

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITION OF MUSAHAR COMMUNITY
(A CASE STUDY OF DUDHAULI VDC IN SINDHULI DISTRICT)**

A thesis

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LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

This thesis entitled **Socio-economic Condition of Musahar Community A Case Study of Dudhauri VDC in Sindhuli District, Nepal** has been prepared by Mr. Sanjay Kumar Dahal under my guidance and supervision. I here by recommend it for acceptance.

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LETTER OF APPROVAL

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ABBREVIATIONS/ ACRONYMS

BS	Bikram Sambat
CBS	Central Bureau Statistics
DDC	District Development Committee
DOSA	Department of Sociology/Anthropology
etc.	Etcetera
GO	Governmental Organization
HMG	His Majesty's Government
i.e.	That is
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
KM	Kilometer
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SN	Serial Number
VDC	Village Development Committee
Vol.	Volume

CHAPTER – I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Nepal is a small land locked country sandwiched between two Asian giants China and India. Its geographical position has been traditionally characterized as being analogous to 'a yam caught between two rocks'. Comprising about 55,000 sq. miles of land, Nepal is highly mountainous country. Only 17 percent of its total land is considered low land, which is largely confined to the Tarai (Plain) belt. Nepal is multi-linguistic, multi religious, multi caste Himalayn kingdom. According to 'dibyopadesh' of late great king Prithivi Narayan Shah. "Nepal is a garden of four caste and thirty six Jats". So Nepal is the garden of various ethnic. Tribal and minority groups according to the National Committee for Development of Nationalities (Government official institution for ethnic and minorities affairs) in Nepal, there are 60 ethnic and minorities group (CBS, 2001) Population distribution of the ethnic groups depends upon the different climatic zones and different geographical setting. In high Himalayan region, there are Bhotiya. Lamas and Sherpa. In hilly region, there are Rai. Limbu. Magar, Gurung, Sunuwar, Danuwar, in siwalik hills Girel, Rawute, Kusunda. In Terai regin, there are Tharu, Musahar, Ghagar, Dhimal, Satar, Rajbansi. Barntar, Kalwar etc. They are striking categories of minorities of ethnic group of people in Nepal (CBS,2001).

Nepal is well known around the world for the religious and caste harmony as a diversity of castes constitutes the country without any violence and dirty games in this respect, though there are still lots of unsolved questions regarding caste discrimination. The waft of caste system is still in influence which is believed to have started from time immemorial. The caste system has been divided into four groups, namely Brahmin, Chhetri, Baishya and Sudhra where Sudra is considered as lowest caste (untouchable) popularly known as *Dalits* (Bista, 2042). As cited by Prithvi Narayan Shah Nepal as a garden of four castes and thirty six sub castes blooming together, the quotation somehow sounds contradictory as the *Dalits* are still searching for the space to bloom within this garden.

Nepal's history is one of syncretism of different culture religions languages and people. Bista, (1985), states that it doesn't have an example of deliberate formal domination of one by another. Occasionally there have been attempts to formalize one socio-culture structure and style such as the caste system and hierocracy of ethnic groups.

Nepal is laboratory for the sociologist and Anthropologist because of its vast diversity in language, religions, peoples faces and races and their culture Hindu, Buddhist, Muslims, Christians and other's are harmonized in one order that process of Nepalisation (Bista, 1985).

A great majority of the people of Nepal do not have any problem identifying themselves with one culture-linguistic of ethnic group or another at one level and with Nepali society in operational at another level.

Bista (1985) described Nepalese community as the phenomenon of unity in diversity. But in the name of unity in diversity, several minor castes are dominated by others; comparatively higher classed socio economic groups are found to be dominating the lower classed socio economic groups. Musahars are the severely marginalized and subjected minority groups residing in Terai and inner Terai who have been regularly dominated by elite class of Nepal. According to the population census report 2001, the population of musahars is only 0.76 percent of the total population of the country. The living standard of the musahars is very low in comparison with other groups. Food crisis, famine and starvation are frequent event on the life cyclic of Musahar. The main areas where musahars reside are Jhapa, Morang, Sunsari, Saptari, Siraha, Sindhuli, Mahottari, Dhanusha, Sarlahi and Rutahat (CBS, 2001).

Socio-economic condition of Musahar community, which is shaping their social dynamics, has not been systematically studied. Present study tries to analyze the socio-economic condition of Musahar people of Dudhauri VDC of Sindhuli district.

Nepal has provided shelter and security for the large number of migrants from different places comprising different races and representing different ethnic, cultural and linguistic groups. There are three major groups according to racial origin namely Tibeto Nepali (Mongoloid), Indo Aryan (Indian origin) and Astro Asiatic (Regmi, 1999).

There is dispersion of different deprived ethnic/caste groups in different geographical areas of the country. Generally Tharu, Rajbanshi, Danuwar etc are found to be inhabited in the Terai region of Nepal. Similarly Magar, Gurung, Rai Limbu, Tamang along with so called Dalits (Damai, Kami, Sarki) reside in the hilly regions. So called higher castes (Brahmins, Chhetris) also generally reside in the hilly regions. Sherpa and Bhotas are found to be living in the mountain region (Regmi, 1999).

The Musahar community is one of the disadvantaged and back-warded group of people in eastern Terai region. "Musahar" is so-called untouchables and low caste agricultural labor. According to the Terai's caste hierarchy along with Chamar, Dom, Dushad, Halkhor and Bantar, Musahar belongs to the lowest group in caste hierarchy. Most of these minority groups settled in the terai and inner terai region including Morang, Sunsari, Udayapur, Saptari, Siraha, Sarlahi, Danusha, Rautahat of Nepal (Pokharel, 1997).

The name Musahar might have come from the occupation of these caste people who are still famous for killing of mouse and eating them. But the people do not agree with that as their oral tradition and stories say that they were the descendants of great sage Valmiki (Musahar believed that their 'Gotra' is Valmiki) who is believed to be author of the religious epoch Ramayan (Gautam and Thapa 1994).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Every country has its own language, religion, culture and traditions prevalent among the people. Therefore, the identity of the country lays in the customs and traditions of inhabitants. Various ethnic communities inhabit in Nepal too. They have their own set

of socio-cultural norms and values. Yet all of them are Nepalese, living in harmony with one another. The late king Prithvi Narayan Shah had said "Let everyone realize that Nepal is a common garden of 4 varnas (classes) and 36 jats (castes)". Unfortunately, many of the communities are still backward and little known by the outside periphery. The Musahar community is one of such type of group which is lesser known and are among the back warded people of the country. It has been essential to undertake a study about this community. Due to the lack of adequate research and timely involvement to bring about improvements in the living standards of the Musahar community, it is observed that their socio-cultural and economic condition is rather degrading day by day. If this situation is not improved the existence of Musahar will be at stake. Therefore, in order to narrow down the problem it is specified in the form of following research questions.

1. What is the socio-economic condition of Musahar at Dudhauri VDC?
2. What could be the reasons/causes of their backwardness?
3. What strategies could be recommended for the upliftment of their socio-economic conditions?

1.3 Objective of the Study

The overall objective of the study is to find out the socio-economic condition of Musahar community of Dudhauri VDC lying in Sindhuli district. The specific objectives are:

1. To study the socio-economic condition of Musahar in Dudhauri VDC.
2. To describe the causes of backwardness of Musahar community
3. To find out the livelihood practices of Musahar community.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Many marginalized communities are still backward and there has been little information available about them. They are yet to be brought into the national mainstream; a task impossible without fully knowing about their different socio-economic, religious and cultural background. No development plan, policy and

programs can be made and implemented effectively without adequate knowledge about such communities. The condition of Musahar of Dudhauri VDC is also not available in the literatures, so this study will be fruitful for planner, policy maker etc. to formulate or implement the development programs that focuses the Musahar Community.

