

# **CONCLUSION**

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The Chamars are often given respectable ancestry and their outcaste condition is attributed to the violation of Aryan laws by some Brahmanical traditions. The Kera Vara (Chamar) according to Manu, is one 'who cuts leather' is descended from a 'Vishad father' and 'Vaideh mother', and is again viewed to be the child of a Brahmin father and Sudra Mother.

There are several legends about the origin of Chamars. One of the most common legends, once upon a time there was a king who had two daughters, Chamu and Bamu. Each of the daughters had a son of great physical power. One day an elephant died in the palace. The king did not throw its body. He enquired if there was any one strong enough to carry the carcass away, Chamu's son performed the task and Manu's son declared him an out-caste.

The Chamars are mainly tanners or leather workers in Nepal and in Southern Parts of Nepal, particularly, Terai region. They are Hindus. The religious practices of the Chamars are in some respects different from those of the upper castes. In spite of several changes, Sanskritic elements occupy a minor place in their religious system.

The Chamars, as such, do not constitute a homogeneous and cogent cultural entity. They generally speak Maithili language, depending upon the region in which they live. In spite of large scale disassociation with the traditional occupation, a good majority of the Chamars are engaged in manual work. They traditionally work as leather workers, makers of shoes, farm labourers, domestic servants and rickshaw puller. The occupations of Chamars differ from place to place of habitation.

The Chamars prefer to live in joint family. The authority of the Chamar family is mainly vested on the male head. They are endogamous and therefore, marry within their own caste groups. Their marriage takes place comparatively at an early age and are mostly arranged by the parents, guardians or relatives. They eat meat mostly of all kinds of animals. But now the situation has changed and the Chamars, in general, have stopped eating meat of dead animals and beef. They live mostly in the outskirts of the village and predominantly in Kachi house with thatched roof. For clothes, they use Dhoti- Kurta because of their economic condition and their dress pattern depends on the place where they live.

Although Caste discrimination had begun in Nepal about 2500 years ago untouchability got its root only about 1500 years ago. In fact *Dalits* were forced to be *Dalits*. They had their own identity in the beginning. History says that caste system did not exist in early time in Nepal. Later on castes were divided according to the works performed by them. This kind of division of works led to untouchability. People were divided into four major castes - *Brahmin, Kshatriya, Baisya and Sudra*. *Sudras* were the lowest caste and regarded as unholy. It happened so in Nepal, during the Lichchhabi King- Man Dev. Untouchability existed in India at the same time and it deeply influenced the then Lichchhabi King Man Dev.

After the unification of Nepal by Prithivi Narayan Shah a new structure of Hindu Kingdom based on caste system and untouchability was established in Nepal. During the regime of king Surendra Bir Bikaram Shah and Junga Bahadur introduced *Muluki Ain* in 1854 A.D. and it enforced recognition of social discrimination and untouchability in Nepal.

Sarbajit Biswokarma of Baglung and Jadubir Rasaili of Dilaran were the pioneers of racial movement in Nepal. They started the movement in 1947 A.D.

Followed by this, 110 *Dalits* entered into the temple of Pashupatinath under the leadership of Saharshanath Kapali in 1954 A.D. Total 750 people including, 450 women were arrested for this endeavor. While fetching the water from various sources, *Dalit* women had to face various problems. *Pariganit Nari Sangh* was established in 1955 A.D. to resolve the problem. This organization was merged with *Nepal Rastriya Dalit Jana Bikash Parishad* in 1958 A.D. In 1959 A.D. a public feast was held in Bankali represented by *Chyames, Podes, Kainis, Dainais, Sarkis, Kusides and others*. In fact, this was the first collective campaign by the *Dalits* to get rid of untouchability.

According to the Human Rights Declaration made by the UN in 1948, no discrimination should be made against any citizen in the use of rights on the grounds of religion, language, race, sex, caste or ideological conviction. On the basis of the declaration, the UN General Assembly passed International Convention for abolition of all kinds of social and caste discrimination in 1969. Nepal signed the declaration of the convention on 30<sup>th</sup> January 1971.

The *Naya Muluki Ain* 1963 abolished the caste system legalized by the previous *Muluki Ain* of 1854. Now, nobody is untouchable by the law. No person shall, on the basis of caste, be discriminated and deprived of access to any public places or to the use any public utilities. Any contravention of this provision shall be punishable by the law. One has to pay Rs.3000/- or imprisonment for one year or both if anybody breaks the law. According to the Article 11 of the Constitution of Nepal, 1990 "All citizens shall be treated equally by the law. No person shall be restricted to have access with public services and utilization of public places."

According to the strategies formulated in the plan for the improvement of the *Dalits* and destitute communities, they have been brought into the national mainstream by empowering them socially and economically. It is also hoped the

gap between the Dalits and non-Dalits will be bridged up totally by eliminating social discrimination.

