati valley and also scattered around Nepal; (ii) Hindu Aryan Khas – who speak Nepali and are now established as ruling castes; and (iii) Hindu Madhesi – who speak Maithili and other language and live in Tarai region of Nepal (Aahuti, 2014)

The United Nations terminology for caste discrimination is “discrimination based on work and descent”. This puts caste discrimination in context of other forms of descent-based discrimination such as racial discrimination. There have been lots of attempts to break and eliminate caste-based prejudices and untouchability practices nationally and internationally. However, the degree of changes in society to abolish such evil practices (caste and untouchability) is very slow. It is very difficult even to measure its magnitude as there have been continuing assaults, discrimination, atrocities to Dalits in south Asia.

Just recently in Nepal we have seen atrocities against Dalits. On May 23, B.K. Nawaraj, a 21-year-old Dalit man from the Jajarkot District was killed in West Rukum District along with five of his companions, after travelling to marry a higher caste girl in that district. This caused international attention to Nepal’s issues of caste violence and discrimination. This atrocity illustrates the crucial importance of understanding the causes of caste empowerment so that incidents like this will not happen in the future.

The problem of Dalit is multifaceted; they are economically backward, socially and politically excluded, inaccessible to education and furthermore, untouchability has barred them from social integration with other communities. Among all racial and ethnic problems, untouchability is the most brutal and humiliating to human dignity. Being Dalit is not just being excluded from rights, but it is also being involved in a process of psychological disintegration that educates us to accept inhumanity. (Aahuti 2014). Similarly, Discrimination, humiliation, oppression are all penalties for not being upper caste, or simply for being Dalit. Our Dalitness is imprinted onto us through the burned bodies of our children, suicides of our PhD scholars and college students, rapes of young girls and women, asphyxiation of our manual scavengers and 'honor killings' of lover. These penalties are so routine that they aren't even considered worthy of shock and outrage. Newspapers either skip these stories or stick them in the back pages, between the sports and the city sections (Dutt, 2019). For this reason, we need to make studies that look at every aspect of caste. As Luintel argues too (p 122) “studies have not given adequate attention on dynamic nature of social relationships and highlighted only cross-sectional findings”.

1.2. Self-reflectivity

Belonging and grown up from Dalit community, I faced exclusion, discrimination, untouchability practices since my childhood in my home town Chautara. Chautara is now semi-urban, comparing to the adjoining VDC Kubinde. Me and my school friends would play together in school, playing football in a team, working together in any field, but during the eating time I was always obliged to sit separately. My friends would not come near, colleagues would eat inside the hotel (small tea shop) for snacks and I had to be outside and had to wash the glass and plates that I ate from. I wanted to break those rules but alone myself it was not possible and my colleagues never did encourage me to break those rules, nor did they support me. These routinized humiliations suppressed me psychologically for a long time and decreased my self-esteem subsequently.

It was in 1994 while I was preparing SLC, I started joining in Dalit social movement. The activities would be conducted in Chautara mostly as it is a district headquarters. These activities gradually increased my self-esteem. By 2000 AD, we, Dalit community were able to use some public hotels (Snacks spot) entering their premises,

temples and taps because of Dalit social campaigns. The rapid marketization of Chautara also weakened the untouchability practices at surroundings. Nowadays, the degree of untouchability practices based on castes have been decreasing particularly in public places but remain generally at the individual level. Since 1990 AD democracy and with introducing a republican system in 2006 the country has made some changes in caste relations and my home-town Chautara is an example of these Changes. So, being a Dalit activist myself and witness of social changes of Chautara provoked me to interrogate the changing factors of Dalit lives if changes occur, and if they did not occur, why not?

Similarly, Kubinde which is a rural area and one and half hour walk from Chautara had gone through a massive political oppression during Maoists insurgency while Maoists were mobilizing their political activists and preparing a people's war from there. 26 people got martyrdom from Kubinde during the insurgency. Did these political activities affect the Dalit Community or not? Did political activities of Maoists from grass root level bring changes to the life of Dalit or not? I was enthusiastic to learn more about it. I myself had supported their political movement actively from 1996 to 2000 before the state of emergency was declared in the nation. Thus, I wanted to compare the changes of Dalits' lives of Chautara(Semi-urban) and Kubinde(rural) and their caste relations. I wanted to know why life had changed for me in Chautara while it seemed that in Kubinde Dalits were still suffering terrible discrimination. Therefore, I chose these two locations, where I made field visit of Dalit settlements in both VDCs, observed Dalit lives there and took in depth interview, and prepared case studies to justify my thesis.

I have observed the day-to-day untouchability practices that Chautara and Kubindee Dalit face. I have conducted around twenty-three un-structured interview from villagers and activists, Dalits and non-Dalits, Bali Pratha holders and non-holders. Similarly, in-depth-interviews and life histories were taken of various Dalit community members; job holders, seasonal migrant, businessmen, teachers, Christian followers, police, government officer, NGO workers etc. I have attempted seeing the changing pattern of their lives over the last five decades before 1990 AD when Panchyat political system were in the country and after that. The initial filed work was done during 2017 January/February where several visits and interactions were made

among needy people. Later, in 2019, some visits were made again updated. Four times focused group discussions were conducted during my field work in both settlements. I was accepted easily in a Dalit settlement whenever I made field visit and the information that I collected so far. The reason could be; my belongingness from same community, moreover I was social activist and they would eager to tell me their caste-based oppression and struggles that I framed here in the lens of Dalit perspective and social change. It also helped that I had been associated with Maoist Party in the past and this meant that I was given more trust by respondents.

1.3 Conceptual framework of a research

The aim of this research is to try and understand the historical trajectory of Dalit social progress in Nepal using a pair-wise comparison of two such locations in Sindhupalchok. The point of this research is to identify Weberian ‘ideal types’ of social change; one based around market towns like Chautara village the other based around rural villages like Kubinde. Weber described an ideal type as “formed by the one-sided accentuation of one or more points of view and by the synthesis of a great many diffuse, discrete, more or less present and occasionally absent concrete individual phenomena, which are arranged according to those one-sidedly emphasized viewpoints into a unified analytical construct”. (Weber 1997: p 90). In this sense, the research question or problem is a comparative and historical one: how did different social processes combine in each location to produce change in caste practices (meaning caste discrimination and caste marginalization)?

The table below summarizes the differences between Kubinee and Chautara and highlights why I have chosen these two locations, apart from the fact that they are known to me and easily accessible for research purposes.

Features of the Chautara (Urban village) and Kubindee (Rural Village)

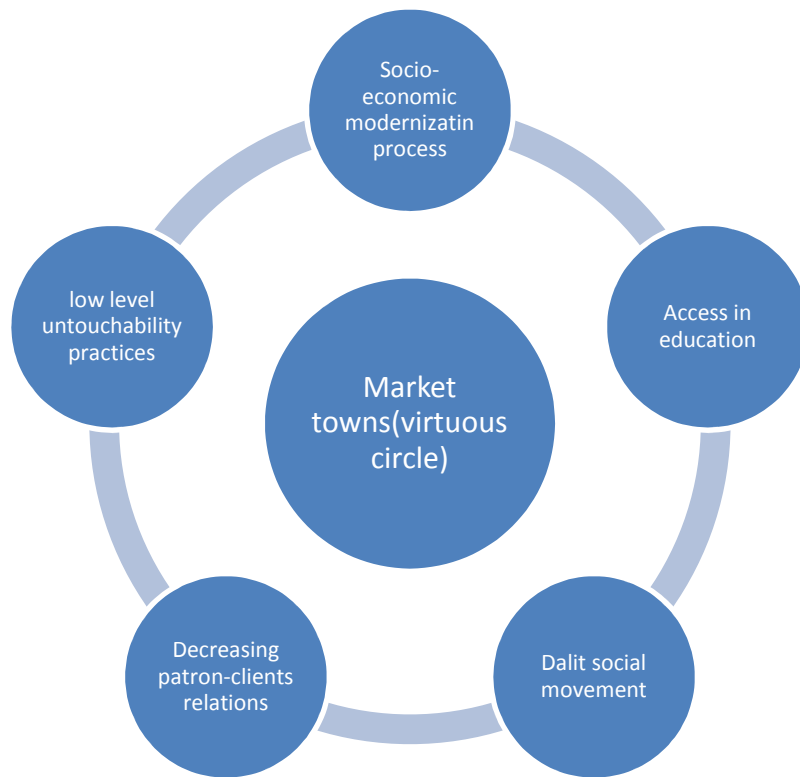
Features	Chautara	Kubindee
Economics	Market town, well connected to urban areas. Professional jobs available. Wage labor replaced quasi feudal relations.	Village area with few market linkages to urban areas. Fewer professional jobs (aside from police). Migration and subsistence agriculture as main resources. Continued reliance on quasi-feudal relations of dependency.
Education	Multiple BA holders	Mainly secondary or less
Infrastructure	Good roads connections, hospital, schools, access to government offices.	Poor roads often damaged in rainy season, under-staffed and inadequate government schools.
History of Dalit movement	Strong mobilizations and high levels of conscientization	Weak mobilization in Dalit locations
Maoist Activity in Civil War period	Low due to police and army presence.	High due to Maoist leadership presence and relative remote location.

These patterns are common across Nepal. This is why these two particular empirical cases can be viewed as ‘ideal types’ which represent processes that have happened across time all over Nepal in multiple locations where Dalits live in places like Chautara and Kubindee.

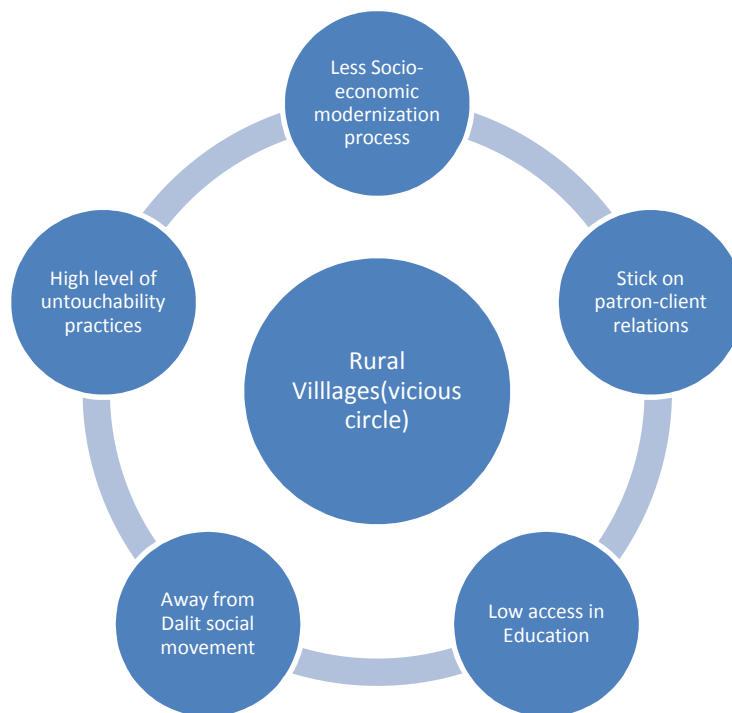
This is deliberately an ‘apples to oranges’ comparison, not a positivist attempts to find one or two variables that were different in places that were in other ways the same. This is why this thesis takes a holistic, comparative approach as explained in more detail below.

Features of two locations in diagram

Market town (Chautara)



Rural village (Kubindee)



1.4 Statement of Research Problem

Dalit empowerment is 'lumpy'. It often varies as you move from one town to another or one village to another. Trying to understand this is the heart of the research problem addressed in this thesis. Current research on caste in Nepal, such as Luintel (2018), gives us the 'big picture' of macro change in caste relations across many regions of Nepal. His research offers big picture causes of improvement in the condition of Dalits (economic, social and educational) and big picture explanations of that social change (the collapse of *jajamani* social systems and increases in awareness, education and market-based mobility).

But in Nepal, change is very local. Often Dalits have been empowered 'locally' in one place while just a few kilometers away Dalit communities are still oppressed and living with old forms of discrimination and inter caste relations.

Using the pair comparison methodology hopefully the thesis will suggest a solution to the variety of experiences among Dalits. It might suggest common themes and 'collections' of causes that have made life in market towns much better for Dalits than in more rural areas, and therefore may suggest policies and actions that could address those areas that are still behind.

Research Question

To create richly detailed 'ideal types' for my chosen locations (Chautara and Kubinde) the thesis will ask questions about the historical trajectory of each place and specific sociological questions such as these:

Do Dalits have their involvement in political activities/campaigns led by political parties? What sorts of Dalit's oppression have been prevailed in towns and what attempts have been made to overcome them? Have Dalits initiated their own special anti-caste prejudices and anti-untouchability campaigns in town? What are the effects of globalization (marketization, commercialization, modernization) to shape Dalit and non-Dalit consciousness? Has formal education helped Dalits to input in Dalit campaigns and for Dalit empowerment? Has civil society, GO or NGO initiatives been done related to Dalit issues? How do other so-called high castes society taken up the Dalit related socio-cultural changes?