Musahar community is one of the lesser-known marginalized groups of people who are far from mainstream of development of Nepal. Due to this reason, it is essential to undertake a study about the tribal group called "Musahar". It has been observed that the socio-economic condition of 'Musahar' of Dudhauri VDC of Sindhuli district is degrading day by day and if any initiation is taken for their betterment, their status will be more vulnerable. Although proposed study may not be sufficient to cover all dimension of Musahar community, it will be able to identify some of their problems and socio-economic dimension. Fundamentally, this study aims to focus on exploring the socio-economic conditions and strategies for the upliftment of Musahar households. If the purpose of study is fulfilled, it will try to give preliminary information that will be useful to the policy makers, planners, politicians, beurocrats, development practitioners to formulate policy and programs for the upliftment of such community. Although the present study might not be sufficient to cover all aspects of Musahar community, it is hoped that this study will be able to identify some of their problems and various other dimension of the community of the study area and make some relevant recommendations.

1.5 Limitation of the Study

The study has following limitation:

- ✓ It covers only some of the aspects of Musahar like settlement, culture, religion, socio-economic condition, occupational skills etc.
- ✓ The study area is restricted within the Musahar community of Ward No.3, 4,5,6,7 and 8 of the Dudhauri VDC, Sindhuli.
- ✓ The study intends to focus only on socio-economic condition of Musahar community of Dudhauri VDC. Thus, the results of the study may not be applicable to other communities or caste groups.

- ✓ The study has been carried out within a limited time and cost.

1.6 Organization of the Study

The first chapter is introduction chapter which includes background of the study; it also includes the statement of problems, objective of study, and significance of the study and limitation of the study.

Chapter second includes the literature review of previous scientific studies, findings of books, reports, ethnography writing or as in the forms of published and unpublished dissertation, regarding to the study.

Likewise, chapter third is related to the methodology of research project. Research design, rational of the selection of the study area, sampling design, statistical tools and technique, observational design, operational design are incorporated in this chapter.

Chapter four is all about geographical setting of the study area, which includes location, structure of village, structure of households, natural resources like land, forest and rivers.

The fifth chapter is the analysis of the data. The collected data are gathered, tabulated, analyzed and thus has been interpreted in this chapter. It describes settlement pattern, economic condition, occupational life, landholding patterns, social organization, marital status, life expectancy, educational characteristics and religions characteristic.

Finally, chapter six includes summary, conclusion of the study and thus recommendations have been made after the analysis of the study.

CHAPTER - II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Nepal is a small developing country in South Asia. It is situated between two large neighbors, China to the north and India to the East, West and South. Various ethnic communities inhabit this Himalayan country. They belong to different castes, classes and tribal groups. These communities have their own languages, religions, customs and cultures. Among the different ethnic groups, Musahars is also one of them with distinct culture and social identity. However, their ethnic significance has never been considered due to lack of sufficient information and studies. The information available from previous works including different sources has been the material to be reviewed in this study. The review of literature is divided into two sub headings, i.e. general overview and studies on Nepal. The first sub heading discusses the development of anthropological studies on cultures. The second subheading presents the review of ethnographic studies on Nepal.

2.1 Theoretical Overview

Early anthropologists H. Spencer, Lewis H. Morgan and Edward B. Tyler followed holistic approach to study society and cultures. They combined biology, archaeology, linguistics, sociology and religion together as a unified field of study. Their evolutionary theory and approach dominated the nineteenth and twentieth century (Gurung, 1990). Likewise, Sir James Frazer (1890), Henry Maine (1871) followed the holistic view of human beings and studied contemporary human societies and cultures in relation to this. Social and cultural anthropology flourished in different historical, social systems in Britain and United States of America respectively (Gurung, 1990). Although, there were already many anthropologists in America, it was Franz Boas who propounded the ethnography based on fieldwork. He studied Native American people in relation to their past. This tradition was also followed by Margaret Mead (1928) and Ruth Benedict (1934).

After 1960s, the American anthropology was characterized by diverse fields of interests. It consisted of a wide range of subjects covering, physical anthropology, cultural anthropology, archaeology, linguistics, psychology, iconology, symbolic

anthropology and economy. Although the field is diverse, the study of culture still remained the core feature of the American anthropology. On the other hand, social anthropology flourished in Britain as a colonial research center. It was Bronislaw Malinowski whose first ethnographic field works (from 1914-1920) was among the Trobriand Islanders to the East of New Guinea. This (Argonauts of the western Pacific) ethnography provides field workers both the theoretical and methodological guidelines to study human behavior. Malinowski interprets every cultural element of native people in terms of functional utility, universality and indispensability as it fulfills human needs (Gurung, 1990).

2.2 Review on Previous Studies

Prior to 1950, Nepal was closed to the outsiders. After 1950, the foreigners as well as native sociologists and anthropologists have conducted research in Nepal. C.F. Haimejndorf is considered to be the first foreign anthropologist to study the Himalayan people of Nepal. His book 'The Sherpas of Nepal, 1964' established an ethnographic tradition in Nepal. He has studied the Sherpas of Khumbu region in Solukhumbu district. They have adopted agriculture, trade, tourism, as well as animal husbandry for their subsistence living.

Pignede's (1969) study in Kaski district entitled 'the Gurungs' describes about the origin of Gurungs. The conclusion of the book is that the Gurungs are agriculturists supplemented by animal husbandry and Indian army for their livelihood.

Among the Nepalese scholars, Dor B. Bista is the pioneer one and has attempted to sketch an ethnographic map of Nepal. Bista, (1967) focused his attention on a majority of different ethnic groups but did not give a space for the Musahar. In due course of describing about different castes in Terai in his book 'Sabai Jat ko Phoolbari', he has given a short description about the Musahar as a tribal caste group of the Terai. He has also described them as people of Terai. In course of writing about Bhahun, Rajput and other Terai people he explained as a traditional occupation Mallaha's job is fishing, Koiri grows vegetables and sells them, Lohar makes Halo Phali (Traditional agricultural tools) and Khatabe or Musahar is engaged in agricultural field basically as wage labour.

Further to elucidate Musahars, some previous works have been reviewed. Gautam and Thapa (1994) have also provided a short description about origin and cultural of the Musahar community. Among the caste inhabiting the areas of Morang, Sunsari, Udayapur, Siraha, Saptari, Sarlahi, Dhanusha, Mahottari, Rautahat are the Musahar with strange traditions and cultures. Previously they were the nomadic people of caste, but today they are a settled community. They also illustrate the reason calling them Musahar, "It is during this period that they say that they were harassed by rodents, especially rats and bandicoots which infested their fields and destroyed much of the standing crops. Thus a creative measure they launched a campaign to trap these rodents, especially the bandicoots and eat them for their protein-rich flesh. They do even today and so they are believed to have been called Musahar, which could probably mean those who eat rats for Musahar means mouse or rat in Nepali-so they became rat eaters." The Musahars claim this to be incorrect and a prejudiced version of their names or caste identity (Gautam and Thapa, 1994).

According to their claim, they migrated to this region approximately four centuries ago from India. However, there is no concrete evidence cited so far about the actual period of their migration, though they are believed to have permanently settled in the region two centuries ago. These people were nomads can be seen even today in the way their houses and huts are built with local materials like bamboo, straw, mud, Khar(thatch) etc. (Gautam and thapa, 1994). For supporting this fact it can be referred to the book written by Indian scholars Rabindra Nath Mukharji "The Social Anthropology" in which he categorizes the Musahar community into two parts according to their life style. Some are still nomads and walk around the jungle for searching wild fruits and animals for living, and others who began to settle in a certain area by cultivating land and domestic animals.

Dahal (1978) has made an ethnographic study of social change among the Athpahariya Rais of Dhankuta. Rajure (1978) explored the socio-economic condition of Tharus of Dang, Deukhuri. Rai (1982) reported the socio-economic status of Lohorang Rais of Pangma Panchayat. Pyakuryal (1982) evaluated the sociological condition of four Tharu villages in Chitwan district in his Ph. D. dissertation work.