Political parties are not taking part on the *Dalit* issues seriously as expected. Political parties want to use *Dalit* movement for their own political gain and interest. During various phases of the *Dalit* movement, it has been found that reputed political leaders of various parties have supported the *non-Dalits* against the *Dalits*. Even the local administration has not been so positive towards the movement. But the role of NGOs and INGOs was found to be very positive and enthusiastic.

The *Dalits* will not be able to achieve their goals unless they become conscious, united and self-reliant. They should enter into political parties and participate actively in every issue. They should not stop struggling till they achieve their goals. They should also continue their efforts for the establishment of *Dalits* Commission and passing *Dalit Bill*.

All *Dalits* are not deprived and destitute. The *Dalits* of valleys and hills are socially and economically in a better position in comparison to the Terai. Social discrimination and untouchability are practiced by the *Dalits* themselves, too. Some castes of the *Dalits* regard themselves superior to others and behave accordingly. A kind of inferiority complex exists among them. They also regard themselves as "We are untouchables". Some *Dalits* belong to socially, politically and economically privileged class, while others are socially, politically and economically under privileged class.

The *Chamars* still lack free access to tea stalls, temples, educational institutions and other public places. They are restricted to study in various Sanskrit Educational Institutions. Most of the *Chamars* are landless and without resources.

Their major occupation is to work on farmland as labourers. Their traditional occupation is regarded as disrespectful. They earn very meager money. Discrimination is found in terms of wages between men and women for the same nature of work. Being, regarded as untouchable, they cannot work in hotels, own shop of trading consumer goods and milk. It is difficult for them to get agricultural credits and employments. Due to malnutrition, illiteracy, hard work and giving birth to children every year, women are living with deteriorated health condition. Their average age is 50 years whereas the national expectancy rate of women is 55 years. They are also suffering from unwanted social discrimination, family violence, social and economic exploitation and rape.

Accesses of the *Chamars* to higher executive posts have not been possible till now. They have not been able to occupy the post of a Judge, Secretary, Director General, Chief District Officer, General Manager, and Chairman.

Nobody is born as a *Dalits* or lower caste. Prevailing situation has compelled to become a *Dalit*. Present social, political and religious conviction and tradition is responsible for it. Nobody should be discriminated as untouchable on the basis of caste. Practice of untouchability and social discrimination are the result of existing feudal system. Unless this system is totally abolished, *Dalits* cannot be free from malpractices. They should organize and unite for total social changes.

The role of civil society is very important to create amicable environment for the *Chamars'* Movement. The Saraswati Community Development Forum (SCDF) of Saptari and the "Self Development Forum" of Parbat and Baglung are two good examples of this movement. The Saraswati Community Development Forum (SCDF) has supported *Chamar* of Siraha district to identify their real situation and raise awareness about their rights.

The Saraswati Community Development Forum (SCDF) has been conducting social development programmes in these areas with the support of the Action Aid, Biratnagar. Regenerated Freirian Literacy through Empowering community Technique (REFLECT) Circles have been conducted at *Madhupatti, Kushaha, Piprapashchim, Daulatpur and Hardiya* of Saptari district since 1998. One of the issues dealt in the Regenerated Freirian Literacy through Empowering Community Technique (REFLECT) Circles was untouchability and legal rights. *Janachetana Dalit Sangam* was established and awareness programme initiated by them. Accordingly, the *Dalits* of Saptari district gathered in Dhati, a small local market and discussed about this problem. They realized that they were classified as *Achhut* (untouchable) because they were not paying proper attention towards health and sanitation and were performing unrespectful occupation of throwing carcass. They also made up their mind to abandon this traditional occupation, as it could not help them as a means of livelihood. They also decided to keep their surroundings clean by keeping their pigs away from their settlements. Similarly, the *Chamars* decided that they would not carry the carcass.

A calf died at the house of Kishanlal Kalwar of Madhupatti village in 1999. Dhodhairam was asked to manage to throw the calf, but he refused. The owner himself disposed off the calf followed by a formation of committee to boycott *Dalits* socially and economically. This event was communicated to the Saraswati Community Development Forum (SCDF). The event was also published in local newspaper and Kantipur daily. After this the blockade came to an end. A buffalo died in the house of Padam Narayan Chaudhary (an ex-state minister) on 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2000. The *Chamars* refused to dispose off the buffalo. This lead to a fraction between the people. There were some people who expressed that the decision of the *Chamars* would help to destroy the existing social system. It has been a matter of prime need for the *Chamars* to get themselves organized and

come ahead to lead the movement. It has also been indispensable to look upon whether the movement is participatory going ahead with concrete achievement.

According to the *Chamars* the movement is the outcome of respectless work, they were compelled to do the work for the upper castes. They have also realized that no - movement would be successful without unity and awareness. According to them a movement is "an organized effort to get rid of exploitation and it helps them to move forward".

The movement launched, in Siraha district by the *Chamars* is an effective effort to get rid of untouchability, various social discrimination, exploitation and domination by the upper castes. The main issue of the movement is to keep them away from throwing carcass. When social and economic blockade was imposed upon them they were compelled to move ahead for the movement. According to them "a movement is a continuous process and can be conducted in various phases".

