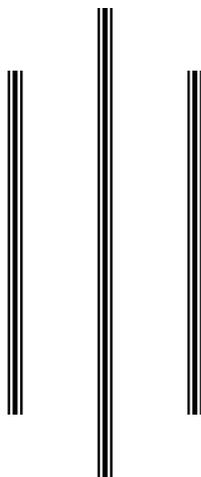
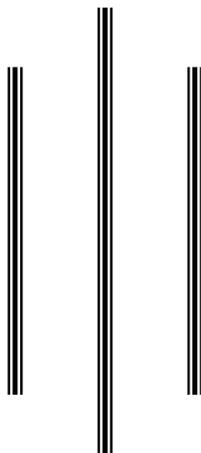


SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE DOM COMMUNITY
(A Case Study of Siraha - District, Nepal)



Final Report
Submitted To :
SIRF Secretariat, SNV Nepal
Bakhundole, Lalitpur,
Kathmandu,
Nepal



Submitted By:
Rajendra Prasad Sah
March, 2007

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research work is conducted on an untouchable (Dalit) caste group, Dom. For this research, one municipality and nine VDCs of Siraha-District were selected purposively. The attempt is made to throw some light on Socio-economic and Demographic status of the Dom community.

I wish to express my sincere and heartfelt gratitude to my supervisor Mr. Surendra Mishra, Lecturer, Central Department of Sociology/Anthropology, T.U., Kathmandu who despite his heavy time scheduled spared some for me, to complete this report writing successfully.

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I would also express my gratefulness to all the Doms of the study-site for their co-operation and help during my field work. This study has not been completed without their assistance.

Rajendra Prasad Sah

March, 2007

Kathmandu, Nepal

APPROVAL LETTER

The report entitled **Sociological Study of the Dom community: A Case Study of Siraha-District, Nepal** is completed by **Rajendra Prasad Sah** under my guidance.

The report has been approved as a final report for SIRF (SNV Nepal).

.....
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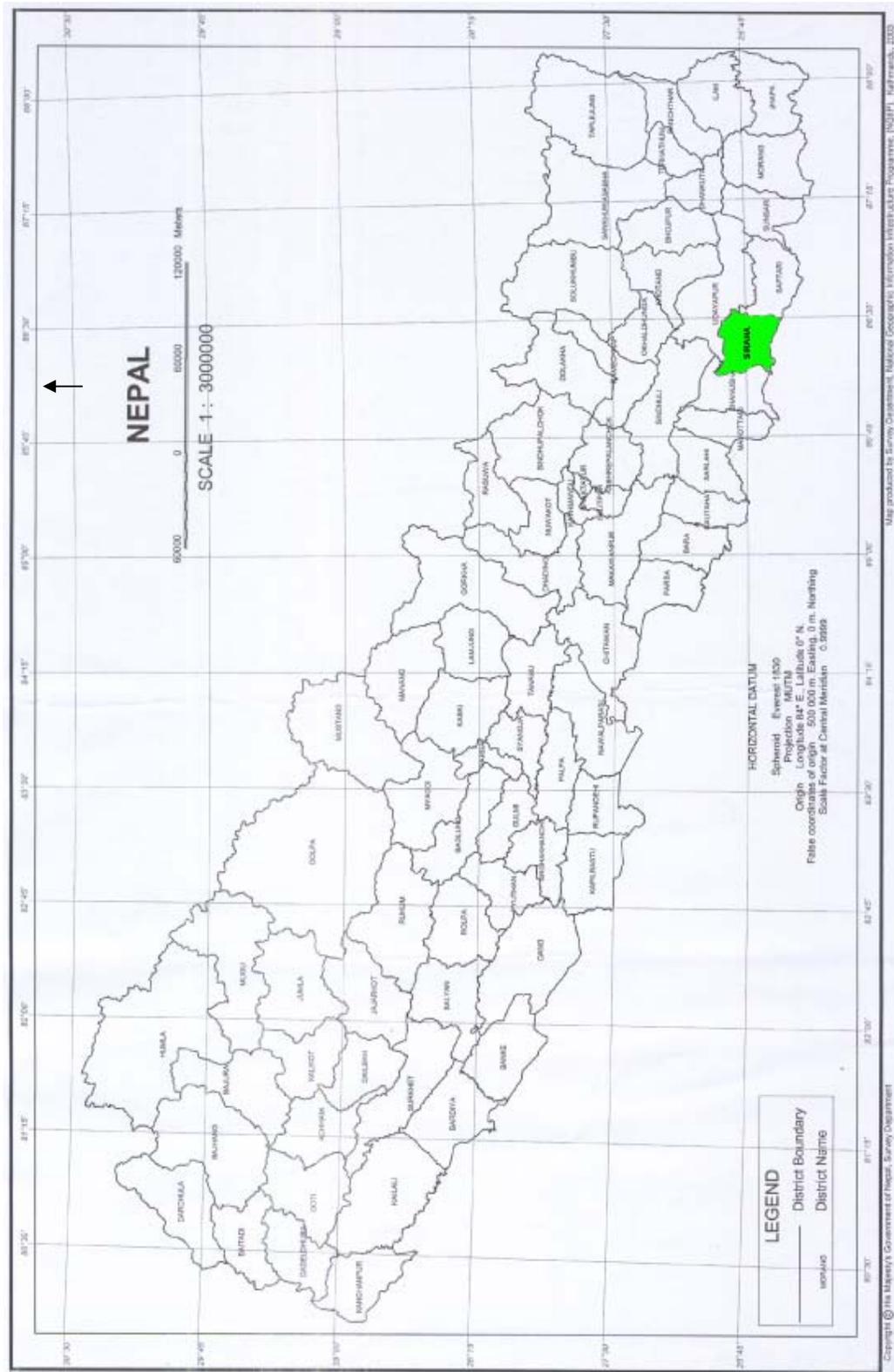
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A Tole/Village of the Dom Community



An Old Dom with his Family Members



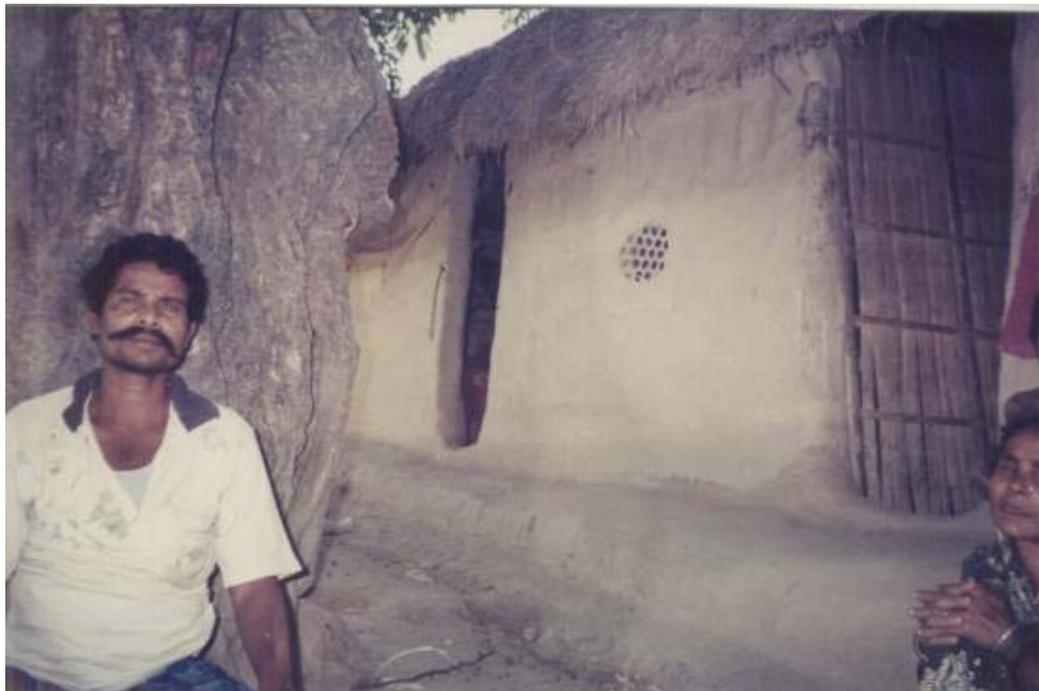
A Couple with their Children



Dom's Home Under a Big Tree



An Old Male Dom on His Yard



A Mainjan of the Dom Community



A Dom Woman Making a Basket



A Pen of the Pigs



A Pen of the Pings Near the Home



Unmarried Children of the Dom Community



School Going Children of the Dom Community



A Couple of the Dom Community with the Researcher

ABBREVIATIONS / ACRONYMS

A.D.	:	Anno Domini
B.S	:	Bikram Sambat
C.	:	Celsius
CBS	:	Central Bureau of Statistics
VDC	:	Village Development Committee
DDC	:	District Development Committee
NGO	:	Non-Governmental Organization
INGO	:	International Non-Governmental Organization
CO	:	Community Organization
GO	:	Government Organization
No.	:	Number
P.	:	Page
S.N.	:	Serial Number
Sq.	:	Square
Km	:	Kilo Meter
HHs	:	Households
FGD	:	Focus Group Discussion
SFDP	:	Small Farmers Development Programme

GLOSSARY

Aelani	:	Unclaimed land
Holi/Hori	:	Festivals of colors
Bataiya	:	A basis of sharing crop
Mainjan/Jawar	:	Community leader
Kattha	:	Unit of land (1 hector = 29.5305 kattha)
Sutkeri	:	Women who have given birth a baby
Chaurchan	:	Festival of Terai people (worship of Moon)
Mun	:	40 kg.
Anchal	:	Tip of Sari
Pahur	:	Pig's baby
Pooja	:	Worship
Juwai	:	Son-in-law
Bhanja	:	Nephew
Khutti Khola	:	A name of river

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The aim of this study is to describe the ethnography of the Dom community, a socially excluded caste group of Terai, Nepal. For this purpose, one municipality and nine VDCs of Siraha-District were selected purposively. There are total 72 households of the Dom Community and their total population is 327(male: 173, female: 154). Descriptive and analytic methods are used in this study. Mainly primary data are used focusing on qualitative in nature.

The Dom community is traditionally an occupational caste. Their main occupation is making a variety of baskets and sell them. They are Sudra and known as Achhut (Untouchable). They migrated from India to Nepal about five or six generations back. The Dom of Siraha-District is also migrated from India and they first settled at Madar, near headquarter of Siraha-district.

The Dom is Hindu. They follow Hindu religion and worship Hindu Gods and Goddesses. The festivals of the Dom are similar with other Hindu castes. They mainly celebrate Dashain, Tihar, Maghe Sakranti, Chhatha Parva, Naga Panchami, Chaurchan, Jur sital, Faguwa (Holi or Hori).

The Dom is poor and exploited by higher castes. Most of them are landless and uneducated. Therefore, they are backward in every field. In the study-sites, it is difficult to see their traditional type of dresses and ornaments. They speak Maithili language.

However, caste based discrimination is not so rigid as it was in the past, but some discriminations can be seen clearly. The Dom is not allowed to enter the home of upper castes. They have separate tube-wells for their

own use because they are not allowed to fetch water either from the private or public tube-wells.

The Doms are not found actively participating in local and national political affairs. Most of them are only voters. They have not access in local resources management. They are not aware about to get their citizenship and to register the vital events. There is satisfactory trend of getting health services from governmental health offices in the Dom community.

Different types of NGOs/INGOs are found working to improve and enhance the life style of Dalits, but there is not seen any positive sign of improvement in the socio-economic condition of the Dom's life style. Gradually, social awareness is improving and enhancing among the Dom community of the study area due to the effect of modernization.

CHAPTER – 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Study Context

Nepal is a multilingual, multi-cultural and multiethnic country. The way of life, dress, language, socio-economic and cultural identities of the people are apparently different followed by geographical variation. Therefore, each group of people has their own identities; they do their own cultural practices and other numerous characteristics.

Geographically, the country is divided into three broad ecological regions stretching from the east to the west. On the high Himalayan region snow covers all the year round; the hill consists of Mahabharat and Churiya ranges and the Terai is plain which is supposed to be a granary of foodgrains.

The Himilayan region, which is to the north of the Mahabharat range is largely an Archic Wasteland and been a marginal area for human settlement. Sherpas, Lomis, Topkes, Golas, generally known as Bhotiyas, are the dwellers of this region. The population is still sparse and the main economic activities are barter, trade, pastoralism and shifting cultivation.

The Hill region also known as mid land lies between the Mahabharat and the Churiya range. It is a sub-tropical belt and has been the traditional population zone of Brahmins, Chhetris, occupational caste groups, Newars, Rais, Limbus, Gurungs, Magars and Tamangs. Subsistence agriculture is the basis for the hill economy.

The Terai region is divided into two regions i.e. outer Terai and inner Terai, where Rajputs, Danuwars, Tharus, Majhis, Satars, Yadavas, Brahmins, Chhetris, Muslims, Chamars, Doms, Musahars, Halkhors, etc. dwell. The Terai consists of forest and was once unhabitatae due to malaria. Now it has acquired greater economic importance with new shelters and reclamation of agricultural by clearing forest.

As the people of Nepal mentioned above live in different physical conditions, naturally, they have developed in course of time different types of customs and manners. Their food habits vary from region to region. They differ from one another in language. They differ tribe-wise and place-wise. For instance, the Newars of

Kathmandu valley differ from the Newars of the rest of country in their culture, language and so on.

It is needed to identify the community to which Dalit groups belong to caste system; and refers to an occupationally segregated, hierarchically and ritually discriminatory social system based on heredity of an individual or group of individuals. They are economically exploited, politically voiceless, socially humiliated and treated as “Untouchables”. In essence, the victim of caste-based discrimination and untouchability can be considered as Dalits. The Dalits have been placed at the bottom in the Hindu caste system. The major Dalit caste groups in the Terai are Musahar, Chamar, Dom, Tatma, Dusadh, Khatwe, Bantar, Dhobi, Chidimar, Patharkatta/Kushwadia and Halkhor while such caste groups in the Hills are Damai, Kami and Sarki. In the Kathmandu valley, the major Dalit castes include Poda and Chyame.