His study was mostly concerned with the ethnicity and rural development. The different aspects of Dhimal had been studied by Dahal (2036, B.S.) and Diwas (2039, B.S.) reported some socio-economic information about the least developed community's people like Satar, Dhimal, Batar, Darai, Kumal and Magar of Jhapa, Morang, Sunsari, Chitwan, Nawalparasi and Palpa.

There are more ethnographic studies conducted especially on Newars, Magars, Gurungs, Tamangs, Sherpas, Rais, Limbus and Ranjbanshis, etc. various studies reviewed above have shown the state of ethnographic studies of different people of Nepal. From the review, it is seen that socio-cultural change is a dynamic process. In India, Musahars are designated as a scheduled caste. They are found in abundant numbers in Purnea, Darbanga and many other districts of northern Bihar. In Morang District they are found in VDCs like Rangeli, Amgachi etc. (Dahal, 1978).

Table No. 1

The Caste Hierarchy of Nepal:

S.N.	Hill origin people	S.N.	Terai origin people
1	Brahmin	1	Brahmin.
2	Chhetries	2.	Rajput
3	Pani chalne caste (Newr, Magar, Gurung, Rai, Limbu) Pani Nachalne caste	3.	Bhumihar
4	'Chhoi Chhito Naparne' (Dhimal, Majhi, Kumal) Untouchables (Kami, Damai, Sarki)	4.	Kaimihar
		5	Occupational caste (Halwai, Kumahor, Caohar, Lohar)
		6.	Menial castes)Dhanuk, Kurmi, Kewa ta Kanu)
		7.	Merehant Caste (Teli, Sundi, Kalwar)
		8.	Untouchables (Chamar, Dushad Musahar, Dom, Halkar)

Source: Caste social mobility and Sarkritisatin in tribal Hindu society: a Study of Nepal old legal code By P.R. Sharma 1977 Kailash Vol. 5.

Now they constitute a part of the Hindu Community no body thinks otherwise. They are a caste like Doms, Chamars, Mehatares or Halkhors. Musahar also from a caste as 'untouchable' caste. Srinivas explains the case as a "hereditary, endogamous, usually localized group having a traditional association with an occupation and particular position in the local hierarchy of castes relations between castes are governed, among other things, by concept of pollution and purity and generally maximum compensability occurs within the castes. (Srinivas, 1964)

Musahar are endogamous, traditionally agricultural labour and 'Rat Killer' for subsistence and their relationship with other castes is governed by varying degree of the idea of pollution and purity. In this connection. Kuppuswamy (1986) makes a very useful remark that "the term Jati or castes refers the occupational group as well as the assimilated national and tribal group. This explanation of the term 'Jati' strengthens the view that Musahars originally a tribal group in course of an unknown period of long time acted themselves in the new social environment of Hindu castes and were Hinduised bit by bit there is a view that when the 'Aryan' and 'Non Aryan' tribes settled down and coming to led, the hostile aboriginal were admitted' as slaves and wage earner this explains categorization of Musahars as a low untouchable group interestingly their attitude toward other low and untouchable castes like Dom, Chamar and Dushad etc are not different from the attitude shown by the higher castes to the Musahar themselves.

The Musahars form two distinct groups Mahaiya and Tirutiya. One major difference between them being that the Magahiya bury the dead while the Tirutiya perform cremation. Marriage is also performed within their own subgroups but between the different clans of the subgroups.

The Musahars are agriculturist and agricultural labourers (Ojha, 2002). Most of them are without lands. They are said by the groups to be elastic in their diet and to be relishing rats and snails. It is also said that drinking and gambling are their common modes of recreation.

This view implies to suggest that Musahar are an ancient social group existent from pre historic ages are entitled to greater respectability in the present day. However, this view, popular among Musahars, lack any scientific evidence and throw little light on their origin the extent to which this legend can be given any concrete evidence in not known.

An equally popular view among a section of academics considers Musahar as tribe according to Scott (1988), "generally tribe means a non literate community or a collection of such communities occupying a common geographic are and having a similar language and culture". This can hardly applied to several tribes today, certainly this is not true to Musahars. They do not occupy any particular geographic areas, they are scattered and spread over several districts. They speak a similar language. They speak a low variety or dialect of area, they live in.

However, Musahar shows some of the characteristics of a tribe in the sense discussed below. Gellner (1972) argues that tribes have "little internal passoralism" no division of labour and dependence on agriculture or passoralism and by large. They have own 'religious specialists' so that "Brahmins or other priest of great tradition of South Asia are regularly made of they also confront to the definition of the tribe that they "possess a morality religion and world view". Beteille, (1987)

Today, Musahars cannot be designated as tribe in the light of these or other similar definition. It is not difficult, as shown above to find out. Out of some of characteristic of a tribe their social organization and practice lingering with them in one or other form for instance, they do not regularly make use of "Brahmin or other priest of the great tradition of south Asia' on the contrary they have their own religious specialist". Who expertise is sought in preferring religious rites, however this does not establish them to Musahar alone. There are many almost all untouchable communities, which have their own priesthood system of religious performance.

Various other definition can advanced for explicating the characteristic of tribes. However, no definition is adequate to describe Musahar as a tribe.

Musahar are landless people, the number even those who own land is negligible. The amount of land possessed of them is negligible. They work as labours on others farms and field in an agricultural society like Nepal where land has been the source of all subsistence, social security, position and power. Being landless with no reliable economic alternative to can on and having no access to means of production is a serious disadvantage with degrades and dehumanizes Musahars (Ojha, 2002)

Economically, they are so depressed that they cannot purchase required amount of food and expenses in the dire situations are dispensed with. The narrow circumstances of their life have breed several non economic factors responsible for various kinds of deprivations social and psychological factors are chief amount them. Reluctance to education is irrelevant to their life because as they feel. It is unproductive consequently, though primary education is free they do not send their children to their village school Musahar children and other are dying with diarrhea, dysentery and fevers (Ojha,2002)

CHAPTER – III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study is based on the descriptive research design because it is deemed appropriate to portray the characteristics of situation, occupations, socio-economic and educational standards of Musahar community.

3.2 Selection of the study Site:

Based on the nature of the study, Dudhauri VDC ward No. 3, 4,5,6,7 and 8 has been selected for the study, where a significant number of Musharas are residing in Sindhuli district. This study has tried to analyze the socio-economic characteristics of Mushar community of Dudhauri VDC. A large number of Musahar live in Dudhauri VDC. They are technologically less developed people. Now their socio-cultural life is gradually changing due to the influence of other communities. The following criteria were used to select Dudhauri VDC as a study area:

- a) Because of the easy access to the research site.
- b) The number of the Musahar community is higher in this area than the other VDCs of Sindhuli district, although they are in minority in number with regard to the caste composition/population of the Sindhuli district.
- c) No study has been carried out about the Musahar community of this area.

Sample Design

The simple random sampling method had been selected for the proposed research taking on mind with the efficient use of time, money and human resources. The household is the sampling unit. Therefore, the Musahar respondents were selected by using the probability sampling method. In Dudhauri VDC, the total population of the Musahars is 1256 with 200 HHs. 50 HHs have been taken as sampling size out of these 200 houses. Selected 50 HHs been selected randomly.

Method of Data Collection

The data has been collected from both primary and secondary level. The household survey is applied to generate primary level of information. Focused Group Discussion (FGD) was conducted to solicit the information in depth. Information gathered from field observation has been intensively used as a primary data in order to back up the information collected from questionnaire survey and FGD. Informal discussion at the paddy cropping field during the lunch break has also been taken in to consideration to elucidate the information collected through different instrument.

Different published and unpublished literatures were studied to obtain the secondary level of information. Access of internet also provided with lots of secondary information related to the proposed assignment.

Method of Data Analysis

The gathered data has been categorized, tabulated and analyzed using several methods. Statistical tools such as frequency, average, percentage etc. have been used for the analysis of data. Qualitative data has been analyzed so that the real situations can be reflected.