People of various castes gathered in Lahan on 23 March 2000 and formed a committee to boycott the *Chamars* socially and economically. Public notice was issued to impose blockade. These events helped to begin the movement and got momentum after some time. Later on, efforts were made by intellectuals, human right activists, NGOs, social activists, political leaders and Medias to lift the blockade. Followed by this, a co -feast was organized by the Lahan Municipality for bringing both sides together to make all understanding and compromise.

Thus an awareness programme initiated by the Saraswati Community Development Forum through the Regenerated Freirian Literacy by Empowering community Technique (REFLECT) Circles converted into a mass movement by creating influx of the people of Saptari and Siraha and Singh Durbar (Government



Secretariats) ultimately. Success made in this regard has been taken as a big achievement by the *Dalits* of the Terai.

According to the *Chamars* movement was not their desire, but consequence of social and economic exploitation for a long time. To initiate any movement, people should be organized and made conscious about their legal and constitutional rights. The ultimate goal of any movement is to "Get rid of all kinds of undesired exploitation". The *Dalits* have a very clear vision about the movement. According to them, "the movement is a process which should be conducted and organized continuously using peaceful means and participatory approach." Women also participated actively and enthusiastically in this process. Children also participated in protest rallies and processions. The Saraswati Community Development Forum, Action Aid Nepal, Biratnagar and social activists also played important role for the movement. Participation of some *non-Dalits*, social organizations, political parties, human right activists, media are also very appreciating.

Empowerment process is recognized as one of the most important factors of the *Chamars'* movement. Various NGOs and social organizations have supported *Chamars* in this process. Short descriptions of various agencies, which have supported to make the movement effective and participatory, have been explained below.

The *Chamars* have understood empowerment as a process of enhancing capacity and strength to utilize their rights. They have been provided training and education to increase their skill and strength during the period of the movement. Both men and women have participated actively in the process. During the training and education programme, they have been oriented to organize and conduct the movement according to the action plan. Similarly, they have been

provided with the skills and knowledge to review the progress along with activating community people and their strength. Because of orientation and training, the levels of awareness about their rights have been found raised to a considerable degree.

The *Chamars* have been compelled to launch the movement, because of the social and economic blockade imposed upon them. Their leaders have played a pertinent role to organize them. Shouting with slogans, participating in rallies, picketing and carrying lantern are some means used by the agitators. They are also trying to expand their organizations in various places along with strong networking.

Economic and social blockade have been imposed upon the *Chamars* when they have decided to avoid throwing carcass. These events have lead the movement. No differences are found among the *Chamars* regarding the selection of issues of the movement. Extensive discussion is held in *Dalit* organizations, local authorities, various castes and communities of *Dalits* after the blockade.

The role of leaders in a movement is a matter of prime importance. In this context, community members have made their frontline workers play the role of the leaders. Selections of leaders in different communities have been performed in a participatory way. Selection of leaders is based on the quality, performance, understanding about the *Chamars'* problems and sound vision of the movement. Thus a democratic process is adopted in course of selection of leader.

Meetings are organized for reviewing the progress after the movement and they have developed it as a system. During such meetings, they have discussed about the shortcomings of the movement, selection of future issues, and preparation of action plan and resources management extensively. In district level

review meetings, community people and workers of various organizations, who have assisted in the movement directly or indirectly, are also invited for their valued opinions and ideas.

Different events that have occurred in various localities, Village Development Committees and districts have been collected at first. These events are communicated and conveyed to a gathering of eight to ten people. Women have also helped in this process. After the discussion, they have reached to a conclusion. This conclusion is discussed in a larger gathering of 15-20 people. New events are added during this process. Children up to the age of 12 to 15 years also have taken part in the discussion. Special time is provided to women to share and express their ideas. Generally, decision is made unanimously.

Empowerment is not only a process of movement, but it is very imperative, too. The *Dalits* are making their every effort to get rid of untouchability and social discrimination along with utilization of their constitutional rights without any hindrances. This feeling would not have developed among the *Dalits* without the supports of NGOs, social activists and others. The movement is going ahead systematically in Siraha district.

Women have established the Nari Sangam when they are educated through the Regenerated Freirian Literacy through Empowering community Technique (REFLECT) Circles conducted by the Saraswati Community Development Forum (SCDF) in 5 VDCs of Saptari. Women have been great source of motivation for men to abandon their traditional occupation. This kind of boldness and confidence in turn energized Janachetana Dalit Sangam of Madhupatti to execute and implement this decision.

The *Chamars* have encountered various problems for avoiding throwing carcass. They have decided to solve the problems through non-violent movement. Their movement has been started from a small village of Madhupatti Village Development Committee (VDC) which is converted as a national issue.

To the *Chamars*, basic services mean availability of facilities of education, health, drinking water, employment opportunities, training, shelter, soft loan and security. Their access and control to basic services and facilities is very negligible. Most of the *Chamars* don't have their own land and are living in other's land. Participation of the *Chamars* in selection of programmes and evaluating them is very negligible.