To emphasize, our research question is: *‘how do we explain the different paths of Dalit empowerment taken by a typical market town and a typical village in the hill region of central Nepal?’*

By using a comparison of these two locations (semi-urban Chautara and rural Kubinde) this thesis will enable me to try and answer this important but difficult to answer question. When researchers point out that the solution to the caste problem includes culture, class and social elements what exactly do they mean? By looking in detail at our two case locations over time (from the 1980s AD to today) we can begin to answer that question. We can do this because we can *isolate different factors* that have helped erode caste system or fail to erode the caste system in the two cases. Chautara experienced rapid modernization and marketization in the 1980’s, while Kubinde did not. Then in the 1990’s Kubinde experienced being a Maoist stronghold area, with strong top-down political pressure which claimed to be fighting against caste. Chautara did not experience this Maoist top-down pressure because it was a district headquarters and so was kept away from Maoist organization and power.

In other words, we have two parallel cases that can help open up the ‘black box’ of social change and reveal *causal mechanisms* (Tilly, 2001) at work in change. We can follow which mechanism interacted with which, and we can come to some preliminary conclusions about the *patterns* of social change most likely to reduce caste discrimination.

Thus, this research mostly focuses on People’s war (1996-2006) and its implications for Dalits in a Maoist affected area and multi factor tools for Dalit empowerment in a town are analyzed. It directly compares Maoist’s affected VDC Kubinda, Sindhupalchok district and non-affected town Chautara(district headquarters) in the course of Dalit empowerment.

B. Secondary Research Question

As a consequence of this primary comparative research question this thesis will also make a contribution to the Marxist / Maoist internal dialog on the question of caste and class.

The Communist party of Nepal (Maoist) claimed a decade of violent “People’s war” (1996-2006AD) as a historic class struggle of Nepal. Within that class struggle, how did they attempt to resolve the caste system and ages old Dalit’s oppression? How far did they succeed to bring changes in their base area for Dalit community? Did they have specific interventions to eliminate caste-based discrimination and untouchability? So, theoretical debate is; *can pure class-based struggle be a tool of Dalit liberation to eliminate caste-based discrimination?* Or is a specific anti caste-based movement needed within and in addition to class struggles? Did Dalit’s problem originate due to the class differentiation only (economic inequality) or it has more than that (religion, Varna or caste?) Do class based ideological parties once gaining power destroy caste system and untouchability or there is an incessant need to have anti caste and untouchability initiatives via multiple paths?

Regarding the Maoist affected area this research will elucidate the problems of Dalits in their affected area and the oppressions they faced. Caste based relationship and changing pattern during and after people’s war will be analyzed also. Questions will include: what components have played a vital role to Dalit to support or join in people’s war? What sorts of initiatives and intervention were taken up once they joined in to Maoists people’s war? Finally, what changes were brought about during people’s war and then related to Dalit? How do other so-called high castes society take up the Dalit related socio-cultural changes? What happened after people’s war ended? Is it in status quo, progress or has the status of Dalits regressed?

1.5 Research Objectives

The main specific objectives of this thesis are;

A: To provide historical trajectory of caste relations in two chosen locations (Chautara and Kubinde) by providing a rich narrative of each location, drawing on interviews and the personal biographical knowledge of the author.

B: To measure caste-based practices, relationships, and changes between Dalits and Non-Dalits in Chautara and Kubinde. These include:

-) Levels of discrimination (in public and private places) ; **Public places** discrimination refers to the discrimination at public taps, hotel and restaurant

entry, where 'known' Dalits are either allowed or not allowed to enter inside the premises; school-based discrimination, especially as concerns eating arrangements during lunch and snack times, and water acceptance by higher caste individuals from Dalits in public spaces. **Private places** discrimination includes practices include home entry by lower caste persons into upper caste homes for social occasions, shared meals within the home of land owners during agricultural labor, water acceptance within the home by higher castes from lower castes. **Cultural/Religious** includes whether or not Dalits are allowed entry to particular temples, attendance practices at festivals, caste related aspects of death and wedding customs, including the role of Damai/tailor caste persons in musical production at festivals, and other village rituals that incorporate caste in symbolic forms. This category also includes inter-caste marriage. **Economic** discrimination takes whether attached labor such as '*Bali pratha*' or '*kholopratha*' or '*ritimagnu*' is existed or not.

-) Exclusion/inclusion status in local representative bodies
-) Differences in social outcomes for Dalits and non-Dalits in the two locations

C. It will also try to describe the actual activities of Maoists in the two locations during the Peoples' War

-) Analysis of Maoist Political documents that relates to Dalits and examine tools and techniques used during people's war for their emancipation.
-) What is in their documents?
-) What did they actually put into practice?
-) What happened after people's war?

1.6 Significance of the study

As stated above, we need to know how the various social, cultural and political factors come together to change caste discrimination practices. This is an urgent and pressing question in contemporary Nepal, as a policy matter and also as a question of social inclusion and 'equal citizenship' (Bennett 2006). We need to do more than just describe or measure social exclusion, we need to know why it persists over time and only a comparative and historical study like this can help us understand these things.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Caste is an established reality in South Asia and South Asian communities across the world. - Yashica Dutt.

2.1 Defining Caste system

I will begin this literature review with general literature on the caste system and its history as it related to South Asia generally and then to Nepal specifically, in order to provide context for this thesis.

The word 'caste' is of Portuguese origin and was applied to India by the Portuguese in the middle of fifteenth century (Beteille 1965). Caste may be defined 'as a small and named group of persons characterized by endogamy, hereditary membership, and a specific style of life which sometimes includes the pursuit by tradition of a particular occupation and usually associated with a more or less distinct ritual status in a hierarchical system (Béteille 1965:46)'. Berreman (1967:70) defines caste system as a 'system of birth-ascribed stratification, of socio-cultural pluralism, and of hierarchical interaction'. In the word of Sinha (1967:94), 'caste is a hierarchy of endogamous groups, organized in a characteristic hereditary division of labour'. To Ambedkar, Caste is a perversion of Varna. At any rate it is an evolution in a different direction. But while caste has completely perverted the Varna system it has borrowed the class system from the Varna system. Indeed, the class-caste system follows closely the class cleavages of the Varna system. (Ambedkar, 2002:104 edited by Valerian Rodrigues)

G.S.Ghurye writes that the caste system is supported by the early term 'Varna' meaning color used to specify the hierarchical orders in society. Later on, the word Jati is specialized to denote caste which is a group the membership of which is acquired by birth. The word Jati etymologically means something into which one is born. It is occasionally used by good ancient authorities as equivalent to 'Varna'(Ghurye 1969:176) According to him forefather of 'Varna' system is 'Race' and 'Division of labor' that was seeded in the Vedic(600 BC) and post-Vedic period in India due to the encroachment of Indo-Europeans upon the indigenous population and this made a conducive environment to foster the caste system. Later on, the

Shudra class (Untouchables/Dalits) were largely formed by those indigenous/aborigines.

Ghurye stipulates the main features of the caste system are; (a) Segmental division of society. (b) Hierarchy. (c) Restrictions on feeding and social intercourse. (d) Civil and religious disabilities and privileges of the different sections. (e) Lack of unrestricted choice of occupation. (f) Restrictions on marriage. (Ghurye 1969:1-21)

Ambedkar, in his article “outside the fold” writes, in every Hindu village the touchables have a code which the untouchables are required to follow. This code lays down the acts of omissions and commissions which the touchables treat as offences. The following is the list of such offences

a. The untouchables must live in separate quarters away from the habitation of the Hindus b. The quarters of the untouchables must be located towards the South, since the South is the most inauspicious of the four directions c. It is an offence for a member of the Untouchable community to acquire wealth, such as land or cattle, to build a house with tiled roof, to put on a clean dress, wear shoes, put on a watch or gold ornaments. d. It is an offence for a member of the Untouchables to give high-sounding names to their children, to sit on a chair in the presence of high caste, not to salute a high. e. On certain festivities, the Untouchables must submit their women to members to the village community to be made the subject of indecent fun. (Ambedkar, 2002:325)

In the past, caste system was taken as a social ladder originated from hereditary and hierarchically ordered occupational categories, Brahmin at the top, followed by Thakuri and Chhetri and menial workers making up the bottom layer. (Luintel 2019:12) However, the things are different today than the past and will be different tomorrow as changes are inevitable in society and this is a law of nature. Thus, Dalits’ oppressions and their resistance mark a state of change. As Dipankar Gupta mentioned in his book; it is of course very likely that over the year's caste identities might get eroded, because of the combined effects of increasing urbanization and economic mobility. This would bring about a greater number of inter-caste marriages which would make ascriptive identities more a matter of choice than just birth (Gupta 2000:114). However, Gupta’s view is arguably optimistic. He sees identity groups

competing in a 'level playing field'. But caste is a deeply embedded system, and even when traditional forms of discrimination disappear it may persist as generational inequality.

2.2 Emergence of Caste system in Nepal

According to some scholars, this Varna system with untouchability first entered into Nepal from Terai region during the Janak dynasty in or around 1000 BC (Prashrit 1999) however these historical facts are yet to be explored. Second, Lichhavis (200 AD - 879) to King Jayasthiti Mall era (reign 1360-1395) practiced the Varna system with four Varna and thirty six castes; third, fleeing the Muslim invasion, Hindu Kings and their subjects from India moved eastward after crossing the Mahakali River from the 12th to 15th century (Kisan 2006). Prithvi Narayan Shah while undertaking unification, simultaneously, led a campaign of Hinduization; Jang Bahadur's 1854 Mulki Ain pervasively classified Nepali people into various castes, caste hierarchy and Hindu practices to various indigenous nationalities who were not caste Hindus. After this hierarchy was reinforced through various means, there began endless division within all castes and indigenous groups, such as between Janajati and Dalit, between Janajatis, between Dalit and poor Hindu high castes. As a result, it sustained the feudal rule and structure of the Hill Aryan Khas Hindu high caste (Aahuti 2015)

The Varna system was rupturing the 'social bond' at the individual and collective levels, fragmenting Nepali society and people on the basis of Caste. Brahmin and Chettri caste groups are not only graded up higher in the state and society rather than they are included in every aspect of societal and state's organs in upward rank. But, rest of groups (Vaisa) are excluded from the mainstream and Sudra (Dalits) are at bottom and obliged to bear a vicious exclusionary practice at individual and group level with untouchability.

Of course, caste also means fragmentation of society into smaller groups (*jatis*) as well as the theoretical vertical division into *varnas*. This is clear when we look at the regimentation of caste by law in Nepal in the nineteenth century.

The first Mulik Ain 1854 divided Nepali society legally into five major categories and enforced offence and punishments on the basis of castes.

1. Caste group of the “Wearers of the holy cord” (*tagadhari*) : Upadhyaya Brahman, Rajput(Thakuri), Jaisi Braman, Chetri(Ksatri), Dew Bhaju(Newar Brahmins), Indian Brahmin, Sannyasi, Lower Jaisi, Various Newar castes.
2. Caste group of the “Non-enslavable Alcohol-Drinker”(*namasinya matwali*): Magar, Gurung, Sunuwar, some other Newar Castes.
3. Caste groups of ‘Enslavable Alcohol-Drinkers(Masinya matwali): Bhote, Chpang, Kumal, Hayu, Tharu, Gharti.
4. Impure, but ‘touchable’castes(pani nacalnya choi chito halnunaparnya): Kasai, kusle, Hindu Dhobi, Kulu, Musulman, Mleccha(European).
5. Untouchable castes(pani nacalnya choi chito halnuparnya): Kami, sarki, kadara, Damai, Gaine, Badi, Pore, Chyame. (Sharma 2012:9)

The Mulki Ain not only maintained the hierarchy of castes, but also prescribed relations among castes such as with regard to food, marriage, contact and sexual relationships. Untouchables were strictly prohibited from maintaining any of these relationships with the castes above them. The Ain had a number of important implications for Dalits: i) it placed them not only below the Hindu high castes, but also below the non-caste, non-Hindu groups such as indigenous peoples and Muslims; ii) it helped create a pan-Nepal ‘untouchable’ identity, subsuming all other regional and local identities, and, above all, iii) it gave legal sanction to untouchability and caste discrimination. It is for this reason that Dalits blame the caste system and the Ain, which remained in effect for more than a hundred years(up until 1963), for being the primary cause of their social, economic and political oppression and exploitation in the past as well as at present (Bishokarma 2013)

Auhuti, 2015 coined the term “Hindu Feudalism” to such states led by Hindu religion. He means, Hindu Feudalism is a system that divides the same class and varna ad infinitum. There are three special features of Hindu Feudalism. First is the Varna system, on the basis of which labor is imposed on certain castes or communities. Second is untouchability-discrimination, which makes the division of labor inviolable and forces those oppressed by Brahman-Kshatriya to remain at the bottom of the society forever. And third, the whole society is endlessly divided both between and within the same class, caste, and ethnic group. Due to the varna system with

untouchability, the Hindu feudal society has become the most divided society. In such a society, those at the bottom-that is, Dalits -become the most oppressed and exploited. (Aahuti 2015)

2.3 Background on the term Dalit and struggles

The term Dalit was first introduced to Nepal by India's famous untouchable, Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar, one of the chief architects of the constitution of India (Zelliot 1992) and founder of the Republican Party of India (later to become the Bahujan Samaj Party), when he visited Nepal in early 1955 AD. A decade later in 1967 it was used in the name of the first organization in Nepal to address Dalit issues, Rastriya Nepal Dalit Jana Vikash Parishad (Cameron 2010). In Nepali and Hindi languages, the term Dalit generally means "despised, oppressed, and distressed." But the Dalit liberation movements in India and Nepal did not allow its meaning to be confined to the above. Now the term has taken the meaning of a collective community that was made "water untouchable" by the Hindu society (Aahuti 2015). According to the National Dalit Commission (NDC), Dalits are defined as "those communities who, by virtue of atrocities of caste-based discrimination and untouchability, are most backward in social, economic, educational, political and religious fields, and are deprived of human dignity and social justice. NDC has listed twenty-six caste groups of Nepal that belong to the Dalit community.