CHAPTER- IV

GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING

4.1 Location

Dudhuali VDC is one of the VDCs of Sindhuli district. Sindhuli district lies in the Inner Terai region of Nepal. It joins with Udaypur districts to the eastern border and Sindhuli district adjoins with eight other district of Nepal; they are: Sarlahi, Dhanusha, Mahottari, Ramechhap, Dolakha, Makawanpur, Kavre, Okhaldhunga.

Dudhuali VDC of Sindhuli District is the study area selected by the researcher. Dudhuali VDC is situated in the eastern part of Sindhuli district Dudhuali is adjoining with Tandi, Ladavir and Arunthakur VDCs of Sindhuli District.

Dudhuali VDC has summer road accessibility. It has services available such as health post, higher secondary school, primary schools, and water supply. It's geographical location has several opportunities to the people of the area.

4.2 Geopolitical Situation of Study Area

The Dudhuali VDC is study area which is situated in Eastern part of the Sindhuli district. Dudhuali VDC is 63 km. East from the district headquarters of Sindhuli. Dudhuali VDC is accessible by means of physical infrastructure such as, seasonal roads, water supplies, health post, and a higher secondary school. Services/ facilities such as electricity, telecommunication service is not available in the VDC.

Dudhuali VDC is the composition of various caste groups. Brahmin, chhetries, Newar, Magar, Danuwar, Musahar etc. So, heterogeneous distribution of caste is visible in Dudhuali VDC.

High caste Brahmin and Chhetries are enjoying the resources of area (such as the land resources). These so called high caste group own the maximum amount of land and Musahar are almost landless. Mushars are occupying the non registered land (Aailani), but with help of political power this land is registered by those high

caste people and Musahar people marginalized their own land because these people were not educated and they did not know about the legislative provision for the land. They do not have any power to bargain with those people and they lost their own land and opportunities too.

In Dudhauri, Musahar clusters are distributed in all 9 wards but Maximum numbers of Musahar are settled in ward 7 and 8. They are now settled in the bank of river and side by the road. They do not want to come in frequent contact with other people remain within their own caste groups.

4.3 Structure of Village

The village development committee is divided in 9 wards, each having special geographical combination. Each ward consists of several small territorial localities.

On the basis of area, ward No. 8 and 9 of the VDC are largest wards, and 2 and 7 are smallest wards. In the VDC, based on the population ward No. 8 and ward No. 9 are biggest, ward No. 5 and ward no. 2 are the smallest.

Ward no. 3, 4,5,6,7 and 8 are the wards of VDC where remarkable no. of Musahar households can be found.

Dudhauri VDC has total number of seven schools. Out of them one is higher secondary school, one is lower secondary school and the remaining five are primary schools.

4.4 Structure of Households

Structure of household is interesting in the study area. Agglomerated settlement pattern is visible. Most of the houses are built in traditional Nepali design.

Most of the Musahar households are far from the other castes' households. Their houses are constructed near roads and river side and far from the high caste households. Generally, the houses of musahars are small huts which are crowded with small passages in between to cross each house.

Each hut is made of the bamboo, straw and other local material. Later the straw wall is plastered by mud and animal-dung and the floor is plastered by thin animal-dung layer. The houses (huts) have to be maintained every year. There is ironic saying that "Mushahar are rich and they have chance to live in the new houses in each year".

4.5 Natural Resources

Natural resources are an important component for the human beings. Natural resources provide the means of livelihood and shelter. The main natural resources can be categorized as following.

4.4.1 Land / Soil

Land is an important natural resource. The land of study area is very fertile. The plain topography is varying and each special topographic feature shows the special fertility. The soil yields wide range of varieties of crops. Main crops are grains such as paddy, wheat, maize, millet etc., legume crops; Musuro, Khesari, Rahar, pea. Bean, Soyabeans etc. the oil yielding crops are Tori (Mustard) Vegetable crops are Raddish, Raio, Cauliflower, Brinjal. Tomato, Cabbage etc. Therefore, soil is suitable for wide variety of vegetative cultivation.

People harvest twice or thrice per annum which mean a wide variety of crops in single land. Intensive agriculture is practiced due to the irrigation facility been available.

4.4.2 Forest

Community managed forest is practiced in some wards of the VDC. Forest resources are available in the VDC, which is used by the people of the study area. Nowadays,

community groups are organizing themselves and have formed forest users group to manage the local forest for preserving and consuming it. As a result two community forest groups have been formulated and are operating its community approach in managing the forest resources.

4.4.3 Rivers

The important natural resources are river in Nepal. River can be used as hydropower, irrigation, transportation, fishing and rafting for tourism, and to some extent as a source of drinking water. Construction materials such as the sand, concrete, stone etc. are provided by the river.

Kamala River is a famous river in Nepal for her continuous water source, fetching with construction materials such as stone, aggregate, sand etc. It has opened the employment opportunity for the people who depend upon the physical labours.

Kamala River has made dependable irrigation easier for the farmers of the area.

Kumraha Khola is another big river of the VDC. Kartha Khola, Kokti, Lakhima Khola are other small rivers of the VDC.

CHAPTER – V

ANALYSIS OF DATA

5.1 Settlement Pattern

The clustered Musahar settlement is separated from that of other castes in the village. Generally, it is separated by a distance of an uninhabited area intending to forbid attachment to other communities with them. This signifies the 'low' social position accorded to them.

The most striking feature of the Musahar settlement is its separateness. Isolation or aloofness from the rest of the village as indicated above. Their locality is called "Musahari" literally, locality of the Musahar. They settle at a place which is at a considerable distance from the house of other castes in their locality. They live by themselves with not even a single household of any other caste. This does not indicate not only sharp caste divisions but also the status that they have been traditionally given. The distance and exclusiveness of Musahar settlement emphasize an important fact that the other caste group assigns the Musahar as low and untouchable status; want to keep them spatially sufficiently away to avoid all kinds of contact with them. Since the Musahar are living at unusual distance form a community of their own. Even children of other caste do not have any chance to mix with and play with the Musahar children.

They live with other caste in the some settlement area. They live in a separate corner of the village known to every body and are visited when they need to hire Musahar labour as a laboures or for some other manual work without involving them in any social, religious and cultural interaction.

5.2 Housing Structure:

Their houses are clustered with one family's house touching the roof of other family's house. The houses are built of the most in expansible and easily available materials.

Bamboo, *Khaier*, *Kamsh* made rope or string etc. are the only materials they use for making their houses.

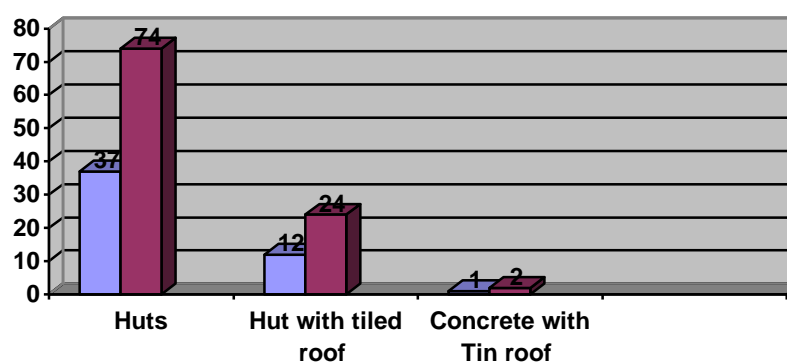
Table No. 5.1: Present Condition of Housing Structure

S.N.	Particular	No. of Person	Percentage
1.	Huts	37	74
2.	Hut with tiled roof	12	24
3.	Concrete with Tin roof	1	2
Total		50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006

The above table no. 5.1 shows that most of Musahar people of the study area are settled in huts. 74%, 24% and 2%. Musahar people of the study area are lived in huts, and huts with tiled roof, concrete with tin roof respectively. They have walls (Tati) are after plastered with mud. The earthen floor is at times cleaned with thin coat mud and cow dung in most cases. It is not necessary to enter the court yard through main entrance. There is a gap or small passage and between two households and children mostly used it.