Untouchability is diminishing gradually after the movement. A new kind of social bond has been developed and established between *Dalits* and *non-Dalits*. They have also started respecting each other.

In the past women were misbehaved and suppressed by men. Now they are treated well and are given importance in family matters. Women are participating in solving problems of *non-Dalits*, too. A good understanding has been developed among and between children of *Dalits* and *non-Dalits*.

Various organizations have played prominent role to build structure and development of the people organization. *Dalit Jana Chetana Sangam*, *Nari Sangam*, *Dalit Samaj Sewa Sangh*, *Jaati Utpidan Samyukta Sangharsha Samiti*, *Saraswoti Community Development Forum* (SCDF) and Social Activists belong to these structures.

Women participation in selecting the issue of the movement, leadership, planning the activities and reviewing the work progress is very appreciable. Children participation is also appreciable. Similarly, the role of community,

people organizations, institutions, Medias, human right activists, local authorities and social activists is also worthwhile.

The Saraswati Community Development Forum (SCDF), Saptari has played a very important role in educating, motivating and empowering the *Chamars*. It has played the role of a coordinator and facilitator to establish *Dalits* organizations and expand them inside and outside the villages/communities. Similarly, social activists have also played a very effective role during the movement by sharing information, organizing, motivating them for their participation in the movement, helping to increase their wages and raising awareness about their rights.

Various Medias have also helped the movement by disseminating the information. Local authorities have also provided their cooperation for the movement by giving valuable suggestions and guidelines, moral and financial supports. They have also helped to lift up economic and social blockade imposed on them.

Women have been organized themselves in the form of *Nari Sangam* after the Regenerated Freirian Literacy through Empowering Community Technique (REFLECT) Circle conducted by Saraswati Community Development Forum (SCDF). Women have become aware about their rights. *Nari Sangam* has played a prominent role for engaging women in health, sanitation, literacy, education, formation of saving groups and income generating activities.

The movement has affected the *Dalits* communities in various ways. Feelings of unity and solidarity among the *Dalits* have developed. They have established themselves as a force to reckon and fighting against social pressure, untouchability and discrimination found in *Dalits* communities. They are

managing resources themselves. They received various supports and helps from NGOs, human rights organizations, and political parties and their leaders/workers and Village Development Committees (VDCs) during the movement. Human right organizations have played important roles in policy influencing, advocacy and as pressure group in various *Dalit* issues.

The *Non-Dalits* have realized the strength of the *Chamars*. Participation of the *Chamars* has increased in various meetings. Throwing carcass and the work being performed by women as traditional birth attendants (*Sudeni*) have been given up. They think the *Chamars* are free to continue or give up their traditional occupation. Local authorities have realized that *Sudeni* should be trained and their work should be respected, recognized and promoted. It is also realized that people organizations can play important role to educate and empower the *Chamars* by conducting awareness and educational camps.

Many things have been learnt during the movement. The *Chamars* have established themselves as a strong force in the present structure of the society. It has been realized that decision-making capacity and self-confidence can be improved through their organizations. It has also been learnt that the goals can be attained through the non-violent movement.

There should be extensive discussion, sharing and interaction among the *Dalits* to drive the future movement effectively. Organization should be made transparent, strong and systematic. They must have clear vision about their future movement. They must take the achievement collectively and should create a congenial and healthy atmosphere where women, youths and children could participate in the decision-making, process more effectively.

It is felt that the non-violent movement can be successful by including all *Dalits* in the process of the movement through insuring cooperation from all the political parties and developing systematic role of the people organizations.

The Government, civil society, private sector and the *Chamars* themselves should contribute to their best to achieve the objectives of the movement. Government should create an environment for the effective implementation of present laws and an effective monitoring system also should be developed to assess whether these laws are being implemented or not. Civil society should also put pressure on the government and its various agencies to implement these laws.

The Chamar movement in Lahan has come out with several effects. Some of the achievements on social, educational, religious, cultural, political and economic aspects are mentioned.

First, the movement has enhanced Chamar communities to be united, organized and active. They have established themselves as an organized strength after the movement. They have realized that women should be literate and basic education should be provided to children. Likewise women have become conscious and active socially and economically. Now they are actively participating in the activities like: basic health service, sanitation, education, group mobilization and income generating activities. Second, the Chamar are facing economic crisis as they have abandoned their traditional occupation. They have now started exploring alternative employment Opportunities. They have started to raise their voices against existing unequal wage system and struggling for equal wages for both men and women for the same nature of work. Some Chamars have not been able to abandon carcass throwing yet. They argue that if they are paid properly, they will continue throwing carcass. This situation reveals that they are economically living a life of dearth and paucity. It is found that

changes in the Chamars' life style have taken place after the movement. They have also initiated to collect movement related information and share it with others. The process as such has helped them to understand the indispensability of the information. They have also established an effective networking within and outside the communities and villages.