The Nepali Dalit organized movement that started in 1947A.D (Barali, 2063) attempted to challenge the caste-based structure of Nepali society. The movement was launched and pioneered by Bhagat Sarbajit Bishwokarma and his followers from Baglung district (Barali, 2063). Today's political parties, Nepali Congress (1947 AD) and Nepal communist party (1949 AD) were just in the process of forming organized party at that time. Therefore, the Dalit movement was prior to them. When Nepali Congress led anti-Rana movement, Dalit communities were participating and supporting actively. Consequently, in May 1971 Jhapa Revolt, 1990 People's movement, a decade long People's War by Maoists and in 2006 April movement led by various political party/groups, the Dalit participation and engagement was high.

Though there has been Dalit participation and engagement in various activities, resistances and movements led by various political party/groups to fulfill the demands

of dignified life, abolition of untouchability, political/administrative inclusion in state organs, education opportunity, justice and economic equality, these demands have been perpetually ignored and answered only by feeding some little benefits to Dalits (charas) such as a few “quotas” in state organs. Even after 1990 movement, they have been excluded from the mainstream; their representation in parliament and cabinet became zero. All these, frustrating situation, humiliation, ostracization, exclusion encouraged Dalits to join in Maoist’s People’s War (1996-2006 AD). The participation and engagement ratio of Dalit to People’s war was higher comparing to the prior political movements. Perhaps, Maoist’s insurgency dreamy slogans “free from all forms of discrimination and establish classless and casteless society” may have attracted and touched Dalit caste group quickly to be free from untouchability and from caste-based exclusion and poverty.

2.4 Literature on Multi-causal aspects of Dalit exclusion in India and Nepal

(Bennett 2006) has pointed the extent of caste discrimination practices in Nepal and argued that this kind of discrimination is a mark of ‘unequal citizenship’. A real democracy based on social inclusion cannot exist until caste discrimination is removed. Luintel (2018) provides data showing the extent of Dalit disadvantages. In 2010 for example (Luintel p 119) the poverty rate for Dalits in Nepal was at 42% compared to middle castes at 29%, Janajati at 27% and Brahmin / Chettri at 17%. Similar patterns are seen in Human Development Index (HDI) and in literacy rates. As Luintel argues (p 122) “in certain aspect of village society, the caste hierarchy in village is still generally in correlation with the economic stratification in Nepal, the lowest being the poorest one”.

Most academic literature on the multi-causal aspect of caste discrimination is about India and by Indian scholars. This is another motivation for this thesis – the need to provide data and theory about Dalit issue in Nepal.

Thorat et al (2010) show, with lots of empirical survey data, that there is a persistent “discriminatory access” to the market and to public goods faced by Dalits in India. This depends on the persistence of traditional caste based discriminatory belief systems. It cannot be explained only by lower levels of education or assets among

Dalits. In other words, the problem of discrimination is multi-causal, covering culture as well as just ‘pure’ class variables.

Mendelsohn and Vicziany (2000) also argue that you cannot reduce caste discrimination to one factor (land/money) as cultural identity is also involved in the struggles both for and against Dalit rights. Caste and class are related but not reducing to each other according to these authors, even though marketization has reduced the ‘traditional’ aspects of caste discrimination in India. They are also pessimistic that capitalist reforms will ‘end’ caste, even though ‘ritual’ aspects of discrimination are getting less and there is fear in this book that a severe divide in resources will exist long into future as higher castes benefit the most from market reforms and modernization processes. A new type of caste/class oppression may therefore replace the ‘traditional’ village-based repression we see in the past.

Most studies of causes of caste empowerment and discrimination from India (where most scholarship comes from) are quantitative in nature, because Indian scholars have access to much more survey data from government sources, for example on work and income broken down by caste (for example *The Grammar of Caste*, 2011). In Nepal this data does not exist. But this can also be an advantage because it forces scholars to look at particular, qualitative case studies in depth.

My aim in this thesis therefore is to follow Luintel’s methodological advice (2018: 124) and show how “societal level changes in inter group social relations should have some observable manifestations in caste relations at local level”. We need to see how dynamics of class, tradition and general social modernization affect different areas in different ways. Thus, the paired study of my two chosen locations – Chautara and Kubindee.

2.5 Social Theory Related to Study of Caste

Apart from the aim of showing ‘ideal types’ of market town and village this thesis may contribute to the application of social theory to caste.

In particular Bourdieu (1977) formulates the idea of ‘habitus’ – a set of internalized norms which are ‘sticky’ and tend to persist even when conditions in the economy and politics change. This thesis will examine the ‘habitus of Dalits in Chautara and

Kubinde (indirectly) by looking at how a pattern of anti-discrimination norms was established in Chautara but how the ‘habitus of caste oppression remained in Kubinde. Bourdieu’s theory related to the main (Weberian) aim of the thesis in that ‘habitus’ is an established and historical ‘pattern’ of thought and practice. These patterns are likely to be rigid to some extent. The ‘habitus of the typical market town and that of a typical rural area may be similar across Nepal, so this paired comparison can give insights into these cultural constructions more generally.

In addition, Nancy Fraser’s (1996) conception of social justice shows how there are different dimensions to justice: distributive (to do with economy), recognition (to do with identity) and participation (to do with inclusion in political and representative bodies). This thesis examines these different strands of justice in relation to Dalits in the two locations, showing that one strand alone will not pull Dalits out of oppression – instead they have to work together.

2.6 Literature on secondary research question: Maoist Movement

The CPN (Maoist) declared its ‘People’s War’ on 13th February 1996, issuing and distributing all over the country an historic leaflet which called on cadres and supporters to “March Along the Path of ‘People’s War’ to smash the reactionary state and establish a New Democratic State!”(Seddon D, 2010)....On the first day of “People’s war”, the organized people’s militia and the commandos of the CPN (Maoist) attacked police posts – as symbols of state oppression and actual centers of local state ‘law enforcement’ – in Rukum and Rolpa. On the same day ‘The Small Farmers Development Project financed by the Agricultural Development Bank, targeting it as ‘a symbol of imperialism.... Then on February 27th, the police went to arrest the headmaster in one village of Gorkha. His students opposed this, and Dil Bahadur Ramtel, an eleven-year-old, fourth-grade Dalit boy, was killed. He became the first ‘martyr’ of the People’s War. (Seddon 2010)

Why was the Maoist revolution held? Mahendra Lawoti (2010) contends that favorable conditions for Maoists revolutions were due to the 1. Poverty and economic inequality 2. Socio-cultural inequality 3. Modernization, social change and fluidity. Simultaneously, he talks, the growth of the Maoists movement were due to 1. Development on leadership and ideology 2. Selective deployment of violence 3.

Revolutionary government and provision of public goods 4. Exploiting contradictions and creating opportunities 5. Exclusionary democracy and the weak state 6. External ideological influences. (Lawoti 2010:7)

Maoists started declaring their Autonomous region (People's state, People's government, People's court) in the country in 2002. After a year of its declaration, they started setting up some 'Model villages' in their core area. First model village was launched in Thawang-Rolpa. Gradually that practices spearheaded throughout country where their stronghold influences were, such as Rukum, Kalikot, Sindupalchok, Jajarkot, Salan, Gorkha, Sindhuli. Hisila Yami writes in her article "The People's war and question of Dalit's" (Yami 2006) the participation of Dalits in their base area and in model village this way.

According to the report for 2004 in the special region (Western) within Middle command (there are all together 7 regions throughout the country) alone 50,800 Dalit membership have been distributed, there are 1775 Dalits in People's Liberation Army, 207 Dalits have been martyred since the initiation of PW in 1996. In this region 17 Dalit Model villages are functioning where about 90% of population has removed Dalit social ostracization. The head of Karnali-Bheri Autonomous Region belongs to Dalit caste. In the new states in the form of Autonomous Regional/National People's Councils, 20% of the seats are reserved for the Dalits. At the ward level at least one seat is reserved for the Dalit candidate. (Yami 2006)

The history of Dalit movement will be considered in more detail and at local level later in this thesis when we look at that history in terms of Chautara and Kubinde, our case studies.

In addition, on the question of Maoists and Dalits There have been several reports, some books and many articles written regarding Nepali Maoists movement or people's war but very few are related to Dalits' role in the war. For instance; Marie Lecomte-Tilouine, 2009 in her book "Revolution in Nepal: An Anthropology and Historical Approach to the People's war" she describes Maoist Model village in Northern Gulmi where Dalit's issues have been captured partially in one chapter. Likewise, *In Hope and in Fear: Living through the People's War in Nepal, 2010*. David Seddon and P. Manandhar also have included Dalit's live changes briefly. The latest book where Maoist changes have been critically analyzed by Pawan Patel a sociologist in his Phd dissertation now has published a book "The Making of 'Cash

Maoism' in Nepal - A Thabangi¹ Perspective where Dalit's life changing stories have been included in a Maoist Model village. Moreover, Bownas (2015), with research based in Kalikot District looked at Maoist affected area (Malikot) and compared that to non-affected area (Manma) which is similar to the approach taken here. But apart from this study, not much intensive field research has been done yet purely in line with Dalit and Moist movements and other literature on this subject (Aahuti 2015) is not based on empirical research but more on theory only. Therefore, in light with Dalit engagement in Maoist people's war and its outcomes to the Maoists affected area this research tries to find out some results and that would be helpful to Nepali social/political movement and history.

In this regard (understanding dynamics of Maoist movement in relation to caste) , Kubinde is a useful case study. This is because we can see the impact of Maoism from 'top down' in Kubinde where many senior Maoists lived, but without other social and economic factors assisting Dalit empowerment. In other words, we get an idea of the independent effect of Maoism in rural areas by looking at Kubinde.

¹ Thabang a Maoist stronghold base area lies in Rolpa district. Thabang had been practicing a Maoist Model Village once it was declared *Jansatta* (People's power/state) where Maoist governed with People's government, People's court and People's liberation Army like alternative state since 2002 to 2006. It was dissolved after peace process ended (2006-2012 AD) formally.

CHAPTER: 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research approach

Research methodology is a way to systematically solve the research problem. It may be understood as the science of studying how research is done (Kothari, 2001). Therefore, research is itself a systematic inquiry and methods are a technique to solve problems. This thesis is part of attempt to look in detail at dynamic social relations, trying to find out how caste consciousness and empowerment can increase in one place, but not in another. In order to discover the reasons, a careful comparative method will be needed.

This thesis adopts a qualitative, comparative and historical (diachronic) methodology based on comparing two location case studies and using biographical and narrative information from those locations. The aim of this methodological approach is to generate Weberian 'ideal types' (see section 1.3 above), with Chautara representing the 'semi urban' type of location across Nepal and Kubinde representing the typical 'rural' location across Nepal. I expect that patterns of causality will be similar to these two ideal types, especially in hill areas of Nepal, although Terai, with greater feudal land relationships, may be different. In addition, the far west of Nepal will have different characteristic due to the greater numbers of Dalits as a percentage of society.

3.2 Selection of Research Sites

The research site has been selected as Sindhupalchok District on the basis primarily of ease of access and personal knowledge by the author. In looking for representative urban and rural sites I chose places familiar to me so that I could access information and obtain interviews with respondents in the easiest manner possible.