The Dom is concentrated more in districts like Morang, Jhapa, Sunsari, Siraha, Saptari, Dhanusha, Mahottari, Sarlahi, Bara, Parsa, Rautahat, Rupandehi, Kapilbastu, Nawalparasi, Banke and Bardia. The total population of the Dom in Nepal is 8,931 (0.04%) where the total number of male is 4631 and female is 4300. (Population Census, 2001)

The Dom is considered the lowest untouchable caste groups of the Terai. They are not allowed to fetch water either from the private or public tube-wells. They have separate tube-wells for their own use or go to the nearby stream/pond to fetch water.

Making a variety of baskets from the bamboo is their traditional caste occupation. In addition, grave-digging and cremating dead bodies are also considered their traditional occupation. These are their main source of earning a livelihood.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Nepal is one of the poorest countries of the world. According to the national statistics, 38 percent people are below absolute poverty line (Census: 2001). In this condition, there are such castes and ethnic groups, who are bounded to give up their traditional occupation because they could not meet their basic needs (food, clothing, shelter etc) by doing their traditional occupation in the changing condition.

Development programmes implemented by governmental and non-governmental agencies could not reach where the backward and poor people live.

Dom people belong to one of the poorest and backward caste in Nepal. Although their traditional work is making a variety of baskets and they are giving up their traditional occupation as cremating the dead bodies and grave-digging because they can not fulfill their basic needs by their traditional occupation.

From Sociological/Anthropological point of view, the study also seeks to study as to what extent Dom's social organization, clans, family and marriage system has changed and to what extent Doms have been sanskritised. Attempt has made to study their present socio-economic condition, cultural and demographic conditions and the present situation of their traditional occupation. It has also attempted to find out their new sources of livelihood and whether they have benefited from the development activities in Nepal. So, the main problem of the present study is to seek answers of the above mentioned questions.

1.3 Objective of the Study

The general objective of this study is to find out the changing socio-economic cultural and demographic status of the Dom community.

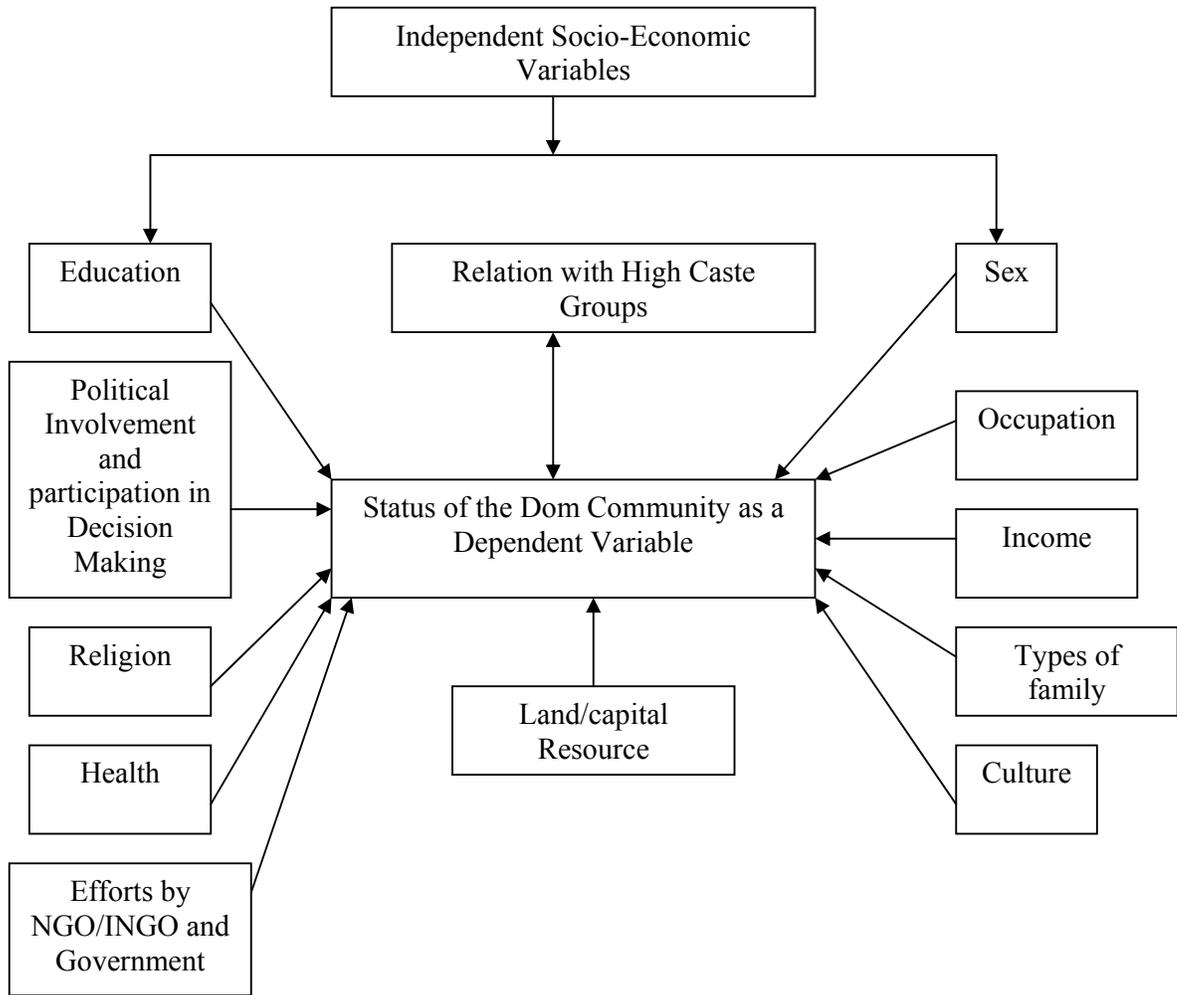
The specific objectives of the study are:

- a) To assess the ethnography of the Dom community.
- b) To analyze the present socio-economic status of the Dom community.

1.4 Conceptual Framework

In this study, the status of the Dom community is defined and measured by selecting socio-economic, cultural and demographic indicators such as education, occupation, religion, residence, income, health and type of family. All of these indicators are independent variables.

Analysis of this study is based on the conceptual framework as to how the socio-economic variables affect on the status of the Dom community. The figure below tries to show the impact of independent socio-economic variables on status of the Dom community as a dependent variable.



1.5 Rationale of the Study

The socio-economic status of a community shows the living condition of people in that community. With the great changes in the field of technology, communication, transportation, education and interaction with different cultural groups, they must have undergone certain changes. Similarly, urbanization, modernization, acculturation, enculturation, migration and population size have also affected the socio-economic condition of any society. Thus, the Dom community is also affected by these factors and is going to change in their subsistence economy, changing occupational composition, changing social and cultural patterns and life style of Siraha Dom community. It has also tried to examine their success or failure in the changing circumstance. The information derived from this study will be useful for development plans and programs and for further study of the Dom community. Thus, the finding of this study will be useful to understand the changing socio-economic status of the Dom community in Nepal.

CHAPTER – 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature review is one of the most important parts in each research. The main objective of literature review is to gain familiarity with the subject matter.

Keeping this into mind literature has been reviewed for the above mentioned purpose in this study. The detail about the reviewed literature is given below:

2.1 Previous Studies on Dalits (Untouchables)

Different sociologists/Anthropologists both indigenous and foreign have carried out various ethnographic studies in Nepal. Among them, Bista is one, who has given a lot of contribution on the field of ethnographic study.

Bista (2031) describes the ethnography of different people. Bista has given a short ethnography study of the people of Sharki in his books. However, there is also lack of detail information about the socio-economic change among other untouchable groups.

Caplan (1970) has studied a village of eastern Nepal where he studied the changing relation between members of indigenous ethnic group, the Limbus and Brahmins, the high caste Hindu group.

Gurung (1989) has given a detail ethnographic pictures about Chepang, a minority group of Nepal in his book. He has traced a continuity and change about chepang regarding their social, ecology, economy, religion, family, marriage and kinship systems.

Regmi (1991) has given an anthropological study of a Nepalese ethnic group, Dhimal. He has described different aspects of Dhimals, such as economic organization and socialization, social hierarchy, religion and festivals, village political organization, phases of life etc.

Regmi (1990) has prepared a cross-cultural study of a Nepalese ethnic group. He has described about the bravery and glorious culture of Gurung.

Holmberg (1996) has described about myth, ritual and exchange among Nepal's Tamang very nicely.

Nepali (1965) has given an ethno-sociological study of the Newars, a Himalayan community of Nepal. The book has given a well ethnography of Newars.

Gurung (2006) has given some information about geographical framework of Nepal and its caste/ethnic composition.

Gurung H. and Bhattachan K.B. (2006) have given information about the literatures or books about indigenous peoples.

Gautam, R. and Thapa Magar, A.K. (1994) have traced about some untouchable castes of Nepal. Badi, Dom, Gaine, Kami, Musahar Sarki, Halkhor etc. untouchable castes are tried to describe in their book.

Sharma, Chhetri and Rana (1994) have stated about caste based discrimination and its related matters.

Some hart touching types of discrimination based on caste are given in the book. For example one is given below.

“An untouchable teacher in Kailali was sent away from his village school to Dangadi on deputation because he ordered students of higher caste and untouchable caste to sit together in the luncheon provided under the Nutrition Food Programme. The school inspectors were satisfied with his teaching quality, but the headmaster, a Brahmin, who did not accept this value, influenced the District Education Officer against the teacher. Later, the luncheon programme itself was dropped.” (Sharma, Chhetri and Rana: 1994)

The above example shows that there are so much discriminations against the untouchable and study should be done about them. But unfortunately, this is not happened. Unless their real situation is carried out, the exploitation and discrimination on untouchable remains for ever.

Some, foreign writer has tried to write about untouchable caste but they all are not ethnographic study. Caplan (1972) is an example which is a study of about a social change in a Hindu village of western Nepal. Similarly, Macdonald (1975) has written a book in which he has written about some untouchable castes.

Although, special books are not available, some dissertations/thesis of master's degree of T.U have written on untouchables.

Chhetri (1985) has prepared a thesis on "Gaine" a singing people of Nepal.

Subedi (1995) has written on his thesis "Badi" an untouchable caste whose traditional profession is prostitution.

Sah (2005) has prepared a dissertation on "Chamar" a leather working people of Nepal and Yadav (2005) has also written on the "Musahar" a cat eating people of Nepal.

2.2 The Dom Community

It has been already mentioned that there are very few sociological and anthropological studies on the lowest (Dalit) castes in Nepal. Sociologists and anthropologists have not done sufficient studies about the Dom community. Bista, a renowned anthropologist is also silent in the study about the Dom community.

The four volumes of Bista (1974) are also unable to give a detail informations about the Dom community. His books state that "Maithil Brahmin, Rajput, Kayastha, Baniya, Teli, Kalwar, Dom, Halkhor, Chamar, Mushalman etc had come in Saptari from southern states of India many centuries ago. Yadav, Koiri, Sudi, Tharu, Musahar, Kurmi etc. speak Maithili language. Amat, Hajam, Gwar, Teli, Sudi, Chamar, Dom, Halkhor etc. are Maithil Thars".

Kantipur, Daily a newspaper (5 May, 2005) has stated the Doms are occupational caste. Their traditional norms and customs allow to marry in childhood. They eat meat of pigs and drink wine necessarily.

Kantipur, Daily Newspaper (6 June, 2005) has stated the Surname of the Doms is Mallik or Marik. They are living in Terai regions. They are doing early marriage now. But some NGOs/INGOs are working to promote the lifestyle of the Dom community by doing different programs like as counseling to do marriage in adult, educating programs etc.

HMG/Nepal (2002) has stated the Doms are considered the lowest untouchable caste groups of the Terai. Any other caste member of the Terai except Halkhor does not accept water and cooked food from them. If any member of the high caste Hindu group is ever touched accidentally by them, he/she must purify either by sprinkling “gold water” or taking bath in the pond as well. Even today, Doms are not allowed to fetch water either form the private or public tube-wells. They have separate tube-wells for their own use or go to the nearby stream to fetch water.

Making a variety of baskets from the bamboo is their traditional caste occupation. In addition, grave-digging and cremating dead bodies are also considered their traditional occupation (Save the children US and INHURED international, 1999). This is their main source of earning a livelihood.

Gautam, R. and Thapa Magar, A.K. (1994) have stated Doom, Domra and sometimes Chandal are some of the names attached to the Dom, but their true origin is still a matter of differing opinions. The remarkable paragraphs:

The Doms are short in stature, dark skinned, have long and loosely kept hair mostly unplaited, and the most peculiar feature is their strange glass-like eyes. Dom occupy, in the rank of untouchable, according to the Hindu caste system. Although they are minority in number, they can be found all over the Terai. They are Sudras and occupational caste.

After the invasion of the Dravidians these people seem to have escaped into the Northern hills and forests, while some sheltered in the Kumaon where they were made permanent slaves. These slaves Dom are supposed to have lived lives worse than animals and were

sold from one master to another to live as chattels. Since ancient times, the settlement of these Dom is alleged to be towards the north of Gonga. It is near Rohini in the east and touches the area of Bihar, where the many ruins of ancient forts are evidence of their identity. The names of their founders have remained till today in places such as Dom diha or Dom gad to prove this point. Situated in Rohini, Ramgad and Sahan Kot, are some Dom forts, it is claimed. A scholar has put forward the idea that Domgad was actually Prabalgad which belonged to the slowly deteriorating Rajputs. There is also a suggestion that a person Domar or Donewar from the Dom family could have been the founder of these forts. It is also possible that they became locally powerful and joined the Rajputs as their slaves. The governor of Ramlawad, Ali Bux Dom stated that such people were enrolled as musicians, from which position, they rose up to higher levels. Though these Dom are not mentioned in Nepalese history, as those people inhabiting the Terai or the border areas between India and Nepal in particular, if further research is carried out, then it should provide a chance of presenting them in a new light.

For many centuries, the Dom lived as slaves and untouchables in Hindu society, and so they have lost many of their traditional customs and cultures and are seen to have undergone a drastic metamorphosis. The Terai Dom are still considered untouchables and accordingly are found to do all the dirty, lowly works like cremating corpses, even today.