The Chamar movement in Lahan also affects Non-Dalits as they also have realized the strength of the Chamar communities after the movement. Untouchability and social discrimination among and between Chamar and non-Dalits have been diminished to certain degree and level. It has helped the Chamar to utilize their rights and live a life of respect and reverence. Non-Dalits have started to eat foods served and given by the Chamar without any hesitation, if it is clean and hygienic. Above all, the non-Dalits repent themselves what they did against Chamar and Dalits willingly and unwillingly in the past.

Now the Chamars are called upon by the Village Development Committees (VDCs) in various local level meetings and programs. Local authorities are providing, with financial supports to the children of the Chamar communities for their education. It has been realized that special programmes are necessitated for their upliftment. Lahan Municipality is taking initiative to provide the services of throwing carcass within municipality areas at its own cost. The Village Development Committees (VDCs) are paying attention to the Chamar including the all Dalits' issues. They are supporting the movement by providing moral supports, taking part in discussions, giving suggestions and financial assistance. It has been accepted by the non-Dalits that the Chamars are free to resume or abandon their traditional occupation. It has also been realized that occupation of 'Sudeni' (mid-wife) should be recognized and promoted along with its advancement.



It has been realized that social development organizations can play the role of a bridging pool to bring the various problems and issues of this people into public notice. It is also realized that social development organizations can play indispensable role for their empowerment and education. Now, social development organizations have felt that participation of both Chamar and non-Dalits in any social activities is needed to eliminate untouchability and social discrimination. Social development organizations have now realized that changes cannot be brought about in their lives only by conducting service delivery programmes. This should be integrated with right base activities and issues. The number of income generating activities meant for them by NGOs is very negligible. Prevalence of laxity of activities as such has helped to develop negative feeling towards the organizations.

The Government authorities have realized that movement is for social changes and restoration of constitutional rights of the Chamar. Hence, marching towards the movement by them is the need of time. Social Justice cannot be attained without supporting the movement. So, the Government authorities have taken the movement positively and have started various activities for their children and women.

The Chamars are behaved respectfully and positive responses towards their problems are in place. The police administration in Siraha is serious to undertake any actions on those who come out with any sorts of harmful activities towards them. The Government authorities strongly feel that awareness building activities should be implemented along with other socio-economic development packages for the Chamars. They are totally unknown about their rights. They even don't know about the importance of citizenship. So, awareness programmes should be brought into application. The Government has taking its initiation to pass Dalit bill and constitute Dalit Commission.

The human right activists are supporting the movement by influencing in policy matter, advocating for their issues and putting pressure on the government and local authorities to work for their betterment and upliftment. A co-feast was organized at the initiation of the human right activists to strengthen harmony and solidarity among the Chamars and non-Dalits. In national level, the Human Right Commission and human right organizations are playing important roles by pressuring the government and NGOs to conduct activities for eliminating exploitation and discrimination being done towards them.

The change of status among the Chamars is closely related to the changes in various spheres of their life: social, economic, political and ritual. The change of status is the result of multiple factors, among which education is most important. It has directly contributed to the change in following areas of status, along with other factors. Of all the different areas of change of status, changes have taken place first in the areas of achieved status, namely, occupation, housing and participation in village economy and finally in different areas of ascribed status. Furthermore, changes in education by initiating changes in the occupation, income and aspiration have prompted the Chamars to sanskritise their values and norms with the objectives of securing changes in different areas of their ascribed status, viz. entry into the temple, use of the services of the Brahmin priests and Sanskrit literatures. No doubt other factors have also worked along with education, but even these factors have been able to work because of education. For example, change in aspiration, which has contributed to changes in areas of status itself, is the result of change of education. Hence education can be regarded as the most important factor for change of status.

The factors of change of status in general can be classified into six categories, namely, general factors (education, occupational diversification, and spread of communication), motivational factors, sanskritization, politicization,

constitutional privileges, and organizational support. Of the different categories of the factors, general and motivational factors have contributed more to the changes in difference spheres of achieved status and by doing so provided a base for changes in the way of ascribed status.

The Chamars in their effort to improve their position have taken through the education and employment opportunities. Development in communication has further a strengthened their efforts. These factors have been categorized as general as these have been available to all the persons, irrespective of caste. These factors, particularly, education by changing their educational standard has increased the motivation and aspiration for change of status.

The Chamars have been able to improve their position more in comparison with other lower castes, largely because of their greater motivation for change, which compelled them to be the best to take advantage of the opportunities of education. This, besides helping them to diversify their occupations, has opened up before them a bigger horizon, which has subsequently prompted them to adopt several measures in the form of sanskritization to improve their position.

In their efforts to bridge the distance between them and the higher castes with a view to improving their social status, the Chamars, have adopted gradually a number of Sanskritic values and practices, namely, worship of Sanskritic deities like Rama, Krishna, and Shiva, using the services of Brahmin priests, adoption of Sanskritic rituals on occasions of birth, marriage and death and adoption of vegetarianism.