Moreover, the district was a Maoist affected region and therefore useful to examine in terms of my secondary research question about impact of Maoism. During the Maoist insurgency (1996-2006) this district was highly affected and many VDC were controlled by insurgents. Kubindee which is a neighboring erstwhile VDC and now ward no 4 of Chautara Sangachokgadi Municipality was a Maoist stronghold where 25 civilians were killed during the insurgency. In contrast, Chautara, headquarters of a

district was not directly controlled by Maoist due to the Army and police barracks being present there. Chautara is an administrative center, town and market of a district, linked to Kathmandu with pitch road, communications and modernization.

The fact that Maoists were actually more active in Kubindee helps the argument of this dissertation. If *even* Maoists could not change the path that Kubindee Dalits were on, it confirms the thesis of this dissertation that Chautara and Kubindee (and the thousands of locations they represent as ideal-typical locations) had paths of Dalit empowerment determined by socio-economic paths that are historical and hard to change.

3.3 Tools of data collection

I collected information with the following tools and Techniques.

-) In depth Interview
-) Focus group discussion
-) Case studies

3.3.1 In depth interview

Interviews are designed to collect a rich source of information from a small number of people about their attributes, behaviors, preferences, feelings, attitudes, opinions, knowledge (Okely 2010). These are the most effective tools for qualitative research as they help us to explain the inner feelings of the respondents.

I spoke to representative samples of Dalits/Non-Dalits in Chautara and Kubindee, totaling 66 in number. They were 36 from Chautara and 33 in Kubindee. These persons were counted who participated in focus group discussion as well. Out of 66, I did in depth interview for 8 Dalits from Kubindee and 7 Dalits from Chautara respectively. Interview with non-Dalits were taken to check their perceptions on Dalit and Non-Dalit caste relations and untouchability practices at their vicinity.

Unstructured and open-ended questionnaire were given to everyone so that interviewees would feel comfortable to express their experiences and feelings on Dalithood-meaning caste relations between Dalit and non-Dalit. Why I took in-depth interview for both Dalit and non-Dalit is; to find out the caste relationship and

untouchability practices by seeing their Dalit perspective and non-Dalit perspective. Moreover, this in-depth interview of Dalit persons helped me to develop specific case histories which showed that Kubindee Dalits have still been practicing Bali Pratha which is no longer practiced in Chautara (see appendices 1 c)

3.3.2 Focus group discussion

Focus group discussions are a good way to gather in-depth information about a community's thoughts and opinions on a topic. Two focus group discussions were held in Kubindee and Chautara. So, altogether four focus group discussion were held. Thus, the information was gathered through individual interviews and focus group discussions in the field areas of Kubindee and Chautara. Respondents were asked to reflect on current discrimination practices and on the war period, and the collection of basic demographic data was also performed to gauge economic status, education status, and land status and income sources of respondents. Some respondents were interviewed one-to-one, some in groups (who gathered spontaneously to talk to us), some inside the home and some outside in public spaces.

Mainly, Dalit communities in different locations for interview were chosen but, some significant number of higher caste individuals were taken for interview as well, to check Dalit perceptions of changes in discrimination practices against higher caste perceptions. Whatever the discriminatory practices and changes being practiced before, during and after the People's war mostly in public space (e.g, taps, schools, temples, restaurants), private home and in economic sphere (quasi-feudal labor relationship-patron-clients) were thoroughly investigated.

In terms of the historical element to the research, in Chautara before 1950 AD and after (at least five generation to date-2016), the caste relationship and their subjectivity are analyzed as concerns intra Dalit and Dalit - Non-Dalit caste relationships and their changing patterns. Thus, comparative historical analysis (CHA) tools are applied. In order to understand any social and political movement we need historical understanding. According to Charles Till, history helps because it identifies significant changes in the operation of social movements and thus alerts us to the possibility of new changes in the future (Tilly2004).

3.3.3 Case studies

Some tragic and inspirational personal case studies were collected in order to reflect the scene and reality of the located area. According to Michael Burawoy (1998), in critical social science, the case study tool is used to have a dialogue or mutual interaction between the researcher and participants to expose and illuminate social life. It highlights conditions of emancipation in which people come to question or challenge the external forces of power and control under which they live. Therefore, I collected some case study of individuals on the basis of their experience of caste discrimination, struggles and changes they have made or experienced in order to make my research more fruitful.

3.4 Data Presentation and Analysis

The analysis of the two location case studies is mainly qualitative and based on narratives, but my results also include quantitative data on education levels, and economic participation in feudal practices such as Bali Pratha,, in the two research locations.

I have also presented the degree of untouchability practices high, medium and low prevailing in two locations according to the various measures. Those work in Bali Pratha are obliged to bear more or intense level of untouchability in Kubinda where as such Pratha is no more in existence in Chautara bazar has less level of untoucability practices.

3.5 Limitations

Though there have been many VDCs affected by Maoists insurgency I have sampled only in Kubindee and Chautara, due to the constraints of time and resources. However, the research findings hopefully will have wider significance and should be the basis of further studies in the future by myself or other researchers. As I mentioned above, the aim is to create 'ideal types' of location which hopefully will represent Nepal, or at least the hill region of Nepal in some dimensions and will encourage others to pursue similar comparative projects.

3.6 Ethical/Safety Issues

All interviews were confidential. No one ordinary person was named in person in my research reports so that I used anonymous names (preserving caste but not first name) when describing personal narratives. However, well known persons and activists and leaders were named.

CHAPTER: 4

THE TRAJECTORY OF DALIT EMPOWERMENT IN CHAUTARA

4.1 The political history of Chautara and its impact to Dalits (Before 1990AD)

Below, I examine the historical background to the Dalit movement in Chautara, up to 1990, including important biographical case studies that illustrate the larger social changes taking place in this era. The historical background below is an integrated part of the methodology of this thesis. We need to know how larger historical forces arrived in Chautara (and Kubindee) to understand where they are today.

There have been organized political struggles in Nepali society against class and caste based exploitation and domination that started in around 1940 AD by Praja Parishad against the Rana Oligarchy that ruled over one hundred and four years in Nepali history.(Gupta1993).Each political movement (the 1950 anti-Rana movement, 1971 Jhapa revolt, 1990 anti-Panchyat autocracy movement, 1996-2006 Maoist's People's war and 2006 April movement) have been fully irrigated by Dalit's blood, toils and tears in order to get free from class exploitation, caste injustice and untouchability.

Peaceful movement or unarmed struggle was launched by Praja Parishad or by civil society to end Rana regime but rulers did not listen their demands and suppressed them brutally. By October 1940 about 500 persons were arrested and after a brief trial Dharma Bhakta, Dasarath Chandra, Gangalal Shrestha and Sukra Raj Sastri were executed. (Gupta 1993).

Eventually, the Nepali Congress took up the armed struggle. In September 1950, the Nepali Congress took a historic decision at its Bairgani Conference to launch a liberation Campaign in Nepal (Gupta;1993:43). The congress liberation force called *Mukti Sena* intensively attacked the main fortification of Nepal, Birganj, Biratnagar, Amlekhganj in Eastern Terai and in Western Terai, Parasi(a small town 9 miles off Bhairawa), under the leadership of Dr. K.I Singh on 13 November 1950. By January 1951, the rebel forces captured Dang, Deokhuri, Kailali, Kanchanpur and Palpa in Western Terai. (Gupta; 1993).

The wave of anti-Rana movement hit to Sindhupalchok district severely. Chautara was known as a Purba Ek Number (Eastern No 1) and Chautara was a headquarter for both Kavera and Sindhupalchok on that time. In 1950, under the leadership of Nepali congress Ghumthang² fortification was captured whose leader was Tribhuvaman Shrestha from Chautara. He was accompanied by Kaila Ghale and some other villagers from Chautara and neighboring VDC. Prior that, the political consciousness against Rana was seeded by Bhakta Lal Shrestha³ during his stay in Chautara when he was a Hikaam or officer of a land revenue office at Chautara in 1938 AD. (Shrestha, 2014). Since that time, the political consciousness among Chautara/ Kubindee youth were instigated and by 1950 AD it came in to an organized form being and affiliated with Congress and Communist party.

Civil Code of 1853 AD (Nepal's Muluki Ain 1910 BS) legally institutionalized the definition and treatment of Dalits as "untouchable". (Hofer, 1979). Prior that hierarchical norms, values and behaviors that governed social interaction was directed by the customary laws. Those customary laws were directed by Hindu religion- Manu Smriti⁴ - Purity and Pollution. Untouchables fall the later. The category "untouchable" was abolished in the New Civil Code 1962 AD (Naya Muluki Ain) in the early Panchyat period. But there were no provisions for punishment, so it proved to be ineffective (Kisan, 2005). Thus, Dalits were socially and structurally discriminated and Rana regime along with Monarchy then legally reinforced such caste practices perennially. They categorized Dalit as untouchables and made disempowered them in every aspects of life during Rana and Panchyat regime.

After 1950 AD, when the first democratic election was held in 1959 AD, Chandral Shrestha⁵ became the member of parliament from Chautara, constituency no 7(Shrestha 2014). "We untouchables supported him to their voting campaign whatever we could", said 82 years, Akal Bdr BK., who is a living legacy of the history of Chautara's Kami Gaun: "We were very young, we did not get chance to vote him, however our parents and villagers voted him and made him won. What did

² Gumthang was the business route to Tibet for Nepal and that lies in Sindhupalchok district.

³ Father of martyr Ganglal and communist party founder Puspallal shrestha

⁴ Manu Smriti was a law to enforce and maintain social order by King Manu around 600 BC in Indian era. Untouchability was legalized and rigidified at that time in his reign.

⁵ Chandralal Shrestha was born in Kubindea adjacent VDC of Chautara and became member of parliament in 1959.

he do for the sake of Dalit community once he gained political power? Nothing, only he made his own good life and gave opportunities to his party cadres and relatives. Chandral Dai was open minded however he was afraid of eating with us due to his family restrictions, based on caste purity and pollution”.

4.1.1 Anti-untouchability Efforts during Panchyat era in Chautara

In Appendix 1, I include various case studies of anti-discrimination efforts during the Panchyat era. The aim of these case studies is to show the limitations of anti-caste measures at the political level during this era. Efforts were confined within patron-client model of social activity and did not extend to whole society.

In other words, the case studies show that at this time an ‘outside’ patron was needed, for example a justice-oriented politician or official to end local practices of discrimination, especially in hotels.

However, the case studies also show economy and society level processes of change beginning in Chautara. Money was coming into the town with greater linkages to Kathmandu. Electricity was another sign of this modernization process. It is not surprising that hotels became the center of attention because this where outsiders who are caste anonymous, would come to eat and drink. So slow social change was happening even if the politics was still in the form of patron-client relations. We should remember that these ‘modernization’ processes were not occurring to the same degree in Kubindee.

4.1.2. Referendum of 1980 and its impact on Chautara

On May 1980 when the country was having a referendum⁶ that atmosphere hit to Chautara as well. Though non-party Panchyat Party system won, the referendum conveyed a political polarization (like Democracy versus Autocracy) in a country. It condensed hot debates and factions among people. Debates of right or wrong upon political system came into surface. Those against Panchyat system restarted their underground activities by reorganizing people in their respective party. Therefore,

⁶ In 2 May 1990, with universal adult suffrage with secret vote in which the people of Nepal would be able to choose between introducing a multiparty system or retain the non-party Panchayat regime

Panchyat itself offered a sister's organization like women, Dalit, youth, students etc not to attract democratic or communist parties besides Panchyat.

It was around 2042 BS or 1986 AD, youth of Dalits in Sindhupalchok were organized in the name of Dalit Samaj Kalyan Sangh⁷, a sister organization of Panchyat where Mr. Hiralal Bishokarma was involved himself at central level. At Sindhupalchok it was opened with the initiatives of some youth Dalits who were made involved in Panchyat by the local rulers. This was the first Dalit Organization of a district during Panchyat period. (Interview with Arjun BK-2017). Whatever level of consciousness they did have, they gradually tried to advocate on Dalit rights when the space was created by Panchyat local rulers. Their meetings would be held mostly in Chautara Bazar. Despite non actions against untouchability practices, Dalit youths of a districts had at least, a chance to discuss their own problems created by untouchability and had chances to inter-dined with local Panchyat leaders/cadres anonymously where they could raise their grievances/voices against untouchability practices that was made punishable by 2020 BS Mulik Ain(1963 AD civil code). Moreover Dalit organization became puppet or a medium to

In the autocracy regime space was created only to the high caste and high class people who were in power. Those who were at bottom either low caste or low class their voices were unheard and suppressed. However some people from Dalit community were also picked up by elite ruler to show up a Dalit community representation in state organs example Hiralal BK, TR BK. Whatever or however their representation were; Dalit leaders were obliged to advocate against untouchability and caste based prejudice. Lobbying, advocacy and voices were only by possible from those leaders who were surrounded and preserved by Panchyat rulers. Those voices were heard who were in apex or in higher echelons. But those who were against Panchyat; were tagged a rebellion and treated as traitor.