Thus, we can not get a sufficient literature about Nepalese Doms. But there are some literatures written in Indian context. Singh (1993) has given some account about Doms. The remarkable paragraphs:

“Dom/Doom/Dumar/Dum/Doom or Mahasha since the late nineteenth century, ethnographers have written about the origin and development of the Doms but the ethnological affinities of the Dom

have remained enigmatic. H.H Elliot considers them to be 'one of the original tribes of India'. The Doms are spread over Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. The Dombara or Domb of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala who are mainly acrobats are substantially different from the Doms. The many and varied legends recounted in different parts of India have attempted only at a rationalization of their low status and miserable condition. The traditional occupation of the Dom includes working in the cremation ground, removing dead cattle, drum beating, scavenging, mat-weaving and basketry. But in recent times they have diversified into various occupations, such as wage labour, animal husbandry and agriculture. A good number of them are engaged as sweepers in various government and private establishments. They share common features of social structures like patrilineal descent and inheritance, and patrilocal residence. All of them allow monogamy, junior sororate and levitate, divorce and remarriage.

In Bihar, the Doms are also called Bhangi or Dhangad and claim to be Bansmalikes. The Doms are distributed in places like Barh, Mokameh, Bakhtairput, Fatuhan, Bansghat, Khojkallaghat, Kurjighat and Gulabighat and their habitations are mostly on the banks of the Ganges and around the cremation grounds. In Bihar, they are notified as Dom, Dhangad and their total population, according to the 1981 census, is 200, 827. the Indo-Aryan language, Magahi, is spoken among themselves and Hindi is spoken with others. The Devanagari script is used. They are non-vegetarians and eat pork. Rice and wheat, their staple cereals, are taken with common pulses like Urad, Moong and Masur along with roots and tubers. Alcoholic drinks are consumed by both the sexes. They are fond of smoking and chewing Khaini with betel leaf.

Domar also known as Bhangi and Mehtar, most Domars in Uttar Pradesh belong to the Turahiya or Tunaiha subcaste. The Domar are divided into seven subgroups, namely Turahiya or Turaiha,

Dom, Lalbegi, Hadi, Basphor, Dhanuk and Dusadh. Incidentally, all these subgroups claim an independent community status. They relate their history to Raja Harishchandra. Their population in Uttar Pradesh, according to the 1981 census, is 19,196. According to the 1971 census, there were 14,443 Domars and 4420 Turaihas. They live in the moderate climate of the plains where the humidity is low and rainfall is medium. In rural area they speak in Awadhi and in town they speak in Hindi. The Devanagari script is used. The Domar are non-vegetarians who take beef and pork. Wheat, rice jowar, bajra, barley, gram and tur constitute their staple diet. Mustard and rapeseed oils and animal fat are used for cooking. Their men and women occasionally take alcoholic drinks which are purchased from the market.

The Domar are differentiated on the basis of subcaste, territory and occupation. These differentiations are responsible for regulating marriage alliances and for maintaining social control. The Turaiha Domar do not use any surname. People in the villages are neither aware of the varna system nor do they recognize it. Other communities perceive them as belonging to the lowest status. They maintain clan exogamy. Marriage with one's mother's brother's daughter is common. Child marriage, followed by gaona at the onset of puberty, is followed. Marriage by negotiation is the common mode of acquiring mates, but there are also instances of marriage by mutual consent. They practise monogamy. Vermilion, glass-bangles and bindi are the marriage symbols for women. Instead of kanyakan, feet worship (paipuji) is performed as an important marriage ritual. Some clothes and utensils are given to the bride as dowry. The bride goes to her husband's house after marriage. Adultery is the common reason for seeking divorce and on divorce, compensation is given to the aggrieved party. Either the wife or the husband can seek divorce on substantial grounds. Small children are looked after by the mother, whereas the older ones stay with the father. Remarriage, junior sororate and junior levirate are

permissible. They live either in nuclear or horizontally extended families, though the former are on the increase. A Domar woman tends to avoid her father-in-law and she has cordial relations with her husband's younger sister. A man has cordial relations with his elder brother's wife, wife's brothers and sisters and father's sisters. The father's property is inherited equally by all sons. The eldest son succeeds to the familial authority. Women collect fuel, bring potable water and also participate in economic activities by working as sweepers and scavengers. Their women enjoy an equal status but have no decision-making powers in familial matters nor do they control family expenditure. Marriage rituals are performed at the bridegrooms's or the bride's residence, depending on convenience. Both parties give a marriage feast. The nuptial ceremony is performed at the groom's residence. Death pollution is observed for ten days.

These above mentioned literatures have given various types of descriptions about different ethnic/caste groups. All of them are not ethnography, but for this study, they are important. They have given much useful knowledge directly and indirectly. Therefore, the research has felt a great value of these literatures during the preparation of this report.

CHAPTER – 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents a discussion on the research methodology that is used to collect qualitative and quantitative data for the study. The chapter is further divided into many sub-sections such as site selection, research design, nature and sources of data, sampling procedure, techniques/instruments of data collection, reliability, and method of data analysis.

3.1 Study Site and Its Rationale for the Selection

Considering the 9 VDCs and 1 municipality of Siraha district were selected purposively on the basis of election constituency. There are 5 election constituencies. From each election constituencies, two VDCs were selected purposively where the Dom population is high.

3.2 Research Design

This study is based on descriptive research design which may consider as appropriate and the best for the analysis of this type of research study. It is descriptive because it describes the ethnography and the socio-economic status of the Dom community.

3.3 Nature and Sources of Data

This study is based on the consideration of primary as well as secondary data. Primary data were collected through field survey. Similarly, secondary data were collected through published and unpublished materials such as research articles, related books, CBS and related profiles.

3.4 Universe and Sampling Procedure

The total population of Siraha district is 5,69,880 (male: 2,92,679, female: 2,77,201). The total population of the Dom community of Nepal is 8,931 (0.04%) where male is 4,631 and female is 4,300. Similarly, the total population of the Dom community in Siraha district is 1,266 (male: 652, female: 614) according to CBS: 2001.

The study site has been selected purposively. Considering the 9 VDCs and 1 Municipality of the Dom community in Siraha district were selected on the basis of election constituency. There are 5 election constituencies. From each election constituency, two VDCs were selected purposively. From the election constituency number 1, Lahan Municipality and Padariya VDC were selected. Similarly, from election constituency number 2,3,4 and 5: Siswani and Mauwahi VDCs, Asanpur and Ayodhyanagar VDCs, Naraha and Barchhawa VDCs and Maheshpur and Ramnagar Mirchaiya (Semi-urban) VDCs were purposively selected respectively. This study is very useful to provide the knowledge about ethnographic, demographic and socio-economic aspects of the Dom community at the present and past.

There are only 72 households in these VDCs/Municipality. So, census method was applied and data were collected from all 72 households.

3.5 Data Collection Techniques/Instruments

It is the most important part for getting reliable information. The techniques/instruments of data collection were used as follows:

<p>Techniques:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview • Observation • Interview with Key Informants • Focus Group Discussion and Meetings 	<p>Instruments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaire • Checklist • Schedule • Interview Guide
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3.5.1 Questionnaire

A semi structured questionnaire was used to elicit socio-economic and demographic information from the respondents.

3.5.2 Observation

Observation is the basic sociological/anthropological tool for the data collection methods. This method was used by the researcher to collect information about dress pattern, food habits, settlement, ceremonies, talking style, behaviour.

3.5.3 Interview with Key Informants

It was used to collect data about the history of their culture, rituals, ceremonies and tradition of the past and the present.

Key informants are the important source of acquiring real data. The persons who have detail knowledge/information about the related site and about related studying group. They are president of VDCs, and president of Dalit. The knowledgeable and aged persons of the Dom community was interviewed to collect information about birth, marriage and death rituals, history of migration, discrimination and so on.

3.5.4 Focus Group Discussion

It was used to collect qualitative data from study sites.

3.6 Method of Data Analysis

The collected data of the research study were analyzed descriptively and statistical methods were also applied where necessary. So, different statistical (table, pie-chart, figure and simple frequency) and logical tools were used to analyze data in this study.

3.7 Limitations of the Study

Since the study was conducted in VDCs of the Siraha district of Nepal. So, the result obtained can not be generalized for the lowest caste groups of the entire country due to vast difference in the cultural, social and anthropological aspects.

CHAPTER – 4

SETTING OF THE STUDY SITE

4.1 Location

Siraha is the smallest district in area of the Sagarmatha – Zone which comes under the eastern development region of Nepal. Its adjoining districts are Sindhuli, Udaypur in the north, Dhanusha in the west, Saptari in the east and Bihar of India lies to its south. The district is located between 26⁰33' to 26⁰55' north latitude and 86⁰6' to 86⁰27' east longitude. Its elevation from the sea level ranges from 76 to 895 meters. The total area of Siraha is 1188 sq. km. There are 2 municipalities and 106 village development communities. This district is also divided into five election constituencies.

4.2 Climate

The Siraha - District lies in Terai which has tropical and sub-tropical climate. The maximum recorded temperature is 40⁰ C in the month of May and June, and the minimum recorded temperature is 20⁰ C in the month of January. Rainfall, mostly starts from the end of May and lasts for three or four months till August and sometimes till September in accordance with extent of monsoon. Study sites receive approximately 1467 mm rainfall annually (District Weather Record: 2006).

4.3 Natural Resources

Generally, land, forest and water are important natural resources of Nepal. Most of the population of the study site depends upon land for its subsistence production. The Dom community depends upon forest also.

4.3.1 Land

Land is one of the most utilized natural resource in the study site. Since the most natural resources are inseparable from the land, it is the basic resource of the people of the study site.

Type and quality of soil are major concerns of farmers and they invest a great deal of labour to maintain and enhance it. Land is generally classified as “Bari” (dry cultivated land) and “Khet” (paddy cultivated land) on the basis of types of crop cultivated and irrigation facilities.

4.3.2 Forest

Forest is an important natural resource of Nepal, but it is not available easily at the study site. Therefore, it cannot be counted as a main natural resource of the study site.

The people of that area fulfill their needs of jungle from their own tiny gardens. People plant “Anap (Magnifera Indica)”, “Sisau (Dalbergia Sisoo)”, “Neem (Mellia Azardirachata)”, “Bakainu (Meliea Azedarach)”, “Masala (Eucalptus Camal Dulansis)”, for their consumption. They use mostly dry animal dung for cooking fuel.

4.3.3 Water Resource

Most of the rivers of Siraha district originates from the Mahabharat range and they contain considerable amount of water only during the rainy season. In the study site, there are many rivers such as Kamala, Ghurmi, Balan, Mainabatti, Khutti Khola, Gaagan, Bataha, Jiva, Sarre, etc.

4.4 Settlement Pattern and House Structure

Settlement is also an indication in Nepal of the ethnic compactness of the different communities. The settlements of Dom community are generally situated outside the settlements of other high caste people. It may be owing to the ethnic compactness untouchability and lack of land.

Though, the settlements of Dom community in Siraha - District are in compact in nature and most of the houses are built closely but the clustering of houses have no any particular direction as other ethnic groups like, Tharus, Telis, Yadavas etc. Due to population increase in the settlement areas, it is now going to be insufficient for the construction of new houses.

In the study site, the houses of the Dom community are made up of mud and thatched roof slopping toward two sides. The houses are found to be only one floor. Pens are made to tame pigs or other domestic animals which lie near the houses of the Dom community.

The size of the houses was very small and narrow because of poverty. The Dom community cleans their houses mostly once a year, especially in Dipawali (Laxmi Pooja).

4.5 Background of the People of the Study Site

Before 1920, Terai (Siraha) District was considered the Kalapani due to prevalence of deadly malaria disease. The settlement in the area had been avoided by the hill people because of the presence of the malaria. Only the Terai ethnic group Tharu existed mainly much longer as they have developed strong natural immunity against malaria.

The launching of “Malaria Eradication Programme” in the late 1950s had encouraged a heavy migration of hill people to the Terai. Hence with arrival of hill people who brought new culture and technology of intensive farming, trade and business have changed a lot in the nature of the entire socio-cultural and economic activity of the area.

The Dom community originally came to Nepal from India many centuries ago, (Mechhi Dekhi Mahakali Samma, 1974). The key informants responded that their forefathers had migrated to Nepal because of a great starvation. Due to hunger, they were compelled to move from India.

The Doms firstly entered to Madar (West and South part of Siraha) from India. Then, they slowly moved to the VDCs and municipalities of Siraha district in search of food and work.

4.6 Caste Hierarchy in the Study Site

Caste hierarchy is quite unique in Hindu society of Nepal. In general, Nepalese society is based on caste hierarchy where people are divided into different caste groups. The caste structure of the society is characterized by hierarchy on system of

subordination held together by relation of superiority and inferiority at the apex of which are Brahmins and at the lowest rank are Sudras.

Under this caste system, a large number of people in Nepal, that is about 12% of the total population of Nepal (Population Census: 2001) are classified as untouchable or Sudra.

In the history of Nepal, king Jayasthiti Malla brought into practice the caste system which was virtually based on the occupation of the people in the name of social empowerment. Even after him, the king like Ram Shah and Prithivi Narayan Shah followed the same caste system. The “Old civil code” of Nepal promulgated by Surendra Bir Bikram Shah in 1953 A.D., stratified Nepali society into four groups: Tagadhari (sacred thread wearing caste), Matwali (liquor consuming caste), pani Nachalne Chhoi Chhito Halnu Naparne (touchable caste, from whom water is not accepted, and Pane Nachalne Chhoi Chhito Halnu parne (untouchable caste). The Dom caste belongs to untouchable group.

Our caste system is characterized by social inequality and rigid system of ascriptive hierarchy. The whole caste system is based on the principle of pollution and purity. This principle is the main rule of our society. The relationship between people and their behaviour towards each other are governed by Hindu norms and values. Untouchability is the main characteristics of Hindu caste system.

Although the caste based discrimination has been legally abolished since 1963 with the promulgation of “New civil code” (Naya Muluki Ain). It still exists as an important reference point for all individuals and constituents, the fundamental social structure of Nepalese society. Majority of the untouchables are accepting the discriminatory practice in rural areas as they believe that it is God made. Traditional caste-based discrimination is the main factor responsible for the social and economical backwardness of the untouchable or other tribal communities in Nepal. They lag far behind the higher caste people.

As generally in Nepal, the castes of the study site are ranked according to a scale of ritual purity and pollution. The system of ranking draws heavily on ideas which are parts of village Hinduism. A symbolic basis for this system is the application of a localized version of Hindu concept of purity and pollution.