The idea to adopt these values and practices in their own life style has been initiated by a group of individuals, who have received support from their caste locality. This process is facilitated and reinforced by changes in their educational

pattern, which in turn has far-reaching effects on their occupational structure, income and also in their attitudinal-motivational framework, and enactment of legislation abolishing untouchability.

The Chamars are marginalized not only in religion but also in terms of political rights (representation), economic rights (participation) and in social rights (exclusion) and they find themselves to be the most disadvantaged group in the Nepalese society.

District based awareness program, feasting together program, exhibition of *Dalits* crafts are helpful to create awareness and to preserve skills and profession of the *Dalits*. Radio program is able to sensitize people on the *Dalits* rights at mass level. The outcome of seminar is able to draw recommendations to the government for the upliftment of the *Dalits*.

It is found that, after the emergence of the Dalit movement, the Government has formulated the following policies for the upliftment of the situation of Chamars to resolve the movement. There are various major achievements; some of them are presented as below:

These Strategies are formulated by the Government to reduce the gap between the Dalits and the non-Dalits and among the Dalits particularly the Chamars. It is necessary to reduce the socio-cultural and religious gaps between socially discriminated and unequal groups to create harmonious society. The Government has re-oriented its bodies to listen the cases of the Dalits in all over Nepal. Likewise, awareness campaign, invite Dalits in religious and other social gathering, participation of Dalits in mass meeting were the achievement of the Chamars Movement in Nepal.

At the time, the Government, political parties, human rights organization, social activists, NGOs and administration have strictly watched any kind of torcher against the Chamars. Musical groups were well recognized and rewarded in local level. Similarly, strategically, enrollment of Dalit to study Sanskrit, abolishment of any practice touch- ability and untouchability, there participations are the achievements from the Chamars movement. There are some strategies formulated by Government to reduce the social inequality between the Chamars and non-Dalits through enhancement in social index like-education, gender, health etc.

To create equitable society, the Government, (including civil society, political parties, NGOs etc.) has formulated to launch special programs for the Chamars. Among them the non-Dalits has stopped to practice about untouchability and they are liable to accept food and drinks from the Dalits. If the non-Dalits married to Dalits, her property rights from non-Dalits should be guaranteed. Similarly, the Chamars do not have to restriction public participation and not to enter in public sphere.

Dalits including Chamars are oppressed in studied area. Among them, Chamars women are in more venerable position. So, it is necessary to formulate the strategies programs to uplift the state of the Chamars women. To concern this matter, government has formulated various strategies, such as, compulsorily enrollment of Chamars girls in school and maintaining the legal age at marriage so as to check the sexual, social and other types of harassment and oppression to Dalit women, particularly to the Chamars. All stakeholders have to participate in this campaign.

In this strategy, all development related policies and strategies have been formulated. The Government has initiated various short-term as well as long-term

programs to enhance the status of the Chamars according the Human Development Index. School enrollment programs, reservation quota in formal, informal, vocational and technical education have been decided to launch for the enhancement of their educational status. Similarly quota reservation for the Dalit teachers preferably, women in primary school level and Dalit scholarships quota have been declared and decided. The Government has decided positive discriminatory policy to enhance to level of education of Chamar (See Appendix-1).

Similarly, in the field of health, the Government has decided to launch various programs to improve their health condition. The Chamars are charged as “dirty” people. It is difficult to provide all incentives from the government, to improve their living conditions, food habits, balance diet and sanitation. That’s why the Government has started to launched Community Based Programs to empower them.

Likewise, for pre-natal, natal, post-natal health check up through Municipality health center have to be introduced. First aid and other health related training are to be implemented.

Economy determines the all sphere of human life. So, it is crucial factor for the determination of the Chamar identity after movement in changing context. To empower them, economically as well, the Government has decided to launch poverty alleviation programs at national level. Parallel to this program, it is decided to reserve the employment opportunities for the Dalits in general and the Chamars in particular. In case of landless, the Government is going to make plans for the redistribution of land for landless through resettlement program.

Another effective alternative to modernize their skill is necessary. It is also necessary to ensure employment in factories of shoe making. In case of Chamar,

in Municipality, they have to reserve their seats for employment. Other income generation program is going to start for subsistence.

Continuation of the movement following participatory, transparent and non-violent process can be seen as a positive achievement. Participation of women and children, establishment of their organizations, systematic development and transfer of leadership among and between *Dalits* are some other outcome of the movement. Practice of disseminating information about the movement related events have been initiated. This is another indicator, which shows that the movement is going ahead positively.