The case studies (appendix 1) and the discussion of post referendum movements illustrate some daring examples that Dalit and Non-Dalit both made to dismiss the social bad customs/evils such as untouchability that came from their personal

⁷ At central level In 1982, Sidhi Bahadur Khadgi became Chairman of the Nepal Rashtriya Samaj Kalyan Sang, with Pratap Ram Lohar as Secretary General. Later, the Nepal Rashtriya Jana Bikash Parishad merged with this organization and Hira Lal Biswakarma also became involved(Kisan 2005). In Sindhupalchok, Sundar Bahadur Sunar was a chairperson, Arjun Bishokarma vice-Chairperson and there were other nine members in a committee.

dissatisfactions, disagreements and disgruntlement. However, their daring efforts were not being recognized by the contemporary political parties; Nepali congress and Communist party.

Their efforts were in the end ignored by the local/central Panchyat rulers because whole society was intent on preserving prescribed social taboos. Dalits who wanted to break those chains were obliged by economic necessity to live in ignorance (without formal/informal education), away from state's services and facilities and stuck in patron-client relationships. Those who were involved to eliminate untouchability practices during that period attempted to blaze a tiny fire in a caste rooted Jungle of Nepali society, their legacy was later on carried in various form by Dalit activists.

However, the important point for our analysis is that these protests were 'stuck' in patron client framework. There was a 'symbolic' element to Dalit inclusion but these moments were not part of a 'modern' movement that could spread and deepen inside society.

4.2. The Prison of Patron Client Relations: Socio-economic relations in Chautara and Kubinde before 1990 AD

The Dalit of Chautara and Kubindee were heavily depended on *bista pratha*(*Patron-Client relationship*)prior to 1990. Their whole family members had to work for so called higher caste irrespective of their class category. They were obliged to work for them in lack of others means of production. Moreover, Nepali customary laws and state's legal code: 1910 BS or 1853 AD Mulki Ain made inviolable their caste-based occupation and whole Nepali society framed in to the caste based structured forcefully.

About *Patron-Client* how does it exist, D. Seddon, P. Blaikie, J. Cameron, explain in their book "Nepal in Crisis" and "Peasants and Workers in Nepal" from the surveys that they made in 1975 AD:

.....The more specialist tasks of manufacture and repair, such as metal work for agricultural implements and cooking utensils, shoe making, and tailoring, are carried out by 'low caste' artisans who also farm but are usually the poorest village members with little or no land and who are discriminated against socially. They are paid a fixed amount of grain (and given meals and drink while working and at festivals) according to an approximate relative

estimate of likely demands by the various households. This rate is fixed 'by custom' but varies according to place and occupation - sometimes per ox owned, or per area of land, or a less exact method of computation, and the payments are sometimes enforced by the local village leaders. Thus the household pays a fixed amount irrespective of annual variations of demand, although it is generally related to the estimated volume of work which they will generate (e.g. sometimes the quantity of grain paid to the tailor is calculated on a *per capita* basis). This system is called *bista* in the hills, *juga* in the terai, and is parallel to the *jajmani* system of India in certain respects. (Seddon, Blake, Cameron 2002: 228-229)

..... The artisan was enmeshed in a complex network of social relationships which tied him to the households which customarily paid him; he was not free to work for others, once the relationship was established and perpetuated, nor was he free to alter his 'price' as in a market relationship. In this arrangement peasant households could call on the artisan for his special skills, as needed, and whereby the artisan households were assured of a payment, after harvest (once or twice a year) in the form of a fixed amount of grain, thereby guaranteeing a basic subsistence from year to year. (Seddon, Blake, Cameron 2002: 96)

Once you are entrenched in a *bista pratha* and boycotted from other means of production, you are not freed to enjoy a basic freedom to participate in the labor market that means you are economically excluded. Sen argues such situation is 'Bondage' or 'Captivity' (Sen, 1999). Thus, Dalit falls in that category of unfreedom due to their severe attachment on *bista pratha*. Moreover, imposed untouchability, denial of access in formal education, excluding from other means of knowledge production (like bar in informal social interaction with other castes groups, bar in participating in social ceremonies- marriage, god-goddess fairs, weekly preach/sermons) obliged them to grow up in psychological disintegration. Consequently, these caste hierarchy became class hierarchy. Those put in lower caste became lower class automatically. That means 'haves' and 'haves not' or 'power with' and 'power to' of a societal cleavage seen viciously and Dalit fall later.

Thus, Dalits of Kubinda and Chautara before 1990 AD fall those categories. They did not have other means of production besides *bista pratha*. They were either landless or their productivity from land consumed only less than three months. Moreover, whole family members were obliged to engage in artisans work (male children are trained hereditary occupation, female are trained collecting grains from *bista*). While talking with some old age respondents, they said that even finding a single literate person in Dalit community both villages were difficult on that time. Once someone hardly

enrolled to primary school, sooner they were obliged to drop out due to severe untouchability practices and teacher's indifference. Heavy engagement on making agricultural implements (repair ploughs, sharpen sickles, repair hoes etc) in households also barred children from school. Those such chains confined them to continue their occupational work, boycotted from education, keep away from social intercourse. Thus, no educated persons born in village, no Panchayat leaders, no formal and informal job engagements adhered them. On a top of that; Untouchability practices were severe in every part of their life. Thus, Quality of life was hellish for Chautara and Kubinda Dalit. Dahal, Dillram argues that until and unless the *patron-client* relationship is broken-down and Dalits become economically independent, their slogans for "social equity and egalitarian future" simply would not be materialized. (Dahal 2010)

4.3 Economic Modernization in Chautara before 1990; Below the surface of Panchayat History

Above, we showed how *bali pratha* was a prison for most Dalits (who made living from agriculture) in both Chautara and Kubinda until at least 1990's. However, other processes were happening in Chautara as an urban centre during this period. These processes were 'invisible' at the time maybe, but they had very deep impacts on the consciousness of Dalits in Chautara. It is in this section that we see the big difference between the two locations. We will look below at how modernization and marketization processes were evolving with the help of a case study drawn from my own family history.

In Chautara, the Bhasa Pathsala was opened for public in 2004 BS and by 2022 BS SLC exam were taken but no Dalit community or my own family members were attended there. Economy conditions were very poor, and my father and forefathers were landless and were depended on Bali Pratha (feudal system, patron-client relationship). Due to the untouchability practices ancestors were obliged to bear great social hardships everywhere in social field. Enjoying citizenship rights from state were mirage for them.

But as the case studies in appendix 1 already suggested, things got slowly change when the Sindhupalchok got linked to Kathmandu through Arinko Highway that

established in 1960 AD. Chautara head quarter's road also started to be constructed and was completed by 1970 AD. The road expansion in district directly linked to Kathmandu (centre) made available for market and small-town expansion, economy activities and administrative work helped immensely affected Chautara people in business and civil servants work. Such opportunity was grabbed mainly by educated and already well-off people quickly but by Dalit it was difficult. My father who was engaged in traditional and hereditary patron-client relationship since long time gradually jumped into the market business exploiting the market expansion of Chautara.

By 1980 he was able to run his own small handicraft and metal shop. As my father told, my grandfather and grandmother were died when he was around 10 years old. Since then, he was struggling very hard to survive his life in social hardships. While he was doing his own business by leaving the feudal residues (patron-client relation artisan work in Nepali Bali pratha), he had only three sons left out of seven children. He could not send them to school except the youngest one. By 1990 father business were at success via personal relationship and networks. By making use of his reputation as a good and reliable businessman he began to serve a large network of customers in the new growing market town and headquarters of Chautara. Some of those customers were former Bali Pratha patrons, but the large majority were from the wider area, including people passing through on business to visit the headquarters. My father responded to market demand by expanding his range of kitchen and household products, this reflects new demand for consumer goods among Chautara's new semi-urban middle class. He was also able to create economic network and relationship with Newar businessmen in Kathmandu. I would argue that these class of businessmen were less caste conscious and more money conscious. They represented the new bourgeois of Nepal's urban centre. Marketization in Kathmandu was therefore linked to marketization in semi periphery / semi urban Chautara and helped to create conditions for social change.

Through his own business he guided two (uneducated but literate) sons in his own business and to youngest one (Resham BK, myself) at formal education or study. His youngest son (the author) was the first person passing SLC in first division from Dalit community of Chautara.

My father did not only engage in business rather than he involved in social movements to assert for rights against Dalit discrimination. It was time when 1990 social movement was succeeded that ended panchyat autocracy and neoliberalism was introduced with multiparty democracy in Nepal. My family members in one hand were engaged in subsistence economy combined with town level business, in other hands they were engaging in political activities. My eldest brother got elected in ward chairperson in 1994 local election. I myself engaged in Dalit rights social movement right after finishing SLC. My second elder brother was engaged in business, my nephew, niece, cousin and villager were started going to school

My father's contribution to my education and to guide my two elder brothers in to business is the direct impact of globalization of education and marketization in Chautara. And this became the vanguard to whole Dalit community in Chautara. By entering the market, which was created by new infrastructure (roads) and government expansion (the headquarters) my father opened up a new 'modern' area of action. The most important direct consequence was education, because with a surplus a new generation of Dalits were able to have time to engage in consciousness raising and activism. My father's case was rare but not unique in Chautara during the 1980's.

4.4 Kubinde Left Behind by 1990's

In the above sections we have not mentioned Kubinde much. This is relevant to our narrative here, because it shows that rural Kubinde was 'missing' from the modernization processes that were slowly happening in Sindhupalchok and around semi urban and urban centers in Nepal. Kubinde as a Weberian 'ideal type' represents rural Nepal that is been excluded from the processes we see in Chautara, and as we go on to argue, even very strong top-down political change (from Maoists) was not able to equalize the situation between Chautara and Kubinde.

However, the impact of Peoples' War could be seen in Kubinda Dalit's life though Maoists political empowerment was trivial. First, they were a shelter provider for Maoists and second impact in some extent could be seen on Dalit children who were studying 8 or 9 class during insurgency. For instance, Mr. Sagar Pariyar among his colleagues from Kubindee became underground during the insurgency while he was sixteen. He was a good singer thus Maoist made him join in cultural activities that

latter made him underground eventually. This is a nice example of how Maoists 'replaced' one kind of feudal control with their own version. During the insurgency, he lost one hand (up to wrist) in military clash and became disabled. He was upgraded as an area level to district level cadre when Maoists came in to peace process. But during the local election he was not given a chance to compete as a candidate though he acclaimed and aspired to be. Thus, ward chairperson from Kubinda and other members were elected from higher caste. Later, to quell his dissatisfaction and aggression he was nominated as executive member of a municipality. He was the only the Dalit I could locate who benefitted from the Maoist political movement from Kubindee and as we have seen only in a limited and subordinate way.

Those leaders who had been sheltered in Dalits home during People's War and had been protected by them in their hardship lives are now in state level high organs or in apex body, enjoying the fruits of political transformation of Republic Nepal. They are mostly from Brahmin community and Janajati (Mayor) from Kubindee, for instance; there are three in central committee members in Communist Party, more than dozens in Province and District level party committee members representing from non-Dalit community, Member of parliament and Speaker of the house of representatives, Mayor, ward chairperson and ward members. On the other hand zero political offices have gone to Dalits. They are not only under-represented but their zero representation in political mainstream makes the entire Maoist movement look hypocritical.

Thus, the dream of aspiration that had been shown during People's War by Maoists and the practical lives of Dalit community deserving in Kubinde now and then exist the same. They were shelter providers before and are a reliable 'vote bloc' now. Thus, their acclamations empowering Dalits and bringing political awareness among them are not justified empirically.

4.5 Post 1990 Chautara: The Rise of Modern Social Movements

Once the term "Dalit" was first introduced to Nepal by India's most famous untouchable, Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar, a decade later in 1967 AD, Rastriya Nepal

Dalit Jana Vikash Parishad⁸.(Cameron 2008) used the term in its organization. Though it was a common name to identify and unite 'Untouchables' in one umbrella, It took long time to Nepali Untouchables to unite in that name.

After reinstatement of democracy in 1990, Nepal's new constitution made caste discrimination punishable by law, however this was rarely enforced. As Multi-Party system reinstated, Political parties started to open their sister's organization, Dalit wings was one of them their sister's organization. Dalits who were united in different parties based on their own beliefs joined in party's sisters organization as well, such as Nepal Dalit Utthan Sang-1991⁹, Utpidit Jatiya Utthan Manch-1990¹⁰, Jatiya Samata Samaj, 1989¹¹, Nepal Utpidit Dalit Jatiya Mukti Samaj-1993¹² etc, They started their campaign against caste atrocities and untouchability by trying to preserve the constitutional rights given to Dalit by 1990 AD Constitution and struggled for inadequate laws.