Brahmins rank highest in the system because they are the priestly caste, as a member of high varna, they wear Janai sacred thread which is a symbol of their ritual purity and a mark of their spiritual second birth.

Chhetris are next in hierarchy to Brahmins and are member of warrior order of the varna system.

Telis, Yadavas, Koiris etc. are lower in caste hierarchy than Chhetris. They are not allowed to wear “Janai” but they are touchable castes. They are the member of “Vaishya” in the varna system.

The Doms, are the lowest in caste order and rank in untouchables (Achhut). They are the member of Sudra in the varna system. Dom is one of the occupational castes of Sudra.

4.7 Population/Ethnic Composition

Siraha is known as heterogeneous district in terms of the caste ethnic composition. The total population of Siraha – District is 5,69,880 (male: 2,92,679, female: 2,77,201). The caste/ethnic groups : Yadav, Muslim, Musahar, Koiri, Teli, Tharu and Chamar are larger in number respectively but the dominant caste/ethnic groups are Yadav, Muslim, Teli, Tharu, Chhetri, Brahman-Hill, Brahman-Terai, Newar and Koiri.

The total population of the Dom Community of Siraha district is 1,266 which occupies 0.22% of the total population of the district (See Appendix-I).

4.7.1 Language and Dialects

The study site is more heterogeneous in the nature of language. The major languages spoken in the Siraha district, on the basis of Population Census, 2001 is given in the table.

Table No. 4.1: Percentage of Population by Major Spoken Languages

Language	Percentage
Maithili	85.0
Nepali	5.2
Tharu	3.2
Urdu	1.8
Others	4.8
Total	100.0

Source: CBS, 2001.

Generally, Maithili is the main language in the study sites. However, different castes of this area use Nepali language as lingua franca despite their own native language/dialects in their households.

4.7.2 Religion

The study site is more religious. Hinduism is the main religion followed by different caste/ethnic groups. However, they follow their different cultural practices.

Table No. 4.2: Percentage of Population by Their Major Religion

Religion	Percentage
Hindu	90.9
Islam	7.2
Boudha	1.7
Others	0.2
Total	100.0

Source: CBS, 2001.

The above table reveals that there are four types of major religions in the study site. Hindu is the main religion of the study sites.

4.7.3 Occupation

Agriculture is the main occupation of the study sites. A vast majority of the people have to supplement in with either caste based occupational work or wage labour or both.

Table No. 4.3: Percentage of Population by Their Main Occupation

Occupation	Percentage
Agriculture	79.09
Business	10.01
Governmental Service	5.20
Industrial Works	2.07
Contract Labour	2.00
Others	1.63
Total	100.0

Source: District Profile, 2001.

The above table shows that agriculture is the main occupation of the study sites. Similarly, business, industrial works, governmental service and contract labour are other means of occupation respectively.

CHAPTER - 5

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter consists of the main part of the study. It tends to focus on the analysis and discussion of empirical data obtained from the field survey. Demographic features of the study site, socio-cultural life and economy of the people are analyzed in detail.

5.1 Socio-demographic Characteristics

This section includes age and sex structure of the total population of the Dom of the study site and their marital status, educational status and occupation respectively.

The following table (See Table 5.1) gives socio-demographic characteristics of the population of the Dom of the study-sites.

Table No. 5.1: Socio-demographic Status of the Surveyed Households

Age Groups	Sex		Total	%	Marital Status	Educational Status			Occupation	
	Male	Female				Male	Female	Total	Primary	Secondary
0-4	31	33	64	19.57	-	-	-	-	-	-
5-9	44	22	66	20.18	-	12	5	17-Primary	-	-
10-14	19	20	39	11.92	16-Married	7	3	10 6-Primary 4-L. Secondary	Domestic Works	Bamboo Works
15-19	18	19	37	11.33	All-Married	2	1	3- Secondary	1- Sweeping in CO All- Bamboo Works	-
20-24	10	13	23	7.03	All-Married	1	0	1- S.L.C. Passed	2- Sweeping in CO and GO	Pig Taming Hen Taming
25-29	11	13	24	7.35	All-Married	-	-	-	1- Sweeping in GO 1- Works in India and All- Bamboo Works	Pig Taming Hen Taming
30-34	10	8	18	5.50	All-Married	-	-	-	All- Bamboo Works	Pig Taming Hen Taming
35-39	12	6	18	5.50	All-Married	-	-	-	1- Sweeping GO and All- Bamboo Works	Pig Taming Hen Taming
40-44	5	7	12	3.66	All-Married	-	-	-	All- Bamboo Works	Pig Taming Hen Taming
45-49	3	1	4	1.23	All-Married	-	-	-	All- Bamboo Works	Pig Taming Hen Taming
50-54	3	4	7	2.15	All-Married	-	-	-	All- Bamboo Works	Pig Taming Hen Taming
55-59	2	1	3	0.92	All-Married	-	-	-	All- Bamboo Works	Pig Taming Hen Taming
60+	7	5	12	3.66	All-Married	-	-	-	All- Bamboo Works	Pig Taming Hen Taming
Total	173	154	327	100						

Source: Field Survey, 2006

In the general measurement of five years of age groups (0-4, 5-9.....60+) have been maintained in the above table.

The total population in the age group 0-4 was 64 (i.e. 19.57%) which is known as children. This age group has occupied second position in number of the total population of the study sites. This age group cannot help in any productive work.

The total population in the age group 5-9 was 66 (i.e. 20.18%) which has occupied first position in number of the total population. Only 17 children were going to school to read in primary level.

The total population in the age group 10-14 was 39 (i.e. 11.92%) which has occupied third position in number. This age group was pre-productive because only 10 adolescents were going to school and joining household works/domestic works also. The 16 adolescents have got married in this age group.

The total population in the age group 15-19 was 37 (i.e. 11.33%) which has occupied fourth position in number. All the population of this age group has got married and bamboo work was the main occupation of this age group. Only 3 adolescents of this age group were found going to read in secondary level.

The total population in the age group 20-24 was 23 (i.e. 7.03%) which occupied sixth position of the total population. Only one male person has passed S.L.C. in this age group. Bamboo work was the main occupation of this age group.

The total population in the age group 25-29 was 24 (i.e. 7.35%) which has occupied fifth position in number. All the population of this age group has got married and has followed bamboo works as their main occupation.

The total population in the age groups 30-34 and 35-39 were 18 and 18 (i.e. 5.50%) respectively which has occupied seventh position in number. These age groups have got married and have followed bamboo work as their main occupation.

The total population in the age group 40-44 was 12 (i.e. 3.66%) which has occupied eighth position in number. This age group has got married and has not any access in education. The bamboo work was the main occupation of this group.

The total population in the age group 45-49 was 4 (i.e. 1.23%) which has occupied tenth position in number. This age group has got married and has not any access in

education. The bamboo work was the main occupation of this group. There were two widows and one widower in this age group.

The total population in the age group 50-54 was 7 (i.e. 2.15%) which has occupied ninth position in number. This age group has got married and has not any access in education. The bamboo work was the main occupation of this group.

The total population in the age group 55-59 was 3 (i.e. 0.92) which has occupied eleventh position in number. This age group has got married and has not any access in education. The bamboo work was the main occupation of this group.

The total population in the age group 60+ was 12 (i.e. 3.66) which has occupied eighth position in number. This age group has got married and has not any access in education. The bamboo work was the main occupation of this group. There were 3 widows and 4 widowers in this age group.

The above facts reveal that child dependency is greater than old (aged) dependency but old (aged) mortality rate is high.

5.2 Socio-Cultural Life of the Dom Community

5.2.1 Family

Family is a universal institution. It is found in every society. It fulfills emotional and physical needs of its members. It is a biological unit composed by group of persons and kins who are related through blood and marriage. It usually begins when the partners marry because marriage is the basis of family.

The family system is divided into three categories: nuclear, joint and extended. In a nuclear family, there is a couple with or without their unmarried off springs.

But there can be found completely nuclear type of family system in Nepalese society as in European society. It is only nuclear in matters of separate residences.

Another type of family is extended one where married sons live together with their parents. Joint family system is that one where two or more nuclear families live under a single roof sharing common property, common residence and common kitchen.

It is generally believed that majority of families in Nepal are joint in nature. It is also because agriculture demands many labours during seeding and harvesting period.

And the head of the family, who is usually the father, exercises control over the family members and family property.

In the Dom community, it is found that they are patrilineal families. Their descendants are traced through the line of father i.e. to sons and not the mother like other matrilineal community. The male Dom is the functional head of the family who does outer activities. After the death of the family head, his position is taken by his eldest son or his wife.

In the Dom community, family property is commonly shared and managed. When the family breaks up, the property is equally divided among brothers. There is no any rigid rule of family separation. According to respondents the causes for the break down of the joint family are: conflict between two brothers, conflict between a mother-in-law and daughter-in-laws, conflict among brother's wives etc.

When asked about the main reason of family separation, most of the respondent's response is that after marriage, they want to live with the income which they earn. It means that because of the lack of the sufficient income sources, physical labour and skill of person are the major means for livelihood. So, after marriage a person wants to live separately from this parent.

5.2.1.1 Distribution of the Households on the Basis of Family Type

Among the total 72 households of the Dom community in the study site, basically two types of family, nuclear and joint have been found. The family type of Dom community is shown in the table No. 5.2 below.

Table No. 5.2: Distribution of the Households on the Basis of Family Type

Family Type	Household Number	Percentage
Nuclear	62	86.11
Extended	10	13.89
Total	72	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006

Above table shows that out of 72 households, only 10 households (i.e. 13.89%) were extended and 62 households (i.e. 86.11%) were nuclear. It shows that the joint family

system is under going change gradually. The Dom community of the study sites prefers to live in nuclear family.

5.2.2 Rites of Passage of the Dom Community

Everybody's life passes through different stages in different periods. In every stage, he/she performs different ritual ceremonies. Rites of birth, marriage and death are the main rites of passage in Hinduism and these are called Sanskar. The word "Sanskar" means religious purification rites and ceremonies for sanctifying the body, mind and intellect of an individual so that he/she may become a full-fledged member of the community. These Sanskar also create an awareness of social status and privileges of the individual.

The processes of the performance of rites of passage are different in every community. Therefore, their ways of performing rituals and some elaborate of these rituals and institutions are necessary to know how they are helpful in the substance of the community. And on the other hand, it should be necessary to know to what extent are they preserving or changing their traditional rituals, which are maintaining the social structure of a society. The Dom community is also found performing these Sanskars according to their own culture.

5.2.2.1 Birth Rite

Birth is the universal fact of human life, when a man and a woman get married; they are socially permitted to have sexual relations. After the conjugal life, they give birth to children and their social life start.

Among the Dom community, when the member of the family know that one has become pregnant they begin to prepare for the day of delivery. They start to collect more chickens for feeding to the mother after delivery. During pregnancy, no special care of mother is taken. With regard to food, there are not set rules. The pregnant woman is required to eat enough rice, meat, pulses, green vegetables, milk, ghee etc. but because of poverty, they could not get special type of diet.

In matter of sexual intercourse, no ritual restriction exists during the period of pregnancy. According to key informants a man may continue to cohabit with his wife till the delivery time.

During the time of delivery, they take help of a woman called Sudeni (a local chamar woman) who knows something about delivery, but not about special health care and who gives birth to a baby is called Sutkeri and her family and clan members observe birth pollution for 6 days.

5.2.2.2 Chhaithi (Sixth Day Ceremony/Nwaran /Naming Ceremony)

Chhaithi is performed on the sixth day after the birth of the child. This ritual is performed believing God writes the fate of the child on that day. At the same time (sixth day of birth) the naming ceremony (Nwaran) is celebrated. The name of newly born baby is given by relatives of the baby. The purification of birth pollution is also done on the same day.

5.2.2.3 Bhat Khuwai (First Feeding)

There is no classical rule for any rituals in the Dom community. A baby is given food after 5-6 months of his/her birth. There is no special ritual for this purpose.

5.2.3.4 Mundan (First Shaving)

When the child's hair is cut first, it is called Mundan. The child is placed on his mother's lap and the hair is cut by a barber. While the hair is being cut the mother makes sure that the hairs do not fall on the ground, so she collects them in the anchal or tip of sari, spread out under the child's head. The collected hair is taken and thrown into a river. This ritual is performed in very simple manner. No other work is performed on that day.

5.2.2.5 Marriage

Marriage is a socially recognized institution for having legitimate sexual relationship between a man and a woman for the protection, upbringing, maintenance and socialization of the children through establishing a family. It is a strong institution in Hindu society and perhaps every other society. According to social rule and regulations and their belief system, types and forms of marriages vary widely. In the Dom community, especially three types of marriage systems are in practice.

1. Magi Bibah (Arrange Marriage)
2. Jari Bibah (Payment of Compensation)
3. Inter-caste Marriage.

5.2.2.5.1 Magi Bibah (Arrange Marriage/Traditional Type of Marriage)

In the arrange marriage system among Doms, the initiative is supposed to take place from the bridegroom's side or bride's side both. When the parents of a boy or girl want to marry their son or daughter, they request to other parents who has a son or a daughter. Generally the Doms marry their children at the age of adolescents.

They practice marriage by negotiation and elopement. Marriage with one's mother's brother's daughter with one's father's sister's daughter and with one's elder brother's widow is permissible.

Marriage rituals are performed at the bride's residence and the marriage feast is hosted by the bride's party. The marriage rituals include sagun, lagan, kalsa, samdhi, dhoti and bidai. The nuptial ceremony is performed at the bride groom's residence. Vermilion, glass-bangles and bindi are the marriage symbols for women. They practice monogamy but polygamy is also allowed. Some clothes and utensils are given to the bride as dowry and cash, pigs, different kinds of assets etc. are given to the bridegroom as dowry.

On the occasion of wedding ceremony the janti and other Doms enjoy and quarrel to each other by taking domestic wine and eating feast.

Another day the janti returns grooms home with bride. On this happy occasion in the grooms home, all their kins and neighbours are invited to a feast (domestic wine, pig's meat, rice and other items provided for a feast).

5.2.2.5.2 Jari Bibah (Payment of Compensation)

The Dom community practices and accepts polygamy one after another or simultaneously. A man can marry with another woman if he dislikes his first wife and keeps more than one wife but if a woman dislikes her first husband, she elopes with other man. Her previous husband cannot compel her to live with him rather he can claim an expenditure he made while marrying her, from her new husband. This cost

paid by a man to his wife's previous husband, is called Jari, such practice exists even today. The cost of Jari may comprise cash.