The constitution of the kingdom of Nepal, 1990 and *Naya Muluki A* in 1963 have completely prohibited untouchability and caste discrimination. Accessibility of Dalits to and with government officials has been established to some extent. They have also responding positively on the Dalit problems and issues than before. Dalits are receiving supports and empathy from political parties and their leaders, local authorities, NGOs', journalists, human right activists, students, teachers, women and non-Dalits, too. Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba has committed to pass the Dalit bill and formed a Commission on Dalits in the nick of time (Dalit Commission has been already formed). Participatory and transparent processes have been followed in course of the movement. Various Dalit organizations have been formed in local level. Both men and women are participating in such organizations. There are separate organizations of women and children, too. Leadership is being emerged gradually and process of developing second-generation leadership is on the way. The need for competitiveness for employment opportunities and access to and with power structure has been developed among the Dalits. Need for working collaboratively among and between the Dalits and non-Dalits has been initiated. System of

documenting and disseminating movement related information has been developed. They have started to search for alternative occupation/profession of income and employment opportunities after the economic blockade. They have developed participatory decision-making process and adopting it gradually.

There are some weak aspects of this movement, too. Sometimes it looks like *Chamars'* movement as no other *Dalits* have participated in the movement strongly and enthusiastically. The *Dalit* leaders have become very ambitious and negative competitiveness has developed among them for self recognition. Political parties and leaders have been using *Dalits* for their political benefits and interest. *Dalit* organizations have not been so far expanded qualitatively and quantitatively. The state of untouchability is still prevailing among and between the *Dalits*. Unhealthy competition among the *Dalit* leaders has developed for self recognition. Some *Dalits* took part in the movement without knowing its objectives and purposes. The movement has increased the expectations of the *Dalits*. In the absence of fulfillment of expectations they are becoming pessimist about the *Dalit* movement. The movement has developed negative feelings towards the facilitating organizations as they have become unable to clarify their objectives and fulfill their needs. The movement has failed to include all *Dalits* in all the process of the movement. So, it seems the movement of the Chamar only. Due to their backwardness and poverty, feeling of inferiority complex is very high among them. The *Dalits'* problem cannot be resolved overnight. Its solution requires a combination of actions and commitment from the *Dalits*, government, political parties, civil society and NGOs. The government, bureaucrats and politicians must treat *Dalits'* issues as major issues. Laws against the discrimination should be properly enforced and the government programs for the upliftment of the economic and social status of the *Dalits* should be fully implemented. Networking



among the organizations has not become as effective as Dalits organizations have not become strong enough quantitatively and qualitatively yet.

### **SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Some suggestions and recommendations are cited here based on the information accumulated after discussion with the community people and learning derived from the study. It is expected that the concerned organizations and stakeholders would be benefited for attaining their goals.

#### **Some Suggestions for the Movement:**

The *Chamars* movement can attain its goals if it is organized systematically and keep up its continuity. In this respect, the *Chamars* and their leaders as well as other leaders have to pay necessary attention on these suggestions and recommendations:

- The movement should not only create problems rather also try to find out the solution at the same time.
- For the success of the movement existing and prevailing practices of untouchability among the *Dalits* must be rooted out first.
- There should be extensive discussion and interaction among the *Dalits* for the success of future movement. The *Dalit* organizations must be made strong enough, transparent and accountable to the communities.
- There should be a clear and long-term vision of the movement.
- The success and achievements of the movement should be taken collectively and collaboratively.
- Leadership development and process of its transfer should go hand in hand.

- For social, economic, political and cultural transformation, *Chamars* should develop feelings of self confidence and self-reliance themselves.
- The *Chamars* should be effortful and struggle from their own level to have access to constitutional and legal rights.
- Women, youths and children should be educated and motivated to take part in decision-making process actively.

### **Some Suggestions for the Civil Society and Political Parties:**

Civil society can play vital role for the improvement and transformation of social structure. They must work as facilitators and mediators without any prejudice. Following suggestions are given to civil society, so that they could assist the Chamar movement effectively.

- NGOs and social activists should develop a system and a network so that they could play the role of coordinator and facilitator by involving more communities, people organizations and political parties.
- Social organizations should continue their assistance till the *Chamar* movement comes out with positive results.
- Awareness and empowerment campaign should be conducted continuously for the organizational and institutional development of the *Dalits*.
- Right base and service delivery programmes should be conducted together.
- *Dalits* and *non-Dalits* should be brought together, educated and motivated so that they could work in an environment free from all pre-conceived thinking to make the *Chamars* movement result oriented and a success.

- Priority should be given to programmes, focusing on *Dalit*, unprivileged and disadvantaged communities.
- Legal provisions and policies should be developed and programme should be implemented, monitored and followed up within the prescribed policies effectively.
- There is need for assessing the situation and status of the *Chamars* by working organizations and go ahead for advocacy on the issue with supportive actions, too.
- Media should be effective to disseminate movement related information in the community, national and international level.
- Private sector should also come out with relevant policies along with social and economic development programmes for the betterment of the *Dalits*.
- Social organizations and political parties should play vital role to bring the *Chamars* issues in the public forum.
- Political parties should formulate policies and programmes so that the *Chamars* could participate in political activities and represent in local political structure. They should also implement the policies and programmes included in their manifestoes.

### **Some Suggestions for Various Organizations:**

Supports of various organizations are needed to make the movement organized, participatory and sustainable. Such assistance can be provided through people organizations, social activists, local authorities and various government agencies.