Figure No: 1: Present Condition of Housing Structure



5.3 Social Organization

5.3.1 Marriage

Marriage is among the top prioritized social activity of the Musahar. The average age of marriage practiced in Musahar community is still about 9-12 year for girls and 13-17 for boys.

Thus child marriage is the normal among Musahar. Because of high mortality rates of women in the Musahar community, a second marriage is very common among them.

Table 5.2: Average age of Marriage

Category	Male (in %)	Female (in %)
Age 9-12	26	64
Age 13-16	62	28
Age 16-19	8	8
Age 20+	4	0
Total	100	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006

62% of the married male got married at their age of 13-16, where as only 4% of male Musahar got married at/or after the age of 20 years. 26% of the male got married at their age between 9-12. 64% of married female Musahar got married at their age of 9-12, where as none of the female have got married at or after the age of 20. 28% of the female Musahar got married at the age between 13-16.

Among the reasons cited in support of early marriage are:

- (1) Fear of death many parents fear that they will die and thus won't be able to witness their children's marriage,
- (2) The fear that other people might misinterpret the delay in marriage and ascribe it to poor health, some secret disease or any physical/mental handicap and
- (3) The fear met the children will escape if not marriage which is a social stigma.

Musahar marry among them. Cross or sub castes marriage is disliked and not encouraged. There are four types of Musahars, namely 'Sada', 'Dhangar', 'Akonsi' and 'Bantar'. The last type is some time also treated as separate caste. For examples a 'Sada will marriage only a 'Sada'.

The village exogamy is the rule among Musahar. They do not marry in the same village such a marriage is viewed as morally illegitimate therefore village endogamy is severally prohibited in Musahar community.

5.3.2 Family

The Musahar family is traditionally patriarchal and all of the characteristics of this kind of family system are maintained rather with firm rigidity. The wife after her marriage comes to live with her husband in his home. The father is the chief of the family who looks after both the family and property as supreme leader of the family, he is respected and obeyed. The children are known by the name of the family of their father.

There is no strict adherence to one or the other kind of family nuclear or extended. Both type of family are found in Musahar community. Some families have members from two three generations living together, others are found split. Studied on the basis of residence, the Musahar family is strictly and exclusively patriarchal as stated above. Musahar also practice and maintain monogamy marriage practice and family structure. At any given time, normally Musahar marry only one woman and they live together. They practiced village exogamy and on the basis of ancestry, the Musahar family is patrilinear, i. e. ancestry of Musahars continues through the father.

Family is the basic unit of human society; it is widely socially sanctioned and culturally approved social institution. Family is group of persons united by the ties of marriage, blood, adoption, constitution residing in a single household and interacting and intercommunicating with each other in their respective social rules of husband and wife, mother and father, son and daughter, brother and sister creating a common

cultural system (Shrestha, 1986). Without family, we can not imagine the formation of society. Family is basic unit of human social organization and history of human society is history of exhibition of family in human being from past to present.

Table no. 5.3: Family Structure of Musahar

S.N.	Particulars	No. of households	Percentage
1	Nuclear family	16	32
2	Joint family	34	68
	Total	50	100

Source: Field survey, 2006.

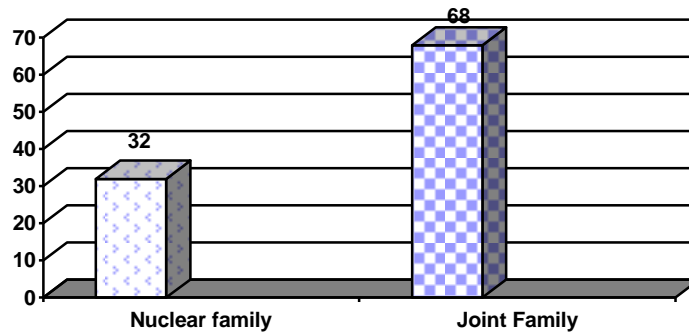
Among Musahar of Dudhauri VDC, following type of family are prevalent which is shown in the above table: they are nuclear and joint family.

Thirty two percent of households are nuclear family, and 68 percent are joint family. The study shows that the Musahar community is still following the traditional family system. The family structure is oriented to a change among Musahar community.

Nuclear family consists marriage couple with or without their unmarried children. In the Nuclear family system, there is no system of economic co-operation rather than on the own family. Nuclear family is always free form the older ones. Among the household of study are 32 percent practiced nuclear family system.

In a joint family not only parents and children but also brothers and step brothers live on the common property and households. In other words. If two more married brother live together with or without their children. In the study area there are 68 percent of joint families.

Figure No. 2
Family Structure of Musahar Community



5.3.3 Kinship System

Kinship system of the Musahar community is found to be similar to that of other communities of the region. Basically, human relationship can be categorized into the consanguine and affined. Consanguine relationship is blood related kinship. In blood relation, father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister etc is close relations. There are eight types of blood relationships: closest relatives are uncle, aunts, grandson, granddaughter and cousin next to previously stated relatives. Marriage among them is never permitted; the blood relation is also a biological relation of inheritance. On the other hand matrimonial relation among Musahars can also be seen. It is also called social relation or women member of different family. After that they are linked in husband wife relationship. Now their relation gets extended to the already existing relatives on both sides there will be father in laws, mother in law, brother in laws, sister in law, daughter in law, son in law etc. these kind of affiance kinship play a significant role in human society, in birth, death and so many other social and religious functions. All kinds of relations get together and help each other special relationship such as through adoption of son or daughter and through miter or friendship is also found among Musahars.

Musahar too have an elaborate system of kinship which is based on both supposed and actual genealogical ties. Both affiance and consanguineous kinship exists among them. When a Musahar gets married, he or she establishes relationship not only with

the one he/she gets married with but also number of other member of each other's family. There is also a large number of kin based on bond of blood. The Musahars kin include primary, secondary and tertiary ones.

Some of the kinship terms are as follows:

Bahnoi	(Sisters Husband)
Didi	(Elder sister)
Sala	(Wife brother)
Sali	(Wife's sister)
Sahroini	(wife of wife's brother)
Bhabho	(wife of younger brother)
Bhainsar	(Husbands older brother)
Dewar	(Husband's younger brother)
Jethani	(wife of dewar)
Jethani	(wife of bhaisar)
Nanaid	(Husban'ds sister)
Pisa	(Husbands of Father's sister)
Pisia	(Father's sister)
Mausi	(Sister of mother)
Mausa	(Husband of Mausi)
Chacha	(Father's brother)
Chachi	(wife of chacha)
Mama	(Mother's brother)
Mami	(wife of mama)
Nana	(Mother's father)
Nani	(Mother's mother)
Baba	(Father's father)

Dai	(Father's mother)
Bhaigana	(Sister's son)
Bhaigani	(Sister's daughter)
Sasu	(Husbands of wife's mother)
Sasura	(Husband's or wife's father)
Putouh	(Daughter in law)
Jamai	(Son in law)
Bhauji	(wife of elder brother)
Samahi	(Father of son/daughter in law)
Samahini	(mother of son/daughter in law)

Kinship terminology shows that they use the descriptive system because the kinship terminologies for addressing to the relatives are different in both matrilineal relatives and patrilineal relatives.

5.4 Religious Characteristic

Musahar peoples are Hindu based tribesman. Their gods and goddess are same to high caste Hindu's.

Table No. 5.4: Religious Characteristics of Musahar People

Category	No. of respondent	Percent
Hindu	50	100
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006

The table above shows that all of the respondents are Hindu. So we can easily say that most of the Musahar communities are Hindus.

5.5 Age Composition

Table No. 5.5: Age Composition of the Respondents

Age Group	No. of Person	Percentage
15-40 Years	25	50
40-60	22	44
Above 60	3	6
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006.

* Below 15 year were not taken in to account

The table shows that the population of the people age above is very low (only 6%). Thus it can be concluded that the average life expectancy of the Musahar community is very low.