Nowadays, though the term Jari itself is not used in legal term, give and take is considered as the compensation for the expenditure of the first husband. The amount of such Jari or compensation is determined by the respected persons of the community or by neighbouring community. There is no fixed rules for it. It depends upon the whim of decision makers who belong to the dominant part of people of the community.

5.2.2.5.3 Inter-Caste Marriage

In the past, if someone married with other caste person, he would be out of the caste. Water and other things touched by him were not accepted by others. If the rule breaker wanted to enter in the caste, he had to be whipped and also he had to pay some money, decided by the community members as compensation.

Nowadays, especially after 2046, the situation has changed a lot. Education, mass communication, state law, close interaction with other caste people etc. are playing a vital role in minimizing the caste based discrimination.

In the Dom community there is also a trend in favour of the inter-caste marriage from older to younger generation. From the in-depth observation, it was found that there was one Dom who had got married with Halkhor's girl who had four children but no one of other castes had got married with the Dom's girl.

5.2.2.5.4 Divorce/Separation

According to the Hindu Sanskar, the marriage is sacrament and sacred union. It does not dissolve easily. The man and his wife are supposed to be bound to each other even after the death of either of them. Therefore, what ever the situation exists, they have to comprise and readjust with each other. But nowadays this view has been undergoing change.

When there is no good relationship between wife and husband, they got divorce. Although social opinion is against the divorce, it continues to exist in every society.

In Brahmin's and Chhetri's family, the social status of a divorced woman is not good. She is considered as a bad woman.

Marriage bound in Dom community can be dissolved in two ways, first by resorting to regular divorce procedure and wife run away with her lover as the second. Under the system of formal divorce, both the parties mutually agree to break the marriage bound by signing the divorce papers called chhod-patra. But none of the parties can affect a divorce by his or her own unilateral decision. But the second method is given enough liberty to the woman to dissolve marriage. A woman, when dissatisfied with her husband, picks up a new lover and runs away to live with him. This method is more prevalent among the Dom community.

5.2.2.5 Remarriage of Women and Widow

In the past, remarriage of a woman/widow was not considered as a good. But in untouchable castes, it has been existed since a long time. In the Dom community it was not allowed in the past but now it is being practiced. Today if a Dom woman's husband leaves her or dies, she can set marriage with another man. But the social status of the remarried woman is not better than once married woman. Similarly, widow marriage is also being practiced, although it is not considered good.

5.2.2.6 Murtuary or Death Rites

When a person dies, the dead body is cremated in any area or at the side of the river called Khutti khola by sons and other relatives. At that time, the dead body is tied with white cloth. All the relatives and close neighbours participate in the funeral procession. If the dead person is old or adult, he/she is burned but if the dead person is a baby or child, he/she is buried. The burning process of corpse initiated by his/her sons and some other relatives too, and by finishing the burning process all the participants of the funeral procession take bath in river, pond or tube well.

Family members and clan members associated with deceased are also ritually polluted. No Pooja (Worship) or any religious function can be performed during polluted period (12 days). Death pollution, in Dom community, is purified by son-in-law (Juwai) or Nephew (Bhanja) on 13th day of death. On the 13th day of death, the sons and male clan relatives shave their head and cut their nails.

On the purification ceremony (13th day of death), the family gives a feast to the members who participated in funeral procession on that day. Before eating the salt on that day, the purification is employed.

The higher caste people don't participate in funeral procession as they may be the neighbours.

5.2.4 Festivals

Nepalese people celebrate various festivals according to their culture and tradition. They worship various Gods and Goddesses and enjoy themselves by eating, drinking and dancing. So it can be said that Nepalese people know how to live in pleasure. The festivals which Nepalese people celebrate are associated with one or other of the divinities, held sacred either in the Hindu, Buddhist or Muslim theology.

The Dom community of the study sites celebrates festivals as other Hindu do. Dashain, Laxmi Pooja (Deepawali), Maghe Dakranti, Chhatha etc. are main festivals of the Dom community of the study site. The ways of their celebrating is given briefly as below:

5.2.4.1 Dashain

Dashain is the greatest festival of Hindu. The Dom community also celebrates it. Dashain is celebrated for two weeks, which is performed with different kinds of religious task. In preparation of Dashain, every house is ceremonially cleaned with animal (Cow, Ox) dung and freshed for the visitation of Goddess Durga and long waited return of distant and nearby family members.

On the occasion of Dashain, they buy new clothes (Dresses) and eat delicious food with pahur's meat and taking domestic wine.

5.2.4.2 Laxmi Pooja (Deepawali or Tihar)

Another festival of the Dom community, as other Hindus is Deepawali which is also known as Tihar. This is celebrates for five days. Goddess of wealth, Laxmi, is worshipped on this festival, specially on the third day of Tihar which known as Laxmi

Pooja. On this day, light is lit on every window, door, courtyard and wall. It means to please Laxmi, who loves light.

5.2.4.3 Chhatha Parva

Chhatha Parva is the greatest festival on Terai region which is celebrated for six days. It is performed with different kinds of religious task. People pray with sun and moon for good health by providing different kinds of sweets and fruits in this festival. As other Hindus, the Dom community also celebrate Chhatha Parva.

5.2.4.4 Maghe Sakranti

The first day of Magh is celebrated as Maghe Sakranti. On the occasion, they like to eat Khichari (A kind of dish made by mixture of rice, pulses and til. The festival is celebrated as a belief of long life. The Dom community eat pig's meat, rice and drink domestic wine.

5.2.4.5 Jur Sital

This festival is celebrated on the first day of Baishakh. Baishakh Purnima is the main day for this festival. They welcome the New Year and farewell the past year. On this day, elder people give blessings by sprinkling fresh water on the head to those relatives who are younger in relation as well as in age. They celebrate this festival happily and hopefully to get happiness. They cook rice, pulse, vegetables, curd, meat etc.

5.2.4.6 Naga Panchami

This is devoted to the worship of the Nagas, the divine serpents. Pictures of the Naga are stuck over the doorposts of all the houses in the morning as protective spells. On this day, Dom people use cow-dung to make model of serpent and display on the wall of their house and worship by offering flowers, incense, milk and apply paste of red power and 'laba' of paddy. One of the important aspects of Naga Panchami is that, if the snake gods are well fed and their images are widely displayed on this special day it is believed that family will be blessed and protected from drought and famine, death from snake bite and disease, loss of possessions and calamity the collapse of names and buildings.

5.2.4.7 Chaurachan

Chaurachan is celebrated with great enthusiasm with an unflinching belief of being blessed with son, have his/her wishes fulfilled and wealth as per one's desire. Also during this festival, people worship moon in the late evening and take food like rice pudding, puri, etc.

5.2.4.8 Faguwa (Hori or Holi)

Holi is the festival of flying colour in the day of full moon of the Falgun. The Dom community observes this festival as one of the most important festivals with the religious significance of Holika's death on this particular day and celebrates this each year. Every body, young or old, boys or girls celebrate this festival happily using different types of colours. They put coloured on each other's body and face, this festival also signal to the beginning of spring season. They eat special sweet dish. Malpuwa (made from flour, sugar and milk), sel, puri, and also drink alcohol and other drinks mixed with "Bhang and Dhathuro". They reach door to door of relatives or friends with dancing singing Hori song and colouring each other.

5.2.5 Food Habits

Every community has its own food habits. Though the Dom community has no any distinct food habits, they usually take two principal meals. The first is taken at about ten o'clock and the second after the sun set. Though they prefer to eat rice but their food items may be any things (rice, wheat etc.) because their food items depend on what they get from their occupation.

The Dom community is non-vegetarians. They keep cock, pigs and goat for income and meat, when their relatives or guests visit their home, rice and chicken are cooked. They even borrow rice from neighbours in such occasions. People feel ashamed if they have to serve wheat.

Smoking beedies/cigarette, drinking wine and chewing betel leaf are quite common among the Dom community. If some relatives visit a family, the family feels necessary to treat him nicely offering him wine, beedies/cigarette and betel leaf.

5.2.6 Dress and Organaments

According to the key informants, the traditional type of dresses of male Doms are Kurta, (a type of shirt), Lungi or Dhoti and the female Doms' traditional dresses are sarees and blouse. The female's traditional ornaments are silver or aluminum earrings, nathiya (a silver bangle wearing in nose) etc.

Nowadays, shirt, Dhoti is worn by old Doms and Pant, Shirt, T-shirt, Shoes are worn by young male Doms. Blouse, Maxi, Sarees are worn by married women and Mini skirts, T-shirt, Maxi, Suruwal, are worn by unmarried girls. Because of the poverty, the quality of clothes and ornaments are always low. The female Doms wear Earrings, Phuli, Tilhari etc. which are made of brass, silver, aluminum and plastics.

5.2.7 Education

Education is an essential factor for accelerating the development of any community. If people are educated, their living standard also improves. Thus education plays a vital role in developing knowledge and skill of the people.

In the past, the Dalits did not send their children to school. Before the establishment of democracy in 1950, no Dalits were given a chance to enter the school education. Therefore, the majority of the Dalits and lower caste are still far behind in the field of education.

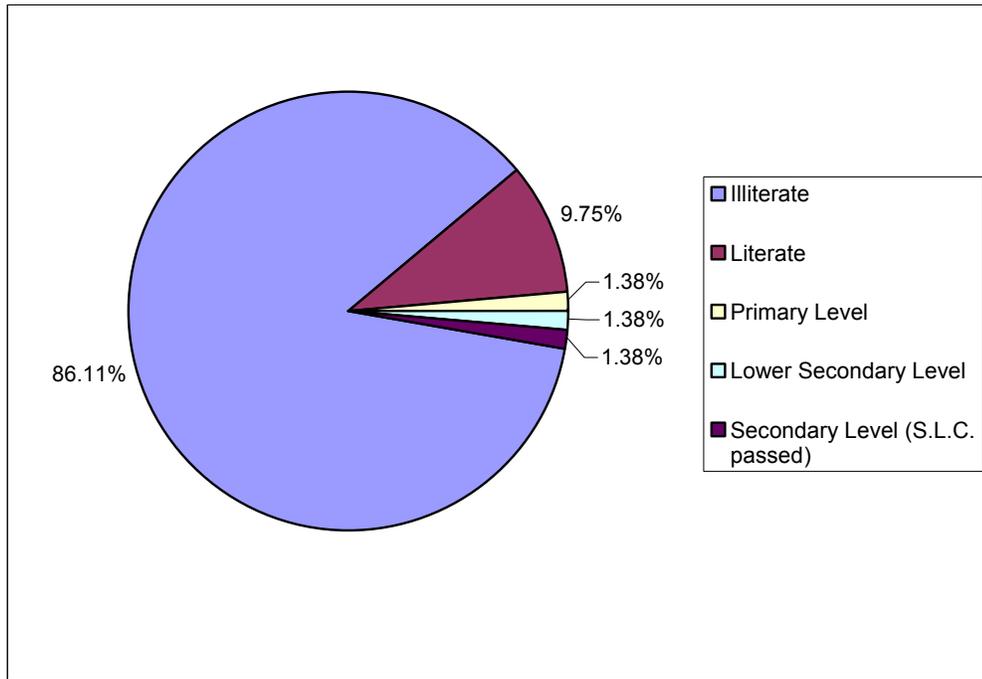
Hence, the Dom community is Dalit (backward and depressed) caste. The community was deprived of education before the promulgation of New Civil code 1964. Even today, they lag behind in the field of education.

Table No. 5.3: Educational Status of the Dom Community

Educational Status	No. of the Respondents		Total	Percentage
	Male	Female		
Illiterate	30	32	62	86.11
Literate	7	0	7	9.75
Primary Level	1	0	1	1.38
Lower Secondary Level	1	0	1	1.38
Secondary Level (S.L.C. passed)	1	0	1	1.38
Total	40	32	72	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006

Figure No. 1: Educational Status



The above table shows that 86.11% of the Dom community was illiterate of the total respondent of the study site. Similarly, the respondent who have got literacy, primary, lower secondary and secondary level were 9.75%, 1.38%, 1.38% and 1.38% respectively. No woman was literate or got any level of education.

5.2.8 Language

The language of the Dom community at the study sites is Maithili. It is different from Nepali and other languages.

Most of the Doms of the study site know to speak Maithili language as their native language but they use Nepali and Hindi languages as lingua franca.

5.2.9 Religion

Religion is a part of culture. Each and every community of the world does have its own religious tradition. The religion of every ethnic group is interwoven with their religious processes.

The Dom community of the study is strongly said that they are Hindu. They worship Hindu Gods and Goddesses like Laxmi, Sita, Ram, Krishna, Vishnu, Durga, Kali etc. They also worship their own Kul Devata (Deities). The deities are Goraiya, Gahil, Kali, Banni, Khatma, etc. They worship their deities in the night of Navami of great festival Dashain. They think that pleasure and misery are directly related with the religion.

5.2.10 Changes in Socio-Cultural Life of the Dom Community

Change is universal fact, so socio-cultural life of the Dom community is being changed gradually. In the past, the Dom community used to live in joint family, but the joint family system is now being declined at the study site. Only 10 families out of 72 families live in joint family and rest of all (i.e. 62) families live in nuclear family.

The cause of breaking joint family system is mainly economic. During the field work, it was asked them why they liked to live in nuclear family, they replied that they liked to live in nuclear family because they liked to live with income which they earned. They do not like to give their income to others. Similarly, marriage system is also changing. In the past, early marriage (babyhood marriage) was in practice but now it is reducing gradually.

Rites of the Dom community are also changing today. Due to the poverty, they are leaving to celebrate Chhaithi or Nwaran. The father or mother himself/herself gives name to the baby.

Murtuary or death rite is also changing. Nowadays, the Dom community of the study site prefers to bury rather than burning because burning is expensive there. Poor Doms can not afford the wood for burning purification ceremony of death rite is being simple because of poverty.

Celebrating different festival is a character of Nepalese people. The Dom community also celebrates different festivals, but the celebrating style is changing. Nowadays, the Dom community of the study site is too much affected by the neighbouring castes. They celebrate Dashain, Deepawali, Chhatha, Maghe Sakranti, Holi, Jur Sital and Chaurachan.