Community development programmes supported by international agencies/organizations have affected the movement of Siraha very positively.

These organizations have rendered supports to the movement morally, technically and financially through their partner organizations and social activists. By formulating clear action plans, these organizations can assist the movement more effectively. Following suggestions are given in this regard:

- Clear understanding and coordination should be established with the government to assist the *Dalit* movement.
- Skill based programmes should be conducted along with initiation of participatory monitoring and evaluating system. It is also necessary to support local authorities to improve their working capacity to attain the purpose.
- They should also propagate and advocate the *Dalit* issues in the SAARC regions and other international forums and conventions.
- Assistance should be provided to those organizations, which are working and advocating the movement.
- Network of international organizations can be very effective to advocate and propagate the *Dalit* issues in various international forums.
- They can support social organizations working on the *Dalits* and right base issues by providing necessary assistance for their capacity building. Unless civil society, social organizations and workers are activated, the movement cannot go ahead.
- Long-term programmes at local level should be formulated and implemented so that people organizations and their leadership could be strengthened and made sustainable.

### **Some Suggest to the Government:**

The role of a democratic government of a nation is to implement policy and programmes for equality in society. In this respect following suggestions are given to the government:

- The Government should improve reform and amend laws relating to the *Dalits* if needed.
- Regular monitoring should be done to assess the implication of the laws.
- The *Dalit* representatives should be included while formulating policies and laws related to them.
- Provision for reservation should be arranged within a condition and criteria for a definite period of time.
- The Government and the local authorities should come out with special programmes for the social and economic transformation of the *Dalits*.
- Amicable atmosphere should be created for the *Dalits* so that their access and control to and with basic services and power structure could be possible.
- There should be clear vision and specific programmes in the national plans to bring social and economic changes in the status of the *Dalits*.
- The local authorities should support and act for putting pressure on the government to implement and execute these programmes effectively.

### **Recommendations:**

- Some measures should be taken to motivate the *Chamars* to education. Provision of scholarships may motivate them to send their children to primary schools. School feeding projects should also be helpful to motivate them.

- The *Chamars* are living in absolute poverty, so to improve their economic condition, they should be provided skill developing and other income generating trainings like tailoring, carpentry, plumbing and so on. Along with these training, they should have access to credit facilities from the organized sector to establish their business and should also be ensured with marked facilities for the sale of their products.
- Education programmes should emphasize not just general awareness but an intensive skill development training for Chamars of those holding traditional occupational skills. This should not stop at the end of educational or training courses, but the trained people should be helped in linking their productive skill to the market, i.e. encouragement and support for production through appropriate credit and the flow of such production in the market.
- For the landless and absolutely poor people, income generating programmes can be conducted on non-farm activities. This type of programme should identify the target population in a limited area on an experimental basis and, when successful, can be replicated in other selected places. With some perceivable progress, such a programme will have gradual radial effects and, overtime, more rapid transformation can be expected in Chamar communities.
- Intensive health and sanitation programmes can be conducted, starting from the experimental projects, so that people change their habits of personal hygiene. Construction of usable public and private latrines should have a top priority in such a programme.
- Special programmes should be designed and conducted for women from Chamars in education, health skill development, income raising activities and improved agricultural practices.

- District level seminars can be conducted involving potential leaders/communicators in these communities with a view to motivating such participants to stimulate or encourage their local fellow members for wider participation in the development process. Such seminars can also review the ongoing programmes, if any, and recommend new ones at the district or local level.
  - There should be an intensive review of the implementation of legal measures adopted for the termination of caste-based discrimination and adoption of more appropriate measures so that all sections of society can feel themselves as equal partners in the national development process. All impediments to the prevalence of social equality should be terminated through firm government action.
  - As Hindu citizens, the untouchable communities should be allowed to enter Hindu temples or public worship places. This will not only reinforce the devotion of such communities but also enhance the status of Hindu religion in world esteem.
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- Although a quota reservation for the backward communities is in high demand, it may lead to more non-competitiveness among the backward communities. Therefore, special incentives should be provided for a specified time period for upgrading the capability of such people, e.g., special tuition courses to complete in competitive examinations, special scholarship schemes for the poorest students, other trainings, and special development programmes addressed to such communities.
  - Special programmes should be designed, addressing specific Dalits. In this respect, neglected groups like the Chamar, Mushahars, Dom etc. are in urgent need of special care. Otherwise these and other minority communities are in an increasing danger of extinction.

- Although providing citizenship certificates in the tarai region is a general issue, special effort should be made to identify legitimate citizens among Chamars, as otherwise the whole communities may vanish.
  - Even if a quota system is contra-indicated, it appears desirable that for at least a decade all menials in public offices should be recruited from among the depressed castes. This not only gives the untouchable communities a much needed entry into the government system, but also breaks the caste barrier by officially recognizing the water and tea touchability of the so-called untouchable people.
  - In view of the persecution of inter-caste marriages, effective measures should be taken to provide legal and moral protection to such marriages so that such spouses do not have to live under the duress of social threats.
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