The Nepal Utpidit Dalit Jatiya Mukti Samaj-1993 were one of those strong organization who organized well in Dalit's common agenda and it's branches were opened throughout Nepal, almost 75 districts, Sindhupalchok was one of them.

Empowerment as a multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives. It is a process that fosters power in people for use in their own lives, their communities, and in their society by acting on issues that they define as important. (Nanette Page and Cheryl E. Czuba 1999). Thus, at the core of the concept of empowerment is the idea of power. Power is often related to our ability to make others do what we want, regardless of their own wishes or interests (Weber, 1946). The exercises to gain those power entered to Dalit of Sindhupalchok being an opportunity when Nepal Utpidit Dalit Jatiya Mukti Samaj-1993, opened its branches and started to unite Dalit community in a district utilizing the new openness of a

⁸ Saharsha Nath Kapali was a chairperson of this organization in central level. After this organization was established at the center, many Dalit struggles were organized by its communist cadres in the Chitwan district at district level. These struggles were led by Ruplal Vishvakarma, then a communist cadre, and many personalities, including Captain Lal Bahadur Pariyar, a veteran of 1950 revolution, were actively involved(Barali 1993).

⁹ It was a sister's organization of Nepali Congress.

¹⁰ It was a sister's organization of CPN(UML).

¹¹ It was a sister's organization of CPN(Masal).

¹² It was a common Dalit organization, the establishment of this organization marked a significant unifying effort in the history of the Nepali Dalit Social Movement(kisan,2005).

reinstated democracy 1990 AD. It was that political empowerment of Mukti Samaj where Dalit community engaged in the process of social change by advocating their own grievances against untouchability practices and caste atrocities prevailing throughout district.

Some social movements are summarized below that impacted the lives of Chautara and (to lesser extent) Kubinde Dalits to fight against caste-based discrimination. These were the 'modern' (contrasted to Panchayat era) movements that changed the caste consciousness of Dalits, especially in Chautara.

Although some of these movements focused on other locations (such as Sipapokhera VDC) it was Chautara where activists met and organized and publicized the movement. Without the modernization process and consciousness change in Chautara social movement mobilization would have been localized and limited.

4.5.1. Well (Kuwa) water touch program of Sipapokhera VDC.

In 1994, March 4 Mukti Samaj district Chapter organized a "Well water touch program in Sipapokhera VDC. The Well was banned to touch/fetch water to Dalit community since a long time (generation to generation). The story is that when a five-year-old Dalit Child Laxmi Bishokarma was thrown in the Well by So called Non-Dalit as she was playing around in upper caste Well. Soon after the death of her, the upper caste women run away from there that led the death of Laxmi Bishokarma a three-year-old child (Bishokarma Dill 2016). When this news was captured by Mukti Samaj, then organization started uniting people and struggled against those atrocities. Hundreds of thousands participated in that program throughout district against such incident. Political leaders from different parties at Central level belonging to upper caste, Mukti Samaj from central team (based in Chautara), district team, Human rights activists and journalists all together joined in water fetch program and declared that Well is opened to everyone and emphasized that if someone or groups proscribe Dalit to fetch water, he/she/they must have been punished legally.

Chautara was not the focus of this action but it was the centre for the organization of activism. Chautara was going to become the 'go to place' for mobilization against caste.

4.5.2. Public Feast Program-Chautara

This was done in Chautara on 1996 where organizer Mukti Samaja invited various people such as; political leaders, Government agencies, NGO workers, Journalists, teachers, students, activists and son on. However flimsy people from non-Dalit community participated in that program. During inter-dinning period some political leaders fled away fearing from their family boycott and social criticism (Mukti khabar 1996, Sindhupalchok)

4.5.3. The Public Tea shop/ restaurants Entry program in Chautara

It was the District Chapter of Mukti Samaj where it organized the Social cultural and legal awareness program among Dalits and Non-Dalits. When rally marched in Chautara Bazar chanting the slogans against caste-based discrimination it interacted with Hotel/Restaurants owner not to bar Dalit community to enter their places otherwise punishable by law. Some restaurants shut their doors, somewhere activists entered by force. This incident made aware in some portion to everyone not to bar Dalit community to shops/restaurants. It also made the Dalit Community's self-esteem to be upgraded.

Above were some exemplary cases. Consequently, a) Milk Dairy utilize program-Bhotachoure b) Uses of Public places like, burial or burning of a dead body at Sindhukot, c) Temple entry program of Tauthali, d) Interaction program with multi-stakeholder on Dalit issues were happened throughout Sindhupalchok Districts. These all were the process of social and political empowerment of a Sindhupalchok's Dalits. Weber (1946) gives us a key word that power exists within the context of a relationship between people or things. Power does not exist in isolation nor is it inherent in individuals. By implication, since power is created in relationships, power and power relationships can change. Dalit's aspiration to empower themselves continued for a decade (1992 AD TO 2001) in the district through their own common organization "Mukti Samaj" in line with micro or macro activities.

In, 2001 when Nepali State declared State of Emergency due to the growth of Maoist insurgency that prevented Mukti Samaj's activities thereafter. However, all these socio-political movements of Dalit to some extent played a synergy to the Maoist insurgency and whatever activities Mukti Samaj led during that time against caste-

based discrimination and untouchability practices it increased the level of consciousness of a society and assisted Dalit for socio-political empowerment. In other words, the Mukti Samaj created the conditions of conscientization in Chautara which shaped future social relations.

Most importantly for the comparison of cases here, these movements were built out of the modernizing semi-urban centre of Chautara. And although places like Kubinde could benefit from the social capital or 'social movement capital' built in Chautara it was Chautara itself which was most affected by this new level of consciousness among Dalit population. This was due to the increasing numbers of Dalits engaged in wage labor and able to free themselves from the curse of Patron-client system, as we will illustrate using data in a later section.

4.6. Kubinde in the 1990's and early 2000's: the legacy of Peoples' War

In Section 2.6, above we talked about the causes of the Maoist Peoples' war that affected Sindhupalchok District heavily, from 1996 to 2004. In fact, as journalist Deepak Sapkota (a Kubinde resident) wrote, Kubinde was one of the early initiators of the Peoples' War:

The police staged a big suppression at Kubinde of Sindhupalchok district, centrally hilly region, in the last week of January 1996. More than five dozen villagers including children, women and the aged were arrested and kept in custody after a policeman died falling into a river while the people of Kubinde chased the police force that had come to arrest a local teacher. The villagers were subjected to extreme torture in the police custody. From February 13, 1996 the people's war started. Sapkota (2014)

Kubinde was a much more Maoist affected area than Chautara because Chautara was home to army and government headquarters, and was basically a 'no go' area for Maoists, even after dark. During the Peoples' War Kubinde experienced 26 martyrdoms in total. None of these martyrs were of Dalits. However, Dalits were important in Kubinde. The important role Dalits played in Kubinde in Peoples' War was hosting Maoist underground fighters. Here Dalits played an 'ironic' role in the Peoples' War. They were useful hosts for underground fighters because police did not expect that Dalits would have resources to support fighters. Their backwardness in economic terms and social ostracism made them useful for politics in this period. No synergy was possible in Kubinde between Maoist cadre and Dalit persons because of

low level of education of Dalit *gaun* in Kubinde and their involvement in *Bali Pratha*. In some way, the wartime role of Dalits continued this patron-client system, with Dalits hosting underground Maoists who were usually from higher castes.

Top-down Maoist ideology and power that claimed to be against caste (Yami 2006) was less effective than bottom-up mobilization that we have seen in Chautara. In fact, during same period Dalits from Kubinde were involved in Mukti Samaj activities in Chautara, rather than joining in equal role in Peoples' War. The underlying reasons for this were the lower levels of education and economic modernization in Kubindee compared to Chautara, which mean that Kubindee Dalits were not able to participate as equals when given the 'political' opening by Maoist Party. We will examine these differences in detail in the next section.

4.7. Socio-Economic Comparison of Dalits in Chautara and Kubinde in Contemporary Period:

In this section I bring up to date our comparison of the two locations. I begin with a table summarizing socio-economic conditions in the two locations before 1990:

Table 1: The socio-economic conditions of Dalit in Chautara and Kubindee before 1990 AD

Chautara before 1990	Kubindee before 1990
) Political/Administration participation -0) Political/Administration participation - 0
) Economic subsistence-patron-client based) Economic subsistence-patron-client based
) Social/cultural-Untouchability practices in private home and Public places (Taps, Hotel, School, Temples-Severe) Social/cultural-Untouchability practices in private home and Public places (Taps, Hotel, School, Temples-Severe
) Educational attainment- SLC passed 0) Educational attainment- SLC passed 0

Source: Filed survey 2017

Of course, as I showed in section 9.3, there was 'invisible' process of modernization occurring 'below the surface' in Chautara before 1990. In recent times, due to the

explosion of these modernization process the difference between Chautara and Kubinde has become much greater, as the data in Appendix 2a shows.

As can be seen the numbers are much higher than for Kubinde, even though there are 73 Dalit households in total in Kubinde compared to 55 in Chautara. (% of Dalit in Kubinde is around 8% and around 4% in Chautara according to 2011 census).

Now looking at employment situation in both locations in Appendix 2b.

As can be seen clearly in this table in the appendix Chautara's socio-economic situation for Dalits is much more advanced than in Kubinde today. Most important are the first two categories in the table: Kubinde depends more on continued Bali Pratha system and much less on modern capitalist enterprise. In fact, as we can see, around 20% of Kubinde HH's even today depend mainly on Bali Pratha. This is despite the strictly economic 'bad logic' of Bali Pratha system, as in interviews the respondents told me that they could earn as much as 50% more in wage labor system as in equivalent amount of grain in Bali Pratha. So why do they persist in it? There is a kind of 'vicious circle', made of lack of modernization over long time and a feeling of 'safety' in the patron client system. Because of lack of diverse labour market skills (which developed in Chautara due to gradual modernization) there is a fear of being without work if there is economic recession. As many respondents said 'who will feed me?'

Case studies contained in appendix 2c illustrate these issues of continued reliance on Bali Pratha.

These cases show how the 'economic' base of Bali Pratha or (in Chautara) of entrepreneur type business affect lives in multiple ways. In Chautara having entrepreneur 'base' means dignity in other aspects of life, but in Kubinde, the base of Bali Pratha means discrimination and poor services across multiple dimensions.

In addition, in Kubinde there is also geographic fact that Dalits are mostly in more proximity to Bahun-Chettri communities than in Chautara. So patron client bonds have tended to be deeper over time than in Chautara, where majority Janajati and Newars were themselves less oriented to role as patrons in this pre-capitalist system. Dalits in Kubinde also tend to have less land than those in Chautara. The typical

‘subsistence’ level in Kubinde is 6 months or less from their own land’s supply, compared to around 9 months among agriculturalists in Chautara.

Similarly, due to general feeling of lack of opportunity there is more migration of persons from Kubinde to overseas locations such as UAE and Malaysia, but according to my field research interviews, those persons who go overseas from Kubinde will earn much less than those from Chautara (not enough to save any money at all). If a person has not passed intermediate level, then they will hardly earn enough to launch a business when they return to Nepal from overseas. One example from Chautara of my own relative is a good one: because he had passed Intermediate level he was able to secure a well-paid post in the Middle East, then saved several lakh during his migration period and was able to invest in a business (pig farm) in the Kathmandu Valley on his return.

In these individual cases we see the long-term legacy of the different paths followed by Kubinde and Chautara over decades. In one case, a ‘virtuous circle’ of marketization, modernization and activism, and in the other a ‘vicious circle’ of patronage, passivity and exclusion. Until and unless the patron-client relationship is broken-down and Dalits become economically independent, their slogans for "social equity and egalitarian future" simply would not be materialized. (Dahal 2010)

What are the social consequences in terms of caste discrimination practices of these different socio-economic environments?

This table, which is true in both Chautara and Kubinde helps summarize the results of my field work

Table 2: Discrimination according to occupation: Chautara and Kubinde

Area of Occupation	Degree of untouchability					
	Chautara			Kubinde		
	High	Medium	Low	High	Medium	low
Those work in Bali Pratha	–			–		
Same work but in Cash		–		–		
Different occupants; Mason Carpenter, other cash work		–		–	–	
Employer working in Government, Army, Police, Teacher, NGO worker in satisfactory post		–			–	
Highly post holders; Government officer, Political leader, Member of Parliament, Municipal/ward chief, Businessman			–			–

Data based on focus group interviews conducted in 2017.