Dressing pattern and ornaments are also changing. In real, more changes can be seen in dressing pattern in Dom community of the study site. It is very difficult to identify the Dom community both male and female at the study site seeing their dresses. They now wear as upper castes. Shirt, Pant, Jacket are popular among male Doms. Saree, Blouse, are popular among married females and Suruwal, Kurta, Shirt, T-shirt and Maxi are popular among unmarried females. But because of their poverty the quality of dresses is always low.

Ornaments are simple although they do not wear traditional types of ornaments. Female Doms wear Tilhari, Mangalsutra, Ring, Earring, Bindi, Nail polish, Cosmetic power, Bangles as ornaments. But because of their poverty, they are made of silver, aluminum and plastics. They wear cheap and low quality ornaments.

Educational status of the Dom community is being changed at the study sites. School enrollment is being started. Now, the parents like to send their children to school.

Change in the study sites can also be seen on the religion. Now, their ways of worshipping of Gods and Deities has become quite flexible. They do not follow their religion more rigidly.

Although they are still Hindu in religion, but changes can be seen in performances. Young Doms are not interested in worship of Gods and Deities.

5.3 Economic and Traditional Life of the Dom Community

5.3.1 Traditional Occupation

It is already mentioned that traditional occupation of the Dom community is grave digging, cremating dead bodies and making a variety of baskets from the bamboo. But the situation has changed a lot. The Dom community is related with making a variety of baskets from a bamboo leaving grave digging and cremating dead bodies now.

Nowadays young Doms like to do work as a sweeper in GOs, NGOs, or INGOs and some of them are working as a sweeper in GOs.

5.3.2 Occupation

In absence of occupation and sufficient income sources, people can not meet their daily needs and demands for the family. Occupational status plays vital role in the promotion of individual and community's status.

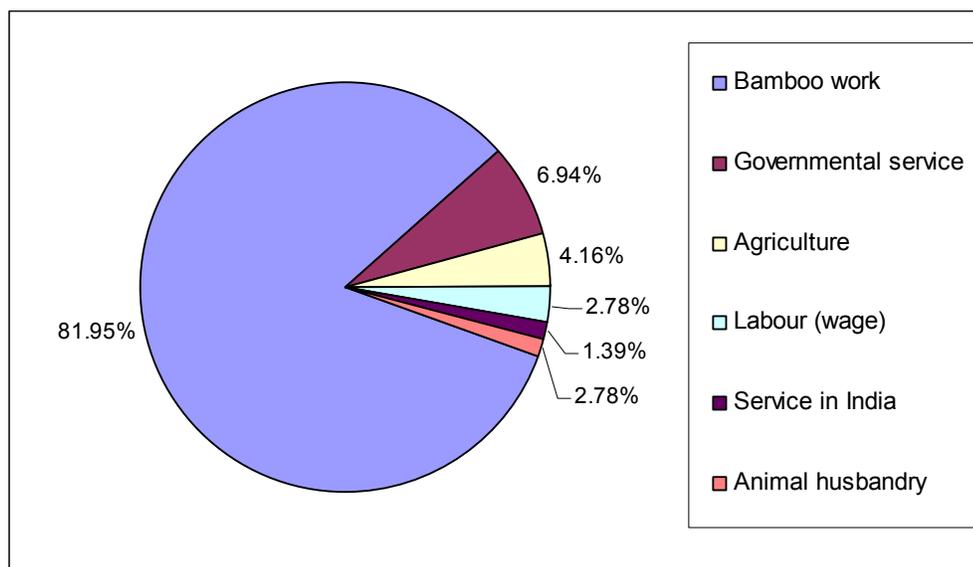
The following table gives a glimpse of the occupational status of the Dom community of the study site.

Table No. 5.4: Distribution of the Respondents by Their Occupation

Occupation	No. of the Respondents		Total	Percentage
	Male	Female		
Bamboo work	29	30	59	81.95
Governmental service	3	2	5	6.94
Agriculture	3	0	3	4.16
Labour (wage)	2	0	2	2.78
Service in India	1	0	1	1.39
Animal husbandry	2	0	2	2.78
Total	40	32	72	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006

Figure No. 2: Occupational Status



The above table shows that the main occupation of the Dom community was the work of bamboo which has occupied the highest number (i.e. 81.95%). It was followed by Governmental service (sweeper) which has occupied (i.e. 6.94%); similarly 4.16%, 2.78%, 1.39% and 2.78% of the total respondents were closely related to agriculture, labour (wage), service in India (sweeper) and animal husbandry respectively.

5.3.3 Land Holding

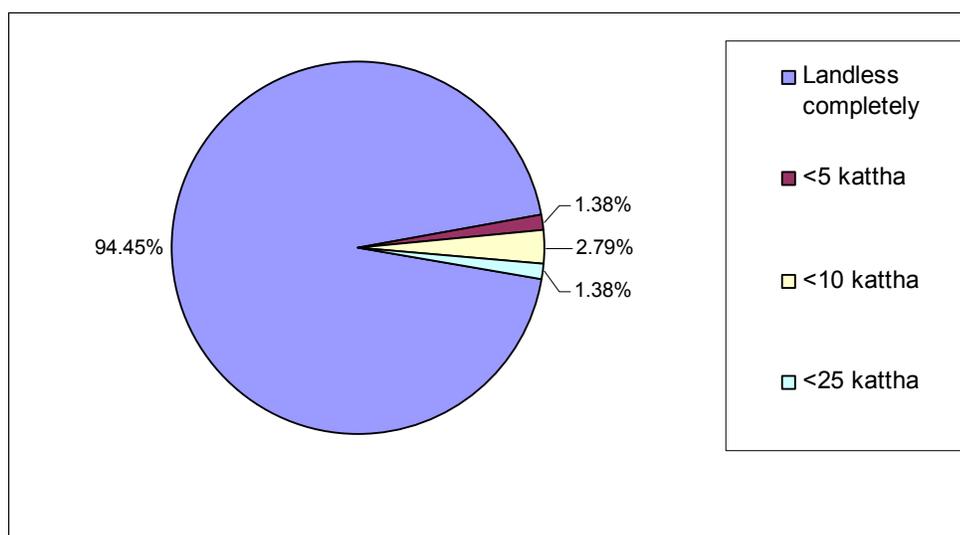
In an agrarian economy, the extent of ownership of land is the main indicator of relative economic status of people. The following table gives the land holding pattern of the Dom community.

Table No. 5.6: Land Holding Pattern of the Dom community

Agricultural Land (in kattha)	Cultivated Ownself	Rented out	No. of HHs	Percentage
Landless completely	-	-	68	94.45
<5 kattha	-	Yes	1	1.38
<10 kattha	Yes	-	2	2.79
<25 kattha	Yes	-	1	1.38
Total			72	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006

Figure No. 3: Land Holding Pattern



Note: 1 Bigaha = 20 Kattha and 1 Hecter = 30 Kattha.

The above table shows that most of the Doms are landless. Among 72 households, 68 households (i.e. 94.45%) were completely landless and 2 households (i.e. 2.79%) among them had less than 10 kattha. Similarly, 1 household (i.e. 1.38%) had less than 25 Kattha and other one household (i.e. 1.38%) had less than 5 kattha.

During the observation it was found that the land which was with the Dom community was low quality and had no any access of irrigation. Therefore the productivity was always very low.

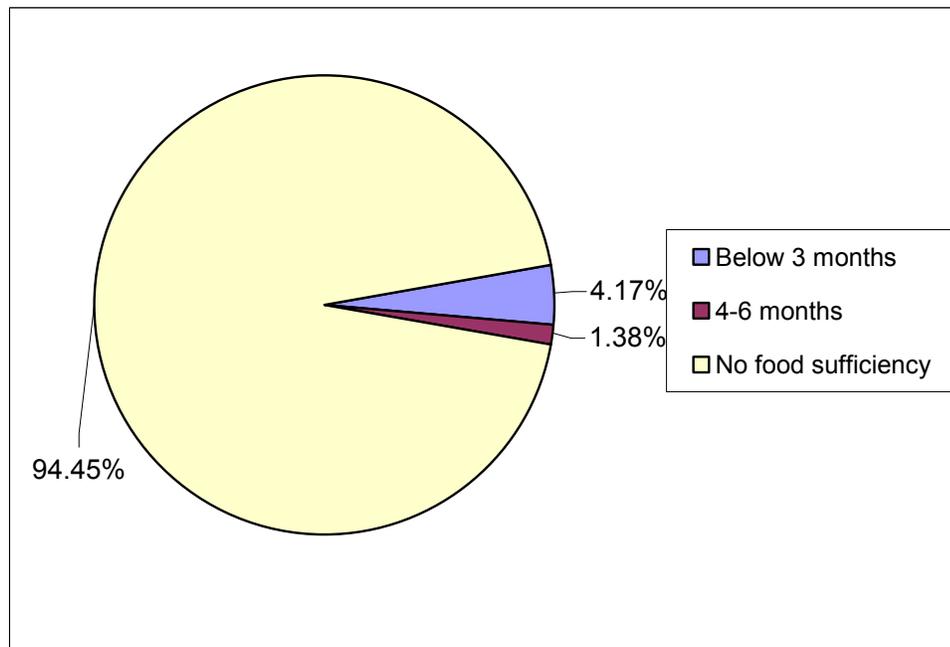
5.3.4 Food Sufficiency

Table No. 5.7: Distribution of the Households by Their Food Sufficiency

Food Sufficiency Months	No. of HHs	Percentage
Below 3 months	3	4.17
4-6 months	1	1.38
No food sufficiency	68	94.45
Total	72	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006

Figure No. 4: Food Sufficiency



The above table shows that among the total households of the Dom community, only 3 households, (i.e. 4.17%) had to meet less than 3 months of their food requirement

form their own agricultural production and only 1 household (i.e. 1.38%) had to meet upto 4 to 6 months of their food requirement from their own agricultural production. Out of the total 72 households, 68 households, (i.e. 94.45%) had no any agricultural production because they had not agricultural land.

Thus, it is clear that the Dom community can't survive only on their own agricultural production.

5.3.5 Livestock

Livestock is also an important source of income of rural people. It supports the farming activity. It is also a source of protein for people. The importance of domestic animals is not limited only to economic aspects. Some animals are socio-culturally and religiously more important in Hindu society.

In the Dom community, they tame different types of domestic animals but in very few numbers. The number of domestic animals and birds is given in the table.

Table No. 5.8: Livestock Keeping in the Dom Community

Livestock	No. of Households	Number
Pig	70	154
Hen	72	146
Duck	10	14
Goat	6	2
Total	-	316

Source: Field Survey, 2006

The above table shows that the number of livestock per household was limited. Four different types of domesticated animals are tamed only for domestic consumption but not for commercial purpose.

The number of domestic animals was not large because from the observation, it was found that there was no forest nearby for cattle raising. Some respondents explained that for cattle raising, the limited landholding is a severe constraint. It was also found that livestock products like milk and ghee will not be bought in market from

untouchable people like Doms. So, the Dom community does not like to tame domestic animals in large scale.

Thus, it appears that the animal husbandry in some extent is directly influenced by the limited landholding and their being untouchable caste.

5.3.6 Status of Indebtness

Table No. 5.9: Distribution of the HHs by Indebtness

Indebtness	No. of HHs	Percentage
Formal sector	2	2.78
Informal sector	8	11.11
No Indebted	62	86.11
Total	72	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006

The above table shows that most of the Dom community was not indebted. 62 households (i.e. 86.11%) were free from indebtedness. Out of the total 72 households, only 2 households (i.e. 2.78%) were indebted from formal sector; Small Farmer Development Project (SFDA) which is called Sana Kisan Vikas Aayojana. And the only 8 households (i.e. 11.11%) were indebted from informal sectors (local upper caste people) whose rate of interest was very high (i.e. 36% to 60%) but the SFDA's rate is 16% to 18%.

5.4 Preference on Health Care

The National Health Policy is adopted in order to bring about improvement in the health conditions of the people of Nepal. The primary objective of the National Health Policy is to extend the primary health care system to the rural people so that they benefit from modern medical facilities and trained health care providers.

Health care system of a society is influenced by the various factors e.g. cultural practices and belief, income, education, accessibility, awareness and attitude. The

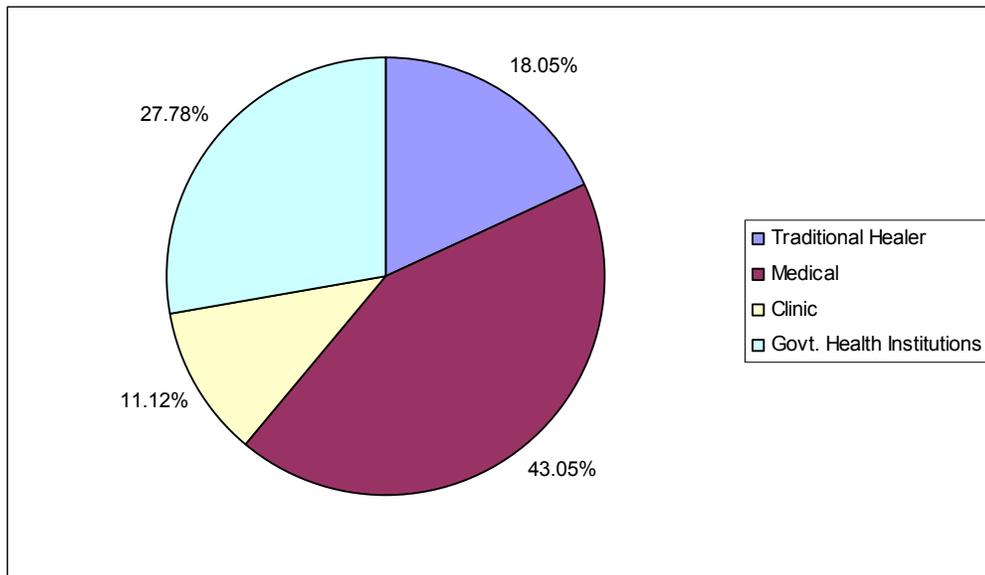
respondents of the Dom community asked about their preference in health care services and information is put here in the table.