Figure No. 4: Age Composition of Musahar Community



5.6 Educational Characteristics

It is said that education is an essential factors for the development of society. It also helps to achieve upward mobility in society. As a mean it does various works for transmission of heritage of human beings. It is synonymous with socialization. Education brings consciousness, develops knowledge and skills of people of the country. Thus education is very essential in developing countries like Nepal. Literacy rate of the country is very low, only 54.1 percent of people are literate. Among them poor and low caste or too low income category, low caste and ethnic groups are

deprived of formal education. Hence Musahar people are also backward in the field of education.

Table No. 5.6: Educational Characteristics of Musahar people

Education condition	No. of people	Percentage
Illiterate	43	86
Only literate	6	12
Secondary Level	1	2
Total	50	100

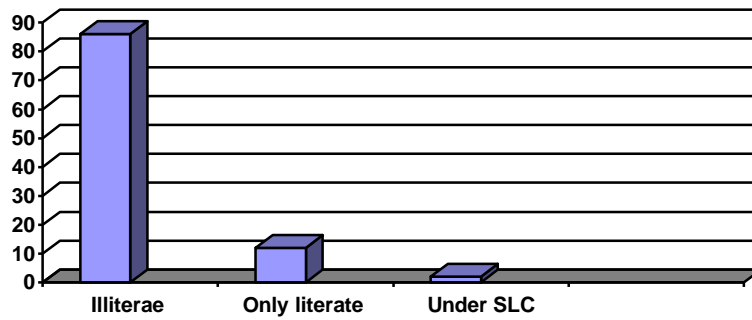
Source: Field Survey, 2006.

The table above shows that out of the total 50 respondent, 86 percent respondents are illiterate and only 12 percent of respondent are literate and only 2 percent of respondent have got secondary level education and no one was found to have passed the SLC exams.

In Dudhauri V.D.C. Musahars are highly illiterate. This shows that the awareness of education among the Musahars is very low and their access to formal or informal education is poor.

Their economic condition does not support all the children to be educated. Most of the respondents answer about the education is that they can not afford the educational cost of their children.

Figure No. 5: Education Condition of Musahar People



5.7 Decision Making in Musahar Community

In every society decision making process exists. Most of the family in Nepali society, we find that the decision maker is the male. But in the case of Musahar people, both male and female are the decision maker of the family.

Table 5.7: Decision Making in Musahar Community

Decision Marker	No. of Respondent	Percent
Male Head	35	70
Female Head	4	8
Both	10	20
All Member of Family	1	2
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006

Though, most of the decision making in the family is made by Male i.e. 70 percent but the female headed household is also in substantial number. Out of the total respondent, 8 percent families' decisions are made by female. 20 percent respondents' family decisions are made by both male and female. Only 2 percent family household's decisions were made by all members of the family. Thus, what we can say that most of decision are made by the male head of the family.

5.8 Economic Condition of Musahar

Agriculture is the main occupation of the people of Nepal. Nearly 17 percent of land measures that the plain covered area are fertile. Though much of the agriculture depends on monsoon and its uncertainty extensively affect life. Irrigation is relatively earlier. The density of population and lack of any alternative source of income generating activities has made people almost extensively dependent on land.

The distribution of land has always been uneven some people own large areas of land; a few have enjoyed the privilege (special right) or inheriting large farms and agricultural estates while other are landless. The land ownership to the advantage of few traditional rich village elites is complex. In fact, it is a very complex problem of country regarding distribution of the wealth in country and that making differences with other life changes.

The land reform programmed initiated in the 1960's was originally an attempt to help change the social order by taking away the surplus land beyond fixed ceiling. There were several other measures stipulated with it, however beyond initial endeavor, it failed to achieve its goal. This hardly affected the land ownership of the rich. This poor have remained poor, the landless have remained landless and who have land holding status, they again became land holder.

There is unemployment and underemployment in the village. However, they can look for alternative sources for their survival. They are landless and unskilled manpower physical strength is everything their sole source of livelihood. They have never been large land owners. They have received in kind or cash which earned their daily bread. Their ancestors were agricultural labours, their parents lived the same life and they know very well that their children will live and die as labours working in other field and other form generation to generation, the tragic and unfinished story of Musahar.

Traditionally, Musahar are an occupation caste group. They have been working as an important socio-economic component of the village of their residence. Their services

have maintained the caste class structure well knit. Certain set of services are considered this exclusive work area though exceptions can be found irrespective of the largeness of the population size and variety of castes and sub-castes in the village, occupationally there has been little or no change the Musahar is one of them.

Musahars strong physical built and the nature of their traditional occupation have close connection. Wherever hard physical work is required, they are almost instantly remembered and their labour force is used. The fast occurring changes in inter community relationship and occupation have not affected their life or nature of their work. They continue sticking to their work as manual labours.

For the same of commences in studying their economic life. Their economic activities can be broadly divided into the following four categories:

- a) Traditional occupation: Agriculture, Agricultural labor and animal husbandry
- b) Earth work
- c) Craft
- d) Modern employment opportunity

This section basically concern in dealing with the general economic activities of Musahar people of study area. Thought main economic activities of Musahar people's life in agriculture, supplemented by trade, animal husbandry and wage earning. They are also engaged in other activities such as crafting fishing, and digging land. In household, female members are engaged in wicker works such as making chatai, Dhaki (bamboo basket) etc. they sell some of the goods in market and use some for themselves in their households. Besides that, some male members are engaged in fishing too. Unusually they do hard work such as ploughing or going to the forest and collection fire wood for sale.

In this way Musahar of Dudhuali VDC solve their hand to mouth problems. However agriculture is their main source of subsistence supplemented by other

activities such as trade animal husbandry, wage labour crafting and fishing etc as shown in the following table.

5.8.1 Occupation

Table No. 5.8: Occupation of Musahar people

Economic activities	No. of Res.	Percentage
Agriculture labour	39	78
Agriculture	1	2
Others	10	20
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006.

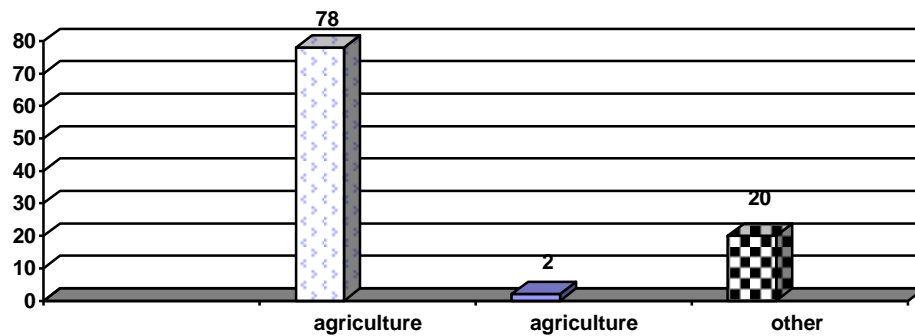
Out of the total 50 respondents, 78 percent derived their livelihood from agricultural labour. They are landless (Sukumbashi) and are in majority. Some are tenants of the local landlord i.e. high caste. They become landless due to not getting opportunity to register their land in their own name during the time of the land survey because these Musahar people were not educated and they are very simple but high caste Brahmin/Chhetries were cleverer and they registered the land in their own name.

Due to the lack of land holding capacity most of the Musahar people of the study area were found cultivating other's land of on the basis of crops sharing as tenant and agricultural labors.

Only two percent of the respondents stated their occupation as agriculture. And 20 percent of the total respondents stated that they have different kind of occupation such as fishing, digging land of others, sale of firewood/wood , handicrafts etc.

Figure No. 6

Present condition of Occupation of Musahar people



5.8.2 Livestock Rearing

The table shows that none of the households in the village are rearing the buffalo, and only 2 percent of the total households have cow in their house. 4 percent of the households have ox, and 10 percent of households are rearing pig in their house.

Table 5.9: Status of Livestock Rearing

Categories	No. of HH having	Percentage
Buffalo	0	0
Cow	1	2
Ox	2	4
Goat	36	72
Chicken	45	90
Pig	5	10

Source: Field Survey, 2006

90 percent of the total house holds are rearing chicken in their house either as a means of income or to meet the family need of meat. And 72 percent of the total households have goat reared in the village.

5.8.3 Land Holding Patterns

Table no. 5.10: Land Holding Position of Musahar people

Category	No. of person	Percentage
Land holder	1	2
Tenant	3	6
Tenant cum owner	6	12
Landless	40	80
Total	50	100

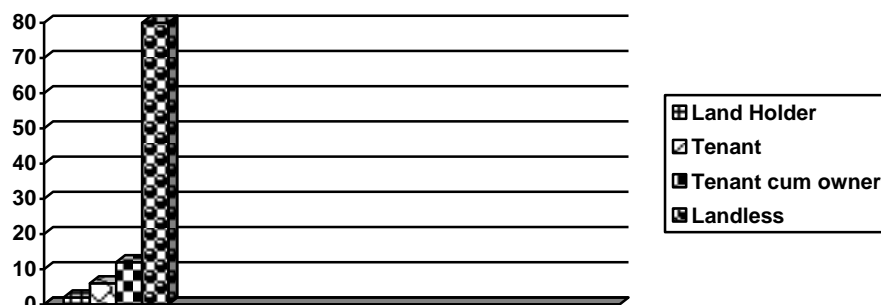
Source: Field Survey, 2006

80 percent total respondents are 'Sukumbashi' (landless). They have no land and are settled down in the 'Ailani Jaggha' (the land which is not registered in any private or public name) near by river and forest. They make their huts in this land. Only 2 percent of total respondent own their land. Those who own land are too small land owner with compare to the others high caste landowner. 6 percent of respondent are tenants of local landowner. They do farming on their contract land on the basis of crops sharing. 12 percent of respondent have small amount of land and tenant land for farming. In small land, they are settled down and in tenant land they do farming for their livelihood. Those tenant who earns other's land can hardly survive but those who do not have any land largely survive.

Agriculture is backbone of Nepalese economy of 90 percent of population is involved subsistence agricultural production. The study area is very rich agricultural productive area. specially, grain and vegetable production. Landholding patterns are moderate. Some hold more than 20 hector of land and normally 1.5 hector holding family are in abundance in number. Musahar are very low number in land holding category. The below the no. 9 table shows that only 2 percent of respondent are land holder and only 6 percent of respondent are tenant who do farming for their livelihood. Tenant do farming on the crops sharing basis. Landlord piece of land give to Musahar on the basis of equally sharing of grain after production. This is know as 'Adhiya'

(Cultivation of land on the crops sharing basis) or 'Batiyan' (Same to 'Adhiya' but in Musahar language).

Figure No. 7: Statement of Land Holding Position of Musahar people



5.8.4 Distribution of Respondents by Food Sufficiency

Table no. 5.11: Distribution of Respondents by Food Sufficiency

Food Sufficiency in Month	No. of Respondents	Percent
0-3 month	40	80
3-6	7	14
6-9	3	6
9-12	1	2
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey 2006.

The above table shows that, 80 percent of respondent are landless and their food sufficiency is less than 3 months. Similarly 14 percent households have food sufficient for 3 to 6 months. 6 percent of respondents have produce food only for 6 to 9 months. Only 2 percent households who have were produce adequate quantity of food grain for 9 months to 1 year.

There household who do not produce enough grains option for their occupation like agriculture labour, became Haruwa and domestic servants.

5.8.5 Source of Fuel/Energy

Fuel wood, agriculture residue and animal dung are the main sources of energy in Nepal. These types of fuel sources are most common in our country. Similarly, commercial form of energy such as electricity, kerosene, fossil fuels etc. are not significant. In the study area, fuel wood was seen the major source for cooking meal.

Table no. 5.12: Source of Fuel/Energy

Source of fuel	No. of respondent	percent
Wood	44	88
Kerosene	0	0
Animal Dung/Agriculture Residue	6	12
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006

Above table shows that most of the household depend on fuel wood (88%) to meet their energy requirement. Agriculture residue and animal dung cake as a source of energy is used by 12 percent of the total households. Among the respondents, none of the household used kerosene as forms of energy.

5.9 Health and Hygiene

5.9.1 Households having Toilet

Out of total 50 households, 96% of the households do not have toilet in their house. Only 4% of the total households in the village have constructed toilet in their house.

Table 5.13: Household having Toilet

Categories	No. of HHs	Percentage
Yes	2	4
No	48	96
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006

The vivid situation with regard to toilet in the households shows that the Musahar community has very limited knowledge about health and sanitation.

5.9.2 Source of Drinking Water

Out of the total 50 households, most of the households (56%) have well/*Kuwa* as a major source of drinking water. 24% of the total HHs stated that their major source of drinking water is tap water, and 20% of the households depend on hand pump for the drinking water sources.

Table 5.14: Main Source of Drinking Water

Categories	No. of HH	Percentage
Tap Water	12	24
Well/ <i>Kuwa</i>	28	56
Hand Pump	10	20
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006

5.9.3 Knowledge about Contraceptive/Family Planning

Table 5.15: Knowledge about Contraceptive/Family Planning

Categories	No. of HHs	Percentage
Yes	12	24
No	38	76
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006

People were asked about the level of information they have about the family planning. Only 24% of the total respondents stated that they are known about the family planning where as 76 percent of the total respondents stated that they do not know about it.

5.9.4 Performance of Treatment

Table no. 16: Performance of Treatment

Performance	No. of respondent	percent
Traditional Treatment	38	76
Modern/Scientific method	12	24

Source: Field Survey, 2006

All the respondents were asked where they treat their patients when they get sick. 76 percent respondents informed that they consult the 'Dhami' and indigenous healers. Only 24 percent respondent informed that they consult the doctor for the treatment.

According to the above, table we can conclude that the role of indigenous healers among the Musahar community is still exist.

CHAPTER –VI

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

6.1 SUMMARY

Present study focuses on one of the disadvantaged, back warded, discriminated, groups of Musahar community whose socio economic condition is very poor and who are still unable to catch the attention of national as well as the international social experts. The objective of the study is to provide a short insight on socio-economic condition and causes of their backwardness.

The Musahars of the community represent a state of object poverty of closed proportion and severe deprivation living like bonded labours through ages. They have virtually remained ineffective by the changes that have occurred in the Nepalese society in the past five decades. The vicious circle of poverty, malnutrition, disease, and ignorance impedes their progress for any better future in exacting socioeconomic structure, their emancipation from poverty and social ills. They have been suffering in extremely difficult.

They are victims of economic racial and social discrimination. Most of the Musahar people (76 %) of the study area settle in huts. 24 percent of responding settles in hut with tilled roof. Only 2 percent of them are settled in concrete house with tin roof.

Most of male population (62%) gets married at the age of 13-16 whereas most of female population gets married at the age of 9-12.

In Dudhauri VDC, most of the Musahar practice to live in joint family. Out of the 50 respondent 68 percent prefer joint family and rest of the 32 percent are staying in nuclear family. Kinship system of the Musahar community is somewhat similar to other community.

In the decision making process 70 percent Musahar households were male headed, 8 percent households were female headed, 20 percent households were both male and female headed and 2 percent households decision were made by all members of the family. It was also found that 76 percent respondents were treated by Dhami and other 24 percent were treated by the doctor or health workers.

Most of the Musahar people's average life expectancy is very low in comparison to the average life expectancy of Nepal. It was found that all members of the Musahar are Hindu. Out of 50 respondent 100 percent of the respondent are Hindus.

Education is an essential factor for the development of society but these Musahar people literacy rate is very low as only 12 percent of the respondent are literate. Most of the Musahar people (86%) are Illiterate. Only 2 percent of respondent were found to have attained the secondary level education whereas no one was found to have passed the SLC level.

The Musahars of Dudhauri VDC almost totally depend on agricultural economy. They are engaged in agriculture as major source for subsistence. Musahar depend on various occupations to solve their problems 78 percent of them derived their means of livelihood as an agro labour. About 20 percent were engaged in other activities. Such as fishing animal husbandry, servant etc. 2 percent respondent holds small size of farming land whereas 80 percent of respondent were landless. Only 12 percent of total respondent were Tenant cum owner and 6 percent of them were Tenant.

None of the households in the village has reared buffalo and very minimal (2%) have cow. As most of the Musahars are involved in agricultural labour and have not their own land for farming, so only 4% have ox. But many of them (72%) have reared goat and 10% have reared pig in their house.

Among total 50 households, only 2 percent have food sufficiency for 9 months to 1 year. But rests of the 80 percent of households produce no food grain or food grains sufficient for less than 3 months.

Majority of the households depend on wood for meeting their energy requirement (88%). While remaining 12% use animal dung and agricultural residue as the energy source. None of the households cook food with the kerosene oil.

Majority of the households depends on Well/*Kuwa* for the drinking water purpose (56%) whereas 24% depend on tap and 20% on hand pump.

It is only 24% of the respondents who stated that they have knowledge about the contraceptive/family planning. Surprisingly, 96% of the households do not have toilet in their house. Awareness has to be raised about health and sanitation.

6.2 Conclusion

After analyzing in detail socio-economic condition of Musahar people of Dudhauri VDC the following conclusions have been made.

- Musahar people of the study area live in a terrible plight both socially and economically. They are victims of economic racial and social discrimination.
- Musahar people of the study area are marginalized from mainstream of the development process of the nation. They have no access to any natural resources, technological knowledge, and educational opportunities as well as political power and employment opportunity.
- They have been suffering in the vicious circle of poverty. They are suffering from malnutrition, diseases, illiteracy, landlessness, unemployment, low income and upper caste discrimination.
- Social status of the people is quite low and miserable and they are treated as untouchables. They are considered as dirty and inferior class of the society.

- Agricultural labour is the major occupation of the people. Most of the people are engaged in this occupation. The other occupation of the people is farming, wage labour and some other people involved in handicraft, firewood collection etc.
- The major livestock is of poultry farming due to lack of capital to purchase cattle and to invest in animal husbandry.
- Land holding position of the people shows that more than 80 percent of the total respondents are landless (Sukumbashi). They have settled down in 'Ailani Jagga' near the road and bank of the rivers.
- Nuclear family and joint family are major types of family of the people but joint family is most popular because more than 68 percent of the people like to live in such family.
- The impact of the poverty and backwardness can be seen in life expectancy and educational level of the people. The life expectancy of the people shows longevity of them is very low. Very few Musahars meets the average life expectancy of overall Nepalese. Similarly, more than 86 percent of the people are illiterate. Consequently, they are unable to adopt good method of sanitation.
- Awareness about health and sanitation is very minimal among the Musahar community. Safe drinking water is still a far cry; neither have they had the toilet constructed. They have very limited knowledge about family planning.

6.3 Recommendations

On the basis of the findings of the study an attempt has been made to recommend some measures for the upliftment of the Musahars community. They are as follows:

- The government and other NGOs or INGOs should be involved in the welfare of backward people and implement specific programs tailored to meet the needs of Musahar community.
- Free and compulsory literacy programme for both children as well as adult should be implemented.
- Income generating programme (IGP) based on local productions such as handicrafts, animal husbandry, vegetable cultivation etc is necessary.

- Education should be compulsory and free for Musahar people. Financial and logistics support is needed to be made in this regards.
- Awareness should be raised about health and sanitation against early marriage.
- All of them have non registered land. Thus, government should give land and land certificate to them
- They are less conscious on development and politics. Thus, it is necessary to make an environment where Musahars can join the politics.
- Safe drinking water facility should be available to the Musahar people
- Technology based skill should be promoted in the Musahar community

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Appendix Questionnaire

Questionnaire on socio-economic condition of Musahar Community in Dhudhali VDC, Sindhuli

1. Name of Interviewers :
2. Age :
3. Sex : M [] F []
4. Ward No. :
5. Mother Tongue :
6. Marital Status : Single [] Married [] Divorced [] Widowed []
7. Religion :
8. Where was your original place ?
Ans :

9. How long have you been staying at this place ?
Ans : _____ years _____
months

10. Household information / number of members:

Age	0-6	7-14	15-59	60 Above
Male				
Female				
Total				

11. Who is the head of the household?
Ans :
12. What is your family structure?
a) Joint family
b) Nuclear family
- 13) If you have joint family what is the reason ?
a) Common income
b) Economy and social security
c) Common residence
d) Division of work
14. Economic status :
a) Agriculture labours
b) Farming / Agriculture
c) Local business
d) Others
15. Do you have other sources of income ?
Yes [] No. []

16. What was your forefather's occupation ?

Ans :

17. How much land do you own ?

a) _____ - Bigha b) _____

Kattha

c) _____ Dhur d) _____

18. What type of land?

a) Khet b) Bari c) Pakho

19. Food sufficiency from won production?

a) Less than 3 months b) 3 months

c) 6 months d) 9 months

e) Whole year f) Surplus

20. Livestock:

S.No.	Types	Numbers
1.	Buffalo	
2.	Cow / Ox	
3.	Goat / Sheep	
4.	Hen / Duck	
5.	Pig.	
6.	Others	

21. On what types of land is your house built ?

a) Other land

b) Own land

c) Aailani

22. What type of house do you have ?

a) Huts

b) Huts with Tiled roof

c) Concrete with Tin roof .

23. Total number of rooms in the house ?

Ans :

24. Do you have the following items ?

a) Radio

b) Television

c) Cycle

d) Others

25. What fuel do you use to cook in your house ?

a) Firewood

b) Bhus chulo

c) Biogas

d) Electricity

e) Kerosene

f) Animal Dung

g) Other

26. Do you have drinking water facility ?
 Yes [] No []
 if yes what type of source ?
 a) Tap water b) Hand pump (public)
 c) Kuwa d) Inar
 e) Others
27. What is your monthly income? Rs. _____
28. Do you have in Toilet
 Yes [] No []
29. Have any members of your family gone to foreign country ?
 Yes [] No . []
 If yes how many?
 Ans : _____
29. What is the income they generate?
 NRs. _____ (Annual).
30. How do you spend your money?
 a) Food b) House rent
 c) Education
 d) Health Care
 e) Clothing
 f) Others.
31. Do you save money?
 Yes [] No. []
 If yes, where would you like to spend it?
 a) Buy food stuff b) Home up gradation
 c) Buy vehicles d) Buy ornaments
 e) Buy livestock's f) Children's education
 g) Health h) Others
32. Who makes decision while spending money?
 a) Personal decision
 b) Household decision
 c) Both of you
33. Education status of your family members
 a) Literate
 b) Illiterate
 c) Primary
 d) Campus or so above
34. Have you even suffered from any disease?
 Yes [] No []
 If yes, _____

35. Where do you go for Treatment?
a) Government Hospital
b) Private
c) Traditional treatment
d) Others
36. Do you know about family planning?
Yes [] No []
37. Do you know about HIV/AIDS?
Yes [] No []
38. Are your children vaccinated?
Yes [] No []
If yes, what?
Ans. _____
39. Why should we marry?
a) To have son/daughter for continuing the family lines
b) To satisfy sexual need
c) Religions duty
d) For the supports in old age
e) Economic partnership
g) Other
40. Who should have the authority to select the marriage partner?
a) Parents
b) Boys and girls themselves
c) Others
41. Your marriage?
a) Within caste
b) Inter-caste
42. Did you receive dowry (daijo) in your marriage?
Yes [] No []
43. If yes how much?
Cash + Goods = _____
44. Do you think that widow should be allowed to remarry?
Yes [] No []
45. Are you a member of any political party?
Yes [] No []