I assessed ‘untouchability’ according to the various measures I discussed in section 5, above. The table is based on focus group and individual interviews in both research locations. I found that respondents reported much less untouchability practices when they were involved more in ‘modern’ sector of the economy. Chautara and Kubinda those Dalit engaged in diverse occupation and away from Bali Pratha, higher level of income, educated and holding prestigious jobs, they bear less untouchability whereas, such empowerment is not strengthened they bear high level of untouchability. This shows how class and caste measures are so closely connected in both locations: where people work in more ‘modern’ sectors they report much lower level of caste discrimination. Here we can see how these two locations have taken very different ‘paths’, because being stuck in patronage model means worse outcomes in many different dimensions.

CHAPTER: 5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Summarizing the empirical findings

The empirical findings above, show that education, economic opportunities, political consciousness, urbanization, road facilities, communications, market access, effects of globalization, and access to local services are the key principal factors that have played a key role in Dalit empowerment and social changes in market towns like Chautara. Where such facilities are lacking, for example in the rural settings such as Kubinde, the level of Dalit empowerment and the rate of social change is weaker.

On the political level, Dalits have been empowered where ever a political party, regardless of its broader ideology, has been able to shape the nature of awareness among Dalits and has united them together. As an example, the public space in Chautara, e.g. teashop, restaurant/bar, temple, school, wedding party, suffers from a lower level of untouchability than Kubinde—even though untouchability is in practice in private homes in Chautara. But politics alone is not enough. Where the conditions for social mobilization do not exist as Kubinde, top-down political mobilization (from the Maoists) did not lead to social mobilization at the base.

The level of awareness is itself the result of the modernization processes: there is a ‘virtuous circle’ of change in Chautara but a ‘vicious circle’ of patronage, lower education levels and discrimination in Kubinde. I expect that the two locations we have discussed are indeed ‘typical’ of patterns we will see across Nepal, and maybe across South Asia.

If these results are correct, it is both optimistic and pessimistic. It is optimistic because it shows how social change can happen (Chautara) based on new opportunities and success in one area (economic) can feed success in others (political). But it is pessimistic because it suggests there may be a division between outcomes in urban and rural locations based on long term trends. This division may be very hard to change. Indeed, that related to our other big finding, that ‘top- down’ ideological change as we saw attempted in Kubinde in Peoples’ War cannot be catalyst for the real change we saw happen in Chautara. Political consciousness led by the Maoists or single party is insufficient to empower Dalits. In fact there is another

pessimistic aspect – that now, successful entrepreneurs in Chautara among Dalits have adopted a ‘bourgeois’ mentality in respect to caste, blaming other less educated Dalits for their ‘laziness’ and their inability to take advantage of opportunities. In this way the divide between the two words of semi-urban and rural will grow even greater as solidarity of richer Dalits for poorer disappears.

These results can be summarized in a diagram illustrating the characteristics of the two ‘ideal types’ of location we described with in the introduction.

5.2 Theoretical Implications

In this section I will examine how these findings relate to theoretical approaches. Firstly, most concretely, it adds local / micro level detail to studies of the factors influencing caste empowerment and discrimination in Nepal.

I would argue that this thesis is an important complementary work to Luintel’s book (2018), which takes a ‘larger’ scale view of changes in Dalit empowerment.

Luintel argues that livelihoods diversification is helping weakening caste structures of Nepal and that a result a rigid ‘varna’ model of caste has begun breaking down even in rural areas. As urbanization and larger markets rise up, so the *jajmani* systems get weaker and ‘new values’ of dignity, self respect and individualism are rising up among new generations.

The argument of this thesis is not completely different than Luintel’s, in that it also argues for the great importance of changes in the ‘base’ of economics in changing attitudes to caste. However, I would argue that the ‘micro politics’ approach taken in this thesis adds some nuance to Luintel’s broad hypothesis.

Firstly, and most importantly, it shows the local level variation in change that is taking place. Market towns have experienced a virtuous circle of change (see diagram above) while rural village have been stuck in a vicious circle of discrimination and backwardness. The thesis suggests that we need more research on these local variations. Average increases in empowerment are good, but they may be clustering in particular locations and excluding others, even those just an hour’s walk away (as in Kubinde).

Secondly, and more speculatively (because this cannot be proved from my two cases) changes in the economic base may be *necessary* for social change, but they are not *sufficient* to maintain and deepen changes in values. The Chautara social movements described in this thesis grew out of economic changes, but only *indirectly*. In fact recently caste conflict has risen up again in Chautara, between the kami and Ghale communities, [A group of Ghale denied to make worship together in the public temple on 18 April 2018. They scolded and insulted to Kami worshipper not to touch RATH (small goddess the would carry after puja in Jatra) publicly on the basis of low and high caste supremacy . These contentions finally went to court. Police caught the culprit and put them into custody during investigation. Now the case is in court, awaiting verdict. The two village is fractured now and there seems a huge break up in social relationship.]. These events show that defending Dalit dignity is not automatic! It does not depend only on changes in the economic base, but needs constant work by Dalit leaders to assert rights in cultural and political spheres.

Thirdly is more a question of terminology: the collapse of the varna mentality that Luintel documents does not mean the end of caste discrimination and exclusion because caste can become 'sticky', due to the vicious circle dynamics described above. Community (samaj) way of thinking that is still tied to economic networks. In Kubinde for example, caste and class are hard to distinguish, as Dalits have less land and less economic mobility. They have not been able to access the opportunities of new market towns and urbanization. Lack of mobility is at heart of traditional caste system also (with Dalits forced to stay isolated in one place and upper castes able to move around) so it is not clear that collapse of traditional varna makes a lot of difference for Dalits in excluded places like Kubinde. It would therefore be a mistake to jump to celebrating new democratic values, and ignoring the particular circumstances of locations like Kubinde (which are more common than Chautara in Nepal as whole) where caste-class nexus is still about exclusion even if language is no longer the 'traditional' varna language.

The analysis of these two research locations can also be seen through the lens of more abstract debates in social and political theory. In some ways, my approach is a classic Marxist one. I have shown that economic change was a leading force in other kinds of change in Chautara. The 'base' of economic change could be seen determining the

‘superstructure’ of change in cultural practice. But I would argue that this study suggests connections between social, economic, cultural and political domains are more indirect and complicated than the base-superstructure model. For example, economic change in Chautara was important, or necessary background to the political opening of 1990’s. But without that opportunity structure (Tilly 2004) from state’s side it is unlikely change would have happened as quickly or deeply. I argue that this economic change was a necessary but not sufficient condition for changes in consciousness in Chautara. On the other hand, we clearly see in Kubinde that political change or opportunity represented during Peoples’ War did not transform Dalit consciousness. This would be close to a Marxist view that economic change is in some ways ‘deeper’ than other levels because so many indirect effects are felt of economic changes. As Bali Pratha became less important, so the chains of oppression inside minds of Dalits in Chautara also fell away. At the same time new entrepreneurship created aspiration and also money for education which helped lead to greater empowerment of Dalits.

As I suggested in literature review the thesis also relates to social / political theory. The patterns we see in Chautara and Kubindee reflect theoretical conceptions formulated in Bourdieu and Nancy Fraser.

This concept of ‘mental chains’ in Kubinde (of Bali Pratha) leads to Bourdieu (1977) and the idea of *habitus*. Habitus is an internalized social structure that creates and shapes the choices and options individuals believe that they have. In Kubinde we saw clear example of how Bali Pratha system was not just an economic system. It was also part of a habitus in which Dalits were trapped. They believed that only being under patronage would they be safe and ‘able to eat’, even if economic analysis puts this in doubt. The habitus of Chautara Dalits changed slowly over 1980’s to 2000’s. In 1980’s the patronage mentality was still present, even in the ‘activism’ done through Panchayat era Dalit leaders. But by early 1990’s a new habitus – of individualism and equal rights had started to grow and challenge the old mentality. Yet ‘habitus’ does not disappear just due to economic and political change. Even today in Chautara there is private home discrimination against Dalits and inter caste marriage is quite rare. Bourdieu shows us how a pattern of oppression can last and endure because it is handed down unconsciously through generations of oppressed and also of oppressors.

However, this thesis puts this 'habitus' in a historical context – unlike in Bourdieu's work we have tried to give a causal explanation of how habitus either stays (Kubinde) or changes (Chautara) based on changes in socio-economic forces. In that way my argument is closer to the Marxist tradition.

Nancy Fraser's theorization of justice is a more practical empowerment theory of evaluating types of social justice. We can see our case studies in terms of the fight for different kinds of 'justice'. Fraser (1996) argues that there are three types of justice: distributive (to do with economy), recognition (to do with identity) and participation (to do with inclusion in political and representative bodies).

In this study I have tried to show that distributive and recognition forms of justice are closely related but we cannot say one must be 'explained away' by the other. As Dalits in Chautara entered the market and benefited from distribution by modern state, they still needed and still need to do the work of 'being recognized' including the history of their oppression and subordination in the 'Hindu feudalist' state. In this way I agree with Fraser, that justice cannot be reduced to one kind of justice only. Here we see the relevance of this study for practical approaches to justice for Dalits. How can we utilize Fraser's conception of justice in relation to Dalits in order to make Dalits 'equal citizens' (Bennett/World Bank 2006) in Nepal? In the author's opinion we need to see caste empowerment as multi-causal and multi-dimensional. We cannot reduce empowerment to one dimension (economy, culture, politics).

However, when we see how Chautara 'naturally' combined these three elements we have a clue to how we can intervene to change caste in the future. There must be more inclusion of Dalits in modern sectors of economy and society to free them from the remnant of feudal, patronage structures. This can be by reservation, scholarship and financing schemes. But there also needs to be revival and growth of groups that can play role that Mukti Samaj played in Chautara, as agent of consciousness and empowerment. In this sense NGO's and party political Dalit groups are less likely to succeed because of their narrow focus and 'top-down' approach to inclusion. Of course it is not easy to 'create' a natural process of transformation but the Dalit movement must learn from history. This thesis tries to be part of this historical learning process.

Appendices

1. Historical case studies of anti-discrimination in Chautara

Non-Dalit efforts

Case 1

It was the year 1964 AD my father Tok Bdr Ghale, Tribhuvan Shrestha, and Dr. Harilal from district hospital took yogurt in our home brought by Akal Bahadur BK from Kami Gaun. My father was assistant PDO(Panchyat Development Officer) at that time, Tribhuvan uncle was a chairperson of Chautara VDC elected by Panchyat and Dr. Harilal was opened minded. They publicly took that yogurt brought by low caste. That was the time even we children were scrutinized to perform purity and pollution. But they dared to do so. Probably, new country code 1963 AD, prohibition on untouchability encouraged them. It was challenging task that they had shown to the community. I think, they were the first persons took food from untouchables and pioneered for us. Since that time, it created space to us to have friendship with Dalits and have commensality with them. They were pioneering generation for us.

By Dil Bahadur Ghale, age 66, eldest son of Tok Bdr Ghale.

Case 2

Akal Bahadur BK age, 82 also added that “Tok Bdr Ghale, Kaile Ghale, Tribhuvanman Shrestha and Surjaman Shrestha efforts at that time was a landmark for untouchability campaign” who drank water publicly in our sister’s wedding ceremony in Chautara. He explained, it was our youngest sister marriage in 1965 AD, Tribhuvan Dai came in our wedding ceremony and drank water publicly and told to everyone not to practice untouchability as this is legally crime and punishable by law. He was legal advocate by practices and a chairperson of our VDC, moreover he was social reformer and would serve poor people without fee sometimes who were in problem. He ran lodge in his home and had no restriction to Dalit caste groups, simultaneously his brother Surja man who ran small grocery (Kirana Pasal) would not discriminate to his clients based on caste.

Besides them other shops were adhered untouchability practices severely upon us. Now, all these inspirators are died but their inspirations remained alone.

Dalit individuals efforts

Case 3

Lal Bahadur Khati and his belligerent action against untouchability

It was the incident of 1966/67 AD, Lal bahadur Khati¹³ who was given a name 'Palmahan'(brave person) by king Mahendra. He was belonged to BK caste and from neighboring VDC Sangachowk-Daduwa where he was born. He was assistant sub-inspector in police force. He would enter forcefully everyone hotel in Chautara. The famous Hotel was Kalimi Hotel that time where stranger would enjoy their lodging and fooding. Once, Kalimi(hotel owner) tried to scold and restrict to Palmahan to enter her hotel. He threw away many goods(tea, bread, curry etc.) from hotel on the street and put her into the police custody in Chautara. He warned her strongly not to prevent Dalit to enter her restaurants and not to discriminate anyone who comes there. He was a very strong person. When small jeep or van would crumble down or swamp into the mud, alone with his single efforts he would rescue them.

He was free to eat any hotels full of choice; once a week (Saturday) without money in Chautara and that was given a permission by the King. Though we were from Chautara we would not dare to enter her/Chautara's hotel and were obliged to wash the dishes after we eat. We had always tussle to her whether clean the dishes or not after used. Once, we broke her glasses and threw away in to the street along with our Guntae Dai(big brother) and brother in law (vanaju). Untouchability practices were very much severe and strict that time. We only few could dare to confront that situation.

In conversation with Akal Bdr BK, age 82

¹³ Late Lal Bahadur Khati (12 September 1937 – 1 January 1996) was a classical singer. His songs are yet to be sung by Radio Nepal. He was assistant sub-inspector in police force.

Case 4

Visit of Hiralal Bishokarma¹⁴ encourages Dalit

Ambar Bahadur Ghale the teacher of Shree Krishna Secondary School in 2071 AD in Chautara said, Hiralal Bishokarma, Assistant Minister of Education - visited Chautara in 1971, AD to inaugurate newly built electricity building, since then Chautara got electricity supply. After inauguration, there was a tea party in high school, but some high castes people along with National Panchayat representative (Bhaktadhoj Pradhan) rejected tea to take collectively, reason was unknown, however we could guess that it was due to Minister BK physical presence and already touched tea and snacks by him.

His official visit added an encouragement to local Dalit community to participate in discussion publically not to discriminate for Dalit people and to avoid untouchability practices in public sphere as it is legally crime and punishable.

2 a. Education Levels in Chautara and Kubindee Compared

Level	SLC	Intermediate	Bachelors	Masters	Mphil	Phd	Total
Chautara	19	19	5	3	0	0	46
Kubindee	9	4	2	0	0	0	15

2. b. Economy engagement in Chautara and Kubindee Compared

Area	Bali Pratha	Registered Entrepreneur	Police/Army	Government/NGO	Petty entrepreneur	Migration	Other Private
Kubindee	11 HH	0	15	3	4	10	6
Chautara	2 HH	13	2	5	4	5	5

c: Case studies of Bali Pratha

In Chautara, Chhatra BK, age 32, became a very young successful businessman in his Iron Metal Industry (Grill Udhyog). There is a historical background, social relations and social networks on his success. His grandfather did a work in patron-client relationship for thirty years for high caste people as he belongs to Dalit caste groups

¹⁴ Mr. Hiralal Bishokarma nominated as a member of parliament by the King Mahendra election held in 1971. In same year, he was appointed as Assistant Minister of education and became a first Dalit in Panchyat ministry cabinet (Khanal, Gelpke, Pyakurel, 2012).

(artisan group). In 2040 BS his grandfather opened his own Metal Shop where he started to sell his own products; there most customers would be his own patrons initially, those social networks he built up his from own personal relationships and experiences. When grandfather was in patron-client relationship, the working form was based on reciprocity, later, expanded into business firm where he trained his three sons and family members in to business as well. His first son (Chattara BK's father) started next business on his own while helping to his father in 2055 BS, second son Kamal also started his own business in 2063BS. The Chhatra BK tells me eagerly now, "I have been learning business and seeing the social networks and trust that my Grandfather, Father and Uncle built up while on business, that capital I grasped it. So, after completing my Bachelor in 2066 BS, I started my own Iron Metal Industry (Grill Udhyog) in 2067 BS. Within five years onward I have so many clients that even competitive markets would not harm to flourish my business because I have good services, quality, personal relationships, and social networks. Moreover, I have made trust to the clients that have been recognized and capitalized since my Grandfather Business inception. When I take the name of my predecessor (Grandfather and Father), more clients incline towards me. I do not feel hesitate to tell you that I am the successor of my predecessor's on business."

By contrast, in Kubinde, Krishna Bahadru BK from Kubenda VDC-3, Sindhupalchok, aged 65 now lives with his second wife. Though late, he is getting old age allowance 500Nrs/month since this year from his brother help. Four years passed away without knowing this benefit though Dalits are given at age of 60. He converted in to Christianity just in recent years and has complaint to his recent wife being alcohol drinker.

Regarding to government benefits and services Maker BK a youngest brother of Krishna BK age 40 says, VDC do not inform us properly and we also do not inquire them about social benefit and Dalit empowerment program though there is a provision of special budget/program for Dalit empowerment. Once, thirty thousand was allocated for us but rest of years, where it went, who took it and how does it allocate we do not know, as, no one is represented from Dalit community in VDC budgeting and planning yet.

Krishan is an iron metal artisan, a caste based occupation of Bishokarma and main subsistence of life that he learnt from his childhood. He works for high caste Master/Patron in Bali Pratha (Grain exchange custom for Dalits that tie mostly Masters-serfs relationship) that has been doing since childhood. He serves for high castes Masters making agricultural tools and daily used iron weapons. It could be either making new (raw material is provided by Masters for new) or doing old maintenance, he serves them for whole year as per their needs. In return, he would collect 5 to 10 Pathi paddy and 3-5 Pathi maize and Dashine festivals left (small piece of meat, beaten rice, little oil and spicy things) for whole year. At his adult time, he served up to 80-100 Masters and two sons were assisting him but now they are separated. Nowadays, he earns 30-35 Masters. If average conversion of his income is like this as per local context; 7.5 Pathi Paddy and 4 Pathi Maize per client in average of 35 Masters converts in a year earning it would be 13.12 Muri Paddy @ 2000 = 26240 Nrs and 7 Muri Maize @ 2400 = 16800Nrs, in Total 43040Nrs which is spouse income of a year. If measuring his income \$1.25 @ 96 = 120 @ 365 = 43800 Nrs., his who family fall in absolute poverty.

Krishan has 12 Ropani land for 15 members family. Only 5 Ropani is arable that produces 5 Muri paddy and 1 Muri Maize. So, entire family members are dependent in Bali Pratha mostly and some seasonal agricultural works engagements. He spent 65 years of subsistence in Bali Pratha ancestrally and had grown up his two sons and grandchildren (15 members) by this custom. He could not able to afford (money and time) for his four children's education. All of them dropped at two or three class; rather they were taught caste-based occupation for subsistence. Now, his sons are in Bali also but unfortunately second son age 30 and have 4 children got injured last year and dislocated left leg, became disabled. First son age 37 now in Malaysia. However, all these attempts assisting hardly enable them to survive.

Kirshna always has to say Namasker to Bista politely in first meetings (greetings) with word Malik or Hajur being bow down. He is kept outside while serving food/snacks to his Bita's home and obliged to wash dishes if visits held. He further adds: "Bahun never gives us Milk and yogurt and serves us in aluminum/steel pots, never in brass/bronze utensils. They said, if untouchable are served these things, buffalo/cows may ascend on trees. In return, Bista (Masters) never takes water/food that we touch. We are not only prohibited in Bistas houses but in Temples and local hotel/restaurants."

Annexes

Focused group discussion question-answer of Chautara Dalit on Bali Pratha

Discussion participants :

Economic aspects - Bali Pratha?

Question : How many Dalit House holds are in Chautara ?

Question : How many HH depends on Bali Pratha(Anvil, sewing, plowing) in this VDC?

Question : What are the grains that you collect from Bali Pratha and how much are they?

Question : How many HH of Patron(Bista) do a Client(Dalit) holds per year?

Question : How long you have to work in a year at Bali Pratha?

Question : Who engages to prepare the materials(new or old maintenance) of a Patron(Bisata)

Question : Do you have to go to collect the grains or Patron brings you at your home?

Question : Does anybody have ample land to cover the whole year agricultural subsistence in your village ?

Question : What are other means of subsistence of Dalits besides Bali Pratha in your village.

-) Daily wages
-) Police/army
-) Metal worker
-) Gold/ornament worker
-) Sewer
-) seasonal migrant working in Kathmandu, Arabian area and Malaysia.
-) Government clerk or officer.
-) NGO worker

Question : How many Dalit work in Arabian area or Malaysia in our village?

Question : What are the causes that tie up your villagers to work on Bila Pratha?

-) Traditionally accustomed
-) inadequate productive land
-) no alternative livelihood resources

Question : What are wages of Male and Female in your village?

Social/Cultural aspects

Question : Where do they make you stay at breakfast/lunch/dinner during your visit at Patron HH?

Question : Where do Dalit face untouchability practices in your village? degree - mild, mode, sever.

-) Public Tap, Well
-) Temple
-) Hotel, Restaurant
-) School meetings/Ward meeting
-) Marriage ceremony/Funeral ceremony
-) Agricultural daily works and snacks sitting time
-) Political Party meetings
-) Personal Home

Question : Who bear the degree of untouchability practices most among Dalits in our village?

Answer :

Area of labor	Degree of untouchability				
	High	Medium	Low	Same to everyone	No untouchability
Those work in Bali Pratha					
Same work but in Cash					
Different occupants; Mason Carpenter, other cash work					
Employer working in Government, Army, Police, Teacher, NGO worker in satisfactory post					
Highly post holders; Government officer, Political leader, Member of Parliament, Municipal/ward chief, Businessman					

Question : If non-Dalit comes to work in your field would they eat the food that you prepare?

Question : How many educated Dalits have in your village? SLC, IA, BA, MA

Question : Are Dalits given a chance to hold a vital post(Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer in the user's groups eg, School Management committee, forestry, road, electricity, sanitation, or any development related user groups?

Question : Are Dalit informed if some local level employment opportunity comes?
such as; teachers, social mobilizer, office assistant.

Question : Do Dalit hold a major post in a political party in your village?

Question : Do have know the legal provision that no one and nowhere (Private and
Public) should act untouchability practices and that is punishable by law.

Answer :

) We do not know

) We know

) We heard little -

Individual question answer of Chautara Dalit on Bali Pratha

Economic aspects - Bali Pratha?

Question : Your Name

Question : Age

Question : Your Address.

Question : Size of Family

Question : How many Patrons(Bisata) do you earn in a year now?

Question : When did you start to work on Bali?

Question : How much Patrons were before ?

Question : What are the grains that you collect from Bali Pratha and how much are they?

Question : How long you have to work in a year at Bali Pratha?

Question : Who engages to prepare the materials(new or old maintenance) of a Patron(Bisata)

Question : Do you have to go to collect the grains or Patron brings you at your home?

Question : What are other means of subsistence besides Bali Pratha of your?

Answer

-) Daily wages
-) Labor exchange in a village
-) Carpenter/Masonry
-) Produce iron related materials and sell in market

Question : Do you prepare other materials and sell to the market besides Bista?

Question : What do your family member do ? Do they have cash income?

Question : How much land do you have?

Question : What produces in your land?

Question : Do you have livestock?

Question : Do your family member educated?

Question : Is your family member employed?

Question : What are the causes that tie up you on Bila Pratha yet?

Answer :

-) Traditionally accustomed since forefather
-) inadequate productive land
-) no alternative livelihood resources
-) Land production covers less than 9 months
-) No market to sell my production

Social/Cultural aspects

Question : Where do they make you stay at breakfast/lunch/dinner during your visit at Patron HH? Do you eat with them?

Question : Do you have to clean the pot that you used?

Question : Do they invite you in their social ceremony(marriage, festivals, rituals etc) and would you eat together?

Question : Do your Patron(Bista) eat together in the public meetings?

Question : Do other Non-Dalit eat together in the public meetings?

Question : What types of Non-Dalit inter-dine with you publicly?

Answer (percentage)

-) Christian -
-) Hindu follower(Traditional/modern)
-) Teacher

- Educated
- Youth
- Political leader/cadre
- Old age
- Others

Question : What types of Non-Dalit enter you in their home?

Question : Do non-Dalit comes at your field(Khet/Bari) to work with you if you invite?

Question : Do no-Dalit inter dine with you in the filed while working?

Question : If Patron comes in your home do they eat food that you serve?

Answer :

- Inter-dine with you publicly
- Inter-dine with you secretly.
- Never eat.

Question : If non-Dalit comes at your home besides your Patron(Bista), how would they inter-dine if you serve?

Answer:

- Eat publicly (out of 100 ?) -
- Eat secretly (out of 100 ?) -

Question : Are you allow to enter temple?

Question : Which Caste do practices untouchability most upon you?

Answer :

- Bramin, Chhetri, Giri, Sanasi etc
- Ghale, Guring, Magar, Tamang, Newar
- Other.

Question : Which Caste do practices untouchability weak upon you?

Answer :

Question : If you invite Non-Dalit in social ceremony eg marriage or in festival, would they eat together or non-Dalit cook separately for them?

Answer :

- We do not cook separately whether they inter-dine together or not
- Must cook separately by Non-Dalit cook, then they would eat.

Question : How do you feel when Patron(Bista) and other non-Dalit perpetually practice untouchability upon you since long time ?

Answer :

- Feel pinching my heart always.
- Feel always living with undignified life.
- Feel maltreating me rather than dog.
- Feel instantly leave the Patron's (Bista) work.
- Feel nothing as it has been accustomed since long.

Question : Do you know the legal provision that no one and nowhere (Private and Public) should act untouchability practices and that is punishable by law.

Answer :

- I do not know
- I know
- I heard little

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