Table No. 5.10: Distribution of the Respondents by Their Preference on Health Care

Health Services Providers	No. of the Respondents	Percentage
Traditional Healer	13	18.05
Medical	31	43.05
Clinic	8	11.12
Govt. Health Institutions	20	27.78
Total	72	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006

Figure No. 5: Preference on Health Care Practices



The above table shows that out of the 72 respondents, most of them (i.e. 43.05%) went to medical which is followed by 18.05% percent who went to traditional healer for health care. Similarly, 27.78% and 11.12% of the total respondents went to governmental health institutions and clinic for health care services respectively.

It is concluded that due to poverty and lack of health care knowledge (awareness), they didn't get proper health care from these health care providers.

5.5 Citizenship Status and Doing vital Registration

All the people of the country have to the right to get their citizenship to be a real citizen of the country. Citizenship is a real certificate of the citizen of the country which plays vital role in daily activities as well as academic and administrative fields. Similarly, all the people of the country have the responsibility to register their marriage, birth of children, death of family members in government office (V.D.C/Municipality).

Table No. 5.11: Distribution of the Respondents by Their Citizenship Status

Citizenship Status	No. of the Respondents	Percentage
Got. Citizenship	43	59.72
Not Got. Citizenship	29	40.28
Total	72	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006

The above table reveals that out of the total 72 respondents of the Dom community, 59.72% respondents had got citizenship but 40.28% respondents had not got citizenship yet due to different reasons: not availability of related documents, lack of money, lack of awareness, tedious administrative procedures, being cancelled citizenship certificate on 2054 B.S. by government and so on.

Table No. 5.12: Distribution of the Respondents by Their Doing Vital Registration

Vital Registration	No. of the Respondents	Percentage
Registered	40	55.55
Not Registered	32	44.45
Total	72	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006

The above table shows that out of the total 72 respondents, only 55.55% respondents had done vital registration but 44.45% had not done. The causes of not doing vital registration were lack of money, lack of awareness, tedious administrative procedures,

administrative officials, being cancelled citizenship certificate on 2054 B.S. by government and so on.

5.6 Access/Approach in the Political Participation and the Local Resource Management

Political aspect is one of the most important part of the social life of human being which is inseparable with man/women directly or indirectly. Similarly, all the people of the society have the right and responsibility to handle and manage the local resources (i.e. school management committee, public works/affairs).

Table No. 5.13: Distribution of the Respondents by Their Political Participation

Political Affaires	No. of the Respondents	Percentage
Polling in Election	66	91.66
Member of a party	0	0.00
Candidate in Election	0	0.00
No. participation	6	8.34
Total	72	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006

The above table shows that out of the total 72 respondents, 66 respondents (i.e. 91.66%) were participated in polling in the election. But 6 respondents (8.34%) had not found any relation with political participation in any level.

Table No. 5.14: Distribution of Respondents by their Approach in Local Resource Management

Local Resource Management Affairs	No. of the Respondents	Percentage
School Management Communities	0	0.00
Public work/ Affairs	15	20.83
No. Approach	57	79.17
Total	72	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006

The above table shows that out of the total 72 respondents, 57 respondents (i.e. 97.17%) had have approach in local resource management and only 15 respondents (i.e. 20.83%) had have no approach in any local resource management.

5.7 Relation of the Dom community with Other Caste People

According to Hindu caste system, the Dom caste belongs to untouchable. So, they can not get all social opportunities in the Hindu society. None of the clean castes get food or water from them and avoid physical contact where possible. But the constitution of Nepal 1963 and 1990 theoretically forbade caste based discrimination in Nepal.

However, it is found a satisfactory relationship between the Dom community and other castes. The other castes people had have necessity to come in close contact with the Dom community for various reasons (i.e. to buy basketry products).

In the democratic system a single vote is also valuable for election. So many political parties were in close contact with the Dom community in the election period. In this way, the relation is being nearer and nearer with other caste people in the study site.

5.8 Social status of the Dom community in Society

The Dom community belongs to Hindu religion. But they are untouchable. The high caste people do not take food and water from them. The Dom community has its own tube-well.

But after 1990, the situation has changed a lot. The feeling of untouchable among young generation is being limited (reduced). During the interview, some Doms told that some male Tharu of the village come to their home and drink wine and eat chicken meat made by their hands.

Although, the position of the Dom community in caste hierarchy was still low, the feeling of untouchability is not rigid as it was in the past. Therefore, it can be said that the social status of the Dom community in the society is gradually improving.

5.9 Contemporary Adaptation Problems of the Dom Community

Feeling of untouchability is not so rigid as it was in the past in the society, but the Dom community is still facing adaptation problems. First of all, they are sudra and their traditional occupation are grave-digging, cremating dead bodies and making a variety of baskets form the bamboo which are known as the dirty works.

In the Dom community “drinking wine” and “quarreling” among themselves are very common. During the field work, the researcher also observed their quarrels many times. Researcher found that most of the Dom community people was taking domestic wine, beedies, cigarettes, betel leaf and so on. The Dom community has divided works on the basis of gender/sex. The male Doms only can control economic resources of the family but females have to be done domestic work and other works including their occupation. It is found that the Dom community is doing marriage to their children in babyhood also but this trend is gradually reducing now. It is also found that this community can say the surrounding villages to other Doms in terms of money or other assets. Seeing their such types of bahaviours, other caste people hate them.

In this way, other caste people do not like to give them equal status as themselves. Therefore, “adaptation” is being difficult for them is a society. Good education and awareness generating programmes are very essential for them.

5.10 Reaction Against Social Exclusion

Generally, social exclusion means discrimination among different castes concerning with activities which are directly or indirectly associated with a society. The Dom community considered that social exclusion is our problem in the ways of improving and enhancing their life style. The reactions of the Dom community against social exclusions are:

- a) Social exclusion should be changed.
- b) Government should take policy against social exclusion.

- c) Government should give more rights to minority groups and Dalits in different fields.
- d) It is not good trend/process of development, so we all communities take policies against it.
- e) COs, NGOs, and INGOs can take policies and strategies which lead to reduce social exclusions.

5.11 Efforts of the NGOs/INGOs and Government

There are different types of COs, NGOs/INGOs which are working to improve and enhance the life style of Dalits, but there is not seen any positive sign of the improvement of the Dom community life style. Gradually, social awareness is improving and enhancing among the Dom community of the study site.

CHAPTER – 6

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This chapter is a brief summary and conclusion of the situational analysis of the Dom community of the study site.

6.1 Terai Dalit as a Group

The National Dalit Commission noted 15 distinct cultural groups within Terai Dalits but the 2001 census identified only 11 groups within them. They are as follows: Tatma, Khatwe, Paswan, Musahar, Bantar, Dhobi, Chamar, Chidimar, Patharkatta/Kushwadia, Dom and Halkhor. They have the plural cultural identities: each cultural group has its own culture in terms of performing life cycle rituals and maintaining the closeness and distance to each other in their day-to-day life. The common features among the Terai Dalits are: i) They are Hindus and ii) They speak Maithili as their mother tongue. The Nepali, the national language of Nepal, is the second language for most of the Dalit groups of this site. Within this larger Terai Dalit category, the Dom community is living in the Terai areas, especially in the eastern and central region of Nepal. Detailed sociological/anthropological or cultural study on Terai Dalits is virtually non-existent.

6.2 Population

According to the 2001 census, the population of Dalits as a whole stands at 2,675,817 which constitute 11.6 percent of the country's total. Of the total Dalit population the population of Terai Dalits is only 886,839 or 35.4 percent. Among the Terai Dalits, the Musahar and Chamar are the largest groups in population size; the population size of these two groups combined account 49.8 percent of the total Terai Dalit population. The Musahar is the largest population group (number: 269,661 or 30.6%) and the Dom is relatively a small group (8,931 or 1.0%) among the Terai Dalits. The average household size is higher (6 members and above) than the national level, suggesting high fertility in the Dom community. The sex ratio is also high, indicating a high female mortality in the study site.

6.3 Economy

The Terai Dalits are the poorest group in Nepali society. Throughout history, they have lived in symbiosis with other sections of people who are generally higher in social, economic and political status than them. In the study site, most of the households (i.e. 94.45%) are landless. In terms of food sufficiency 94.45% of the Dom community of the study site has got chronic shortage of food throughout the year.

The Dom community has its own traditional caste occupation. This community is used to make basketry products and sell them. This community sells surrounding villages within the caste in terms of money and other assets. This community also tames pigs, hens, goats and other domestic animals. Women do more household work and basketry work than men. The wood and domestic animal-dung are the main fuel resources even today.

Attitude towards saving is minimal. When they earn little money some portion of that money goes to drinking domestic wine and so on.

As a whole the Dom community is the most poor group among the Terai Dalits though it is the larger single Dalit group numerically in the Terai, Nepal.

6.4 Degree of Caste-based Discrimination

Though untouchability has been abolished by law in Nepal in 1963, our study shows persistence of untouchability in relation to the exchange of water and food with communities considered to be higher in social hierarchy. In some cases the commensal norms have been weakened at public places such as market areas, etc. There is virtually little discrimination in schools in sitting together or while sharing and drinking water to each other. The intra-Dalit caste - based discrimination is very high, keeping intact their own vertical nature of caste hierarchy and maintaining strictly their own sense of superiority and inferiority in dealing with people of different communities.

The process of sanskritization, however, is showing effects to the Dom community, the community started giving up their family names which is considered derogatory

and put family names which are respectable locally. For example, the Dom prefer to call Mallik than Dom or Domra.

6.5 Education

Except for the other Terai Dalits the Dom community has no level of education as a whole but it is moving towards the positive trend. The literacy rate of the Dom community is the lowest than other Terai Dalits and thus poses a great challenge for the government to provide education for all by the year 2015.

6.6 Women

The Terai Dalit women are the least educated group, but culturally they are more free, open and receptive group than the high caste Hindu women of the Terai. A widow among the Terai Dalit can remarry without problem and there is less social stigma attached to mix up with men within or outside of the community. They can do the wage labor job outside home sharing hands with males in various activities. Women also have a significant role in all economic and income generation activities; they go to the market to sell goods and buy consumer items. They also play an important role in social functions and ritual matters. Generally they have a lower social status than men and only few women have decision-making powers within the community.

Women are more sufferers than males within the Dom community. As the Dom community is systematically integrated in the patriarchal model of the Hindu caste structure, their social and economic status is much lower to that of males.

6.7 Health Condition

Data reflecting the health conditions of Dalits is virtually non-existent. The life expectancy of Dalit is much lower (50.8 years) than the national average (57 years). Likewise, the infant mortality is much higher (116.5 per 1000 live births) compared to the national average of only 79. Nutritional status of both the male and female is poor and many women are suffering from a number of diseases, including the sexually transmitted diseases. The Human Development Index of Dalit populations as whole is lowest (0.239) compared to the national average (0.325).

The Dom community comes under the above mentioned facts. The Dom community has not met all the facts which has mentioned above even today.

6.8 Sanitation

A majority of the households of the Dom community of study site have access to drinking water from tube-well and they have their own tube-wells on the basis of private or public within the community because they are not allowed to fetch water from private or public tube-wells from other caste peoples. None of the households of the study site have toilet facility. Most of them use an open space, forest and bush area for defecation. Most of the people of both adults and children use water only for washing hands before meal and after defecation. Nearly half of the total households in all areas throw household waste close to the household surroundings.

6.9 Traditional Leadership

The Dom community has its own traditional leadership locally known as "Mainjan" in the study site. In fact, the local leadership at the village level is known as "javar" and many jawars made one Mainjan. Mainjan controls over all the jawars' activities and guide them about their role and functions. The Mainjan can decide on social matters and impose punishment for crimes and offenses like adultery, elopement, disputes over land and water, disrespect for traditional customs, etc.

6.10 Political Representation

The representation of Terai Dalits groups in the local, district and national body were very low. Less than one percent of the total population of Terai Dalits were represented in the local body in the study site. The Dom community has no representation in the local, district and national body of the study site.

CHAPTER - 7

RECOMMENDATIONS

The major issue of concern is poverty of the Terai Dalit communities in Nepal. Poverty has wide ramifications in the life of the Terai Dalit groups as it is systematically tied with landlessness, lack of enough food, education, health and participating in politics, particularly in the local government bodies. In addition, the caste-based discrimination is paramount and observed in all the study site. Despite all efforts in the fields of education and health by the government and various NGOs/INGOs the impacts of these programs are still minimal in the areas of study. So recommendations are out lined here on five major areas: caste-based discrimination, economy, health, education and political representation.

1. Caste-based Discrimination

- i) Dalit discrimination is identified as the primary are of concern in the study site. Recommendations for gradually minimizing the caste based discriminations are:
 - a) Putting both the Dalit and non-Dalit groups together and creating awareness among them. The lesson is: Caste-based discrimination is harmful for the development of society as a whole. This has to be done bringing a lot of illusions from the different parts of the world, b) punish all those people who discriminate people in their day-to-day life, endorsing strong legal measures.

- ii) Intra-caste based discrimination is also widely observed in the study site and this has effected the larger goal of Dalit solidarity among Terai Dalits. Culturally they are deeply ingrained in caste based discrimination and there is a strict hierarchical order in terms of food, marriage and rituals among the Terai Dalit. In other words, culturally all of them are endogamous groups and one group does not accept food and water from the other member of the different Dalit group. Recommendations for this issue are:
 - a) increase dialogues among the various Dalit groups of the Terai which should focus on accepting food and water from each other; ii) increase inter-caste marriage among the Terai Dalit groups. These both activities can be done gradually with the help of "Mainjan", the traditional headman of each community in the area. The dialogue should start among the Mainjans of various cultural groups.

2. Economy

As most of the Dom community is landless or marginal landholders, it is not wise to focus their attention on agriculture and animal husbandry. The Dom community only raises pigs. The only alternative available to improve their economy is to sharpen their traditional skills. The Dom community of the study site possesses some level of skill in their traditional occupation, but this skill has yet to develop fully to compete in the market with other groups. This needs both: better technology to utilize their skill fully and the market of their finished products. The NGOs/INGOs and the government can play significant role to improve their skills further while providing of guarantee for the finished products. For example, this community has an excellent skill in making bamboo baskets.

3. Education

Though the education is gradually not taking a good shape among the Terai Dalit communities, there is need of concerted effort both by the government and the NGOs/INGOs to improve the level of education by sex and age in the study site. Recommendations for improving the present level of education by age and sex are:

- i) Include the skills of Terai Dalit, especially the Dom community in the informal, formal and vocation level educational program so that Dalit children are prepared mentally to upgrade their traditional skills; other children will also be largely benefited from this skill enhancement training program; it will further improve interaction between the Dalit and non-Dalit students.
- ii) Make the quota system for Terai Dalit children, especially to the Dom community for getting admission and provide financial support for getting all levels of education, including the technical courses such as the medicine and engineering. The Dalit parents will be more motivated to send their children to the school when they know that the government has reserved the quota for their children, including the areas like medicine and engineering.

4. Health

Recommendations for improving health situations of three communities are:

- i) Create awareness among the Terai Dalits (the Dom community) for the use of private latrine and its benefits in avoiding diarrhea and other diseases.
- ii) Enhance the knowledge and practice of family planning services to both the eligible females (15-19 years of age) and males so that fertility rate of these groups could be curtailed gradually.

5. Political Representation

There policy should be changed in such a way that some seats at the higher level should be reserved for the Terai Dalit groups, especially the Dom community so that they can come to the power which ultimately influences to the district and local bodies.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX – I

Caste/Ethnic Composition of Siraha – district, Nepal

Caste/Ethnic Groups	Total	Male	Female	Percentage
Chhetri	7588	3865	3723	1.33
Brahman – Hill	7664	3920	3744	1.34
Magar	7045	3566	3479	1.23
Tharu	27252	13669	13583	4.78
Tamang	6238	3219	3019	1.09
Newar	7559	3962	3597	1.32
Muslim	41478	20939	20539	7.27
Kami	2734	1428	1306	0.47
Yadav	137622	71866	65756	24.14
Rai	1825	932	893	0.32
Gurung	315	153	162	0.05
Damai/Dholi	786	391	395	0.13
Limbu	765	405	360	0.13
Thakuri	1038	546	492	0.18
Sarki	2517	1238	1279	0.44
Teli	28186	14507	13679	4.94
Chamar/Harijan/Ram	26670	13507	13163	4.67
Koiri	31453	16334	15119	5.51
Kurmi	7061	3608	3453	1.23
Sanyasi	1008	525	483	0.17
Dhanuk	22138	11210	10928	3.88
Musahar	31519	16032	15487	5.70
Dusadh/Paswan/Pasi	15775	8131	7644	2.76
Sherpa	649	348	301	0.11
Sonar	2136	1111	1025	0.37
Kewat	12539	6280	6259	2.20
Brahman – Tarai	4589	2364	2225	0.80
Baniya	7375	3821	3554	1.29
Gharti/Bhujel	610	328	282	0.10
Mallah	12107	6194	5913	2.12
Kalwar	2784	1411	1373	0.48
Kumal	785	406	379	0.13
Hajam/Thakur	8852	4584	4268	1.55
Kanu	111	56	55	0.01
Rajbansi	48	20	28	0.00
Sunuwar	2706	1409	1297	0.47
Sudhi	16217	8445	7772	2.84

Lohar	441	225	216	0.07
Tatma	10301	5215	5086	1.80
Khatwe	7984	4148	3836	1.40
Dhobi	4176	2150	2026	0.73
Majhi	437	230	207	0.07
Nuniya	101	54	47	0.01
Kumhar	1714	868	846	0.30
Danuwar	6677	3320	3357	1.17
Haluwai	9563	5028	4535	1.67
Rajput	2102	1078	1024	0.36
Kayastha	2607	1312	1295	0.45
Badhae	3062	1570	1492	0.53
Marwadi	667	356	311	0.11
Santhal/sattar	165	71	94	0.02
Jhagar/Dhagar	1177	609	568	0.20
Bantar	1341	654	687	0.23
Barae	5207	2660	2547	0.43
Kahar	6	4	2	0.00
Gangai	3	0	3	0.00
Rajbhar	1128	599	529	0.19
Thami	1	0	1	0.00
Dhimal	17	6	11	0.00
Bhote	486	240	246	0.08
Bing/Binda	759	372	387	0.13
Bhediya/Gaderi	535	289	246	0.09
Nurang	32	15	17	0.00
Yakkha	13	4	9	0.00
Darai	8	2	6	0.00
Tajpuriya	9	3	6	0.00
Chidimar	5	2	3	0.00
Pahari	4	2	2	0.00
Mali	741	385	356	0.13
Bangali	342	174	168	0.06
Chhantel	1	0	1	0.00
Dom	1266	652	614	0.22
Kamar	1536	785	751	0.26
Bote	7	0	7	0.00
Brahmu/Baramu	4	2	2	0.00
Gaine	4	2	2	0.00
Jirel	6	0	6	0.00
Adibasi/Janajati	209	109	100	0.03
Dura	1	0	1	0.00
Churaute	96	55	41	0.01
Meche	48	20	28	0.00

Lepcha	5	0	5	0.00
Halkhor	316	169	147	0.05
Punjabi/Sikh	198	109	89	0.03
Kisan	12	6	6	0.00
Raji	2	0	2	0.00
Byangsi	15	9	6	0.00
Dhunia	47	23	24	0.00
Jaine	33	15	18	0.00
Raute	1	1	0	0.00
Kusunda	2	0	2	0.00
Unidentified Dalit	1201	611	590	0.21
Unidentified Caste	15315	7736	7579	2.68
Total	569880	292679	277201	100

Source: CBS, 2001

APPENDIX – II

Population Composition According To Caste/Ethnicity of Nepal

Caste/Ethnic Groups	Total Number	Percentage
Chhetri	3593496	15.80
Brahman-hill	2896477	12.74
Magar	1622421	7.14
Tharu	1533879	6.75
Tamang	1282304	5.64
Newar	1245232	5.48
Muslim	971056	4.27
Kami	895954	3.94
Yadav	895423	3.94
Rai	635151	2.79
Gurung	543571	2.39
Damai/Dholi	390305	1.72
Limbu	359379	1.58
Thakuri	334120	1.47
Sarki	318989	1.40
Teli	304536	1.34
Chamar/Harijan/Ram	269661	1.19
Koiri	251274	1.11
Kurmi	212842	0.94
Sanyasi	199127	0.88
Dhanuk	188150	0.83
Musahar	172434	0.76
Dusadh/Paswan/Pyasi	158525	0.70
Sherpa	154622	0.68
Sonar	145088	0.64
Kewat	136953	0.60
Brahman-Terai	134496	0.59
Baniya	126971	0.56
Gharti/Bhujel	117568	0.52
Mallah	115986	0.51
Kalwar	115606	0.51
Kumal	99389	0.44
Hajam/Thakur	98169	0.43

Kanu	95826	0.42
Rajbansi	95812	0.42
Sunuwar	95254	0.42
Sudhi	89856	0.40
Lohar	82637	0.36
Tatma	76512	0.34
Khatwe	74972	0.33
Dhobi	73413	0.32
Majhi	72614	0.32
Nuniya	66873	0.29
Kumhar	54413	0.24
Danuwar	53229	0.23
Chepang (Praja)	52237	0.23
Haluwai	50583	0.22
Rajput	48454	0.21
Kayastha	46071	0.20
Badhae	45975	0.20
Marwadi	43971	0.19
Santhal/Satar	42698	0.19
Jhagar/Dhagar	41764	0.18
Bantar	35839	0.16
Barae	35434	0.16
Kahar	34531	0.15
Gangai	31318	0.14
Lodha	24738	0.11
Rajbhar	24263	0.11
Thami	22999	0.10
Dhimal	19537	0.09
Bhote	19261	0.08
Bing/Binda	18720	0.08
Bhediya/Gaderi	17729	0.08
Nurang	17522	0.08
Yakkha	17003	0.07
Darai	14859	0.07
Tajpuriya	13250	0.06
Thakali	12973	0.06
Chidimar	12296	0.05
Pahari	11505	0.05

Mali	11390	0.05
Bangali	9860	0.04
Chhantel	9814	0.04
Dom	8931	0.04
Kumar	8761	0.04
Bote	7969	0.04
Brahmu/Baramu	7383	0.03
Gaine	5887	0.03
Jirel	5316	0.02
Adibasi/Janajati	5259	0.02
Dura	5169	0.02
Churaute	4893	0.02
Badi	4442	0.02
Meche	3763	0.02
Lepcha	3660	0.02
Halkhor	3621	0.02
Punjabi/Sikh	3054	0.01
Kisan	2876	0.01
Raji	2399	0.01
Byangsi	2103	0.01
Hayu	1821	0.01
Koche	1429	0.01
Dhunia	1231	0.01
Walung	1148	0.01
Jaine	1015	0.00
Munda	660	0.00
Raute	658	0.00
Yehalmo	579	0.00
Kuswadiya/Patharkatta	552	0.00
Kusunda	164	0.00
Unidentified Dalit/Dalit	173401	0.76
Unidentified Caste/Ethnic Group	231641	1.02

Sources: CBS, 2001

APPENDIX - III

Population Composition of Dalits and Ethnic Groups of Nepal

Caste/Ethnic Groups	Number of the total population	Percentage
Ethnic Groups	8460041	37%
Dalits	2829494	12%
Others	11861888	51%

Source: CBS, 2001

APPENDIX - IV

Caste-wise Population Composition of Dalits of Nepal

S.N.	Caste	Number of the total population	Percentage
1	Kami	895954	3.94
2	Damai	390305	1.72
3	Sarki	318989	1.40
4	Chamar	269661	1.19
5	Musahar	172434	0.76
6	Dushad	158525	0.64
7	Sonar	145088	0.36
8	Lohar	82637	0.34
9	Tatma	76512	0.33
10	Khatwe	74972	0.16
11	Bantar	35839	0.05
12	Chidimar	12296	0.04
13	Dom	8931	0.03
14	Gaine	5887	0.02
15	Badi	4442	0.02
16	Halkhor	3621	0.3
17	Others	173401	12
	Total	2829494	

Source: CBS, 2001

APPENDIX - V

Population Composition of Dalits by Terai Region/District

District	Population	Percentage of the District Total Population
Saptari	84,429	18.1
Siraha	82,334	17.9
Parsa	62,180	16.7
Bara	68,105	16.4
Mahottari	71,808	16.3
Danusha	76,419	14.1
Rauthat	56,913	13.7
Sarlahi	61,101	12.4
Sunsari	27,877	6.0
Rupandehi	28,612	5.5
Kapilbastu	20,115	5.4
Nawalparasi	22,202	5.1
Morang	29,542	4.4

Source: CBS, 2001

APPENDIX - VI

Population Composition of Dom community by District/Development Region

District	Male	Female	Total	Development Region	
Panchthar	8	4	12	Eastern Development Region	
Jhapa	75	89	164		
Morang	174	181	355		
Sunsari	476	402	878		
Dhankuta	5	4	09		
Khotang	1	0	01		
Udaypur	25	26	51		
Saptari	757	658	1415		
Siraha	652	614	1266	Central Development Region	
Dhanusha	483	431	914		
Mahottari	376	348	724		
Sarlahi	321	274	595		
Sindhuli	18	17	35		
Kathmandu	2	2	4		
Nuwakot	2	1	3		
Rautahat	388	361	749		
Bara	298	288	586	Western Development Region	
Parsa	457	442	899		
Lamjung	1	0	1		
Nawalparasi	108	93	201		
Rupandehi	47	47	94		
Kapilbastu	3	0	3		
Banke	1	0	1		Mid-western Dev. Region
Bardiya	1	0	1		
Jajarkot	1	1	2		
Bajhang	1	1	2	Far-western Dev. Region	
Achham	1	0	1		
Doti	2	0	2		
Dadeldhura	1	0	1		
Baitadi	3	3	6		

Source: CBS, 2001

APPENDIX - VII

Questionnaire for Household Survey

1. Introduction

Full Name of Interviewee:	VDC/Municipality:
Age (completed year):	Word No.:
Sex:	Tole/Village:
Religion:	Household No.:
Education:	Origin place:
Time spent in VDC/Municipality (in yrs)	

2. Socio-Demographic Information of Household.

S.N.	Name	Age	Sex	Marital Status	Educational Status	Occupation	
						Primary	Secondary

3. How much land do you have?

Types of land	Total land	Cultivated ownself	Rented in	Rented out

4. What do you grow on your land?

S.N.	Major types of crops	Production

5. Is the production sufficient to meet the annual food required of the family?

- a) Yes b) No

6. If No, what are the major sources of income which help you to manage family in the food deficit months?

- a) b) c) d)

7. What type of animals do you have?

S.N.	Type of animals	Number

8. What are the main sources of cooking fuels?

- a) b) c) d)

20. What is your access in local resources management?

i) In the management committee of school: a) Yes b) No

ii) Participation in local development works/affairs: a) Yes b) No

21. Do you have approach in political participation?

a) Yes b) No

22. If Yes, in which political activities do you involve?

a) As a voter b) As a candidate in election

c) As a general member of a party.

d) As a active member of a party.

23. What is the condition of your family in terms of work division, market approach and control in resources on the basis of sex?

.....

24. Is social exclusion your problem?

a) Yes b) No

25. If Yes, what is your reaction about social exclusion?

.....

26. What are the reasons of doing early marriage in your caste?

.....

27. Why and how do your caste sell a village within the caste as an asset?

.....

APPENDIX – VIII

Checklist for Key Informant

1. Birth Rituals (before and after birth):
2. Marriage Rituals (in details):
3. Death Rituals (in details, who participate, who brings what and when):
4. Festivals:

APPENDIX – IX

Checklist for Focus Group Discussion

1. Please, say about your origin place?
- a. Inter-caste relationship
- b. Caste-based discrimination
2. What are the main causes of your backwardness?
.....
3. Do you want to change your traditional occupation?
.....
4. If yes, why?
.....
5. Have you seen any changes on what? in what sense? after 1990?
.....
6. What is your reaction about social exclusion? do they understand the term social exclusion? better to simplify the term so that they can understand what you asking
.....
7. What can be done against (reduce) social exclusion?
10. Please evaluate what to evaluate? as whole

APPENDIX – X

Checklist for Observation

1. Settlement Pattern (where it is located):

2. Types of Houses:

3. Sanitation:

4. Condition of Children (cleanliness):

5. Location of Animal Shed:

6. Assets they have:

7. a. Cleanliness of kitchen.

b. Cleanliness of bed room:

c. Cleanliness of source of water:

d. Cleanliness of drain: