

**DALIT MOVEMENT IN THE NEPAL TERAI:
A STUDY AMONG THE CHAMARS OF SIRAHA**



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CONTENTS

List of Tables.....	i
Acronyms.....	ii
Acknowledgement	
Map of Siraha District	
CHAPTER-I: Introduction.....	1-32
• Statement of the Problem.....	1
• Historical Background of the Dalits.....	5
• Chamars.....	9
• Review of Literature.....	13
• Objectives of the Study.....	28
• Methods of the Study.....	29
CHAPTER-II: The Lahan Municipality.....	33-81
• Population Profile.....	33
• Housing Conditions.....	35
• Female Ownership on House and Land.....	36
• Gender and Household Head.....	36
• Literacy Status.....	37
• Educational Attainment.....	37
• Religion.....	38
• Caste and Ethnic Composition.....	38
• Mother Tongue.....	40
• Economy and Employment Situation.....	41
• Occupation.....	41
• Health and Sanitation.....	43
• Chamars of Lahan.....	44

• Population of Chamars.....	46
• Population Size.....	46
• Literacy Status of Chamar.....	48
• Economy of Chamars.....	49
• Occupational Pattern.....	50
• Landholding Pattern.....	51
• Income.....	52
• Expenditure.....	53
• Indebtedness.....	53
• Livestock.....	54
• Trade and Commerce.....	55
• Religion.....	56
• Religious Belief and Practices.....	57
• Rituals relating to Birth.....	60
• Rituals relating to Death.....	61
• Family.....	63
• Marriage.....	64
• Dress.....	67
• Ornaments.....	68
• Food Habit.....	68
• Habitation and Housing.....	69
• Festivals.....	69
• Daily Routine.....	70
• Caste Meeting.....	71
• Domestic Violence against Women.....	74
• Health Service Practices.....	75
• Practice of Untouchability at the Public Place.....	76

• Political Life of the Chamars.....	77
• Political Consciousness.....	77
• Political Association.....	78
• Political Participation.....	80
CHAPTER-III: Historical Background of the Chamar Movement....	82-113
• Background of the Movement.....	82
• The Movement in the Study Area.....	85
• Timeline of the Chamar Movement.....	95
• Learnings from the Movement.....	112
CHAPTER-IV: Present Movement of the Chamars.....	114-174
• Organizational Structure of the Chamar Movement.....	114
• Membership.....	117
• Nature of the Leadership.....	125
• Objectives of the Movement.....	125
• Participatory Process of the Movement.....	126
<u>Changes in the life of the Chamars (during and after movement)</u>	
<u>Area of Change.....</u>	130
• Change in Self Image.....	130
• Change in Demographic Characteristics.....	131
• Change in Religious Belief and Practices.....	134
• Change in Rituals Relating to Birth and Death.....	137
• Change in Marriage.....	137
• Change in Family Life.....	139
• Change in Dress and Food.....	141
• Change in Housing Pattern.....	141

• Change in Occupation.....	142
• Change in Land Ownership.....	144
• Change in the Ownership of Modern Commodities.....	145
• Change in Political Consciousness.....	146
• Change in Political Association.....	149
• Change in Political Participation.....	150
• Nature of Changes.....	151
• Factors of Change.....	156
• Change in Status (Area, Nature and Direction).....	158
➤ Adoption and Worshipping Sanskritic Deities.....	158
➤ Temble Entry.....	160
➤ Using the Services of Brahmin Priests.....	161
➤ Use of Sanskritic Literature.....	162
➤ Serving the Food to the Higher Castes.....	163
➤ Entry into the Houses of the Higher Castes.....	164
➤ Use of Wells, Roads, Schools and Hospitals.....	165
➤ Mode of Address to Persons.....	165
➤ Education.....	166
➤ Occupation.....	167
➤ Housing Pattern.....	168
➤ Participation in the Village Economic Life.....	170
➤ Participation in the Municipality.....	171
➤ Participation in the Village Politics.....	172
➤ Factors of Change.....	173
Conclusion, Suggestions and Recommendations.....	175-205
Bibliography.....	206-208
Appendix	

LIST OF TABLES

Table No.	Content	Page No.
1	Number of Households and Population by Sex	33
2	Population by Place of Birth and Sex	34
3	Population aged 10 years and above by Marital Status and Sex	35
4	Ownership on house and land	36
5	Population distribution by Literacy Status	37
6	Population by Religion	38
7	Population by Caste / Ethnic Group	39
8	Population by Mother Tongue	40
9	Number of Households with land used for Agriculture Purpose	41
10	Distribution of Households by Type of Available Facilities	42
11	Number of household by ward	46
12	Population of Chamars by Age and Sex	47
13	Literacy Status of Chamar by sex	48
14	Occupations by Category of the household	50
15	Land Holding Pattern of the Chamar Households	51
16	Monthly income of the family	52
17	Expenditure Pattern	53
18	Distribution of Domestic violence by type	75
19	Health Service Practices	76
20	Practice of Untouchability	77

ACRONYMS

AAN	Action-aid Nepal
CARE	CARE Nepal
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CBR	Crude Birth Rate
CDO	Chief District Officer
CMR	Child Mortality Rate
CPR	Contraceptive Prevalence Rate
DDC	District Development Committee
DDO	Dalits Development Officer
FM	Frequency Modulation Radio Transmission
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
IMR	Infant Mortality Rate
INGO	International Non-government Organisation
LDO	Local Development Officer
LE	Life Expectancy at Birth
MLD	Ministry of Local Development
MMR	Maternal Mortality Rate
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOH	Ministry of Home
MU	Municipality, Metropolitan City, Sub-metropolitan City
NDC	National Dalit Commission
NDUC	National Dalits Upliftment Council
NGO	Non Government Organisation
NPC	National Planning Commission
SC	Schedule Caste
SCUS	Save the Children United States
STD	Sexually Transmitted Disease
TFR	Total Fertility Rate
TV	Television
UUDUVS	Upekshit Utpidit Ra Dalitbarga Vikas Samity
VDC	Village Development Committee
DAWAG	Dalit Watch Group
SCDF	Saraswati Community Development Forum
REFLECT	Regenerated Frarian Literacy Through Empowerment Committee Technique

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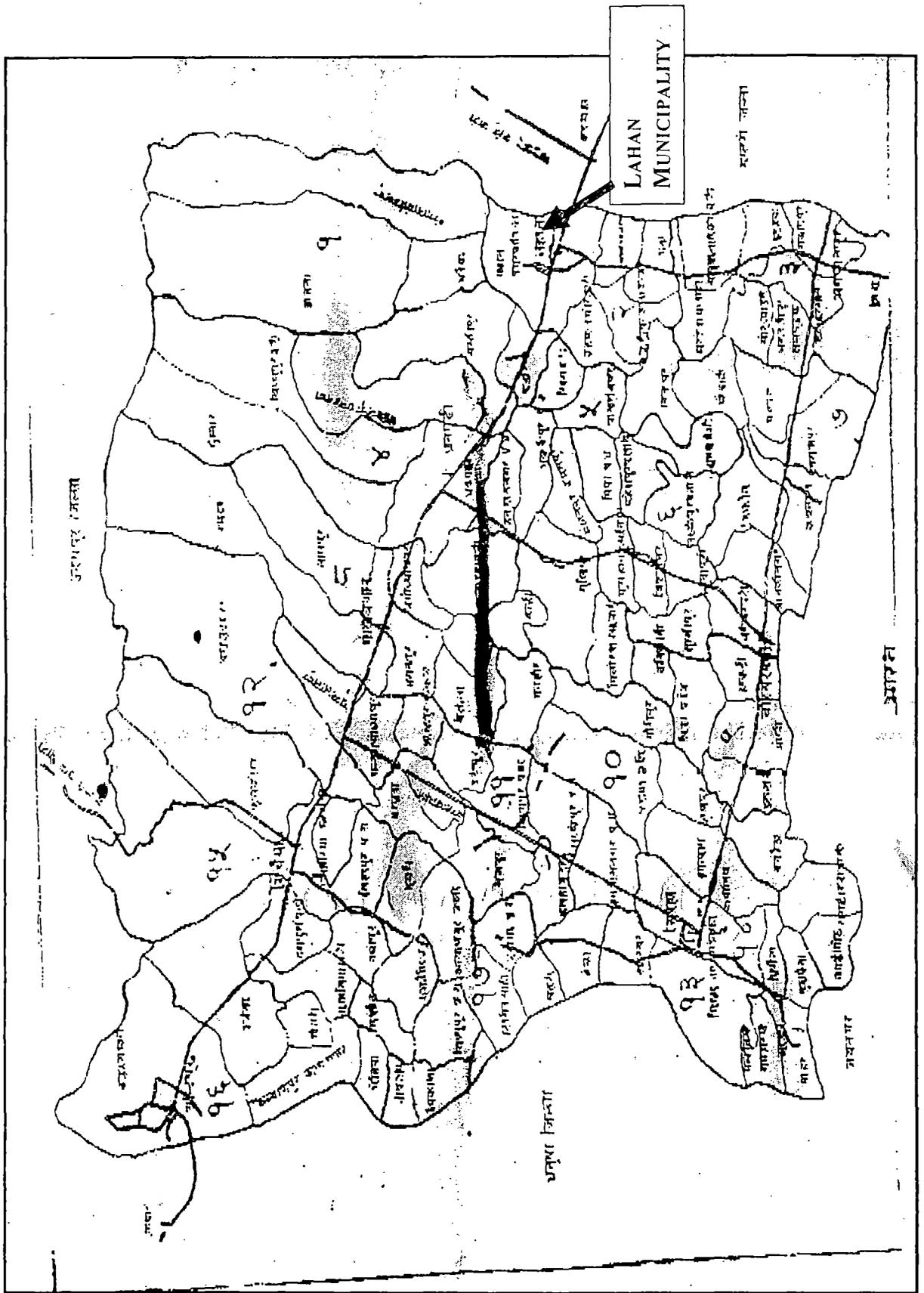
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MAP OF SIRAHA DISTRICT

CHAPTER-I

CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

The division of people on the basis of caste is unique to Hindu society. Hindu society is hierarchically divided as Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sudra. According to this religion, the creator of the world *Brahma* created *Brahmin* from his mouth and they are expected to perform teaching activities, *Kshatriya* from his hand and given the role of ruling and providing security, *Vaishya* from his thigh to produce food and perform economic activities and *Shudra* from his feet to serve others. In this way, from the very beginning of the creation, the *Shudras* are shown to have originated from the disrespectful part of the body of the creator and given the task of serving. During the time of extremely feudalistic society, the king (*Kshetrias*) used to rule the country with his might, the priest (*Brahmins*) propounded by the *Vedas*, the traders and farmers (*Vaishyas*) used to handle the economy of the country and *Shudras* had to serve all these classes of people through manual works. The religion, therefore, treated *Shudras* as inferior human beings and the extreme case was that of untouchability. This system was more formalized and ritualized by some famous Hindu sages like *Bhrigu*, who propounded rules and regulations and formed *Manushrimiti* which provided guidance to the kings and further enhanced the caste system. There are several myths related to this division.

From early times by an ordinance of Manu, men of the higher castes or classes were permitted, after marrying a woman of their own castes, to have subsidiary wives from any of the classes below them. This custom seems to have been prevalent, and no definite rule was prescribed that the children of such unions

should necessarily be illegitimate. In many cases there are no doubt that their descendants ultimately became full members of the caste of the first ancestor. According to Manu, the children of a Brahmin by a Kshatriya woman could attain Brahminhood in the third generation and those by a Vaishya woman in the fifth. Such children could also inherit the family property. According to the Mahabharata, if a Brahmin had four wives of different castes, the son by a Brahmin wife took four shares, that by a Kshatriya wife three, that by a Vaishya wife two, and that by a Shudra wife one share. Manu gave a slightly different distribution, but also permitted the son by a Shudra wife to have a share of the inheritance. Thus, by this, it is clear that the son of a Brahmin even by a Shudra wife had a certain status of legitimacy in his father's caste, as he could marry in it, and had been permitted to partake of the sacrificial food at marriage, and could also inherit a small share of the property. The detailed rules prescribed for the state legitimacy and inheritance show the recognized unions of this kind of subsequent prohibitions. This must lead to mixture of blood in the different castes. There is still a survival of it in the practice of hypergamy (Chandra and Chreack: 2002).

Castes are still being historically constructed, or perhaps more aptly being 'deconstructed', as a vertically integrated hierarchy decays into a horizontally disconnected ethnic array. Under these contemporary circumstances, although the overall direction of change is fairly clear, the social fact of caste appears increasingly ambiguous, inconsistent and variable. What people mean when they identify themselves as members of castes- as nearly all Hindus still do-or as non-members of any caste-as many Muslims do-is itself changing in diverse ways, and the same of course applies to the identification of others. Intentions and belief in relation to caste therefore become patently problematic to an extent that they did not realize before and this is partly because the deconstruction of 'traditional'

caste entails the collapse of a relatively coherent, internally consistent ideology (Toppe:2000).

However, the history of the caste system shows that belief in 'putative biological difference', which are expressed through a reutilization of divergent social practices, has not acted as an impediment in transcending the rules of endogamy and the formation of new castes when material conditions bring together families of diverse caste origin but similar socio-economic background. The formation of the Kayastha caste, in early medieval time, is a case in points, as literate professionals drawn from different Varna/castes crystallized into a caste. For a correct understanding of the dynamics of the caste system, we must pay attention not only to 'repulsion' or fragmentation' of castes but also to the processes of fusion which allow this institution to continue and even strengthen itself as social, political and economic circumstances change. For example, in the overseas context, in Trinidad Varna categories have come to replace caste as the endogamous unit and status referent. No doubt endogamy is basic to the morphology of caste but for its origin and sustenance one has to look beyond hypersymbolic manifestations and the ideational explanations which merely beg the question by making it an attribute of the Indian mentality. As we shall try to show, endogamy evolved gradually and acquired rigidity with the growth of patriarchy in a Varna-based class society.

The word Dalits literally means a person emerged from a swamp. As the Hindu religion has classified the castes into four groups, the lowest group, Sudra, has been termed as untouchables. If one from other group touches Sudra s/he has to purify with gold treated water. Other group can not use the dish without putting that in fire if that was touched by Sudra. He is not allowed to enter into the house of an upper caste, if entered has to be purified by a ritual called Puja. These all practices of the society indicate that the Sudra are not given the status of human

beings. This system of inequality is enforced and maintained by social, political, religious and cultural institutions that are creating and maintaining inequality among different groups of people. These institutions are responsible for economic, social, and psychological domination of the lowest rank people, i.e. Dalits.

The distinction between untouchable and other is merely conventional. No one is born as untouchable. Parental upbringing and social suggestion build up habits of untouchability into the individual. It is the process of socialization that makes one realize that the person is untouchable to the person him/her self as well as to others. There are no physical differences between the two. He was of the view that untouchability is not the problem of untouchables alone, just as war is not the problem of militarists. Untouchability with its associate poverty, ignorance and extreme discontent distorts democracy and places society in the top of a volcano. Therefore, the removal of untouchability is a common problem.

There are two principal aspects of the problem of untouchability: religious faith and political power. Both of them have been effective methods of making and mending attitudes of people and organizing social relations.

The illusion of Karma divides people wider apart than the patent differences of the colour of the skin or the shape of the nose. A Brahmin is more alien to Chamar (untouchable caste) than a white to a black and Mongol to a Semite, even though a Brahmin and Chamar cannot be recognized, as such, except by the labels they take for themselves.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE DALITS:

With its diverse and extreme geographical and climatic conditions, Nepal, the only Hindu Kingdom in the world till 2001, has its caste hierarchy even more diverse and extreme. The main basis of the social system is based on the caste system. Within the same system its own fellow brothers and sisters are regarded as *Shudra* and untouchables, which usually does not prevail in any other religions in the world.

The so-called untouchables of Nepal are created by the Hindu religion. From the historical studies the existence of caste system can be seen in the Lichhavi period that is from the first millennium. King Jayasthiti Malla restructured the society as advised by four Brahmans invited from Banaras (India). He divided the Newars into 64 caste groups based on the occupational division of labour in the fourteenth century. Later, due to the intensifying process of Hinduization, the Newars developed Dalit groups such as Poda, Chyame etc. Junga Bahadur Rana, the founder of 104-year old oligarchy Rana rule, introduced the National Code of Nepal, 1854, in which he restructured the Nepali society into four-fold caste hierarchy. At the top were Tagadhari (“sacred thread wearing” of “twice-born”) followed by Matawali (“liquor drinking”) Pani nachalne chhoiee chhito halnu napanne (“untouchable, sprinkling of holy water required for the purification of the body”). *Tagadhari* was further sub-divided into Upadhyaya at the top followed by Thakuri, Chhetri and Jaisi. Similarly, Matawali was sub-divided into two groups: *namasine* (“enslavable”) and *masine* (“slavable”). Before the implementation of the law in all parts of Nepal, *Matawalis*, that is, indigenous nationalities had an egalitarian social structure and they were outside the four-fold Varna and Hindu caste system. “Untouchable castes” were further sub-divided as “upper” and “lower” castes. All legal provision, including punishments, was meted out based on caste status. The concept of purity and defilement of body and

food funded the National Code. The National Code required that the *Matwalis* must practice caste-based untouchability against the “untouchables” and “upper caste untouchables” were also required to practice it against “lower caste untouchables”. Although caste discrimination was the hallmark of the National Code of Nepal, 1854, it was abolished by the New National Code of Nepal, 1963. In practice, however, the caste hierarchy introduced in 1854 still continues unabated in every-day-life.

In Nepal, however, the definition of Dalit differs from one source to another. According to Koirala (1996) “dalit” refers to “a group of people who are religiously, culturally, socially and economically oppressed, who could belong to different language and ethnic groups.” He believes that Dalit is not a caste group but a politically coined word used to refer to socially backward caste community in Nepal. In this definition, we could even include many *Indigenous Nationalities* such as Chepang, Raute, Majhi, Kumhal, Bote and others who are equally backward in terms of social and economic indicators. The word Dalit is used in Nepal to identify a vulnerable and poor group of people, who are discriminated against on the basis of their caste. On the other hand, Bishwakarma (2001) prefers to use the term Dalit exclusively only for the so-called “untouchables” of Nepal. He notes that the term Dalit is in use in Nepal over the last 33 years, it is less derogatory than the term “Harijan” as used in India since the 60’s and the term is synonymous to untouchable caste as defined in the Hindu *Varna* model and in the Old Legal Code of Nepal of 1854 (Dahal and others: 2002).

Since the political revolution of 1950 constitutional and legal provisions have consistently provided for the equal treatment of individuals irrespective of caste, but caste related social behaviours were never been declared to be punishable by law. The constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal (1960), for the first time, declared the practice of untouchability as illegal and punishable by law. The

Civil code was amended accordingly and provided for punishment up to one year in prison or Rs. 3,000 in fine or both. However the code still sought to maintain the status quo as long as entry to temples and religious places was concerned until the Supreme Court declared this provision null and void in 1994.

Although Nepal endorsed the International Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in 1970, the enforcement part is weak and the centuries old oppression persists. Thus, Nepal submitted Draft report to the World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen in 1995 which stated:

Social discrimination and segregation is widespread in rural Nepal, particularly among the Hindu caste hierarchy. The low caste people are traditionally segregated and subjected to various types of discrimination because they are considered untouchable. Although such segregation is declared illegal by the law of the land, the low caste people are very much marginalized from the socio-economic and political mainstreams of the country. The caste hierarchy is considered to be the greatest hindrance to social mobility in Nepal.

Bhattachan (2003) and others who did the study on the untouchables of Nepal are of the view that Dalits are neither the original creation of Nepal nor of the Dalits themselves. Four fold Varna model along with caste hierarchy, purity and defilement of water, food and body, division of labour based on descent etc., were created by the Hindus of the Indo-Gangatic plains in India. Both untouchability and descent based division of labour were imported in Nepal from North India.

Macdonald (1984) has cited the list of untouchable castes identified by the old National Code of Nepal. These are as follows:

Castes from whom water is not acceptable but physical contact does not require purification by sprinkling of water are: Musalman, Madheska Teli, Kasai, Kusle, Dhobi, Kulu, Cudara. Caste from whom water is not acceptable and physical contact require purification by sprinkling of gold treated water are: Sarki, Kami, Sunar, Cunura, Hurke, Damai, Gaine, Badihad, Pode, Cyamakhalak.

In 1964 King Mahendra brought new National Code. This Code declared equality to all population of Nepal. But this Code did not consider practice of untouchability as a crime. It did not concern the uplifting of the Dalits. New Constitution of Nepal 1990 guaranteed equal right to all Nepali citizens. It also made the practice of untouchability as a crime. Provision of special social, health and employment opportunities to Dalits is another positive aspect of the constitution.

In the 9th National Plan, for the first time it has been explicitly mentioned about the objectives related to the development of the Dalits in Nepal.

To obtain these objectives it has adopted various strategies. One of the strategies is implementing laws against untouchability. Establishment of National Dalit Commission is a step towards the implementation. The Commission is engaging in collecting information related to Dalits.

Bhattachan (2001) writes, "There is conflicting information about the number of Dalit communities. For example, Sharma (1997) and Hemchuri (1999) have identified 11 and 14 Dalit communities respectively in the Census of 1991.

Recently the "The National Commission for Dalits" has brought a list of caste groups who were identified as Dalits in Nepal Terai. They are Kalar, Kakaihiya, Kori, Khatik, Khatwe(Mandal, Khanga), Chamar (Ram, Mochi, Harijan, Rabidas), chidimar, Dom(Marik), Tatma (Tanti, Das), Dushad (Paswan,

Hajara), Dhobi (Rajak), Pattharkatta, Pasi, Bantar, Musahar, Mestar(Halkor), Sarbhanga (Sarwariya).

Use of the term 'Dalit' is very recent and it symbolizes a struggle for recognition of self-identity, expression of historical reality of oppression due to caste-based untouchability and occupations, and a determination for creation of egalitarian society.

The Dalits is not a homogeneous group. Dalits population in Nepal is divided and its heterogeneity extends to language, religion, and culture. Their differences can be categorized in three broad regional groups: a) Dalits in the hill community, b) Dalits in the Newari community, and c) Dalits in the Terai community. Chamars are one of the major Dalits in the Terai community.

CHAMARS:

The tanners of leather, the preparers of skins, the manufactures of leather articles, and the makers of shoes belong to a well defined class in the Indian social order. Most of these workers, in Upper India, are to-day included under the general term *Chamar*. This occupational group may be traced back to very early times; Tanners (*Charmamna*) are mentioned in the Rig Veda, in the later Vedic literature, and in the Brahmanas.

The Chamars belong to a lower level in the hierarchy of scheduled castes and the other castes in general. Their origin in the occupational class of leather-workers and in the Non Aryan tribal group and their food habits of eating pork, chicken, and beef have pushed them to a lower social status. So they have to live in their own hamlets set apart from the upper castes or the main settlements. Nevertheless, they are an integral part of the rural communities and of the *Jajmani* system. This makes it possible for one to attempt an interpretation of their socio-

economic attributes in terms of their interactions with the higher castes, particularly with land-owning groups, as also in terms of the Reference Group Theory of behavior. However, even though the complexion of Socio-economic parameters has undergone changes the caste identity of the Chamars has not been lost. This provides a rationale for identifying the Chamars as a social group and for attempting a study of their social geography. (Mukerji, 1980)

Chamar or Ramdasi is one of the major communities found in almost all the states of northern India, Nepal as well as in other regions. They are known differently in different areas and as such include many subgroups. Their community name is derived from the Sanskrit word *chamakara*, meaning leather worker. According to the Puranas, the Chamars descended from the union of a boatman and a Chandal woman. Scholars have identified them with the Karewara or leather worker mentioned in the tenth chapter of Manu's *Dharmashastra*. The father of the caste was Nishada (the offspring of a Brahman father and a sudra mother) and the mother a Vaidcha (offspring of a Vaisya father and a Brahman mother). There were sixteen major sub-castes with eleven hundred and fifty-six subdivisions among the Chamars in the North- Western provinces at that time. In the Central Province, the majority of the Chamars belonged to the Chattisgarh division and the adjacent feudatory states, where they were emancipated from their earlier service status and became cultivators and occasionally even landed proprietors (*malgujars*). In the western parts of Punjab Chamar are called Mochi. The Chamars in different states are listed with their other synonyms and subgroups. In three states, namely Gujarat, Karnataka and Maharashtra, they are notified with the Bhambi. The different subgroups of Chamars claim an independent status for many reasons, some of which are a separate origin, different myths, occupational differences, religious/ sectoral affiliations, etc. Some of these subgroups who claim an independent existence, such as the Jatav, Mochi/Mucho,

Satnami and Rabidas would prefer an identity distinct from the Chamar. Despite this, owing to their being notified with the Chamars, these subgroups have been grouped under Chamar in this volume, irrespective of their claim for a separate identity (Briggs: 1920).

According to 2001 census Chamar population comprise 2,69,661(1.19%) of the total population of Nepal. Among them 26,670 are in Siraha district and 729 are living in Lahan municipality (Central Bureau of Statistics: 2001).

Chamars are endogamous group; they do not permit inter-caste marriage. One who does is socially outcasted by the community. They rank themselves above other untouchables like Dushad, Dom etc. They maintain social distance with other Dalits.

Chamars are on the bottom in every field; their participation in the politics-local to national level is very low. They are not in a position to take part in politics except casting the vote. Some of them have been represented in the local village body, sometimes political parties feel prerequisite for the balanced growth of the society, so they use these people. In Lahan, no Chamars is in higher political post.

Poverty is the basic characteristics of Chamars. They are extremely poor and do not have saving character. Most of the Chamars are landless and only very few have small piece of land. Majority of them are living in small hut in very poor condition. Their income is not sufficient for their necessities other than hand to mouth. They are not able to support their children to have education, and for health services. School enrollment of Chamars is very low. These days they are sending their children to the school but due to poverty and various other reasons only a few are able to complete the school education.

Industrial products have displaced the traditional occupation of Chamars for example the modern shoe making factories have affected the life of the Chamars, who by tradition are used to making shoes. These days they are working as laborer in different fields like agriculture, road construction, brick factories, building construction and also as Rickshaw puller. Young Chamars are going to India and urban areas in order to improve their economic condition. The women's wage is lower than men. The midwife work is also decreasing, because of increasing number of women going to the hospital for child birth.

For last several years, some Dalit-based organizations, including Dalit Mukti Samaj, Dalit Sewa Sangh, Dalit Bikas Sangh, Dalit Utpiran Usthan Manch, Dalit Sramik Morcha, Rastriya Dalit Kalyan Samaj, Nepal Jan Bikas Parishad, Vikasonmokh Samaj, Sustainable Livelihood Forum have been working for Dalits. In local level Saraswoti Samudahik Bikas Manch, and Human Rights Commission are actively working for Dalits of the area. All major political parties have there agenda related to Dalits.

For the first time in the History of Nepal, in 1999, a movement among the Terai Dalits emerged. In Saptari an NGO Saraswati community Development Forum of Saptari had run **Re-generated Frerian Literacy through Empowerment Community Technique (REFLECT)** centres. The Dalit participants in the program discussed the reasons for their humiliations and found carcass throwing as the major one. They refused to throw such dead animals any more. Because of their unity the upper caste did not go against them and their movement was considered as successful. That success was replicated by the Dalits living in Lahan and they too refused to throw the dead animals. In Lahan the upper caste people joined together and imposed economic blockade to the whole Chamar people. This movement is still going on in these areas. The present study will

bring primary information from the perspective of those Dalits involved in the movement.

This study focuses on the movement of Chamars, the so called untouchables who are involved in the movement for their social and economic development in the present context. The study has brought out the causes of the movement and problems they are facing. This study tries to reveal and explore the linkages between present social and cultural changes that are going on between different groups of people categorized on the basis of their social and economic characteristics. It is sure that the findings of the study will be useful for the people and organizations working in the field of social justice and equity. However, in the following section available studies on the movement in Nepal will be reviewed.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

On the whole studies on Dalits' socio-political movements are very few. Most of the literatures on Dalits movements are from India. The chapter on literature review will first explore the Dalits Andolan (movement) in India and Nepal in particular.

Shah (1990) mentions, social movements primarily take the form of non-institutionalized collective political action which strives for social and political changes. He has divided the studies on social movements in India into eight groups based on the participants and the issues involved: peasant, tribal, Dalits, backward caste, women, student, middle class, and industrial working class. He is of the view that each of these movements has four major components: issues, ideology, organization, and leadership.

The main issues around which most of the Dalits movement have been centered in colonial and post colonial periods in India are confined to the problem

of untouchability. They are predominantly anti-untouchability movements. Other than untouchability the issue of increasing reservations in political offices, government jobs and welfare programs are also taken in the movements. Shah classifies Dalits movements as i) reformative and ii) alternative movements. The former tries to reform the caste system to solve the problem of untouchability. The alternative movement attempts to create an alternative socio-cultural structure by conversion to some other religion or by acquiring education, economic status and political power. Both types of movements use political means to attain their objectives. The reformative movements are further divided into Bhakti movement, Neo-Vedantik movement and Sanskritization movement. Alternative movements are divided into conversion movement and religious or secular movement.

The Bhakti and Neo-Vedantik movements were not confined to the Dalits but initiated by Hindu religious and social reformers. According to the pioneers of this movement, untouchability was not an essential part of Hinduism. Dayanand Saraswati, the founder of Arya Samaj in India, believed that the caste system was a political institution created by the rulers 'for the common good of the society, and not a natural or religious distinction'. The Neo-Vedantik movements and non-Brahmin movements played an important catalytic role in developing anti-caste or anti-Hinduism Dalits movements in some part of India. The Satyashodhak Samaj and the Self-Respect movements in Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, the Adi-Dharma and the Adi-Andhra movement in Bengal and Uttar Pradesh, are important anti-untouchability movements which were launched in the last quarter of the nineteenth and the early part of twentieth century.

A major anti-untouchability movement was launched by B.R. Ambedkar in the 1920s in Maharashtra. This has been continuing in different forms till today. It has spread all over India. Ambedkar became the leader of the untouchables. During the 1920s, the Mahar launched unsuccessful Satyagrahas against

untouchability in Maharashtra. The Dalits demanded a separate electorate in the 1930s which led to a conflict between Ambedkar and Gandhi. Gandhi did not think that the problem of untouchability was a political issue.

Although Indian Constitution of 1947 abolished the practice of untouchability, the Dalits continue to experience discrimination, segregation, and violence. The laws providing for the welfare of Dalits are often ignored. The government of India maintains that the problems should be handled internally and do not represent a form of racism, while the sections of Dalits intelligentsia seek international attention to the problems they face.

Srivastava (2007) finds, Dalits, mostly landless agricultural labourers or manual labourers, need greater political voice and participation in political processes to break free from the age old socio-culturally imposed bondage, segregation, and discrimination. Despite the advances brought about by the reservation system, customs and other social practices continue to hinder rapid and all round social emancipation of Dalits. As landless labourers who depend upon the landlord farmers for their livelihood, the Dalits continue to suffer from the traditional caste equations and the landlords continue to profit from it. This system provides fertile ground for atrocities. Only economic empowerment of Dalits, providing them with land and the related wherewithal, can mitigate the social tensions. The caste distinction has not only social but religious sanction. One of the profound changes in contemporary Indian society has been the emergence of a new sense of identity among the Dalits. The Dalits Movement not only rejects the very ideas of pollution, impurity and 'untouchability' but in the process is forging a new vision for Indian society which is different from that espoused by the higher castes.

He further adds Dalits movement itself is a revolt against the obnoxious brahmanical values but at the same time, should express solidarity with all oppressed masses of the world. The movement should build bridges with likeminded groups, secular and democratic organizations, and avoid becoming another cult group. Because if identities are our point of speaking then one should remember Dalits are not a homogeneous community. In fact no community in the world is homogeneous. They are as wide as anybody else and hence these identities fit in there also. This study is suitable only for academic purpose and to provide information about Dalits movement but it is unable to provide direction about Chamar movement in particular. That's why this study fulfills that gap.

Rawat (2005) writes Dalit movements have a rich history of rationalism and humanism. In fact, the historical evolution took place with Buddha's revolt against Varnashram dharma. Buddha not only rejected supremacy of Brahmins but also of the Shastras. Sanskrit was the language of the Brahmins and knowledge their sole domain and Buddha not only demolished their knowledge base of Brahmins but also popularized among the masses by sermonizing in Prakrit. And this tradition of revolt continued at the later stage also. All the indigenous reform movement and religions in India had inherently revolted against the Brahmanical value system, which gave divine sanction to untouchability and caste system. After Buddha, Mahavir Swami rejected the notion of caste and violence in the brahmanical structure. Even the birth of Sikhism is related to the caste prejudices rampant in varnashram dharma system. In the 15th century Kabir talked of rejection of caste system and talked of one God. He attacked rituals and Shastras and talked of a society based on equality.

He also explains that the Mughal rule in India was a status quo one, the emergence of British power made a lot of difference for the downtrodden people.

They brought a sense of liberty for the marginalized communities. Jyoti Ba Phule belonged to Mali (fishermen) community of Maharashtra. Pune's Chitpawan Brahmin would not allow any Dalits and backward to join schools. Women particularly of Dalit community could never dream of going to school. Phule realized that unless the community gets educated they would not be able to emancipate themselves. So he started a massive work of education by starting various schools in and around Pune. The Brahmins opposed education movement among Dalits which they had denied for years. Phule exposed the brahminical literature, wrote plays about the exploitation of the farmers and appreciated Christian missionaries for their noble work in school education.

Annamalai (2002) has raised issues about Dalit movement as strategies to gain political force. There is increasing intolerance of the situation that has not changed for the majority of the Dalits in the fifty five years after independence. The educated Dalits, who can articulate about the exploitation the Dalits are subjected to, try to use intellectual organizational means to fight it. Some visible efforts are: using conferences and media (some examples are the recent campaign to include caste in the UN World Conference on Racism, International Dalits Human Rights Conference, First World Dalits Convention: Towards a Casteless Society, Dalits Solidarity Programme), publication of books and journals (International Journal of Dalits Studies, The Dalits Magazine (a U.S. based publication), Bahujan Youth Times, forming discussion groups (Dalits and Bahujan egroups), action groups (Dalits Liberation Education Trust, DalitsIndia) and building websites to create awareness (<http://www.ambedkar.org> is one example). They educate themselves on the constitutional and legal rights of the Dalits and fight for their implementation and extension using national and international forums. Dalits intellectuals and activists seek to educate and unite

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24 APR 2010

17



Dalits to strength their power base. They internationalize Dalits issues to get world attention and support.

Teltumbde (2002) traced out the historical background of the Dalits movement, in the familiar sense of organized resistance of the ex-untouchables to caste oppression, may not be traced beyond colonial times. However, in a wider sense of the struggle of lower castes against the hegemony of Brahminical ideology, it has to coexist with the history of caste itself. The broad framework of caste remaining the same, the Dalits movement could also be seen in a historical continuum with its previous phases. In another sense, it could be taken as the articulation phase of the numerous faceless struggles against the iniquitous socio-economic formation ordained by the caste system that has occupied vast spaces of Indian history.

Teltumbde (2004) has critically raised some key impacts of Dalits movements. Some of them are still consequential to the discourse of revolutionary change in India. The first is about what constitutes a nation. The Dalits movements dismiss the premise of the mainstream nationalist movement that India is a nation. Ambedkar, for instance, repudiated the notion of a nation in a caste society and challenged it saying that each caste was a nation. Phule, who was Ambedkar's preceptor, had said that "unless all the people in the Balisthan (his term for India), including the Shudras, Ati-Shudras, Bhill, Koli etc. become educated and are able to think over and unite, they cannot constitute a nation." Thus, although the anti-caste movement in general and Dalits movement in particular acknowledged the positive aspects of colonial rule and tactically sought to make use of their contradiction with the bourgeoisie nationalists to exert pressure on the latter to agree for desired reforms and devolution of power to the lower castes, it never was so overwhelmed as not to see its long term interests lying in the demise of alien rule.

Das (1983) quotes the compulsions of politics overtook religious spirits, which meant the Brahminic social order, based on castes remained largely unhindered and even influenced the emergent Muslim society with the Hindu converts. Even then this process spelt a sea of opportunity to the untouchables living outside the cities and villages. It was the Muslim invaders who first opened the gates of their cities to these 'Untouchables'. Many 'Untouchables' and low caste people embraced Islam and joined the invaders, partly to avoid persecution and partly in search of better status and fortunes. Those who embraced Islam and joined the armies of Muslim invaders imitated the customs and manners of their new masters. They gradually merged and integrated into Muslim society. Besides those who formally embraced Islam, whether voluntarily or under compulsion, there were millions of those who belonged to the artisan castes like weavers, masons, carpenters, blacksmiths, shoemakers, basket makers, potters, dyers etc., who slowly came to be Muslims.

Sharma's (1985) full-fledged study examines the relationship between the Arya samaj and untouchables. He observes that the Arya samaj was against the political movements of the untouchables. It went against any move initiated by the untouchables for their solidarity and integration.

Omvedt (1994) provides the religious discourse is thus a common feature of all the anti-caste movements. For example, the Satnami movement of the Chamars in the Chhattisgarh plains in Eastern Madhya Pradesh that eventually became an independent religious sect, the Dravid Kazhagam movement of Periyar EVR Ramaswamy Naicker which created a stir by publicly burning the effigy of Rama and celebrating the virtuousness of Ravana; the Nadar Mahajana Sabha in Tamilnadu ,the Ezhava movement of Narayana Guru which culminated in establishment of a new religious sect called Shree Narayan Dharma Pratipalana Yogam in Kerala and the most pervasive Dalits movement led by Babasaheb

Ambedkar curiously reaching its climax of mass conversion to Buddhism; they all signify an overriding hatred for the religious code of Manu and a proposition of an alternate faith for themselves. It essentially embodied dejection with the Brahminism, which was perceived to be the root cause for their sufferings. The most articulate expression of this dejection is found in Ambedkar's analysis that holds overthrowing of 'Hindu' religious ideological hegemony as a necessary condition for the liberation of Dalits.

He mentions about the global movements. He further adds there was a strong revolutionary movement all across the globe that drew its inspiration from the Bolshevik revolution in Russia in 1917. It claimed its ideological strength from the theories of historical materialism, dialectical materialism and scientific socialism propounded by Karl Marx. The Russian revolution had ignited hope of emancipation in oppressed humanity. In India too, it soon took roots and came to be reckoned as a political force, especially in the urban centres where it had a particular appeal among the workers of various factories. The leadership of this communist movement however came from the middle class educated youth who for historical reasons had to come from the upper castes, the majority being the Brahmin itself. Their comprehension of the philosophy of communism was acutely constrained on one hand by the lack of systematic political education compounded by the non-availability of much of the original literature, and on the other by their class and caste consciousness. It rested on the dictums like class struggle, dictatorship of proletariat and notions of the base and superstructure without the underlying dialectics that lent it its specific meanings. This movement was essentially pitted against British imperialism that brought them nearer some sections of the nationalists and tended to ignore the caste as a super structural identity. The emergence of autonomous Dalits movement could not therefore be taken kindly by the communist movement, as it saw the Dalits movement to be

dividing the workers, diffusing the focus of the anti-imperialist struggle and being non-scientific. In their strategic formulation, the open anti-State stance of the communists moreover did not find favour with the Dalits.

This study is suitable only for academic purpose and to provide information about Dalits movements but it is unable to provide direction about Chamar movement in particular. That's why this study fulfills that gap.

Gorringe (2005) highlights the Dalits as a major force in Indian democracy throughout the country. While the political interventions of the Republican Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party in the north are well documented. He focuses on the more recent rise of Dalits politics in the Southern State of Tamil Nadu. Dalits identity assertion and political mobilisation have irrevocably transformed the Indian political landscape. While the impact of the Dalits movement on the terms and definitions of political configurations in Tamil Nadu is clearly visible, behind this macro-level change is the everyday struggle against the entrenched power matrix at the grassroots.

He also, examines the mode of organisation and engagement in politics of the Dalits in Tamil Nadu, and their contribution to the processes of democratisation and egalitarianism. Situating the Dalits movement in the context of socio-political changes in Tamil Nadu and argues that it is at the local level that the relations of power are challenged, negotiated and reconfigured, and it is through these processes that the Dalits movement has brought large sections of the oppressed classes into the fold of India's democratic polity as active participants. With its many insights and unusual methodology, his study will help the students and scholars of Dalits studies of various discipline.

Samel (2004) attempts Dalits Movement during 1857-1950, in four southern states i.e. Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu, Karnataka and Kerala. The author provides valuable insights into the genesis of the concerned movement and leadership, event structure, internal dynamics and the social and cultural consequences. The author has focused on a brief history of the states, caste system, socio-economic conditions of Dalit leaders, organizations of Dalits movement, educational efforts made for Dalits and Temple Entry Movement in South India. This is not a study of Dalits alone, but an attempt to present a social and political history of a fascinating area in a time of rapid change and also a contribution to the regional history of South Asia. This study is suitable only for academic purpose and to provide information about Dalit movements but it is unable to provide direction about Chamar movement in particular. That's why this study fulfills that gap.

Kshirsagar(2006) traces out the history of Dalits liberation movement in India during 1857 to 1956. It attempts to find out the causes of the origin of inhuman practice of untouchability. The study expounds the history of Dalits liberation, with special emphasis on the Dalits organizations and the role played by the leaders individually and collectively for the liberation of their brethren, and their achievements. It covers all the aspects of the Dalits movement. It has been objectively analysed, properly interpreted and systematically arranged in a consolidated form. It would be useful as a ready reference to the scholars, interested in undertaking intensive research on individual leaders, and their role in the movement. It would be beneficial to those activists who prefer to take lessons from their past. Therefore, the book is of great value.

Herald (2007) has given a voice to the oppressed, backward and the poor by challenging feudalism and vested interests. But it is a shocking factor that the same Dalits have stepped into quarrel seeking separate mutts for different sub-

categories among themselves. There is a need for internal reservation but the Dalits movement should not get spilt amidst this.

Hardlmann (2008) elaborates new 'practices' and discourses among Dalits activists since the 1990s and shows how these practices both shaped and changed social relations. It is an anthropological attempt to reach behind the surface of the contemporary Dalits movement. It discusses the kind of discourses found among Dalits activists; the organizational structure of the movement; local practices among activists and also among others. This study also relates the method of anthropological fieldwork to theories about social movements. It offers a historical context as a prerequisite to understanding processes in the contemporary Dalits movement focus on the heterogeneity and the geographical spread of the contemporary Dalits movement. The fieldwork moves from a small locality of Dalits in Lucknow to interaction with Dalit activists in Maharashtra to the life of Punjabi Dalits migrants in Birmingham.

It is revealed from the review of various literatures that Indian society as a whole never accepted hierarchy as a basic value system. The anti-caste movements essentially were against the creed of Brahminism that had ordained the iniquitous social structure. They were always articulated in terms of constituting an anti-thesis to oppressive aspects of the 'Hindu' religion. They invariably materialised in the form of denouncements of these aspects and in corollary, adoption of a different faith, which in their perception was better. These movements invariably needed certain extraneous enablers especially the political congeniality.

These studies are suitable only for academic purpose and to provide information about Dalits movements but it is unable to provide direction to the Chamar movement in particular. It is expected to fulfill the gap of Dalits movement in general and Chamar movement in particular in case of Nepal.

and it symbolizes a struggle for recognition of self-identity, expression of historical reality of oppression due to caste-based untouchability and occupations, and a determination for creation of egalitarian society.

There are very few studies that have been made on Dalits and Chamars as well as their Movement in Nepal. Among them some relevant studies are reviewed here:

Bista (1996) writes “Chamars have charged of dirty and menial works in the community and eat any animal carcass except for that of dog, cat or horse. The Chamars play drums in the wedding band”.

Subedi (1997) writes, Chamars of Dang migrated from India, but they came first to Deukhuri and to the Dang. When they came to Dang they were involved in leather work and as watchman. Due to decline of traditional shoes and rise of factory shoes Chamars mostly started to depend on agricultural labour for their livelihood.

Chamars are Hindu and according to Hindu caste hierarchy they are sudra and consider as Achhut(untouchables). His finding shows exploitation of Chamars by higher caste groups like Brahmin and Chettri. Though the caste based discriminations is not rigid as it was in the past, but the researcher observed some discriminatory practices which still exist in the area. Chamars are not allowed to get water from the well at the same time with other caste people. Most of them are landless, and uneducated therefore backward in every field. Researchers have found that these Chamars are forgetting their traditional culture and language.

Upadhyaya (2000) has made Socio-economic study of Chamars of Janakpur municipality. She says Chamars have separate settlement which is

Bhattachan (2001) writes about the importance of Dalits movement in Nepal. He describes about the contribution of Dalits in Nepalese history. Firstly the Dalits have not started revolutionary movement till now, though they are subordinated since historical period. Similarly Dalits are the skillful human resources of Nepal. They are contributing society through different service sectors, musical field, literature and even in film industries. They have greatly contributed during the unification of Nepal by Prithivi Narayan Shah. He has also pointed out those weaknesses of state and mal-adjustment policies for Dalits in mainstream politics. He has suggested reforming the state and taking part Dalits in state agencies to make equitable and harmonious Nepal. His studies don't contribute to the movements of Dalits as a whole and specific to the charmar of Nepal terai.

He categorizes only three Dalits communities at the national level. These are Mijar Samaj, Biswakarma Samaj, and Pariyar Samaj. Other Dalits castes have yet to get organized. Most of the Dalits are organized as Dalits either as a fraternal or sister organization of different political parties or as NGOs. One such organization of Dalits women is Feminist Dalits Organization (FEDO) based in Kathmandu with its branch offices in other districts”.

Bhattachan and others (2003) who have done a study on the untouchables of Nepal are of the view that Dalits are neither the original creation of Nepal nor of the Dalits themselves. Four fold Varna model along with caste hierarchy, purity and defilement of water, food and body, division of labour based on descent etc. were created by the Hindus of the Indo-Gangatic plains in India. Both untouchability and descent based division of labour were imported in Nepal from North India. In both Nepal and India, however, the use of the term is very recent

known as 'Chamartol'. Very few of them have brick house. They follow Hindu religion. Her study shows very low socio-economic status of Chamars.

Yadav (2001) studies social and economic status of Chamars of Mahottari district. He has found division among Chamars in this area. Chamars are divided into 'Kanujiya' and 'Tirhutia' clans and Tirhutia believes themselves as superior than Kanujiya and avoid marriage relationship. His study also found low socio-economic condition of Chamars.

There is no systematic study on the Chamars movement of Lahan. However some journalist and human right activists have made some observations and published it in National newspapers.

The economic blockade against Chamars in Siraha district after their refusing carcass disposing job. In the morning of 24th March, 2000, people in the Lahan market were sent notice about the social seclusion of Chamars and who ever goes against that will be fined 551 Rupees. After this notice tea shops refused to offer tea to Chamars. One Chamar was taken out of his ticket booking job. Riksha-puller and other Chamars who were involved in different types of labour works were taken out of their work, and even Chamars children were beaten for playing in the street, they were not allowed to enter schools. Notice was posted in the walls and electric polls for Chamars not to walk on others land, not to go out for defecation and warned if the women came out they will be raped, and male will be stoned.

Such Social blockade made Chamars life worse. This was the case of violation of human rights. Such social blockade was made by the land owners. even ex-minister and party leaders were involved. Such blockade attracted human right activists, journalists, and other social workers. Some human right activists

and Dalits association met together and made decision to lift such blockade immediately and no one could compel Chamars to dispose Carcass against their will. However Chamars were not satisfied with that decision and demanded to punish those who were involved in violence against them. According to Chamars the District Officer was not interested to punish those higher caste people, instead engaged in omitting proots and forcing Chamars to withdraw complaints.

Similarly, Basnet (2001) focuses on the chamar as subordinate caste as well as class in Nepal Terai. He established the problems of chamar in both castes as well as class hierarchy. He focuses on restriction towards chamar by high caste and social system.

Hemchuri (1992) mentions about the background of the Dalits movement in Nepal. She does not specify the dimension of Dalits movement. She has just raised the necessities of Dalits movement for the liberation of Dalits. She has not clearly raised specific issues about their liberation. She claims the Hindu religion system has obstacle for Dalits in general. She emphasizes to unite Dalits first and then start to revolt against the social system.

The exploitation of Dalits is feudal in nature. So it is necessarily a revolt against the state rulers and social cultural system. The state formed in Nepal could not address the people's sentiments including basic needs. The state structure must be revised and must be reformed. It excluded the subordinated castes, ethnics and Dalits. So to make it participatory social laws have to be promulgated and reformed as a result Dalits can participate in all agencies of nations. Complete reservation must be there so as to empower Dalits in total. There are various problems in nations related to Dalits. To address these problems about Dalits, State must be reformed and Dalits must revolt as the people's movement in

different societies, so that they can participate in every field by pressuring State, existing social system and more.

The above mentioned literatures concerned more about ethnographic studies i.e. socio-economic profile, migration, fertility and demography. But they do not incorporate changing life pattern of Chamars in Nepal. It is a hope that this movement will become political movement against the discrimination of Dalits in Nepali society. Thus, the study fulfills the gap between ethnographic studies and current affairs of Chamars.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The objectives of the study are to explore the movement and struggle of people identified as Dalits, living in a village of Terai, Nepal. It also tries to understand the relationship between so called untouchables and other caste groups by analyzing the movements of Chamars. This is strongly believed that the findings will remain useful for generating future Dalit friendly policies which help to enhance greater social cohesion and harmony among Nepalese people in future. The specific objectives are as follows:

1. The study aims to prepare an ethnographic account on the Dalits by depicting various aspects of their social (such as demography, education, caste based discrimination, gender etc.), economic (such as land holding, occupation, income, expenditure etc.), and political (political participation, representation at village, district and national government) life to show their status and position in the social structure in Nepal.
2. The study will find out the basic roots of the Dalit movements in Nepal and its various causes cultural, economic and other factors such as

domination by caste, discrimination, poverty which are responsible for the emergence of Dalit movement.

3. The study will try to assess the structure and functioning of the Dalit movement. It focuses on the types and functions of the organizations along with the nature of the movement.
4. The study also intends to explore the current achievements of the movement (reservation in education, employment, politics and strictly implementation of laws against the discrimination in various sectors etc.). Various problems such as strong belief in religious faith, social boycott, lack of objectivity of the movement etc. have been encountered with organized Dalit movement in Nepal. The positive and negative aspects of the movement will be assessed along with the responses of the government as well as contribution of the movement in improving the Dalits' social condition.

METHODS OF THE STUDY:

Lahan Municipality of Sirha district has been selected where the traditional caste system is well established and has maintained a strong identity of caste in the social framework. It is bisected by east-west highway (which brings external social and economic changes to the area) and bordered by Bihar State (one of the poorest, more conservative and densely populated Hindu States of India) in the South. In connection with this movement emerged among the Terai Dalits in 1999 in the history of Nepal. It originated in Saptari District of Nepal. But for the first time Chamars of Lahan Municipality of Sirha District refused to throw dead animals and got success. This issue was raised nationally and internationally by different NGOs and INGOs. In Lahan the upper caste people joined together and imposed economic blocked to the whole Chamar people. This movement is still

going on in this area; this is the reason that I have purposely selected this as my study area.

According to 2001 census Chamar population comprised 26,670 in Sirha district. Among them 729 are living heterogeneously in the seven wards of Lahan municipality. They have in total 161 households.

In order to understand the personal and demographic information of Chamar and their movement of Lahan municipality 161 respondents were selected from all 161 households. The respondents were mostly the head of the household because they knew about the community problems and participated in the movement. They were able to understand the questions related to the Chamars activities and movement. The non-Dalits leaders of political parties, journalists and human right activists, representatives of local bodies, representatives of the administration and authority and NGOs were also selected as key informants for group discussion.

Information was collected primarily through the schedule, observation and focus group discussion. These tools were considered as major tools for collecting data and information from the grass-root level focusing on their view, opinion, attitudes towards Chamars from various people and organizations directly involved with the movement affairs. The information were also collected from the non-Dalit, political leaders, activists, local bodies, local authority, NGO and INGO, who are directly or indirectly involved in the entire phenomena of the movement.

This study used both primary and secondary data. However, the main part of the study primarily based on the interview schedule. The interview included all the Chamar households of the study area. The interview schedule was divided into

two parts. The first part included questions related to demographic information, educational status, occupation, landholding pattern, number and the name of the organizations working in the study area and the second part of the schedule included information about the inter-caste relations, opinion related to untouchability, domestic violence, health and sanitation.

Observation was used to identify the forms, nature and intensity of the existing practices of castes based untouchability and also to determine the nature and extent of double discrimination against women due to the practice of caste based untouchability. Observation technique was followed to gather information on village settlement pattern, types of house, sanitation, food habit, dress pattern, religious activities, ceremonies, use of ornaments, daily routine and different aspects of life of the Chamars.

The following number of focus group discussions with 8-10 people in each from different status was conducted to collect information related to types and nature of discrimination, nature and process of movement and suggestion for establish equitable society. The discussion was conducted among one group of Dalit consisting of both male and female. one group of non-Dalit consisting of both male and female. one group of political leaders from among the political parties namely; Congress, Communist and National Democratic Party. one group of Journalists and Human right activists, one group of Government local bodies, one group of officers of Government offices and one group consisting of officials of Saraswati Community Development forum (NGO).

A standard list of indicators related to existing practices of caste based untouchability and Dalit movement was prepared and relevant indicators were used as checklist to different focus groups. For example: nature and practice of untouchability related questions were asked with Dalits, similarly, movement

related questions were asked with Dalit political leaders, activists and representatives of different Dalit organizations. Non-Dalits were asked about selected questions related to both caste-based untouchability and Dalit movement. Administrators and Authorities were asked questions about the implementation and violation of law and punishment of the guilty.

In the beginning of the focus group discussion, participants were asked to talk about different issues related to caste based untouchability and Dalit movement. Later, questions from the standard list were asked to ascertain whether those form of discrimination and movement exist in the study area.

In order to verify the reliability of the data collected from the primary sources, the data from various secondary sources have been used wherever necessary. For this all available documents related to Dalits and their movements were consulted. These documents are various publications of the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), National Planning Commission (NPC), Lahan municipality, related books, reports, articles, pamphlets, daily news papers and other publications.

The study has been interpreted through the use of both qualitative and quantitative data to the elucidate valid picture of the movement. The quantitative data were collected and analysed in the following areas: Caste and Ethnic distribute, village and household economy, income and expenditure pattern and occupation. The qualitative data have been used to elucidate social, culture and religious phenomenon expressed with specific context of human relationship existing within the framework of caste system in Nepal. The thesis is mainly based on qualitative analysis.

CHAPTER-II

CHAPTER-II

THE LAHAN MUNICIPALITY

This chapter comprises of population and housing condition, religion, literacy status, economy, infra structure, health and hygiene of the caste and community living in Lahan. It also presents a detail description of the Chamars.

Lahan municipality lies in Siraha district of Eastern Development Region. It covers an area of 20.23 sq. km. According to Population Census 2001, this municipality had a density of 1,367 persons per sq. km. It was declared municipality in 1975. Its socio-economic characteristics are described below.

POPULATION PROFILE:

Lahan municipality spreads in 10 wards which accounts 5262 households with an average number of 526 households/wards and average household size 5.2. Comparatively the ward number one has more household followed by ward 5 and 3. The municipality comprises of 27,654 population representing 52.5 per cent male and 47.5 per cent female (Table-1).

TABLE 01: NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS AND POPULATION BY SEX

Ward	No. of Households	Population					Average Household Size
		Total	Male	%	Female	%	
0	5262	27654	14532	52.5	13122	47.5	5.26
1	1035	4684	2550	9.2	2134	7.7	4.53
2	316	1823	899	3.3	924	3.4	5.77
3	556	3156	1704	6.2	1452	5.3	5.68
4	541	3057	1548	5.6	1509	5.5	5.65
5	606	3527	1780	6.4	1747	6.3	5.82
6	441	2199	1158	4.2	1041	3.8	4.99
7	382	2042	1132	4.1	910	3.3	5.35
8	520	2796	1503	5.4	1293	4.7	5.38
9	342	1811	894	3.2	917	3.3	5.30
10	523	2559	1364	4.9	1195	4.3	4.89

Source: Lahan Municipality, 2004.

The distribution of population by five years age group and sex show relatively leading proportion in age group 5-9 (14.6%) followed by 10-14 (12.2%) and 0-4 (12.1%) respectively. Out of the total population the majority 56.5 per cent falls in economically active (15-59) age group. By gender, male population leads in most of the age group below 15 years. In the age group of 60 and above there are 3 per cent female population.

Out of the total population of Lahan Municipality, 522 people own the citizenship of other countries representing the highest (98.1%) from India. The others are from Bangladesh 0.8 per cent, others 0.2 per cent from China, and the rest from other Asian countries. Comparatively ward number 3, 1, 8 and 7 has a higher number of foreign citizenship.

Most of the population of Lahan municipality (94.3%) are native born and 86 per cent born in the same district. Out of the total foreign born (1565) population 29 per cent are male and 71 per cent female. Ward number 3, 7, 4 and 8 has comparatively higher number of foreign born population. Among the native born population 14.1 per cent are born in the other district with rural born remarkably higher than urban born (Table-2).

TABLE 02: POPULATION BY PLACE OF BIRTH AND SEX

Sex	Total Population	Foreign Born	Native Born
Both Sexes	27654 (100%)	1565 (5.6%)	26089 (94.3%)
Male	14532 (52.5%)	448 (1.6%)	14084 (50.9%)
Female	13122 (47.5%)	1117 (4.0%)	12005 (43.4%)

Source: Lahan Municipality, 2004.

The population aged 10 and above is 20,269 representing 67.2 per cent married, 31.4 per cent living single and 1.4 per cent not stated. Out of the total married population 48 per cent are male and 52 per cent female. The majority (92

%) have single spouse, 2.4 per cent remarried and 3.4 per cent widow. The proportion of divorced and separated is very low in comparison to those living with one spouse. Only 0.14 per cent population is divorced (Table-3).

TABLE 03: POPULATION AGED 10 YEARS AND ABOVE BY MARITAL STATUS AND SEX

Sex	Total Population	Population							Marital Status not Stated
		Single	MARRIED AND LIVING WITH			Widow/ Widower	Divorced	Separated	
			One Spouse	More than One Spouse	Remarried				
Both	20269	6364	12522	255	333	461	19	21	293
Sexes	(73.2%)	(31.3%)	(61.7%)	(1.3%)	(1.6%)	(2.3%)	(0.1%)	(0.1%)	(1.4%)
Male	10714	3945	5946	255	253	112	4	8	191
	(52.8%)	(36.8%)	(55.5%)	(2.4%)	(2.4%)	(1.1%)	(0.03%)	(0.07%)	(1.8%)
Female	9555	2419	6576	0	80	350	15	13	101
	(47.2%)	(25.3%)	(68.8%)	(0%)	(0.8%)	(3.7)	(0.2%)	(0.1%)	(1.1%)

Source: Lahan Municipality, 2004.

HOUSING CONDITIONS:

Type of house unit can be one of the many indicators of the quality of life of an urban household. Based on the use of building materials, four broad categories of house or housing unit in municipality can be sorted. These are pakki or concrete (brick and cement, cement and iron), semi pakki or partly concrete (partly brick and cement), kachha or non concrete (local materials: stone, mud and wood) and others. The house/housing units composition in the municipality is dominated by non pakki ones. About 40 % of the house/housing units in whole municipality are pakki types. However, significant variation in composition can be noticed in different wards. The proportion of non pakki types are considerable high in the ward no. 2, 4, 5 and 9 i.e. above 70 %. Among the non pakki ones, semi kachhi is common type in most wards.

FEMALE OWNERSHIP ON HOUSE AND LAND:

Gender disparity in ownership is highly acute. The traditional pattern of ownership prevails in the municipality where male commands over ownership on the basic assets like house and land. In all wards, more than 86.4% of women do not have ownership on either land or house or both. This implies vast majority of women are devoid of ownership rights making them economically and socially vulnerable (Table-4).

TABLE 04: OWNERSHIP ON HOUSE AND LAND

Ward	Total	Ownership of Female On			No Ownership
		House Only	Land Only	Both House and Land	
0	5262	333 (6.3%)	28 (0.5%)	356 (6.8%)	4545 (86.4%)
1	1035	21 (2.1%)	4 (0.4%)	88 (8.5%)	922 (89.0%)
2	316	32 (10.1%)	0 (0%)	7 (2.2%)	277 (87.6%)
3	556	18 (3.2%)	1 (0.2)	59 (10.6%)	478 (85.9)
4	541	67 (12.4%)	1 (0.2)	3 (0.6%)	470 (86.8%)
5	606	3 (0.5%)	16 (2.6%)	62 (10.2%)	525 (86.6%)
6	441	50 (11.3%)	2 (0.5%)	29 (6.6%)	360 (81.6%)
7	382	38 (9.9%)	0 (0%)	31 (8.1%)	313 (81.9%)
8	520	63 (12.1%)	2 (0.4%)	16 (3.1%)	439 (84.4%)
9	342	12 (3.5%)	0 (0%)	37 (10.8%)	293 (85.7%)
10	523	29 (5.5%)	2 (0.4%)	24 (4.6%)	468 (89.5%)

Source: Lahan Municipality, 2004.

GENDER AND HOUSEHOLD HEAD:

Gender is a cross cutting issue and without concerning gender analysis, study may be biased. Participation in social sphere, education status, economic condition etc. shows the status of development of any gender. Household head is

also the unit of analysis. There is a clear cut gender imbalance in terms of household head in the municipality. Male overwhelmingly dominates the number of household head i.e. 9 % of the total. In an average, there are about 8 male headed households for each female counterpart.

LITERACY STATUS:

Education is one of the measuring indicators of human development index. Therefore, education status shows the living condition of population.

Of the total population 6 years of age and over (23332) in Lahan municipality, 55.7 percent is literate. Male literacy is 69.1 percent and female 40.8 percent. Compared with national average, the total literacy rate is slightly higher (national average 53.7 percent) (Table-5).

TABLE 05: POPULATION DISTRIBUTION BY LITERACY STATUS

Sex	Population Aged 6 Years and Above	Population			Literacy not Stated
		Illiterate		Literate	
		Can't Read and Write	Can Read Only		
Both Sexes	23332 (100%)	9109 (39.01%)	1017 (4.4%)	13002 (55.7%)	204 (0.9%)
Male	12312 (52.8%)	3251 (13.9%)	432 (1.8%)	8506 (36.5%)	124 (0.5%)
Female	11020 (47.2%)	5858 (25.1%)	585 (2.5%)	4497 (19.3%)	80 (0.3%)

Source: Lahan Municipality, 2004.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT:

Among total literate population (13002) in the municipality 35.2 percent has attained Primary education only, 16.7 percent Lower Secondary and 12.2 percent Secondary education. Literates with SLC constituted 15.5 percent. The proportion attaining higher education i.e., beyond SLC is 12.8 percent only.

RELIGION:

Religion is another indicator to analyze the population. It is found that religious syncretism is highly practiced in study area though different religious people live there. An overwhelming majority is of Hindu population 24323(87.9%). The remaining population belongs to Islam 2829(10.2%), Bouddha 420(1.5%), Kirat 40(0.1%), Christian 22(0.1%), Jain 3(0.01%) and other religion 17(0.06%) (Table-6).

TABLE 06: POPULATION BY RELIGION

Total Population	Population						
Total	Hindu	Bouddha	Islam	Kirat	Christian	Jain	Other
27654.00	24323 (87.9%)	420 (1.5%)	2829 (10.2%)	40 (0.1%)	22 (0.07%)	3 (0.01%)	17 (0.06%)

Source: Lahan Municipality, 2004.

CASTE AND ETHNIC COMPOSITION:

Caste and ethnicity are the basic component to analyze the population. All caste and ethnic groups are not equal in all dimensions. Therefore, caste and ethnic distribution gives clear cut picture while studying. There are many caste/ethnic groups in the municipality. Among them Muslim (10.3 percent), Tharu (10.0 percent), Koiri (8.0 percent), Sudhi (5.3 percent), Dusad/Paswan/Pasi (5.2 percent), Yadav (4.9 percent), Brahman-hill (4.7 percent), Dhanuk (4.4 percent), Baniya (4.3 percent), Musahar (3.9 percent) and Teli (3.7 percent) are the main caste/ethnic groups. Others are Haluwai (2.9 percent), Chamar/Harijan/Ram (2.6 percent), Chhetri (2.6 percent), Kumhar (1.8 percent), Newar (1.6 percent), Mallah (1.6 percent), Marwadi (1.6 percent), Tatma (1.4 percent), Kayastha (1.2 percent), Kewat (1.2 percent) and Kami (1.0 percent). Other caste/ethnic groups with less than 1 percent population each in the municipality are Hajam/Thakur, Kalwar, Rajput, Khatwe, Sonar, Halkhor, Manjhi, Kumal, Sanyasi, Kurmi, Brahman-terai, Sarki. Magar, Bangali, Santhal/Sattar, Gharti/Bhujel, Rai, Dhobi, Kanu, Damai/Dholi, Dom and Barae (Table-7).

TABLE 07: POPULATION BY CASTE / ETHNIC GROUP

Caste Name	No. of Population	Percent
Chhetri	710	2.6
Brahman - Hill	1287	4.7
Magar	148	0.5
Tharu	2726	9.8
Newal	430	1.5
Muslim	2838	10.3
Kami	269	1.0
Yadav	1350	4.9
Rai	115	0.4
Damai/Dholi	94	0.3
Sarki	139	0.5
Teli	1034	3.7
CHAMAR/ HARIJAN/ RAM	729	2.6
Koiri	2208	8.0
Kurmi	170	0.6
Sanyasi	155	0.5
Dhanuk	1215	4.4
Musahar	1066	3.9
Dusadh/Paswan/Pasi	1432	5.2
Sonar	189	0.9
Kewat	330	1.2
Brahman – Tarai	132	0.5
Baniya	1181	4.3
Gharti/Bhujel	97	0.4
Mallah	444	1.6
Kalwar	242	0.9
Kumal	163	0.6
Hajam/Thakur	253	0.9
Kanu	79	0.3
Sudhi	1456	5.3
Tatma	385	1.4
Khatwe	208	0.8
Dhobi	86	0.3
Majhi	181	0.7
Kumhar	510	1.8
Haluwai	814	2.9
Rajput	228	0.8
Kayastha	331	1.2
Marwadi	456	1.6
Santhal/Sattaar	113	0.4
Barae	59	0.2
Bangali	105	0.4
Dom	51	0.2
Halkhor	179	0.6
Unidentified Caste	871	3.1
Others	396	1.4
Total	27654	100

Source: Lahan Municipality, 2004 based on Population Census, 2001.

MOTHER TONGUE:

Language is a means to communicate with each other. Without language it is impossible to share feelings and emotions with each other. Maithili is the mother tongue of 72.4 percent population in Lahan municipality. Other linguistic groups are Nepali (10.9 percent), Tharu (10.0 percent), Marwari (Rajasthani) (1.4 percent), Newari (0.5 percent), Hindi (0.5 percent) and Bangla (0.4 percent) (Table-8).

TABLE 08: POPULATION BY MOTHER TONGUE

Mother Tongue Name	Total Population
Nepali	3019 (10.9%)
Maithili	20011 (72.4%)
Tharu	2778 (10.0%)
Newar	141 (0.5%)
Urdu	256 (0.9%)
Hindi	134 (0.5%)
Bangla	108 (0.4%)
Marwari (Rajasthani)	398 (1.4%)
Unknown Language	666 (2.4%)
Others	143 (0.5%)
Total	27654 (100%)

Source: Lahan Municipality, 2004.

ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT SITUATION:

As Nepal is a country of an overwhelmingly agricultural based economy, the primary source of income of the people is land. Therefore, it is necessary to look up at the ownership of land to understand the extent of basic economy of population. It is interesting to see that the municipal households with land use for agricultural purpose are lesser than (28%) the household with no land used for agricultural purpose. Most of the wards have relatively lesser the proportion of the land use for agricultural purpose, however some wards i.e., 5, 7 and 8 consists only about 11% of the land used for agricultural purpose in this municipality (Table-9).

TABLE 09: NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH LAND USED FOR AGRICULTURE PURPOSE

Total Number of Households	Household with Land used for Agriculture Purpose	Household with no Land Used for Agriculture Purpose
5262 (100%)	1471 (28.0%)	3791 (72.0%)

Source: Lahan Municipality, 2004.

OCCUPATION:

Excluding the ownership of land, the other major means of livelihood of the people is the sale of their traditional occupation. There are number of households which have small scale household economic activities of the municipality. More than 69% of the households have no economic activity in the municipality. Only about 18% of the total households have adopted business and about 4% have services. Other activities are very less. The figure shows that most of the business activities are concentrated in ward no. 1, 5, 6, 7 and 8 which consist about 81% of the total households of this municipality.

The data indicates the employed population 10 years of age and above by occupation by sex. Almost 23 percent of the populations are engaged as service workers and shop and market sales workers in this municipality. Similarly, it is followed by skilled and semi-skilled agricultural and fishery workers (22%), craft related activities (20%) and elementary occupations which consist of about 18% of the total households of this municipality. The remaining populations are in other sectors, i.e. professional and technical as well as non-technical sectors. Moreover, the service related works ranks as the first important occupation on which about 23% of male and 22% of female are involved where as in elementary occupation this proportion is 18% male and 18% female. Likewise, the agriculture is also contributing factors which consists about 19% of the male and 38% female are involved. Other occupations are dominated by the male population.

In the case of communication, telephone facility is available in all wards but it is very limited in ward no 2 and 9 of the municipality. More than 30 percent households of all wards, except in ward no 2 and 8, of the municipality have radio. Television is also available in all wards of the municipality.

Many households in all wards have motor car, motorcycle, and refrigerator. Such facilities are comparatively more available in ward no 1, 4 and 7 (Table-10).

TABLE 10: DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLDS BY TYPE OF AVAILABLE FACILITIES

No. of House hold	Households with Facility of								Facility not Stated
	Radio	Television	Bicycle	Motor Car	Motor Cycle	Other Vehicle	Refrigerator	Telephone	
5262	1652 (31.38%)	1903 (36.18%)	2490 (47.32%)	83 (1.58%)	323 (6.14%)	148 (2.81%)	179 (3.40%)	596 (11.31%)	1914 (36.35%)

Source: Lahan Municipality, 2004.

HEALTH AND SANITATION:

Households of Lahan Municipality get drinking water from various sources. Piped water (tap), tubewell, and well are the major sources of drinking water in Lahan municipality. Out of the total households of the municipality, about 70 percent households receive drinking water from tubewell and about 22 percent gets pipe water. Besides these sources, about 4 percent households fetch water from the well and about 2 percent households are depending on other sources. Although the proportions of households, fetching drinking water from natural spring and river/stream are very negligible, nevertheless, some households of Lahan fetch drinking water from these sources.

The proportion of households depending on different source of drinking water is varying in different wards of the municipality. However, tubewell is observed as the primary source of drinking water in each ward. The percentage of households using piped drinking water is ranging from 5 percent in ward no. 2 as the least served ward to 50 percent in ward no. 7 as the highest served ward. Although piped water could be considered as relatively reliable and safer source of drinking water, significant proportion of households of the municipality are depending on tubewell and well. The proportions of households getting drinking water from well is about 18 percent in ward no. 4, about 1 percent households of most of the wards are depending in well for drinking water. Similarly, about 6 percent households in ward no. 8 use other source of water than stated here and about 6 percent household of both 6 and 8 no. wards do not state about their source of drinking water.

In Lahan Municipality, modern flush toilet is available only in about 35 percent of the total households. The proportion of households using ordinary toilet is about 7 percent. Rest of the 56 percent households of Lahan Municipality use

open toilet. Moreover, about 3 percent households of the municipality do not state about the toilet they are using.

The proportion of household with different toilet facility is varying in different wards with the leading proportion of households not having toilets in most of the wards. The proportion of households having no toilet is ranging from 15 percent in ward no. 7 as the least, to 90 percent in ward no. 2 as the highest. Similarly, the proportions of households using ordinary toilet are 16, 13 and 12 percent [as the top three] in ward no. 3, 6 and 7, respectively. Contrary to this, the proportion of households having modern toilet is ranging from 6 percent in ward no 2 to 70 percent in ward no. 7. Notable proportion of households of ward no. 1, 6 and 8 do not state about the use of toilet in Lahan Municipality.

CHAMARS OF LAHAN:

In the Terai area of Nepal, The Chamars are also known as the Ram, Mochi and Ravidas. They are notified as the Chamar and Mochi in these areas. Similarly, in Nepal the 3 Chamars belong to a lower level in the hierarchy of scheduled castes and the other castes in general. Their origin as a occupational caste of leather-workers having a lower social status placed them in the lowest stratum in the hierarchical division of the people in Hindu society. Traditionally, the tanners of leather, they prepare goods of skin, they are the manufacturer of leather articles and as the makers of shoes belong to a well-defined class in Nepal. Chamars living in Nepal are found similar in all aspects of economic and social life.

The word leather (hide) Charman, Charma, is known in both the older and the later portions of the Rig Veda, in the Atharva Veda, in the books of the Yajur Vedic Schools, in the Brahmins and in the later literature. The old literature also knows the shoemaker as Charmakar. Shoes made of skins and of leather, are

mentioned in Mahabharat, Ramayan and Vishnu Puran. Thus, the occupations of tanner and leather were fully developed in ancient India.

Probably from the early Aryan times, the lower class who belonged to the common labourers and those who, on account of the disgusting aspects of their work and life, were deemed to be unclean and untouchable. Manu's famous passage is: "All those tribes in this world, which are excluded from those born from the mouth, the arms, the thighs, and the feet (of Brahman), are called Dasyus, whether they speak the language of the Mlecchas (barbarians) or that of the Aryans.

Chamar is Terai origin caste. It is generally said that the Terai origin castes of Nepal migrated from India from the very early period.

In India, Chamars are basically landless and traditionally work on skins and hides. They are also engaged in agriculture, animal husbandry, government and private services as unskilled labourers. Most of the elderly members of the community are uneducated, but gradually, formal education for boys is being favoured but not for girls. Boys discontinue their studies due to social and economic reasons. Economically, the Chamar is a most valuable element in the society and his function is the rough toil and drudgery of the community. Nearly always a poor man, Chamar, as a rural labourer, generally has plenty to do.

The struggle for subsistence among the lower castes, who do not in general own the means of production, is indeed bitter and hard. So searching for the means of livelihood the Chamars entered Nepal, which had similarities in climate, culture, religion and open border between Nepal and India from the very beginning of the human civilization.

POPULATION OF CHAMARS:

Population Size: The population size of the Chamars, during field work was 941. The growth of nearly 212 in 5 years, an increase almost conforms to the rate of growth for the village as a whole. The factors which have contributed to the increase in their population include mainly decline in death rate, steady birth rate and immigration. Due to the absence of proper records, the number of immigration could not be ascertained. According to the respondents, about 5-10 families have come and settled in the village during the movement. Their positions as individual caste with respect to their numerical strength in the village have changed during the movement.

The information shows that majority of the Chamar population lives in ward no.1. Among the total populations of Chamars 43.5 percent live in this ward. Where as there is no any Chamar in ward no.3, 7 and 8(Table-11).

TABLE 11: NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLD BY WARD

Ward No.	No. of Household	%
Ward No. 1	70	43.5
Ward No. 2	20	12.4
Ward No. 4	1	0.6
Ward No. 5	3	1.8
Ward No. 6	18	11.2
Ward No. 9	10	6.2
Ward No. 10	39	24.2
Total	161	100

Source: Field survey, 2006

The total number of population of Chamars in study area is measured 941. This number varies from the Census Survey 2001. Because this study was done in 2006. So this is new one. Similarly the majority of the Chamar population lives in ward number one. Among the total population of Chamars of study area 40.38

percent lives in this ward i.e. 380. Second largest number of Chamar resides in ward number ten which comprise of 27.41 % (258), where as there is no any Chamar in ward number three, seven and eight.

Age is one of the determining factors for development index. If the country has higher number of economically active population; the higher will be the rate of development and vice versa. In Nepal economically active population is lesser than economically inactive population. The case is also more or less comparable to the study area.

The data shows that the total number of population of Chamars is 941. The percentage of female population is 51.75 where as the population of male is 48.25 percent. Among the various age groups of both sexes, the majority of percentage is found in female population of 18-50 age groups. The percentage is 20.72 out of the total population of Chamars and 40.04 percent of the total female population of Chamars.

The distribution of Chamar population in the study area are found as follows:

TABLE 12: POPULATION OF CHAMARS BY AGE AND SEX

Lahan Municipality/ Ward no	Female Population of Family	Male Population of Family	Total	Female Population (0-5 Age Group)	Male Population (0-5 Age Group)	Female Population (6-10 Age Group)	Male Population (6-10 Age Group)	Female Population (11-17 Age Group)	Male Population (11-17 Age Group)	Female Population (18-50 Age Group)	Male Population (18-50 Age Group)	Female Population (51 and above)	Male Population (51 and above)
Ward No. 1	192 (20.4%)	188 (20%)	380 (40.4%)	44	40	29	35	17	22	87	81	16	9
Ward no. 2	53 (5.6%)	45 (4.8%)	98 (10.4%)	23	16	5	5	1	2	22	23	1	0
ward no. 4	6 (0.6%)	5 (0.5%)	11 (1.2%)	1	1	2	1	2	0	2	2	0	0
ward no 5	5 (0.5%)	6 (0.6%)	11 (1.2%)	1	3	0	0	0	1	3	4	1	0
ward no 6	52 (5.5%)	46 (4.9%)	98 (1.4%)	12	10	9	9	6	3	19	20	7	3
ward no 9	46 (4.9%)	39 (4.1%)	85 (9%)	9	8	12	4	5	7	12	13	7	7
ward no 10	133 (14.1%)	125 (14.3%)	258 (27.4%)	37	24	14	25	11	12	50	50	21	13
Total	487 (51.7%)	454 (48.3%)	941 (100%)	127	102	71	79	42	47	195	193	53	32

Source: Field survey, 2006

LITERACY STATUS OF CHAMARS:

In spite of the existence of the schools in each ward of municipality, most of the Chamars are found to be uneducated. Although, the Chamars community of Lahan municipality are aware of the importance of education to some extent but a high rate of children are not attending school due to poverty and other reasons. This information indicates that the illiteracy among the Chamars likely to increase in the coming days.

Among 941 of the Chamars only 115 (12.2%) males and 56 (5.9 %) females are literate. They studied only up to higher secondary. None of them had any technical qualifications or training, or special skills in arts or science. The educational statuses of these 171 literate are as follows: up to primary- male- 62, female-41, lower secondary male-23, female-11, and secondary male-18, female-4, higher secondary male-12. There have no female in the higher secondary level.

TABLE -13: LITERACY STATUS OF CHAMAR BY SEX

Ward	Literate		Illiterate	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
1	47 (5.0%)	26 (2.8%)	160 (17.0%)	139 (14.8%)
2	11 (1.2%)	6 (0.6%)	47 (5.0%)	34 (3.6%)
4	3 (0.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
5	2 (0.2%)	0 (0%)	5.0 (0.5%)	4.0 (0.4%)
6	13 (1.4%)	6 (0.6%)	50 (5.3%)	36 (3.8%)
9	9 (1.0%)	3 (0.3%)	40 (4.3%)	33 (3.5%)
10	30 (3.2%)	15 (1.6%)	123 (13.1%)	99 (10.5%)
Total	115 (12.2%)	56 (5.9%)	425 (45.2%)	345 (36.7%)

Source: Field survey, 2006

The information indicates that the majority of Chamars of both sexes are found from the schooling level to primary level. The numbers of people who are upgrading in school are reducing from lower secondary to secondary and from secondary to higher secondary level respectively.

Drop out rate of children at the primary level of education is high. In spite of primary education being free, inability to purchase basic things like books, school uniform etc. lead to the increase in drop out rate of the children at the primary level.

Poor management of the school, humiliating behaviour of the teachers and children of so-called high caste were the factors that led to drop out. Only few are able to reach secondary level of education, and those who took higher secondary education were not able to continue their education due to poverty.

ECONOMY OF CHAMARS:

Economically the Chamar is a most valuable caste in the society, and its function is the rough toil and drudgery of the community. Though always poor, as a rural labourer, Chamars generally have plenty to do. Their work is distributed over the year as follows: For five months, from June to November, he works in the field with a plough; for two months, November and December, he is engaged in reaping the autumn crops; In January and February he is occupied with buildings and other forms of earth work; in March and April he is busy harvesting, and in May he does little earth work. In between he does whatever work comes to him. However, economic changes are taking place, and Chamars are changing their traditional profession.

OCCUPATIONAL PATTERN:

The information pertaining to the occupational pattern of the Chamars during the movement reveals that they mostly worked as agricultural labourers, small business holders and servicemen.

The occupational pattern of the Chamar population during the movement is given in table 14. The table reveals that both change and diversification of occupation has taken place among them. It also points out that agricultural labour no longer forms the main occupation. On the contrary, agriculture has become the most important occupation. 82% of their total working population is engaged in agriculture. Next to agricultural labour, 4.3 percent is engaged in service, 3.7% in small business, 1.9% in farming, 1.2% in shoe mending, similarly, 0.6% are engaged in tailoring and as mester. All working women work as agricultural labourers in the village or are engaged in their traditional work (domestic worker), primarily because they lack both education and skill for other types of employment and are also not willing to go out of village for work. The following table shows the occupation followed by Chamars:

TABLE -14: OCCUPATIONS BY CATEGORY OF THE HOUSEHOLD

Occupations	No. of Household	%
No response	9	5.6
Labour	132	82.0
Local small business	6	3.7
Service (Job)	7	4.3
Farming	3	1.9
Tailoring	1	0.6
Shoe mending	2	1.2
Mester	1	0.6
Total	161	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2006

LAND HOLDING PATTERN:

Land is the only one defined resources in underdeveloped societies. Without ownership of land one cannot access towards any resources and opportunities. The landless people in Nepal are mostly Dalit groups as a whole. Though the Terai is considered the granary of Nepal, the percentage of landless people is found to be highest in the Terai. The landlessness is more prominent in the Terai. Many Chamars have settled themselves in the land owned by landlords of the study area, and they were used as labourers to farm their land. In the study area Bataiya land (sharing or lease land), Mohi land (tenancy land), and Numbari land (own land) are found. The information shows that the 98.1% of the Chamar have no Bataiya land, 98.8% have no Mohi land and 34.2% Chamars have no land to stay. (Among the total number of Chamars, 65.8 percent have some numberi land (own land) having ownership. But who have their numberi (own land), they are also in the bottom of the landownership (Table -15).

TABLE 15: LAND HOLDING PATTERN OF THE CHAMAR HOUSEHOLDS

Area	Household		
	Bataiya Land	Mohi Land	Nambari Land
No Land	158 (98.2%)	159 (98.8%)	55 (34.2%)
0-4 kattha	1 (0.6%)	1 (0.6%)	84 (52.1%)
5-9 Kattha	1 (0.6%)	-	13 (8.1%)
10-14 Kattha	1 (0.6%)	1 (0.6%)	3 (1.9%)
Above 14 Kattha	-	-	6 (3.7%)
Total	161 (100.0%)	161 (100.0%)	161 (100.0%)

Source: Field Survey, 2006

INCOME:

Occupation and income are closely related. The monthly income of the Chamar families, as per available information during the movement, ranged between Rs. 1,500 to Rs. 4,000+. Five families 3.1 percent have highest monthly income above Rs.4, 000.

Along with the change in occupation, income of the Chamars has also changed and increased considerably. The majority i.e. about 37.9 percent have monthly income ranging between Rs. 3,000 and Rs.3,499. About 26.1 percent families have monthly income of about Rs. 3,500 to Rs.3, 599. Similarly, 11.8 percent have ranged between Rs.2, 500 to 2,999, 15.5 percent have ranged between Rs.2, 000 to 2,499 and 5.6 percent have ranged between Rs.1,500 to 1,999. The average family income has been calculated to be about Rs. 3,041.25. The distribution of the families on the basis of monthly income is given in Table-16.

TABLE -16: MONTHLY INCOME OF THE FAMILY

Income (In Rs.)	Number of families
1500 to 1999	9 (5.6%)
2000 to 2499	25 (15.5%)
2500 to 2999	19 (11.8%)
3000 to 3499	61 (37.9%)
3500 to 3999	42 (26.1%)
4000 +	5 (3.1%)
Total	161 (100%)

Source: Field Survey, 2006

Among all the present occupations, agriculture and business provide highest income and agricultural labour the lowest.

EXPENDITURE:

The expenditure pattern of the Chamars has been changed. Now they also spend their income in different items except food. Still they spend majority of income, about 60 percent on food. Similarly, 10 percent on clothing, 5 percent on social obligation, education, recreation and buying housing commodities. They also spend about 2 percent on health and 8 percent on different other items (Table-17).

TABLE -17: EXPENDITURE PATTERN

Item of Expenditure	% of the Income Spend by the Respondents
Food	60
Clothing	10
Social obligation	5
Education	5
Housing and housing commodities	5
Health	2
Recreation	5
Miscellaneous	8
Total	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006

The table reveals (i) that there has been significant addition in the list of the items of expenditure, (ii) decrease in the expenditure on food, and increase in expenditure on education, housing and recreation. This reveals their desire to have an improved standard of living. Change in occupation followed by increased income and change in aspiration have contributed to this change.

INDEBTEDNESS:

Indebtedness has remained a widespread phenomenon and is common to all people irrespective of caste, even though the proportion of indebted population among the Chamars has fallen during the movement. Of the total 161 Chamar

families during the movement 118(73.3%) were stated to be in debt and their amount of loan ranged between Rs. 3,000 to Rs. 12,000. Loans were usually taken for family maintenance and performance of social obligations from the village money lenders only.

Construction of houses, purchase of bullocks or buffaloes, cows, goats, radio, cycle and performance of social obligations has been stated to be common factors for incurring loans among them. Sources of loan include relatives, friends, private moneylenders (Landlords) and banks. Of all these sources, bank and relatives are most important, as about 38 percent of the indebted families among the Chamars have taken loan from the bank.

LIVESTOCK:

The ownership of livestock among the Chamars in 2006 was determined by the economic utility of the animals and these were confined to cows, buffaloes, poultry and goats. All the 161 families during the said period owned some livestock. While ownership of goat and poultry were common to all the families, twenty five families have a cow each. Goats have owned by almost all families. In absence of proper data, it has not been possible to compare the ownership of livestock between the Chamars and others.

The ownership of livestock among the Chamars is now determined, along with the previous factors i.e. the economic utility of the animals, by the social attitude towards the domestication of any particular animal. Total number of these animals owned by them is 428. Distribution of the livestock owned by them is as follows: buffaloes-12, bullocks-20, cows-35, goat-185 and poultry-176. The 148 families (about 92% of the total), majority of who are early residents and have their own house, possess all these 428 livestock. Of the total families owning

livestock, three families who are working as agriculturists, have both bullocks and buffaloes. The families having buffaloes and cows domesticate them mainly for the purpose of selling milk.

TRADE AND COMMERCE:

Trade and commerce is practically confined to the Baniyas of the village. The entry of the Chamars into trade and commerce have resulted into further diversification of their occupations and greater involvement in the village economic life. There are a total of 9 shops of Chamars in Lahan. The distribution of the shops is as follows: grocery shops-2, vegetable/fruit shops-4, tailoring shop-1 and shoe mending-2.

The Chamar shop owners are all young people. They all regard themselves as young entrepreneurs and as such are willing to take risks by investing money in some new ventures. They have been largely inspired to improve their position by caste leaders and have been greatly encouraged and assisted by elders and their own caste meeting. Their shops are mainly located in the bazaar of the village. The customers of these shops are not only confined to their own caste members or lower castes but also include the higher caste people of village and its surroundings. In fact, the Chamar tailoring shop draws a large number of higher caste people, as they regard the owner of the shop as a master (skilled) tailor, who is well conversant with new designs and fashions.

Milk selling is considered by the Chamars in particular and the villagers in general as a good source of secondary income and it has been taken up by families, irrespective of castes, who have surplus milk. The selling of milk is a new trend in the village. The desire to change and improve economic conditions by supplementing their income has promoted them to be engaged in this business.

RELIGION:

The religion plays a vital role to regulate society and culture. It is the super structure of society and culture in general. The Chamars society is also one of those kinds. It is already mentioned that untouchability is the outcome of Hindu Varna system, so religion plays an important role in the study area too. All 161 household, follow Hindu religion in the study area.

The literature shows that Dalits have no right to entry in Hindu temples, ban on worshipping, restriction for reading the Hindu religious books. Similarly, many Dalits believe that psychological effect is the greatest effect of caste-based untouchability that have dominoes effect on others. Inferiority complex or lack of self-respect and self-confidence, attitude to tolerate stoically than to protest or revolt and accept untouchability as destiny are three such effects.

The Chamars of Nepal believe in Hindu religion. They worship the sun. On the birth day of the lord Krishna people fast and no one begins to eat until about mid-night when the moon rises. Women worship the moon, so that the children may escape disease. Rivers receive special consideration as great satisfiers of life.

The Chamars accept the doctrines of transmigration and Karma, and this belief explains many death customs: and, for the most part. these ideas exercise a dumb, depressing, fatalistic influence upon them. There are, however, certain sects of the Chamars which teach that Guru- Worship will issue in a permanent release from the round of births.

For the most part, Chamars are denied admission into Hindu temples. Their offerings are, however, accepted; and they may stand in front of the entrance and look in. Brahmans accept food and cash from Chamars, although they do not touch them.

There are many shrines in which the Chamar has great faith, and from which miracles of healing have been reported. Such shrines are places of pilgrimage.

RELIGIOUS BELIEF AND PRACTICES:

The respondent Chamars are used to worship a few deities like kalimata, and sitalamai and a number of spirits, viz, 'Bhut', 'chudel', 'pret', 'pisach' and 'Rakshasas.' A brief description of all these deities and spirits indicating the purpose of their worship is given below:

Kalimata: Kalimata is regarded as omnipotent and a source of strength. She is believed to protect her devotees from the pischas (demons) and can be satisfied only by offering blood. Therefore, rituals connected with kalimata always involve sacrifice of animals.

Sitalamai: Sitalamai is worshipped for protection against diseases, like small-pox, cholera and plague. It is believed that if displeased, she throws the seeds of these diseases in all directions and upon whom so ever it falls they will be attacked with the diseases. She, like kalimata, can be pleased by offering blood and animal sacrifices.

Bhut: Bhut is the disembodied spirit of a person who has died a violent death by accident, suicide, capital punishment or had been killed by another spirit whose funeral ceremony has not been performed. The term "Bhut" is also used in a more general sense to mean a malevolent spirit. Bhut is worshipped so that it may not do any mischief to the worshipper.

Chudel: Regarded as the ghost of a woman, chudel is greatly feared. A woman who had died while unclean or pregnant or in child birth is supposed to

assume the form of a Chudel. She is described as having pendent breasts, large projecting teeth, thick lips, uncombed hair and a black tongue, all giving a dreadful appearance. Her displeasure, it is believed, bring death and disease to the family.

Pret: pret or paret (female pretin) is viewed as the ghost of a deformer or defective person. The ghost of a child dying prematurely or a still born child may be called paret. The pret is malicious and needs to be pleased.

Pisach: pisach is a demon resulting from men's vices and is, in reality, the spiritual embodiment of some vice, as that of the spirit of a thief or insane person.

Rakshasas: Rakshasas are considered to be ogres or giants found in trees, in birds and sometimes animate dead body. They devour human beings, and eat raw flesh and carrion. They cause vomiting, indigestion and other problems to the people. Among different categories of Rakshasas are the Deo a gigantic, powerful, stupid, long-lipped, cannibal, Bir- a malignant village demon of great prowess, who amongst other things brings diseases upon cattle, and often lives on trees.

In the case of Chamars of the study area, the entire households are Hindu. In the Hindu worshiping societies, they have been found to have added a number of deities in their list for the purpose of worship in their desire to reduce the gap between them and the higher castes.

Rama: Rama, it is considered, protects the mankind from the evil influence of the demons and contributes to the happiness of life. It is believed that he is easily pleased through devotion of the soul and is worshipped without making any animal sacrifice. He is worshipped also for protection against demons.

Krishna: Krishna is another god, who is also worshipped with the objective of securing protection from all evils of life. He symbolizes the indestructibility and infinity of the spirit of man, and one is, there fore, beholden to him as the incarnation of god. At the hour of death, one should hold fast to the thought that one is unshaken and indestructible. Efforts are made to put into practice in their day-to-day work, the ideals ascribed to him. No animal sacrifice is required to worship him.

Shiva: Shiva is regarded as protector and destroyer of the world. He can be easily propitiated and once propitiated, his protection is ensured to his followers from all miseries of life. He does not require any elaborate worship and any animal sacrifice either.

Motivation: Their religious beliefs and practices are traditionally oriented towards protection from diseases, death and destruction, and obtaining blessings for leading a happy life through solution of the problems of every day life. Of all these, it is worth noting, that they attached greater importance to the solution of the problems of everyday life.

Modes of Worship: Animal sacrifice, lighting of lamps and burning incense comprised the main modes of worship among them in recent days and the worship is performed by the elderly men of their own caste or caste priests.

Place of Worships: They were not allowed to worship in the temples in the past. They had separate shrines to worship their deities and spirits. In recent days while continuing the practices of worshipping their deities and spirits in their own shrines, they have also started offering their prayers in the village temples of Rama, Krishna and Shiva, on special occasions.

RITUALS RELATING TO BIRTH:

It has been commonly believed by all the villagers over the ages that conception is controlled not by man, but by god. Generally, a woman feels shy to disclose her pregnancy. It is the distaste and vomiting, which develop during the first few months of her pregnancy that gives a clue to the elderly women. Thereafter, they make enquiries and confirm the fact of conception, and then only they break the news to others.

After the confirmation of pregnancy, several restrictions were imposed and still are being imposed on the pregnant women, on her diet and movements. She is asked to avoid walking on uneven surfaces and to visit haunted places or houses which are supposed to cause the birth of still-born babies, because of the fear of miscarriage, instead she is given improved nutritional diet including milk, ghee etc, depending on the economic condition of her family. Workload of the women is gradually reduced and after the 6th or 7th month, work in field and other work involving exertion is completely prohibited.

As pregnancy advances, she is gradually segregated and, in some cases where the family can afford it, she is allowed to sleep in a different room, usually with an elderly woman of the family guarding her. Mostly during the period of confinement, the woman does not go to her parent's house. The delivery is usually conducted with the help of the village dhai (mid wife), a Chamar woman, who cuts the umbilical cord and buries the placenta on the ground near the bed of the mother. The dhai's fee in the earlier period amounted to be about 50 to 100 rupees, which was mostly paid in kind, whereas it varies from Rs.150 to Rs.250, and generally in case of a male child or first child, the dhai is paid more than 250 rupees.

On the Chhathis or the sixth day following the birth, Chhathi Puja, common to all castes, is performed in which the elderly female members of the family participate. It is believed that "during sixth night following the birth, the fortune of the child is decided and imprinted on it". In the morning of the sixth day, both the child and its mother are anointed and given a ceremonial bath. The floor of the house is plastered with a thick paste of clay and cow dung. In the evening the mother-in-law or an elderly women of the family lights a holy fire near the mother's bed and throws camphor and pieces of wood into the fire. Songs are sung and are chorused by other women who gather there to witness the ceremony and when it is over, sweets like halwa, laddoo etc. are distributed. On the seventh day, Satwa is observed when women folk gather again to sing before the main entrance of the house, where a swastika symbol is made of cow dung.

Kaun pujan is performed on the twenty first day following the birth to signify the end of the period of pollution for the mother after child birth. On this day, the child and mother are again given a bath and anointment and dressed in new garments. The floor of the room is again plastered with cow dung and clay. From this day, the new mother resumes her family work, as she is no more considered unclean.

RITUALS RELATING TO DEATH:

The Chamars, like other Hindus, usually cremate their dead, except the child below the age of 5 years, who is usually buried. After death, according to the prevailing practices, the corps is wrapped in new cloth and placed on the pier or arthi, made of grass and wood by the caste members. In some cases, where one can afford it, a silver coin is also put into the mouth of the dead person.

When the funeral procession is ready to start, the husband of the deceased, if the dead person is a married woman, marks the forehead of the dead several times with vermilion. In case of a man, his widow marks the forehead, using the fingers of the dead husband. In both cases, marking on the forehead indicates the dissolution of marriage. The Arthi is first lifted by the near relatives, and afterward carried by other relatives and friends. This is traditional common practice among all castes. With the procession, fire from the house is carried in an earthen pot or a place of dried cow dung for securing protection from evil spirits.

According to the practice common to all castes, after the body has been taken away from the house, all the water vessels are emptied and such other earthen pots that the deceased had touched before his or her death, are broken. In some cases, water is sprinkled over the bed to make it cool for the spirit of the dead.

As a convention common to all castes, the pier on its way to the cremation ground is placed on the ground only once from a certain distance from the house and village habitation and 'pinda dan' is performed. Moreover, at the crematorium, a pyre of cow dung cake and wood is prepared. The sheets of cloth wrapped round the dead are taken away by the Bahangis. Then the mouth, ear and nose of the dead body are sealed with ghee according to the instructions of the experienced caste members, in some cases by caste priest, who attend the funeral, and then the corpse is placed on pyre. After taking several rounds, of the pyre, ghee, barley and camphor are sprinkled by the male next of kin on it, like eldest son, who sets the pyre on fire accompanied with chanting of mantras at the instance of the caste priests. When the dead body has been largely consumed by fire, the son or the brother of the deceased perform the kapal kriya, common practice for all castes, by striking the skull of the corpse thrice with a bamboo pole to release the soul, as they believe it remains locked up in skull and must be

broken to let it free. All persons attending the funeral then return to the house of the deceased and after observing silence for few minutes praying for peace of the soul of the departed sprinkle water towards theirs back and get complete bath before leaving for their respective houses.

In some cases, on the third day following the cremation, the ashes of the dead person called phool (bones) are collected by the near relatives and placed in a small coloured vessel away from the house. They are later consigned along with some coins to the water of the river Balan. This practice is very common among the higher caste Hindus. The Chamars have also started adopting this practice. An earthen lamp is kept burning at the place of death during the following nine nights.

On the 13th day following the death the caste priest, is called to perform the termi ceremony (ceremony performed on the 13th day after the death of the deceased person) so as to grant peace to the soul of the dead and guarantee a place in heaven as well as for the purification of the family. In termi, relatives, particularly the persons who accompanied the funeral procession are invited and treated to a feast. A year after the death, the well to do families performs solash ceremony also known as kaj, when the caste members are again treated to a feast.

FAMILY:

More than 55 percent Chamars are found living in joint families, (joint family consists of two or more nuclear families consisting of a man, his wife, growing up sons and daughters-in-law, their children and minor sons and daughters residing in a single dwelling and sharing food together). Among the total household, 45 percent of them are found to be living in nuclear families. Preference for living in a nuclear family has seemed to be a common trend among other caste members even though it is more marked among them in comparison to

others castes, particularly higher castes, mainly because of their desire to avoid conflicts between the mother and daughter-in-law.

Authority in the Family: The authority in the family was exclusively in the hands of the male head of the family. Like in all other families in the village as well as the area, the male head of the family used to take all decisions, like marriage of children, occupation of children, entering into legal suits, taking of loans and construction of houses. Rarely did he consult any other members of the family.

The situation in the past has changed and some sharing of authority has been observed. No doubt the male head of the family takes all important decisions, but in the process of taking the decision he consults his wife and grown up children which was not done during the earlier times.

Sharing of a house by two families, which has been a rare phenomenon in the past, has become very common. The acute accommodation problem, it is interesting to note, has forced them to have the same house of their parents even while they live in nuclear families. The land allotted to them for construction of their houses is very inadequate in proportion to their present population, due to this shortage of unavailable habitational land; it has been of their parent's house, but cooking, eating and sleeping separately and living their own life, apart from their parents.

MARRIAGE:

Concept of Marriage: The marriage is traditionally considered by all the Chamars as a sacrament and not a contract. They believe that marriage helps one to practice "Dharma" and complete the life cycle of the individuals. This of course does not mean that they do not allow dissolution of marriage; on the contrary, they

allow dissolution of marriage and divorce on several grounds. For instances, a man can seek dissolution of marriage and divorce his wife on the grounds of her disobedience, bad character, barrenness and chronic illness. A woman can ask for divorce from her husband on account of cruelty, impotency, inability to maintain her and chronic illness. But all cases of dissolution of marriage and divorce will have to be approved by their respective caste meeting. Since the last several years, there have been only two instances of divorce. One of these cases was brought out by males for barrenness and sickness of his wife. Only in one case a woman asked for divorce because of cruelty of her husband.

Arrangement of Marriage: Marriages are usually arranged by the parents or relatives of the parties. Women are rarely consulted. Of course, the elderly female relatives have some say in the discussion of the marriage negotiation, and their opinion carries weight. Self-arranged marriages, which was practically unknown in the past, have started taking place, where the parents only concede to the desire of their children, including daughter, in the selection of their spouses. During the last seven years, two self-arranged marriages; all within the caste have taken place. The marriage becomes binding only when the ceremony is performed and the consent of the relatives of both parties to marriage, if arranged by the parents, is obtained.

Age at Marriage: Marriage among the Chamars in the earlier period used to take place at an early age. Girl got married usually between 5 to 10 years and the boys between 10 to 15 years. The primary reason for their preference for early marriage was the desire among the parents to get their daughters married immediately after puberty. Another reason is the parents desire to get rid of their responsibilities by arranging marriage of their children at an early age, as failure to do so bring condemnation. Even these days, early marriage has still remained a

prevalent practice even though the age of marriage has increased comparatively, that is for a boy from 15 to 20 years and for a girl from 10 to 15 years.

Marriage Ceremonies: The marriage ceremonies of the Chamars start with the performance of mangni. The betrothal ceremony, known as mangni, is performed on an auspicious day after the selection of the groom. The father and relatives of the girl visit the house of the boy, apply a tilak on his forehead and give him some money and clothing. Gur (crude sugar) is then distributed among the relatives and others present on the occasion. After tilak, the parents of the boy send to the girl some gifts consisting of laddoos (Sweets) and clothes.

The ceremony following mangni consists in of a chithi (letter) smeared with marks of turmeric which is sent by the girl's parents. The letter containing the marriage date and timing is accompanied with some sweets (gur/shakkar) through the intermediary to the boy's father on an appointed day. The boy's family after receiving the sweets distributes it and ties a sacred red thread at the right wrist of the boy. The boy's family then confirms the date after consulting the family priests and relatives. A few days before the marriage, both the bride and groom take bath with batna for cleaning their body.

On the day of marriage, before the departure of the marriage party to the bride's place, the bridegroom wears on clothes mostly brought by his maternal uncle. The dress includes a turban, a vest, a pyjama, a kachja, a sehra and a finger ring. After this the groom starts for the village of the bride with a number of persons accompanying him. The persons who accompany him are collectively known as the barat. On arrival at the village, the family members of the girl welcome the boy with some money, sweets and then the boy is brought with his barat in a resting-house and accommodated there. Similarly, the female relative of the bride offers some money and sweets to the bridegroom on behalf of the bride's

parents. The bride-groom's father then sends a sari and ornaments through the go-between, who puts these articles on the lap of the bride. Before the actual marriage when the boy comes to the girls' house, he receives a welcome at the threshold known as barohi and then the red cloth wrapped around the bride is tied to the parna of the dress of bridegroom. Pheras (circumambulation) generally take place in the afternoon at an auspicious time previously fixed, and the bride's father performs the kanyadan (giving of the bride). After kanyadan, a feast is given to all the members of the barat, by the bride's family. Bidai (departure) ceremony takes place on the day following the marriage after lunch. Close to the end of the whole process of marriage is the reception of the bride at the groom's village. This reception consists of a number of rituals including mukh-dikhana, kangan-kholna.

Gauna, which marks the end of the whole process of marriage, takes place when the girl's parent's feel that she is matured enough to be a wife, and a mother. Previously Gauna used to take place three to five years after the marriage but now, due to increase in the age of marriage, it takes place within one year and some times immediately after the marriage.

Marriage Expenditures: There has been considerable increase in the expenditure in marriage on dowry, jewelry, clothes, transport and feast. The total wedding expenditure ranged between Rs.4, 000 to 5,000 earlier, whereas now it varies between NRs.20, 000 to NRs. 40,000. The payment of bride price, which was prevalent earlier has however now been replaced by payment of dowry.

DRESS:

The Chamars faced no restriction with regard to their dress pattern in the past, even though the males used to wear dhotis up to the knee and females rarely used more than two clothes. The younger and elderly men used dhoti and kurta.

The young male children used mostly half pants and shirts. The women and girls used loose pyjama and kameez. During the winter, in addition to these clothes, they used a kind of warm cloth called as kambal. The clothes used by them were usually dirty and tattered.

These days, they are using a variety of dresses. Along with dhotis and kurtas, they have started wearing trousers and shirts or pyjama and kurta. The women have started wearing sari. The unmarried and young girls have started using relatively light pyjama and kameez inside the village and a salwar suit and kameez, outside the village. Juti or unlaced shoe, made locally as per order, has remained the most common footwear of both sexes in the village during these two periods.

ORNAMENTS:

Ornaments worn by Chamar women, like all other caste women are varied both qualitatively and quantitatively from other caste women. They constitute both the sringar (adornment) of a women as well as the barometer of her family's economic position. The women use ornaments for head, ears, nose, wrist and foot. In the earlier period, these ornaments were mostly made of zinc and silver, whereas now some of them especially for the ear, nose and neck are made of gold. Women have recently more or less stopped using cheaper ornaments.

FOOD HABIT:

In the earlier period, majority of the Chamars were non-vegetarians. Their non-vegetarian diet included beef, mutton, chicken, egg and fish. Normally they used to take two major meals, one in the noon and other in the evening and one minor meal in the morning, although the number and nature of the diet differed on the basis of the economic conditions of the family and the season which was

applicable to others also. The food pattern of the Chamars has almost remained the same from past to present. Some of them have started taking only vegetarian food. Those taking non-vegetarian diet have also stopped taking beef as the influence of higher caste Hindus.

HABITATION AND HOUSING:

With regard to the habitational site of the Chamar there has been no change from the past to the present. They, like the untouchables in all the villages of Nepal, live at the outskirts of the village since the time of their settlement. They are neither permitted to construct their houses in the centre of the village nor given any house to live on rent.

All the families had their own house. The houses usually have one or two room. They in general, as per the respondents, lacked ventilation and proper sanitation. None of the houses have any separate place that could be used as a bathroom.

FESTIVALS:

The Chamars of the village neither had nor have any festival which can be termed as the characteristic festival of their own community. Celebration of any festivals, which can be grouped into two categories, the festivals for the families and kin groups, namely teej, makar sankranti and sankat chouth and the festivals for the whole village viz. barorha, jaithka –dushera, janam asthami, dushera, diwali, sivratri, and holi were very uncommon , mainly because of their poor economic condition.

Even in the recent days, they do not celebrate all these festivals. Of all these festivals, they celebrate teej, sivratri, holi with great enthusiasm and zeal. Teej

festival is celebrated by the young girls, especially the married ones, on the 3rd day of 'sawan' (July-August). Holi is also celebrated, although the Holi bon- fire is organized separately, and they narrate the same popular legend of prahlad and Harnakush as to the origin of the festival. Janamstami, Dushera and Ram navami, which are considered as the main festivals of the higher castes, are celebrated, but not so elaborately as by the higher castes.

They have taken up the festivals of higher caste Hindus of the village, but they do not celebrate them with the meticulousness of the latter. As a result, celebration of the festivals has not helped them very much in their aim of identifying themselves with the higher castes.

DAILY ROUTINE:

Daily routine of the Chamars has remained almost the same and very simple. This routine is mostly in the line of other castes in the village. The difference, which existed then and still exists is that, apart from the elderly people who regularly spend some time in prayer, the rest except a few do not spend any time in prayer. Some elderly people, both men and women have recently taken up the practices of spending one to two hours in the morning in prayer. This offering of prayer, according to many Chamar people. is a new trend, because previously the Chamar rarely spent any time in prayer. The people get up early, often one or two hours before sunrise, except the young and the sick. While the males, after cleaning the surroundings of their house including the place where they keep their cattle go out of the fields for their morning ablution, women after morning business divide themselves, in case the family has more than one woman, according to various tasks of cooking, cleaning of the house and cleaning the children as well as washing their soiled clothes.

After the morning food, the men go to work, and the women continue their daily round of household duties. The children play within the village or remain with their mothers. At mid-day, the men, who work in the village or in the surrounding villages, return, for their meal after which the women takes their meals, the children eat either with the father or the mother. After the meal, the males either go for work or take rest or gossip in groups, while enjoying the smokes. The women, after their meal, mostly gossip for one or two hours. A few of them of course, do some stitching or knitting work or some other lighter work. After this women resume their work until light fades out.

In the evening, the men sit in their houses mostly with smokes or in an open courtyard where friends and relatives from other house also gather. They talk about their past, present and future life and prevailing social and political situations. The atmosphere occasionally brightens up with a rumor about a family intrigue or the illicit conjugal life of a person or a case of litigation. After an hour or two, they go back to their houses, take the evening meal and then go to bed. The women join them after the meal and the children are already in bed for an hour or more.

This is the general routine. It is repeated every day without any variation, except on occasions when the annual festivals or religious ceremonies take place in the village or in the locality or a social function like a marriage or a kaj is held in the family. Visits of relatives from distant places also slightly change the daily routine but such occasions are not very frequent.

CASTE MEETING:

The Chamars of villages traditionally have a well-organized caste meeting system, which binds them together as well as work as an instrument of change. The Chamars, individually or in groups, respect and fear the decisions of the

meeting, be it their own village or the larger area of neighbouring villages. To defy the expressed decision of the meeting is simply unthinkable to the vast majority of them.

The village level caste meeting consists of two elderly people; membership of this meeting is mostly hereditary. Women cannot become members of this meeting. These two members nominate one to work as Myanjan (pradhan). The post of the Myanjan in the village area is often hereditary. The meeting usually takes place once a month, but the meetings may also be summoned by members who have referred their dispute to the Myanjan.

The meeting mainly exercises jurisdiction over the following cases: 1) illicit sexual relations, such as the discovery of pregnancy of a widow or unmarried girls, of adultery or of other illicit function: 2) matters pertaining to marriage, remarriage and divorce of their caste members, especially when these create problems in the families concerned, because of refusal to give in marriage the daughters after betrothal, 3) quarrel between the families in connection with money transactions and debts, housing, land etc. and 4) violation of caste rules concerning commensality. The meeting decides the cases on the basis of merits and then imposes punishments which may be in cash or kind or both.

The cases which have been brought before the village meeting during the last 20 years are mostly related to marriage or violations of caste rules concerning commensality. The meeting has also worked as a watch dog of the villages' meeting decisions, particularly in relation to the matters which affect their intra- and inter-caste relationships, both inside and outside the village.

The larger area which comprises of many villages is the supreme body among the Chamars and it has final decisions making powers in the issues

pertaining to its caste members. The size of this area is not fixed, as it depends on the strength of the caste members in the villages as well as the effectiveness of the individual caste meeting in the villages. Usually it has a Myanjan, mostly a hereditary post, known as Choudhary, who is assisted by four other persons from other villages known as 'Shayak' or 'Chokrat', selected by the Choudhary. The Choudhary of this area wields enormous power and exercises it through the chokrat and the village caste meeting is within his own jurisdiction.

The meeting normally deals with inter – and intra- caste relations, village fractions among the caste members and sometimes the feasts to be given to celebrate a marriage or a 'kaj'.

The meeting of the supreme body does not take place regularly. It meets at a central village, only when it has to decide an extra ordinary case which affect the inter caste and intra caste relationship, and is attended by the adult members of the caste. For example, once it meets to discuss their religious practices vis-vis the practices of other castes and the changes to be brought about in their religious practices to fall in line with other caste Hindu. In these meetings, beside the members of village the members of the outside villages also participate. The decisions in these meetings are taken on majority vote basis. However, in the absence of proper records, it is difficult to indicate the exact number of meeting of these larger caste bodies. In all those meeting, it has dealt with the cases, along with other thing, which affect the status of the caste members. It is this meeting, which had initiated several changes, like adoption of Sanskritic deities and modes and motivation, for worship, forbidding the acceptance of dowry, promoting vegetarianism and has also supported the actions of the individual caste members aiming at change of position in the social hierarchy.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN:

Domestic violence has been described as when one adult in a family misuses their power to control another. It is the establishment of control and fear in a family through violence and other forms of abuse. The violence may involve physical abuse, sexual assault and threats. Sometimes it is more subtle, like making someone feel worthless, not letting them have any money, or not allowing them to leave the home.

In most cases, the victims are women and children, although the woman is usually the primary target. Many women in Nepal Terai are the victims of domestic violence. There are different forms of domestic violence in Nepal. That is psychological abuse, social abuse, financial abuse, physical assault or sexual assault. It can be criminal and include physical assault or injury (hitting, beating, shoving etc.), sexual abuse (forced sexual activity), or stalking, Dowry death or harassment, mental and physical torture, sexual trafficking and public humiliation.

Women are the basic indicators of social and economic development. Any behavioural change in the role of a woman brings changes in social, economic and demographic structure of the society. As the Nepali society is organized in patriarchal model, the status of women is lower to that of male in every field of life-social, economic and political.

The status of Dalit women in Nepal society is not very different to that of Nepali women in general. Women are more sufferers than male within the chamar society. Their social and economic status is much lower to that of male. They depend on male in every aspects of the life. In the study area chamar women are in sub-ordinate position. They are not heard properly, so the domestic violence is still in practice. The causes of violence as women say, is due to the higher rate of

alcohol drinking and gambling among Chamars. Women are the primary victims of domestic violence within the family and community at large.

Most of the cases of domestic violence in the study area are found to be of mental or physical torture 41(25.5%), Dowry Death or Harassment 18(11.2%) and sexual abuse 16(9.9%). Only 2(1.2%) cases are found as Sexual Trafficking and Public Humiliation. Majority 84(52.2%) of the respondents were not willing to give the answer because they hesitated to expose their behaviour against Women (Table-18).

TABLE -18: DISTRIBUTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE BY TYPE

Type of Violence	No. of Cases
Sexual Abuse	16 (9.9%)
Dowry Death or Harassment	18 (11.2%)
Sexual Trafficking and Public Humiliation	2 (1.2%)
Mental or Physical Torture	41 (25.5%)
Not Response	84 (52.2%)
Total	161 (100.0%)

Source: Field Survey, 2006

HEALTH SERVICE PRACTICES:

Chamars have poor health due to their poor living conditions, unhygienic food habits within their communities. There are high morbidity conditions, especially among women and children. Chamars do not have knowledge of nutritious food and balanced diet, hence resulting in malnutrition among children and women. They have higher prevalence of uterus prolapse and sexually transmitted disease. Due to illiteracy, fear and shame, they usually hesitate to seek remedy and treatment from certified medical doctor.

Chamars are very backward with respect to sanitation and water supply. There are open drains which results in collection of water in front of the houses, creating puddles and, thereby causing great hardships to the people. There are no separate latrine and bathrooms. A covered place in the house is usually used by females for bathroom cum urinal purpose. The men folk use the creaks and corners of their dwelling sites or adjoining gardens for the purposes of both latrines and urinals. These all things are happening the cares of illiteracy, ignorance, poor condition etc. As a number of people believe in sorcery (beliefs in ghost, spirits, and witches and reliance on Dhani, Jhankri and home treatment), health seeking behaviour particularly the chamar people in the study area are found as follows: (Table-19).

TABLE-19: HEALTH SERVICE PRACTICES

Cases	No. of respondents	%
People using service of Dhami	51	31.7
People using services of health posts	30	18.6
People using services of home treatment	80	49.7
Total responses	161	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006

The above table shows that most of the respondents 80(49.7%) are using the services of home treatment while they need health services.

PRACTICE OF UNTOUCHABILITY AT THE PUBLIC PLACE:

The caste-based discrimination to Dalit is found every where in Nepal as well as the study area. There are many existing practices of caste-based discrimination which have been lumped into major broad social categories. They are, denial of entry in the neighbour's houses, local hotels, temple etc., accuse to

common resources such as using the water tap, well, pond etc. is obtained. Denial to participate in public activities or entry to public places such as the religious function, forced labourers to carry the dead animal. The practices of untouchability at the study area have been divided into 3 cases, untouchability at public places, at schools and at neighbours.

The majority of the Chamars 136(84.5%) have the practice untouchability at neighbours, similarly 16(9.9%) at public places and 9(5.6%) at the school (Table-20)

TABLE 20: PRACTICE OF UNTOUCHABILITY

Cases	No. of Population
Practice of untouchability at public place	16 (9.9%)
Practice of untouchability at school	9 (5.6%)
Practice of untouchability at neighbours	136 (84.5%)
Total	161 (100.0%)

Source: Field Survey, 2006

POLITICAL LIFE OF THE CHAMAR:

I have made an attempt to explain their political life indicating their consciousness, association and participation, both in and outside the village, in order to delineate their political life before the movement.

Political Consciousness:

The Chamars of the village did not involve themselves in any significant political activity. Their political consciousness was at a very low level. They had heard about national leaders and the parties, but had no information beyond that.

They had no idea about party policies. Politics as such was considered by them, to be a domain of the rich, higher caste people and the educated few. They had no idea about the intricacies of politics or practice and also never perceived politics as an instrument of change of status.

This was true not only to them, but also to other caste members, with certain exceptions of the higher caste members, whose involvement, whatever little it might be in politics, was confined to the Municipality. In a sense, politics in the village revolved mostly around factional activities, alignments and realignments within these factions based on caste and economic influence.

The Chamars are found to be a rather political conscious group. They are aware about the national problems viz. poverty, increase in prices, importance of vote, ideologies of different political parties, important leaders and their background. They are also conscious of the intricacies of politics in their village life, and also of the roles played by different political leaders including their caste leaders in ameliorating their conditions and in improving their status. They even know that their support, to a party adds strength to the party. They also realize that they should not and indeed cannot stay away from politics for long but should bargain for their votes in the Municipality election in order to strengthen their power and influence both in and outside the village.

Political Association:

The Chamars had no political association before the movement. They were neither sympathizer nor members of any political party. They had heard vaguely of the Political Parties, but were not clear how their involvement can help the Political Parties as well as themselves.

They are observed to be the supporters and members of the Political Parties, some of them were members. Some of them were also its active members. Gradual awareness about politics gravitated them towards the ruling party. Support to the ruling party, is considered to be a common phenomena among all the lower castes. The village and its neighbouring areas in general are strong holds of Nepali Congress. Opposition parties (Communist) have not been able to establish their roots in these areas, primarily because the people felt that their interest could be best served under the Congress rule. Other parties in the opposition are not considered to be in a position to deliver the goods as far as they were concerned.

Their association with the then ruling Congress party was usually a matter of convenience, rather than of ideology. The majority of the respondents, whosoever talked of their political association with the Congress, said “we cannot expect to get anything if we support a party which has no all Nepal standing and cannot form a government. A party which has influence throughout the country and can form a government can only deliver the goods. The Congress fulfils all these conditions. The Congress wants our (lower castes) support for coming to power and we support the congress because we feel that after coming to power it will protect us from exploitation, and help us in changing our conditions”.

The political association of the Chamars have contributed further to their economic prosperity and increased their influence, thereby improving their status in the village. For instance, getting financial loans and land on lease have become comparatively easier because of their association with the then ruling Congress party. Villagers have begun coming to active members of the Congress, and even to their friends and relatives who have influence over them in their homes, for advice and assistance in matters of their own interests, viz. seeking higher contacts

for employment of their children etc. This can be regarded as an example of their influence as a result of their political participation.

Their political association has also resulted in individual contacts and visits of the Congress leaders to their houses in marriages or other festivals which, furthermore, has helped to improve their influence and status. A prominent Congress leader visited the village a number of times and in all his visits he spent a few minutes with the Chamar leaders discussing their problems. Between them and other lower castes, the former have greater political association and influence on their leaders.

Political Participation:

Before the movement Chamars had no political participation because of their lack of political consciousness and absence of political associations.

The situation has substantially changed. Increased political awareness and close association with the then ruling party (Congress) have resulted in political participation of a few Chamar leaders in both regional and local politics, especially during and after the parliamentary elections. The nature of the participation in these elections was more in the form of organizers of the campaign. In the parliamentary election, the political party leaders organised several meetings and contacted individual families, besides meeting the caste leaders in the villages, and in all these meetings and contacts, they were helped whenever necessary by Chamar leaders. They (Chamar leaders) organised several meetings in different villages and in all these meetings they appealed to their caste members and other lower caste members to cast their votes. They also organised door to door campaigns. Due to their hard work and sincere efforts the Congress

was successful in securing the support of the lower caste mass and in polling a large number of votes.

The contacts of Chamar leaders with the Congress party not only continued after the election, but also it increased. The efforts of these leaders made strong impact on the minds of the political elites who frequently sent for them and entrusted them with various responsibilities in connection with the party's organizational work.

The Municipality election provided opportunities to their leaders to carry on their political activities in the village and they fully utilized these opportunities. The election, apparently held on the non-political lines was not free from political influence. In this election, besides helping their higher caste friends to receive nominations they also secured nominations for Chamar as a candidate in the Municipality. The political leaders also entrusted them (Chamar leaders) with the over all responsibilities of the campaign for the contestants, particularly among the lower castes. Their efforts again proved to be helpful.

The Political leaders sought their support not only in all local political events like election, but also in solving many problems relating to the lower castes in the neighbouring villages. They are often asked to meet and talk to them, who come and approach the party leaders for settlement of his problems and to deal with the problems of the concerned authorities.

CHAPTER-III

CHAPTER-III

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE CHAMAR MOVEMENT

BACKGROUND OF THE MOVEMENT:

The studies on *Dalits'* socio-political movements are very few. Dr Ambedkar, was an all-India leader who claimed to represent all the *Dalits* of the country. But his role in mobilizing the Dalits outside Maharashtra is not well known. There is no full-fledged study or even an anthology giving information about various Dalit movements in different parts of the country. Shah (1980) gives an overview of the *Dalit* liberation or anti-untouchability movements in India. The former deals with the colonial period, whereas the latter looks at both the colonial and the post-colonial periods. Many books dealing with the Dalits, have mentioned about Dalit movements in a particular region or of the country as historical antecedents. The study on the Dalit movement is confined mainly to Dr Ambedkar's movement in Maharashtra. Shah (1975) writes in his study entitled, *Politics of Scheduled Castes and Tribes*, about comparative *Dalit* movements in Maharashtra and Gujarat, to show why the *Dalit* movement in Gujarat was less militant than that of Maharashtra.

The Dalit movement in India has a history of over 100 years. Dalits have waged a long, arduous, and often bitter struggle against oppressive caste discrimination, economic exploitation, marginalized political participation and an unjust social order. Their movement have achieved considerable success, ranging from such legislative enactment as those declaring the practice of untouchability an offence, to concrete measures such as reservation in the spheres of education,

employment, and elected representation in civic and legislative bodies. An important achievement of the Dalit movement has been to force non-Dalits, especially the upper castes/classes, to accept the fact that the Dalits constitute an important force in politics.

In Nepal, it is found that the history of Dalit Movement had started in 1947 through the establishment of 'Jailor Union' by Saharsh Nath Kapali. The main objective to establish the Tailor was union to enhance their caste-based occupation, which was in verge of difficulty. It became the initiation of Dalit Movement in Nepal during the later Rana period. After the political change of 1951 two organizations –“Nimna Samaj Sudhar Sangha- Dharan” and 'Jailor Union – Kathmandu” united and they made “Jati Todh Mandal”. It was known as “Samaj Sudhar Sangha in 1953. Parallelly, various other organizations were established in Baglung and other parts of Nepal.

During the movement few Dalits had challenged the Hindu religion during Rana period by wearing sacred thread (Jaanai) and they were punished through imprisonment.

The main objectives to establish these organizations are to protest against untouchability and other social discriminations prevailing in society. At 1955 Dalit had mass protest to enter into the Pashupati temples. Saharsh Nath Kapali lead the movement. Government arrested more than 750 people at that time and later the hoarding board (untouchables are restricted to enter inside temple) was taken out from there.

On the Chairmanship of Mithaidevi Bishwakarma, “Pariganit Nari Sangha” (1956) was established for women to participate in Dalit welfare. Later on, it was merged with “Samaj Sudhar Sangha” and was given a new name “Nepal Pariganit

Parishad” in the Chairmanship of Saharsh Nath Kapali and it was formally registered in 1962. Due to the activities and contribution of Saharsh Nath Kapali former King Mahendra nominated him as the representative of Dalits in the Upper house as parliamentary member in 1958.

Later on, “Nepal Rastriya Dalit Jana Bikash Parishad” was established on the leadership of Saharsha Nath Kapali. Successfully it completed their first conference meeting which was held in 1971 in Kathmandu and it succeeded to establish branch office in various districts. It aroused the consciousness about Dalit unity against untouchability and caste based discriminations all over the nation.

After Referendum (1979), Dalit organizations strongly demanded for reservation. They suggested to the Constitution Reform Suggestion Commission to include the chapter for welfare of Dalits. It was one of the great successes for Dalits. But because of the contradictions among them the programs were not successful even though objectives were good and it did not give them positive result.

At the end of Panchayat System youth of Dalits established “Jaati Bived Unmulan Manch (1987) to lead the Dalit Movement with the objectives to establish discourse among Dalit about their rights and liberty. But, it was not sustained for long due to various reasons.

After the political changes of 1990s, various Dalit organizations have been established. Some organizations are working properly and some are not. On the contrary, all political parties are concerned about giving certain reservation seats for Dalits before election. Likewise, other sister organizations are established in major political parties Nepali Congress, United Marxist Leninist and so on. Now-

a-days various political parties, their sister organizations are also working in favour of Dalit Welfare. Similarly, Government has launched Dalit Welfare programs in all districts through Social-welfare Council and through Local Bodies of Ministry of Local Development. Not only Government Organisations, Non-Government Organisations and Various Welfare Societies and Committees are also working to empower the Dalits.

THE MOVEMENT IN THE STUDY AREA

Chamars' Movement Against the Disposing of Carcasses:

In October 1998, four Dalit Sangam (a Public Organization of the Downtrodden People) under the guidance of Saraswati Community Development Forum, Terhauta, launched and strengthened the community program in four Village Development Committee of Saptari district, namely Hardiya, Daulatpur, Madhupatti and Kushaha. After its formation, the downtrodden people were made aware of the "Role of the People's Organizations in Civil Society" and the "Present Condition of the Downtrodden People in Our Society". These activities led to their strong unity and extension of the organization. Between 1998 and mid-1999, four strong people's organizations were formed in four Village Development Committee which struggled on different issues of the oppression of the Dalits and started taking decisions about making internal reforms for caste and class upliftment. Mr. Baldev Ram, President of Public Awareness Dalit Sangam, Madhupatti, expressed, "We have served the society by throwing the carcasses but we are regarded untouchable only on that account".

Primary Phase of the Movement Against Throwing Carcasses:

In July 1999, an animal of Kishan Kalwar of Madhupatti died. As practised traditionally, he asked Dhodhai Ram to throw the carcass. When Dhodhai Ram

refused, the owner had to throw the carcass himself. But the villagers threatened to boycott Dhodhai Ram for his refusal to throw it and boycotted him for a couple of days. Later, the Dalit organizations of 5 Village Development Committee joined together and supported Dhodhai Ram and protested against the boycott. The event was given due coverage in *Chhalphal Saptahik* (a Nepali weekly) dated 15th August, 1999. The news were copied and distributed among the Dalit Sangams. The boycott could not prolong due to the unity of the Dalit Sangams. Instead, the movement against throwing the carcasses got momentum.

Expansion of the Movement:

Another event occurred at Daulatpur in November 1999 after the event at Madhupatti. Some cattle of Harilal Chaudhari, Shreedev Chaudhari and Bhutai Chaudhari of Ward No. 5 of Daulatpur Village Development Committee died. The cattle owners asked the Chamars to throw the carcasses as per the existing tradition. However, none of the about 600 Chamars living in that village agreed to do so. Accordingly, they revolted against the Chamars from 1 December 1999. They prevented the Chamars from taking any loans, using pipes, wells or ponds, working in somebody's field, or as a labourer and also from buying goods from any shop. The defiant would be fined Rs. 501/-. The Chamars of Daulatpur had a tough time for about a fortnight. The event was given a wide coverage in national daily newspapers like *Himalaya Times*, *Kantipur* and *The Kathmandu Post*.

Launching the Movement Against Throwing Carcasses in Lahan:

After declaring to launch the movement against throwing carcasses during the Human Rights Day 10 December 1999, the President of Public Awareness Dalit Sangam, Baldev Ram, reached Lahan with some copies of the *Kantipur* news on Daulatpur blockade. He related the December 1999 events of Daulatpur to the

social leaders of Chamars and general people of Lahan. Moreover, Baldev Ram decided to launch a movement against throwing carcasses through a small meeting of the Chamars in Lahan. Thus, the Movement against throwing Carcasses had started from Lahan, Siraha in December 1999.

Impact of the Movement Against Throwing Carcasses:

The Chamars' decision against throwing carcasses became a sensation in Lahan. Many welcomed it, as their fundamental rights while others condemned it fearing it would upset the entire social structure. They called it improper and impractical. Meanwhile, a calf of Mr Surendra Shrestha of Lahan Municipality died in evening. He requested many Chamars to throw the carcass but none agreed. At 8 p.m. he himself threw the carcass on a municipality wheelbarrow brought with the help of his neighbor Parshuram Chaudhari. After throwing the carcass, he said, "We threw the carcass ourselves. Will the society condemn us as untouchable? Never, but the Chamars are called so only on that account."

Position of Lahan Municipality:

Socially speaking, Lahan Municipality is largely inhabited by Marwaris and Chaudhari who are mostly industrialists, rich and politically powerful. The Marwaris are involved in trade and industry while the Chaudhari are active in trade, industry as well as agriculture and politics. An analysis of the power centers shows that Laganlal Chaudhari (former mayor) and Padma Narayan Chaudhari (former MP and State Minister for Industry) have been directing all the social, economic and political activities of Lahan. Despite their political or ideological differences, the Chaudharis display great harmony and agreement on many issues due to their old family and caste relations. Padma Narayan Chaudhari's house still is regarded as Dyodhahi (a palace). He is a property owner. Many Dalits like

Chamars and Musahars depend on their land (estate). On this account, the Dalits always dance to the master's tune and the latter always cashes them as a vote bank (or pocket votes) during the elections.

Nature of Sanction Against the Chamars in Lahan:

On 24th March, 2000, all the Chamars of Lahan Municipality had to face a very inhuman and harsh illegal blockade. On the eve, a group of 5-7 people went around the Lahan market and pressurized each individual and shopkeeper for social boycott and blockade of the Chamars. They also pasted a notice of the same effect on electric poles. "The Chamars are not allowed to walk upon others' land, to use ponds, wells and pipes and to perform daily rituals (purging and pissing) on others' land". Early at the morning on 24th March, 2000, two persons were employed by Chamar Boycott Committee to announce the blockade on a microphone. Accordingly, they hired a rickshaw (three-wheeler) and went around Lahan market appealing the shopkeepers not to sell any goods to the Chamars. Early morning, the Chamar porters were forced out of the local Bus Park and deprived of their daily earning. A group was employed at the bus park under Bhagwati Chaudhari for that purpose. The bus conductor Sanhu Ram was forced out of his regular job. He was also asked to vacate the shop immediately rented at Magain Chaudhary's house and close his communication centre.

Explosion of the Event:

Few days the blockade was imposed on 24th March, 2000, a young buffalo belonging to Padma Narayan Chaudhari died. His family members ordered the Chamars to throw the carcass. However, the participants of the "Movement against Throwing Carcass" refused to follow the order. So the family members of Padman Narayan Chaudhari had to throw it themselves. This enraged Padma

Narayan Chaudhari and his elder brother Kisun Lal Chaudhari. On 23rd March, 2000, a meeting was held at the School located in Ward No. 1 of Lahan Municipality under the chairmanship of Padma Narayan Chaudhari. It resolved that the Chamars were to be barred from the meeting. Other attendees belonged to 11 different castes. Padma Narayan Chaudhari made them all consent about the fact that the Chamars had breached the social tradition and deserved social punishment. Thus a Chamar Boycott Committee was formed. It was not yet clear as to how many members it consisted. But a local resident, Purna Bahadur Khadka was selected as its Chairman. It, however, prevented the Chamars from working as labourers, taking or giving loans, trading upon others' land, using wells, pipes and ponds, working as porters at the bus park, working as bus conductors and buying goods from any shop. They were also sacked from the houses where they worked as attendants. A severe blockade followed the other day on 24th March, 2000.

Participation of the Dalits in Chamar Boycott Committee:

A group of Musahars belonging to the Dalits were actively involved in deciding for and executing the blockade on the Chamars. Later it was found that they had built their houses on Padma Narayan Chaudhari's land. So they could not defy the later's order and support their fellow Chamars. Another reason was that they were likely to be placed as porters at Lahan Bus Park instead of the Chamars. The Musahars were tempted at the prospect of earning Rs. 200 to 300 as porters so they took part in the forum against the Chamars. Moreover, the Chamars and the Musahars had been claiming superiority over each other as per the so-called social tradition of untouchability. This superstition also led to the Musahars getting involved against the Chamars.

Role of Saraswati Community Development Forum (SCDF) against the Blockade:

A three day training was conducted by “People’s Organization or Unity for Rights” from 22nd March, 2000 at the School, Kadamaha in Madhupatti Village Development Committee which was the work area of Saraswati Community Development Forum. The trainees consisted of the leaders of the Dalit Sangams (Public Organisation of Dalits) of five Village Development Committee and other district level Dalit leaders. On the night of 23rd March, 2000, they came to know about the blockade being imposed from next morning. When they met at Lahan Chowk at 8 a.m. on 24th March, 2000, the blockade was at its peak. Mayor Muni Shah expressed sorrow over the event, as well as his commitment to actively solve the problem. Then the delegation reached the Area Police Station. They pre-nurised the in-charge Sub-Inspector Harka Bahadur Karki of the event and requested him to take immediate action against the blockade. A delegation of the Dalit representatives, Saraswati Community Development Forum representative, Chamar victims, Human rights representative Jitendra Mahato, Advocate Suresh Karki, Mayor Muni Lal Shah, journalists and political leaders entered the site to hold a talk with the Chief District Officer. The talk began immediately on their arrival. The talk was held for about 5 hours. During the talk, the blockade leaders insisted that the Chamars must throw the carcasses, as per existing tradition otherwise they would face the blockade. However some points on agreement are;

- a. No one shall be forced to throw carcasses against his will and the municipality shall make an alternative arrangement.
- b. No one shall prevent anyone who offers to throw carcasses.
- c. The blockade against the Chamars shall be immediately lifted, as it is illegal and inhuman.
- d. The above points shall be abided by all. The defiant shall be legally executed.

Role of Local Administration:

Local police were found encouraging such activities like illegal advertising about the enforcement of the blockade against the Chamars, teams asking every shopkeeper to carry the blockade on, illegal forming of blockade committees, and forceful sacking the Chamars from their jobs. They paid attention only when the representatives of the Non-Government Organisations and Human Rights Organizations assembled the Chamar victims and pressurized the Chief District Officer and the police authority. The latter was sympathetic to the Chamars and expressed their commitment to take legal steps against the supporters of the blockade before the talk held at the Area Police Station. They even claimed that the Constitution held no importance. They would administer things strictly according to the social traditions. These were all highly objectionable. They also betrayed their helplessness by keeping quiet before the blockade party.

Role of Mass Media:

The mass media, newspaper and Radio Nepal showed profound interest in the event of blockade against the Chamars. First of all, *Kantipur Daily* (a Nepali national daily newspaper) published the details of the event as the headline news in its issue dated 25th March, 2000. It carried an editorial on the same issue only the other day that is on 26th March, 2000. The Nepal Television broadcasted it on the *Samachar Sar(News)* Program on the same day. Similarly, the Radio Nepal made the event public by broadcasting it through *Ghatana ra Vichar* program. Besides, *Himalaya Times* and other national daily newspapers published the news with due priority. The publicity of such sensitive news with top priority in leading newspapers and mass media drew the attention of all justice loving people of the country. So much so that leaders of political parties and members of parliament lost their patience and raised the issue (their voice) in the Lower House.

Formation of an Investigation Committee:

Honourable Member of National Assembly, Shanta Manavi, was the first to speak and express sorrow on the issue. Similarly, honorable MP Mrigendra Kumar Singh condemned the event. Another MP Rishibabu Pariyar gave a speech against the oppression of the Dalits in the Kingdom. Meanwhile, the Social Justice Committee of National Assembly took the matter seriously. It formed a 4-member investigation team and sent it for investigation. The team consisted of Member of Parliament Dr. Ramman Shrestha, Shanta Manavi, Vijul Vishwakarma and Rishibabu Pariyar. They reached Lahan on 1st April, 2000 and collected detailed information about the event by talking to the concerned party, Chamar victims, blockade people, and leaders of political parties, local administration, police, journalists and other civilians. They promised to present their report on the event to the Social Justice Committee.

Role of Other Organisations:

The representative of the human right organization Jitendra Mahato, representative of Nepal Downtrodden People's Liberation Society Vishwendra Paswan, Advocate Suresh Karki, Mayor Munilal Sah and journalists played an active role in protecting the human right and self-respect of the Chamars in the event of the blockade in Lahan. Their efforts and advocacy for the Dalits are highly appreciable.

Role of Nepal Downtrodden People's Liberation Society:

The Society assembled the Dalits and convened a meeting in Lahan on 25th March, 2000. It also formed Nepal Downtrodden People's Liberation Society Joint Struggle Committee. The Committee was deputed to take five Chamar victims to Kathmandu, present a memorandum to the Prime Minister, and organize a rally in

Kathmandu. Similarly, it presented a memorandum to District Administration Office, Siraha on 3rd April, 2000. It also issued an appeal about the event in Lahan. Moreover, it decided to organize 2-hour transport strike in Lahan on 26th March, 2000, but it postponed the program for certain reason. Saraswati Community Development Forum refrained from participating in the program as the Committee had taken the decision without its consultation, although Saraswati Community Development Forum had played an essential part in getting the blockade against the Chamars lifted.

Challenge by the Blockade Party to the Human Rights Activists:

The blockade party were shocked by the strong condemnation of their inhuman, cruel, illegal and oppressive activities all over the country. Especially after the investigation of the parliamentarians' committee, they feared to be legally executed. Then they took a defensive posture. They issued an appeal blaming that the event was politicized, the Chamars were being made scapegoats, and the Non-Government Organisations were harvesting dollars through the event.

Press Conference by Saraswati Community Development Forum:

Saraswati Community Development Forum held a press conference on 4th April, 2000 to clarify its role, view and future program after the appeal of the blockade people was issued and some people tried to ignore its role in ending the blockade. About 16 journalists of Siraha and Saptari district and many other people were present in the program held in the hall of Industry and Trade Union, Lahan. Executive Director of Saraswati Community Development Forum, Dilip Kumar Chaudhari, issued a press release explaining about its role in the event. Arjun Thapaliya answered the questions raised by the journalists. The news about the conference was published in the *Kantipur* and *The Kathmandu Post*.

All-Party Meeting:

An all-party meeting was held on 4th April, 2000 at District Administrative Office, Siraha at the initiation of the Chief District Officer. The participants held an extensive discussion on the event. Chief District Officer Anandraj Pokharel tried to protect the blockade group from legal execution saying that there should not be much argument or debate about the agreement that had already been reached, but the people of other parties opposed him. Another meeting was held on 7th April, 2000. It decided to legally execute Purna Bahadur Khadka, President of the Chamar Boycott Committee, from among others.

Continued Movement Against Blockade:

Nepal Downtrodden People's Liberation Society had rescheduled a protest meeting and on 2-hour transport strike in Lahan on 10th April, 2000.

Filing Public Suit:

The Dalits organized protest rallies, transport strike and protest meetings against the blockade in Lahan on 10th April, 2000. The meeting was addressed by the representative of Samyukta Janmorcha (United People's Front), Dalit leaders and journalists. The Dalits participating in the rally filed a case against the two major people of the blockade group, Padma Narayan Chaudhari and Purna Bahadur Basnet.

Protest Against the Dalit Movement:

The Nepali Congress Town Committee, Lahan, presented a memorandum to the Prime Minister through the Area Police Station. Lahan, on political basis, as a protest against the case filed on the blockade people saying that it was aimed at character assassination of Padma Narayan Chaudhari. Similarly, counter programs

like protest rally, mass meeting, transport strike and sit-in at the Area Police Station, Lahan were scheduled for 17th April, 2000. On 16th April, 2000, Nepali Congress appealed to the people to take part in counter-struggle through advertising on microphone and distributing pamphlets. The Nepali Congress Town Committee demanded that the Minister of Home Affairs should visit the spot and make an on-the-spot investigation.

Time-line of the Chamar Movement:

The movement started in 1998 in Lahan area. More than 57 events had taken place. During 1998 to 1999 only four events were organized. Main objectives of these movements were to organize the Chamars first and conduct public awareness programs – like rally, mass meeting to unite as well as to make them participate in welfare activities. The outcome of the initial phase of the program was to bring awareness among the Chamars first and unite them to resist against trouble makers.

Basically, during that period, awareness campaigning, committee formation, community mobilization, health and sanitation programs were launched. It resulted in positive response in life of Chamars and it further helped the Chamar movement through active participation.

During the period of June 2000 to Oct 2000, nine events took place. The Chamars refused to throw carcasses and not to work as mid-wife. Two rally were organised along with mass meeting which decided to protest by refusing to throw carcass

At the beginning of 2001 in January, National and Local Newspaper, T.V. and Radio published the news – covering movement of the Chamars for not throwing carcass. Similarly within 2001 there were 15 events. These movements

were organized by Chamars with regional and national Dalit organization. The Chamar movement also got support from other Dalits as well as political parties. As a result various organizations like Dalit Sangam and others were established. In this period, Chamar movement got support from other national, regional and local organizations. They demanded for free education and the right to go to the public places and to abolish the practice of untouchability.

In March 2001, Dalits of the study area with leaders and activists protested the rally, demonstration against the blockade and boycott against the Dalits decision not to throw carcass. This issue had attracted the attention of the district administration office, police office and even parliament. In this period the people of high castes held meeting in Lahan to blockade against the Chamars movement of Lahan.

During 2002 to 2005, 27 events took place. At that period spot inspection, field study, supervision teams were mobilized by the Government, Human rights and Dalit organizations. Then various programs were launched to empower the Dalits. One of the most important events was “Sweeper Movement in Lahan Municipality” demanding increment in salary and guarantee in job as well as permission to enter in temples, hotels and other public places. The Time Line of The Chamar Movement are as follows:

TIME LINE OF THE CHAMAR MOVEMENT RESULT

S.N.	Time	Event	Cause	Impact	Effect	Learning
1.	March, 1998	The situation analysis survey.	1. To implement the factual programme for identifying the situation of the community.	1. To initiate by the community. 2. Knowing the information about the community.	1. Programme conducted for identifying the issues.	1. The survey provided a sufficient knowledge about the community.
2.	June, 1998	Organization of Dalit People of 5 VDC.	1. To organize the Chamar community.	1. Chamars were organized. 2. They began to implement by identifying the	1. Chamars were unified. 2. They requested the local	1. The organization can be made in the imitation of

				issue.	administrati on to take action against the trouble makers.	local community leader.
3.	December. 1998	Conduction of rally and mass meeting on Human Right Day and provided the information about human right.	1. To provide the human rights.	1. Community knew about human rights. 2. To get the justice.	1. Community demanded the human rights. 2. They began to fight injustice.	1. By knowing the provision of human rights, Chamars became encouraged to fight against trouble maker.
4.	June, 1999	Conduction of 15 reflect classes for Chamars by sarswati Community Development Forum, Lahan.	1. To encourage the community for right based approach.	1. Discussed about term carcass. 2. Community argued that Chamars should be awarded for their contribution in the field of cleanness rather than humiliation as untouchable. 3. Strongly implemented the decision of not throwing the Carcass. First of all, Dodhai Ram announced for not throwing the Carcass.		
5.	June, 1999	Rally and mass meeting by 1000 people in Kusha to Secondary School demanding for free education.	1. To create environment for the better education for poor and dalits.	1. Joint and strong voice by the guardian's for their children's education. 2. Access of their voice to the various level of educational field.	1. Scholarship for dalit students. 2. Free distribution of books for dalit students. 3. Commitment by the government for providing free education and books for dalit children.	1. The need of strong blow for getting success in various problems facing by the dalits.
6.	July, 1999	A cow is died in the house of	1. All the Chamars of Lahan	1. Blockade was made by upper	1. The organization	

		Kisan Lal Kalwar of Madhupatti Village. People asked Dhodai Ram to throw the carcass but he refused to throw.	decided to change their traditional profession i.e. throwing the carcass. They had committed to be changed from dirty community to the clean.	castes people to the Chamars. 2. They became isolated by the other society. 3. Immediately no body was found in the favor of Chamars.	of dalits was formed. 2. All the Chamars decided to leave the hated profession.	
7.	March, 2000	The national news paper radio, T.V. published the news for the period of 15 days about the blockade and boycott punishment given the Chamars for not throwing the Carcass.	1. To inform all the people to break the blockade for not throwing the Carcass.	1. All the people knew the reality. 2. Many organizations had taken the imitation about the events.	1. They could not come outside the home. 2. They could not buy any things from shop even the cattle could not get any thing to eat. 3. The news was published in newspaper.	
8.	March, 2000	A buffalo died in the house of ex-state minister Padma Narayan Chaudharya and asked the local Chamars to throw the Carcass but they refused.	1. Two groups were found one group argued that the decision taken by Chamars was right where as next group arranged that this type of decision make disturbance in social system. 2. The movement against the throwing carcass started from village centered in city area. 3. The issue of not throwing the carcass got preference at national level. 4. Parliamentary committee demanded the action for Padma Narayan Chaudhary for his misbehave with Chamars.	1. In favor of Chamars, human rightists other institutions, political parties and all dalits were became united then; the movement of not throwing carcass became successful.		
9.	March, 2000	The II castes meeting was held in Lahan and decided to blockade against	1. To compelled the Chamars for doing their traditional profession.	1. No body helped the II Caste. 2. People were against the	1. This was a great achievement of the Chamar movement	

		the Chamars of Lahan.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. To form the association for protecting the Chamars. 3. To blockade the Chamars by publishing the public notice. 4. To humiliate the Chamars as low and inferior Caste. 	<p>blockade of Chamars by upper caste.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. The dalit movement became strong against the boycott programmes for Chamars. 4. NGO, social workers human rightists, political leaders and media asked to withdraw the blockade and boycott programmes imposed against Chamars. 	that people became aware for their rights and movement got sympathy from almost all sides.	
10.	March. 2000	Public case was registered by Chamars in District Administrative office Siraha Against the II Caste who boycott the Chamars.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The meeting which was held in march by II caste to boycott the Chamars. 2. Chamars, who lacked their own land got trouble for toilet facility. 3. The upper castes people threat them to break the leg if they come out side. 4. Chamars could not buy the daily necessary goods because of boycotting. 5. The notice was published than shopkeeper who sells the goods for Chamars should be punished. 6. The blockade was made effective by standing the youth with stick. 7. The government authority could not accept the application about the trouble given by the upper castes. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chamars of Lahan protected in police office for 2 days. 2. Traffic closed in highway for 4 hours. 3. After the effective movement, police office started to register the case. 4. In imitation of local administration, compromise between two parties was held. Then, the movement became slow down. 5. Lahan Municipality arranges a co-feast between Chamars and upper -castes leader. 6. In co-feast many people were participated. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The supporters of dalit movement were increased day per day. 2. Movement got recognized in national and international level. 3. The movement became success. 	
11.	April, 2000	Nepali Congress Lahan Committee	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To disturb the dalit movement. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dalit leader was released from the party 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The dalit movement became more 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The political parties are not sensitive

		organized the various programmes against the Chamars.		Committee. 2. The then minister Gopal Rai scolded the Chamars.	effective. 2. The traffic was closed for an hour.	in the issue of dalits.
12.	April, 2000	Dalit meeting and press conference was held.	1. Publicly expose the events. 2. To fix the strategy for the movement.	1. The news was published. 2. Human rightist institutions knew the fact.		
13.	May, 2000	Joint movement committee conducted the programmes in favor of Dom and Chamars.				
14.	July, 2000	Reforms of caste system, not to throw the carcass and not to work as mid-wife.	1. They decided that they became untouchable because of throwing carcasses. 2. To work at home as mid-wife but in government services they couldn't get the job. 3. The Chamars women who provide the maternity services at mid-night but they are humiliated by upper caste male so, they want to leave this profession.	1. The meeting of dalits was held.	1. The awareness was created among the dalits against the discriminative culture of the upper caste society.	1. The awareness was created among the dalits against the humiliating culture of the society.
15.	July, 2000	Visit of Bibek Pandit was held and orientation programme was conducted.	1. Review of past dalit movement was held.	1. Identification of weak and strong point of Chamar movement. 2. The new method of working together with workers and civil servants was began.	1. An experience was realized that the success of the movement can be gained by reforming the weakness of the community.	1. The review of the past programmes and actions can help the future action.
16.	July, 2000	The rally was organized by the female activities against the alcohol and playing cards in	1. Against the laziness of male, counter parts. 2. Against the lost of property. 3. Against the	1. Male realized the reality. 2. Male realized about the equal contribution in domestic and	1. Local bars were closed. 2. Playing cards was closed. 3. The property was saved.	1. People realized that the waste of time and money is meaningless

		Daulatpur.	system of female engagement in domestic and agriculture works.	other business.	4. Equality for the business among the male was started. 5. Free life style was began.	2. To do something with the help of the family is better for living.
17.	August, 2000	The participation of female Chamars in Daulatpur community forestry.	1. Lacking the representation of female. 2. Lack of women empowerment.	1. Women were encouraged for participating in the committee. 2. Male also helped to encourage the female for their active role in committee.	1. The female started to participate in almost all committee with active role.	a. Easy to work with the participation of women in any committee.
18.	August, 2000	A meeting of Dalit sangam was held and they decided not to throw the carcass and announce the implementation of the announcement.	1. To be humiliated in the society by throwing the carcass.	1. Blockade against chamars was started. 2. Carcass should be thrown by the owner ownself. 3. It became a movement.	1. The Chamars of other places had also decided not to throw the carcass. 2. Dalits were encouraged. 3. Non-Dalits were demoralized. 4. Dalit commission was for med.	1. The movement organized by all dalits can be a example of movement in national and international level. 2. The movement becomes successful.
19.	August, 2000	Dalit Sangam was organized in Pipra West.	1. Dalit started to be organized.	1. Dalits published their pains. 2. They started to fight against the injustice.	1. They started to coordinate among the other dalit sangams in common issues.	
20.	October, 2000	Five cattle were died in Daulatmpur by Malaria, Chamars were told to throw the carcasses but they refused.	1. All the Chamars decided not to throw the carcasses. They realized that they became untouchable due to their dirtiness and such type of hated profession.	1. Blockade was started against the Chamar community. 2. The cattle owner himself was completed to throw the Carcass. 3. The upper caste people protested against Chamars. 4. The news about the blockade was published in national news papers. 5. Chamars were boycott by the other society.	1. Chamars became free from the social pressure of throwing the carcasses.	

21.	Jan., 2001	Community sent the representative in Dharan organized by Dalit Service Association.	1. Information about the events of Siraha and Saptari for the delegates came from many places.	1. Identification of the suffer and pains of hill and terai area's dalits.	1. Unification of all the delegates in dalit's issues.	
22.	Feb., 2001	The association of Dom is Saptari district was formed.	1. Expansion of Dalit movement.			
23.	Feb., 2001	Initiation for free and quality education by the dalits in Siraha.	1. To attract the attention of concerning agencies for quality education.	1. Work plan preparation. 2. To follow-up the programme 3. Protect the rally.	1. Participation of dalit in school management committee. 2. Lobbying for free and quality education.	1. Discuss should be held among the participants for identifying the achievements of the programme.
24.	Feb., 2001	District level dom caste meeting was organized in Saptari.	1. One of the most exploited and demoralized caste among the dalits is Dom. It is necessary to improve the living standard of the Dom. So to find the way out for the development of Dom was the main objective of the meeting. 2. To form the caste based organization. 3. To eliminate the untouchability between the dalits who are in the field of dalit movement.	1. All the concerning agencies administration, police political parties, realized that Doms are also Hindu. So, the entry for Doms should be open in Hindu Temples.	1. Doms entered in the chinnamasta temple. 2. Doms worshiped in Kankalini Temple. 3. Doms registered the case against the hotel-keepers who refused to provide foods for Doms.	
25.	March, 2001	The dalits leaders and activities protected the rally, demonstration, against the blockade and boycott for not throwing the carcass in district Administration office, police	1. To take action for troublemaker. 2. For the justice of victim people.	1. Protect the valley. 2. Blockade of police and administrative office.	1. Parliament asked the police and administration to take action against the trouble maker.	

		office and the M.ps. paid attention in parliament.				
26.	May, 2001	The entire Doms of Saptari district conducted the rally and mass meeting against the untouchability and demanding the right for entry in the public places.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To entry into the public places. 2. To eliminate untouchability. 			
27.	May, 2001	Formed the people's organization for the rights.				
28.	July, 2001	The decision taken by the Chamars of Kochabakhari not to throw the carcasses the upper caste people threw 20 carcasses near about the tube well using by Chamars.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yadav people took revenged with Chamars for not throwing the carcasses by throwing the 20 carcasses near the tube well using by chamars. 2. Main cause of throwing carcasses near the tube-well was to compel the Chamars for throwing the carcasses. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Upper-castes people tried to make dirty and bad smelling in Chamars settlement area. 2. Many people took initiation to normalize the movement. Administration became unsuccessful for compromise. 3. The movement became more effective. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is the end of social exploitation. 2. The untouchability between dalits is slightly reformed. 	
29.	March, 2002	Food Grain Collection for the education of poor and dalit in Rajbiraj.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implementation of free education up to secondary education. 2. Proper distribution of scholarship to be provided for Dalit students. 3. TV attract the district Education office, District development committee and village development committed for the proper distribution of scholarship to the dalit children. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The moral pressure was created for the government. 2. The dalits children jointly organized the education campaign. 3. District education office became awarded for the distribution of dalit scholarship. 		

30.	April, 2002	Singhdarbar blockade	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To fulfill the demand of dalit's. 2. To arise the dalit issues at national level. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dalit issues were discussed in kathmandu. 2. The issues got priority in newspaper. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The case was registered in supreme court of Nepal. 2. The case was decided by the court in favor of dalits. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dalit issues could be raised in the session of Parliament.
31.	July, 2002	A team which was sent for spot study in Hariharpur was beaten by upper caste people	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. They came to encourage the Chamar's movement. 2. We solve our problems ourselves 3. Chamars are low caste people. So, we should not encourage them. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The structure of dalit blockade programme became district level. 2. The case was filed against the trouble – maker in administrative office. 3. Chamars protected in district administrative office for the justice and investigation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. People knew that the movement was not born by hobby but it was the outcomes of compulsion. 2. The movement needs the legal ground and targeted for law and justice 	
32.	July, 2002	Saving collection and mobilization by dalits in 36 villages of saptari and siraha	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. TV improve the economic condition 2. To send the children at School. 3. To collect small amount of money for the small business. 4. Protection from high interest rate. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The discussion method was followed. 2. The culture of not speaking was broken. 3. The information system is started among the community members. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The saving programme is started in neighboring villages. 2. Improvement in economic condition is begun. 3. Poor People protected from high interest rate. 4. They began to handle the small business. 5. Other NGOs also helped the programmes. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The movement can be success if the situation and time become favourable. 2. The activities can get energy if the top level people support.
33.	August, 2002	Spot inspection by the government team in Hariharpur.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All party meeting, administration and police formed a inspection committee for investigation of the events. 2. To discuss about the boycott and blockade between two groups. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The administration assured the shopkeeper who did not sold the goods for Chamars would be punished. 2. Dalits felt that the administration is with them. 3. Administration committed that 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chamars can meet chief district officer any time. 2. The main leader of Hariharpur events Ram Prasad Yadav was punished. 3. Dalits became satisfied by the achievement of the 	

				the blockade is neutralized in one month.	movement.	
34.	Oct., 2002	Leadership Development Training for Dalits in Lahan.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To empower the Dalit leadership. 2. To make dalit youth leaders. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dalits are aware for getting their rights. 2. Generating idea for sweeper movement. 3. Initiation was taken for the upliftment of Dalits. 4. Dalits are demanded separate budget from VDC for them 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Initiation is taken for the children of Dalits. 2. They formed VDC level association. 3. They conducted orientation programme for Dalits. 	
35.	Jan., 2003	Destruction of Dalits houses in unregistered land in Ithari and parshahi Village of Siraha.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Due to political curiosity. 2. To make field the land used by the Dalits. 3. It is due to not throwing the Carcasses by the Chamars. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Upper castes people made the Chamars homeless even in the cold wave. 2. Five Chamars were became ill by the beaten of upper castes. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Many institutions and journalists helped the victim people and made pressure for the justice of victim people. 2. Trouble makers are made compulsion to pay compensation for victim people. 3. They got freedom to stay at the village 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The structure may be changed as accordance to the issues. 2. Victim people became encouraged when the institutions neared them.
36.	Jan, 2003	Destruction of Dalits houses in Arnaha, Kusha Saptari and dalits are beaten by other castes of people.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Not throwing the carcasses. 2. Low number of Chamars population. 3. They refuge to respect Shah and Yadav. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Became ill by beating. 2. Became home less. 3. The women and children became harassed. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Police are made awared about the misbehave for dalits. 2. Reconstruction of destroyed houses. 3. Dalits became united. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The effective way for hearing the injustice is spoken by the victims themselves. 2. The help of media is very important
37.	Feb., 2003	Dalits children organized a rally against save the children to Siraha	Not helping attitude for the education of dalit children	The news was published in Newspaper	Central office asked the Clarification	

38.	March, 2003	The first case about the untouchability was registered in Rajbiraj Court.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For justice 2. For self respect 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Other people became aware 2. Doms also realized themselves as a man 3. Doms Came to know about law and justice 4. Dalits demanded to take actions for the trouble makers. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. They beg excuse when Chamars cased the file. 2. Hotel Keepers became ready to use the glass and plate for the Chamars. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Case can be filed against those people who practice the untouchability
39.	April, 2003	A Dalit is beaten by shopkeeper in Daulatpur	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Shopkeeper beat the Dalit in regular transaction of payment for buying goods. 2. It was for a nominal transaction. 3. It was due to the relationship between Dalit and non Dalits. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unnecessary expenditure for treatment by Dalit Victims. 2. The Shopkeepers loosed the confidence of the customers. 3. It was a injustice done to a Dalit. Thus, other Dalits were became aware. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It was the exploitation against the Dalit people by upper-castes 2. The victim people were released. 	
40.	May, 2003	Sweeper movement in Lahan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sweeper demanded for the entry in temples and hotels and increment in the salary and permanency who worked in Lahan Municipality 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. They became ready for step-wise movement. 2. They formed struggle committee in the leadership of concerning persons. 3. All the sweeper became unified. 4. People who misbehaved with sweeper beg excuse. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sweeper could enter in the hotels and temples. 2. The events were broadcasted by radio. Thus, the hotelkeepers of other place became aware. 3. The sweepers of Lahan Municipality got permanent job. 4. All the people of Lahan Municipality became aware in untouchability issue. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If the victim people realized their pains in-depth, the movement can be successful. 2. If the previous movement is successes, same type of later movement can more successful.
41.	May, 2003	A non-dalit women was beaten in Govindpur, Siraha	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To work in dalit house. 2. To be a home less 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The troublemaker was become afraid when the news was 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dalits made a house for victim women. 2. All dalits 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It was a example to be learned that non-dalit women

				<p>published in various newspapers.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. All dalits people helped the victim for her justice. 3. Dalits told the police to take action trouble maker. 4. All dalits created a movement for justice. 	<p>formed an association in VDC level.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. A good relationship was created between Dalits and non-dalits. 	<p>were also victimized like dalit people.</p>
42.	August, 2003	District level sweepers gathering in Rajbiraj	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To unite all the sweepers of the district. 2. To form a district level committee of the sweepers. 3. Sweepers is kept behind among the Dalits. So, to make them forward. 4. To explore the pains and condition of the sweepers of Saptari district. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sweepers were united. 2. They formed an organization. 3. They became aware about their rights. 4. They started to be changed themselves by realizing own weakness. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It helped in the upliftment of lower castes. 2. They became encouraged for their children's education. 3. The same caste people became united. 4. They started to save some amount from their income. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Courage and self-confidence can be increased by participating in seminars and mass meeting. 2. The gathering and mass meeting encouraged to do some thing new for the upliftment.
43.	Nov., 2003 to July 2004	Data collection for the distribution of scholarship and filed the case in District Education Office, Saptari	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Government has provided the scholarship for the dalits children 2. Have Dalit children really got the scholarship? 3. To identify proper distribution of scholarship. 4. To know the rate of distribution 5. Have only dalit got the scholarship or other are too getting? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It helped the guardians. 2. Guardians became encouraged to send their children in school. 3. The distribution pattern of scholarship was publicly exposed. 4. All the concerning people have the same voice. 		
44.	December, 2002 – February., 2004.	Adult literacy classes were conducted in 29 places of Saptari and 6 places of siraha	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To break the non-speaking culture among the Dalits. 2. To make them able to expose 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dalit women became literate. 2. Women formed their organization. 3. They started the 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. They started to send their children at school. 2. Increasing trend of 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is known that the adult literacy class helped for the

			their trouble and pains publicly.	discussion method for identifying the problems and find out the solution. 4. They stated the saving programme.	access in resources is begun. 3. They became able to identify friend and enemy. 4. They became aware about the distribution of scholarship for the Dalit children. 5. They started to contact in related organizations 6. They stated for demanding their rights in VDC level.	successful Dalit movement. 2. Adult literacy class helped to send their children at school.
45.	May, 2004	Dalits people entered the Kankalini temple Saptari	1. It was for the practical implementation of human rights. 2. It was for self respect.	1. They were able to enter the hotels and temples. 2. The news was published. 3. The self-respectness of Dom is increased.	1. In the opinion of doms, the society is changed. 2. They are reducing their bad habits. 3. They could file the case if some one talk about the untouchability	1. The movement gets success if the time and situation is favourable. 2. If the high-ranking people support the movements the movement can be successful.
46.	June, 2004	1000 children got birth certificate in 4 VDCs in Siraha (Bhadya, Sisni Govindpur and Dodana)	To get admission in schools	1. Dalit children began to go to school. 2. Increasing number of students demanded more teachers.	1. The dalits of neighboring villages also started to register the birth of children.	1. They knew about the importance of birth registration. 2. They knew that the registration of birth, death and marriage should be made within 35 days.
47.	June, 2004	District level sada (Mushahar) meeting was held in Saptari	1. To unite the Sada at district level. 2. To make an active committee of Sada at district level. 3. To able the	1. District level committee was formed. 2. The meeting convinced all the Sada unite in common interest.	1. The meeting decided to uplift the Sada castes. 2. They felt that police and administration helped them	1. The load of seminar should be distributed among the concerning people. 2. To conduct

			<p>backward castes.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> To know the real condition of Sada and to inform it among the same caste of people. To encourage the educated youth in creative activities 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> All the Sada knew that fighting against injustice is necessary for them. Youth Sada became encouraged. They became award in education. 	<p>in genuine issues.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> They knew that the official task in any office could be solved by saying their problem. They made district level not work. 	<p>seminar and meeting is best way to solve the problem rather than to say by a single person.</p>
48.	June, 2004	People's opinion for the construction of home for landless people destroyed by upper caste people in against the dalit movement.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> To make house in government's land An upper caste youth was punished Rs. 25000/- for illegal relationship with a Sada girl. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Sadas case filed against Paltu Shah. The news was published in various newspaper. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Paltu Shah realized his misbehave. Sadas got land to build houses. Paltu Shah committed that the misbehave will not be repeated. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Many representatives of various organizations visited on the spot to know the reality and helped for justice of victim people.
49.	June, 2004	Dalit student scholarship co-operation, Kanchanpur Saptari (for 1 student).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Being a very poor student. He was in condition to be dropped out from class ten. The family was very large and income is very low. He was dalit and intelligent student. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> He got the opportunity for continuing his education. The confidence of the guardian is also increased. It is hoped that his condition could improve in future. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Continuation in his study. The faith of dalits toward organization is increased. Dalits were encouraged. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> It is difficult to access the education to dalits if the government does not provide the free and quality education for the dalits.
50.	June, 2003	Dalits formed the VDC level association	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> To access the dalits issues in local level. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Dalits of VDC became organized. Group discussion Discussion for the future programme. Stake holders were called. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The system was begun for discussing the problem. Dalits are ready for campaigning To struggle in common issues. Access in various organization. Search of the resources. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> VDC level organization helps to solve the local problem.
51.	August, 2003	Blockade for Chamars in Tarpatti and sarsia of Dhanusha, District.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> For not throwing the carcasses. For not serving as mid-wives. For demanding the high wages. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The blockade by upper-castes people. Chamars could not get job. They were 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> They became helpless in front of landlord. They were compelled to 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> It is realized that law and justice is only for upper-caste people.

				<p>compelled to stay at home.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> They became hungry. Chamars children could not go to school. They could not buy the medicine. They could not get the cattle for grassing. They could not inform the media and other related organization for their help. 	work at low wage rate.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> They realized that they got sorrow and pains for their voice against their in justice. They felt that if all the dalits could be united the movement would be successes.
52.	September, 2003	Initiation taken by the dalits for closing the dalit school Majhaura. Siraha	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> For being newly registered and new staffing. For being a dalit school. Due to political cause. Dalits children were getting the education facility. The school was established with the donation collected by the local dalits. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The news was published in news paper. They asked help from other organization. They informed the situation to district administration, police and district development committee. They informed in Education ministry. The concerning agencies took initiation. It is realized that the school should be established and staff should be managed by the government. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> If the steps are for goods motive, the result becomes favourable. The government agencies should also be pressurized for getting the services. The group of 30/35 individuals could create the pressure. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The students of Majaura protested in District Education Office then the government fulfills their demand. It is learnt that the movement becomes success if it leads the community.
53.	November, 2004	The person who beat the Dom (Sweeper) was punished in saptari	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The person refuge to repair the bicycle's of the Dom and he beat the Dom. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The meeting was called. He was punished. The women gathered from different places to speak in favor of justice. The news was 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The amount of five hundred was used to buy the medicine. VDC provided a tube-well for the use of Dom. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The victim people could get the justice if all the dalits would be united.

				published.	3. Dalits became united. 4. The victim got justice.	
54.	January, 2005	Blockade the road	1. Demanding land.	1. Landless poorer were unite.	i. System were failed and local administration attract the situation.	
55.	July, 2005	The inter-caste marriage between Dalit and non-dalit became failure in Daultpur	1. The boys were form lower caste and girl was form Yadav. Thus, the Yadavs disturbed the marriage programme. 2. A person disturbed the marriage between Chamar and Bishwakarma. 3. The Chamar boy was not any educated and from well to do family. So the person disturbed the marriage. 4. The police and administration heard the voice of upper caste people.	1. The mental tension was created in boy sand girl's life. 2. The guardian's of both families were humiliated by the society. 3. The situation discouraged the possibility of inter caste marriage. 4. The victim could not get help from police and administration. 5. The victim people were humiliated and harassed by the society.	1. They were unable to get marriage. 2. Non-Dalit got relief from the events. 3. Dalits people became aware about such. types of events. 4. Non-dalits got relief from the punishment of police and administration	1. It was learnt that inter caste marriage system could be successful in the management coordination and support of Dalits association
56.	September, 2005	The dalits landless people ploughed the black-topped road and they informed District Administration office and land conservation office.	1. To get the land for landless people.	1. The declaration of land movement. 2. The news paper gave priority in their news.	1. Dalits became success to attract the government.	
57.	December, 2005	All Dalit representative held meeting at Lahan	1. To evaluate the condition of Dalit.	1. To declare the further steps.		

Learning from the Movement:

New experiments were made right from the spot that the Saraswati Community Development Forum stood by the movement of Chamar immediately. These shows that the social workers or activists involved in public advocacy should enhance their ability to make fast decision and analyze the effects of the events. The activists involved in public advocacy must have a sound backing of general mass. The activists involved in public advocacy must keep a vigil on the activities of all parties or groups, be able to advocate any issue from legal point of view and be ready to stake his or her life if necessary. But on the other hand, it is difficult to execute law when the rival group is stronger. The authorities concerned with the implementation of law also hesitate to speak against and properly administer or enforce law on the powerful and influential people.

The individuals or institutions exploit every situation to take the credit of positive results of campaigning though they may be far behind the line. But the opponents use power and money to defame the social workers and try to create propaganda, against them. Similarly, the high caste people try to politicize the event for the slightest lapse of the rightful movement of the Chamar. For example, it was felt that a political party was used to shield the mistake of one single individual, Padma Narayan Chaudhari. Nepali Congress Town Committee had issued a letter to a person called Dille Mijhar accusing him of anti-party activity for his advocating in favour of the Chamars.

The issue raised by media is more effective than the voices raised by thousands of people and social workers. Then, even the administration is forced to act immediately. Public campaign becomes more effective if done jointly different organizations rather than by one single organization. The worker involved in

public campaign must have a good rapport and co-ordination with all sorts of people.

The achievements of the movement are significant. The Chamars' movement against throwing carcasses has enough publicity. Dalit representatives got social exposure. A collective forum has been formed of 30 journalists, advocates, Non-Government Organisations representatives and Dalits for public advocacy for civil rights. The Dalits have shown rare unity.

Weaknesses of the movement is also visible. It is difficult to continue public advocacy and to follow the events before the problems are completely solved, due to budget constraint and lack of proper guidance by the authentic people on proper time. Therefore, organizations try to get more credit to lift the blockade and face challenges and dangers while strongly advocating the case of the Dalits.

CHAPTER-IV

CHAPTER-IV

PRESENT MOVEMENT OF THE CHAMARS

All Dalits are not deprived and destitute. Similarly, social discrimination, untouchability and economic exploitation are very high in Nepal Terai particularly in Lahan. A kind of superiority complex exists among the Dalits, but not found among the Chamars. Chamars lack free access to tea stalls, temples, educational institutions and other public places. They are restricted from studying in various Sanskrit Educational Institutions. But situation is improving day by day after their movements. Most of the Chamars are landless and without resources. Their major occupation is to work in farmland as labourers. Their traditional occupation was not regarded respectful. Discrimination was 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 shops of trading consumer goods and milk. It is difficult for them to get agricultural credit and employment. Due to malnutrition, illiteracy, hard work and child birth every year, women are living with deteriorated health condition. Their average age is 50 years whereas the national life expectancy rate of women is 55 years. They are also suffering from unwanted social discrimination, family violence, social and economic exploitation and rape. The Chamars of Lahan are now socially and economically in a better position in comparison to the past, because of their movements.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE CHAMAR MOVEMENT:

Some organizations were initiated and constituted to strengthen and continue the movement. Role of the prominent persons and organizations in the movement have been mentioned here.

JANACHETANA DALIT SANGAM:

It was established in 1999 under the Chairmanship of Baldev Ram and was formally registered in 2001. The organization is struggling for the attainment of the rights of the *Dalit* and abolition of untouchability and all kinds of social discriminations. The members of the organization meet every month. Presently *Janachetana Dalit Sangam* has been expanded to five Village Development Committees and efforts are being made to expand it in other Village Development Committees and constituencies, too.

Besides organizing *Dalits* to strengthen the movement, the organization is also supporting the movement by finding out issues for the future, mobilizing *Dalits* for small saving and motivating them to send their children to school. Programmes for capacity building and institutional development of *Janachetana Dalit Sangam* are also going on continuously.

NARI SANGAM:

Nari Sangam have been established in those communities where 15 Regenerated Frarian Literacy Through Empowerment Committee Technique Circles were conducted by Şaraswati Community Development Forum under regional development programme assisted by Action Aid, Biratnagar, Nepal. They organize interaction programme on various women related issues. They have also started collecting of small saving to enhance capacity of *Dalit* women for income generation. They collect Rs. 10 to 20 every month. There are 10 to 15 members in a women saving group. They conduct awareness programmes and support *Dalit* Sangam in the movement related issues.

DALIT JATIYA ORGANIZATION:

There are many *Dalit* organizations in Siraha district. Prominent among them are: *Nepal Ram Kalyan Sangh*, *Bishwokarma Samaj Kalyan Sangh*, *Rastriya Dalit Sewa Sangh* and *Nepal Ram Kalyan Sangh*. They have contributed a lot by organizing *Dalits*, working as pressure group and collecting fund for the movement. They are also providing support to *Dalit* movement by coordinating among and between various organizations.

DALIT JATI UTPIDAN BIRUDHA SANYUKTA SANGHARSHA SAMITI:

About 500 *Dalits* took part in the gathering of Kachandaha Village Development Committee of Saptari district on August 21, 2000. They established *Dalit Jati utpidan Biruddha Samyukta Sangharsha Samiti* under the Convener ship of Rampriti Paswan. This committee has been working actively for the Restoration of *Dalits'* rights by organizing protest rallies, conducting signature campaign, constituting various committees, collecting fund, presenting ultimatum to the local government to decide future strategies for the movement.

SARASWATI COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FORUM (SCDF):

Saraswati Community Development Forum is one of the non-government organizations working for social and structural change of *Dalit* communities by conducting service and right base community development programmes. The organization is conducting integrated community development programmes in different Village Development Committees. Action Aid, Nepal, Biratnagar is assisting the organization by providing technical and financial support. Beside this, it is also conducting occasional issue base programmes in various Village Development Committees of Siraha.

The organization has played a very important role to strengthen the *Dalit* movement by organizing and educating *Dalits* in various related issues. It is also helping to internationalize *Dalit* issues by using various public advocacy forums.

ROLE OF THE SOCIAL ACTIVIST:

Action Aid Nepal supported the Dalit through “Social Activities” as facilitator in various issues, it tries to develop the positive feeling among Dalits i.e. “I can do”, “I can win” etc. The social activists facilitate supports to Dalits to organize themselves to deal with various issues. They collect, analyse the issues and problems of Dalits and they suggest or educate them to achieve Dalits legal and social rights. The program supports the various phases of the movement. Parallely, social activists help Dalits by coordinating, sharing ideas, and establishing network among communities and organizations. Role of the social activist is to find out the problems of Dalits and make them public issues and to assist them to solve these problems through any means like – legal, social.

Membership:

The movement that occurred in Lahan was a strong campaign against untouchability, social discrimination, exploitation and suppression. Dalits played a very important role to lead the movement ahead. The Dalit community, Non-Government Organisations, International Non-Government Organisations, media, local authorities, local administration and political parties had actively participated as a member of the movement.

DALITS COMMUNITY:

Dalit communities have actively participated in the process under the initiative of Dalit organizations. They have supported the Dalits in the process of

selecting their issues and plan for the movement. Both men and women have been actively participating in every plan of action. They have organised protest rallies, picketing and other activities of the movement. Similarly they have contributed to raise and manage fund for the movement. They have initiated for establishing and expanding their organisation and networks from Village Development Committee to constituency level. They have succeeded a receiving support from different organisations. Women along with children have also participated actively and enthusiastically in the movement. By establishing coordination and network with the Village Development Committee and districts, they have become successful in expanding the movement nationwide.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS (NGOs):

Appreciable role has been played by Social Development Organizations to facilitate the *Dalit* movement ahead. In this process, Saraswati Community Development Forum has played a very important role. It has supported women through education and other activities. It is helping the Dalits by empowering them by creating circles among and between them. It is co-coordinating and facilitating the Dalits by Uniting Dalit communities to run Dalits welfare programs. These organizations are helping Dalits by conducting training, workshop, seminar, interaction programs to boost the working capacity and confidence of Dalit leaders and organizations. The role of social organizations has mobilized journalists and media persons to highlight Dalit issues and problems. They are playing the role of mediator between the local authorities and administrations when necessary. Likewise, social organizations are providing financial, physical, technical supports to strengthen the movement. They are also facilitating Dalits by managing and conducting various activities such as rallies, picketing, publicity and mass meetings. The role of Social Development Organizations is important and they are working very seriously.

MEDIA:

Various local and national newspapers helped the *Dalit* movement by publishing news, articles and features. Prominent among them are: - Janadesh, Jana Awaj, Saptari Awaj, Aajako Watawaran, Suchana, Saptari Sandesh, Saptari Janakrosh, Trishna, Blast Times, Janak Awaj, Lahan Times, Nava Udaya, Nava Jagriti, Kantipur, The Kathmandu Post, Nepal Samachar Patra, Himalaya Times, Chhalphal weekly etc. Similarly, Radio Nepal, Nepal Television and British Broadcasting Corporation-Nepali Service have also given coverage to the movement by broadcasting and highlighting various events and issues through their stations and channels. However the media sometimes also play a negative role regarding the movement.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES:

Local authorities did their best for the movement by actively taking part in the meetings, sharing ideas, providing moral support and financial assistances and helping to withdraw the blockade. For example: Lahan Municipality provided financial supports to organize *Sahabhaj* (co-feast) along with providing, various food items to *Dalits* during the blockade. Mayors' role in this regard was appreciable. Similarly, Madhupatti Village Development Committee also supported the movement by providing tractor to carry community people to the rallies and playing supportive roles to lift up blockade imposed on *Dalits*.

As expressed by *Dalits* in some Village Development Committees, role of representatives and the local authorities have been very negative. Human right activists, journalists, *Dalit* delegates were beaten up with the help of local authorities/representatives. Vice Chairman in Hariharpur Village Development

Committee, and representatives of local authorities in Manraja came out against the movement actively.

LOCAL ADMINISTRATION:

Human right activists, social and political workers, journalists have played important roles in pressurising local administration to act and response quickly to solve *Dalit* problems. Some of the incidents have been mentioned below:

An all-party meeting was held in the presence of District Development Committee Chairman, representatives from various political parties and social organizations in District Administration Office followed by a visit of Hariharpur to study the situation on 6th September, 2000. Five *Dalit* representatives were also included in the team. A comprehensive discussion was held on the issues of the blockade and the movement by bringing together the victims of the movement and *non-Dalits* who were directly involved in creating disorders. Chief District Officer declared that legal action would be taken against those persons who were involved in imposing blockades on *Dalits*. On 8 September 2000, the team also visited Kochabakari. Village Development Committee Chairman Baijanath Jha took responsibility and made his commitment to take steps for withdrawing the blockade in Kochabakari.

An all-party meeting was held again and Chief District Officer assured to withdraw the blockade within a month. It was also agreed that the *Dalits* could meet Chief District Officer without any administrative hassle. Ram Prasad Yadav, the Vice Chairman of Hariharpur Village Development Committee was arrested and legal action was taken against him for his deeds during the blockade. Later on, he was released on bail. Similarly, a group of *non-Dalits* who were heading for the

blockade were restricted from doing so in Lahan. Chief District Officers' role to solve the crisis in Lahan is praise worthy.

HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS:

The Human Right activists supported the movement in various ways. They worked as pressure group to conduct enquiry, they also advocated and mediated to solve the crisis. They also supported, to some extent, to motivate, organize and coordinate the movement in various levels.

POLITICAL PARTIES:

Leaders and workers of various political parties have provided their support for the movement in various ways. After the events that occurred at Hariharpur, Navaraj Subedi of *Rastriya Janainorcha* and Govinda Neupane of Communist Party of Nepal actively participated in the public meeting organized at Rajbiraj on September 2000. Govinda Neupane supported the movement playing the role of a mediator between *Dalits* and the local administration.

In Lahan *Rastriya Janamorcha* and different sectors, organizations of Communist Party of Nepal have contributed a lot to lead the movement ahead. Man Bahadur Biswokarma and local leaders actively participated in the movement and helped considerably. Local leaders and workers of Nepali Congress and Communist Party of Nepal participated in the public meeting. More than twenty thousand people had gathered for the meeting.

SOCIAL ACTIVISTS:

The role of social activists have been very much prominent and important in the movement. Social activists have been making frequent visit to the

communities and conducting meeting with the *Dalits* for identifying and analyzing their situation. Discussion and interaction *is* centered on their social and economic problems. They are being educated and motivated by the activists to enjoy their social and legal rights provided by the constitution.

The social activists are providing moral and physical support, motivating *Dalits* to send their children to school. birth registration and receive citizenship. The *Dalits* are being helped by the social activists to organize themselves to build community based organizations and to strengthen their working capacity along with their skills. The social activists have played a very important role by disseminating information to lead the movement strongly in an organized way.

The social activists have done their best to strengthen the capacity and confidence of *Dalit* communities and organizations by conducting meeting, seminar, study tour and training programmes. Training in leadership development, organizational management, right based approach and procedures have been provided to 130 *Dalits* from Saptari, Siraha, Dhanusha, Dhankutta, Kanchanpur and Morang districts.

Among the *Dalits*, *Doms* are the most backward and depressed community. Social activists held a *Dom* convention to educate and improve their level of life in consultation. In this regard, the role of the social activists was very prominent. The social activists have also played the role of facilitator and mediator in various phases of the movement related activities. Their role in getting the *Doms* to enter into the temple of *Chinnamasta Bhagawoti* temple is quite praise worthy.

The *Dalits* were exploited and oppressed in the past by so-called property owners and high caste families. They were compelled to keep themselves mum against their acts. Social activists have helped to build up the confidence, made

them strong enough to react upon the behaviour and dealings after the movement. It has in turn helped to raise the existing wage rate.

Although, the social activist are limited to Chhinnamasta and Lalapatti, they have extended their services as mediator and facilitator to Rajbiraj, Kalyanpur, Sambhunath, Banauli, Amaha Chowk, Kathauna, Bagbira, Pakri, Prasawani, Hariharpur, Kabilasa, Kushaha, Terhauta and Lahan in course of organizing and strengthening the movement. Besides this, they are keeping in touch with *Dalits* of other districts for movement related activities.

ACTION AID NEPAL:

Action Aid Nepal has been working in Nepal since 1982. It is conducting right based and service delivery programmes by using participatory and empowerment process. It is also conducting poverty reduction programmes in eleven districts of Nepal in collaboration with its partner organizations. Social, economic and political situation of the country play a very important role in this regard. Therefore, *Action Aid* Nepal is helping various agencies in policy influence, issue based advocacy and action research. The target groups as specified are underprivileged and marginal people of the society, women, children and *Dalits*.

One of the major objectives of Action Aid Nepal is to help the *Dalits* and oppressed community by educating and increasing their access to information, basic services and resources. It is also conducting meeting, seminar, workshop, training and discussion and interactive programmes to establish network for pro-public advocacy on various existing issues. It has also provided professional inputs for the formation of *Dalit* Commission and draft of *Dalit Bill*.

The Action Aid Nepal is conducting Area Development Programmes in collaboration with its partner Saraswati Community Development Forum. The Dalits from below the poverty line are being supported for their social and economic development using empowerment process and providing financial and technical assistance. For performing all the programmes, a system has been developed by following participatory process and considering the decision of target groups.

Similarly, technical assistance has been provided by Action Aid Nepal to run various circles. Its positive results can be seen in various fields. Due to the influence of the movement, *Dalits* gave up carcass disposal work and raised their voices to increase the wages. Action Aid has facilitated and rendered support to establish women and *Dalit* organizations along with strengthening capacity and skill building.

Action Aid Nepal has been supporting the non-violent *Dalit* movement is Lahan. It is supporting them by conducting awareness camps, building and institutionalizing their organizations through social activists. It was the effective facilitating role played by the Action Aid Nepal that helped build ownership and belongingness of *Dalit* communities towards the movement.

Action Aid is playing an active role in propagating the movement in national and international arena. It is conducting "Cross Border" activities and other programmes. It is also coordinating with various organizations and journalists to make *Dalit* organization strong and sustainable.

It is helping the *Dalits* in finding out their problems, issues and solution by educating them, lobbying inside and outside the countries and conducting awareness and empowerment activities. It is helping the government in managing

Dalit Awareness Radio Programmes and in broadcasting tele-serials related to *Dalits* and networking in national level. Action Aid is also providing its technical and financial support to study and assess the causes of caste based discrimination and its solutions at national level.

NATURE OF THE LEADERSHIP:

Social movements are said to have “entropy”: that is, they will disintegrate over time if energy is not expanded to keep them together and active. Therefore, leadership must be constant in a movement, always again uniting it, motivating it, and directing it.

The role of a leader 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. Selection of leaders from different communities were performed in a participatory way. Selection of leaders was based on quality, performance, understanding about *Dalit* problems and sound vision of the movement. Thus a democratic process was adopted in course of selection of leaders.

The centrality of communication and the need for continual organization in a social movement makes their leaders particularly important. Leaders speak in the social movement to develop the sense of joining with others in shared concern.

OBJECTIVES OF THE MOVEMENT:

The main objective of the movement are to reform and amend the caste discriminative rules and regulations in law and order framed by Hindu supremacy so as to form the equitable society. As far as possible, customary law has to be changed in socio- cultural practice. It helps to formulate the *Dalit* related laws and policies to transform the social and economic condition of the *Dalits*. Another

latent objective is to create the access of basic services and power structure to the Chamars.

Another objective of the movement is to reduce the socio-cultural and religious distance of socially discriminated unequal groups to create harmonious society. Likewise, awareness campaigning, inviting Dalits in religious and other social gathering, participation of Dalits in mass meeting are set up as the goal of Chamars Movement. The other objectives to bring intercommunity solidarity by reducing social inequality between the Chamars and non-Dalits through enhancement in social index like-education, gender and health. To create equitable society the Government (including civil society, political parties, NGOs etc.) aims to launch special programmes for the Chamar communities. Similarly, it is aimed to remove of the Chamars in participating in public occasions. To achieve this goal, the government is formulating various strategies, such as, – compulsory enrollment of Chamars' girls in schools, maintaining the legal age at marriage, removing sexual, social and other types of harassment of Chamar women. It also aims to increase the enrollment of Chamars to fillup the reserve quota for the Chamars in formal, informal, vocational and technical education.

Similarly, in the field of health, it aims to launch various programmes to improve the health and living conditions of the Chamars, then food habits and sanitary behaviour. The government has also taken steps to fill the reserve quota in the employment sector. To empower the Chamars economically the government has launched poverty alleviation programmes.

PARTICIPATORY PROCESS OF THE MOVEMENT:

According to the *Dalits*, the Movement was not their desire, but a 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 of 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, ERO Biratnagar and social activists also played an important role in the movement. Participation of the *non-Dalits*, political parties, human right activists and media are also noteworthy.

Empowerment process is recognized as one of the most important factors of the *Dalit* movement. Various Non-Government Organisations and social organizations have supported the *Dalits* in this process. Short description of various agencies, which have supported them to make the movement effective and participatory have been mentioned below:

EMPOWERMENT:

The *Dalits* have understood empowerment as a process of enhancing capacity and strength to enjoy 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 participated actively in the process. During the training and education programme, skills were transferred to the *Dalits* to organize and conduct the movement according to the action plan. Similarly, they are also provided with the skills and knowledge to review the progress along with activating community people and their strength. Because of the orientation and training, the level of awareness about their rights among the *Dalits* have increased to a considerable degree.

ORGANIZATION BUILDING:

The *Dalits* have realized that they are compelled to launch the movement, because of the social and economic blockade imposed upon them. Their leaders have played a pertinent role in organizing them. Shouting slogans, participation in rallies, picketing and conducting protest rallies carrying lantern are some means used by the agitators. They are also trying to expand their organizations in various Village Development Committees along with strong networking.

SELECTION OF ISSUES FOR THE MOVEMENT:

Economic and social blockade were imposed upon the *Dalits* when they decided not to throw carcasses. These events led to the movement. No differences were found among the *Dalits* regarding the selection of issues for the movement. Extensive discussion were held among them, local authorities, various castes and communities of the *Dalits* after the blockade.

SELECTION OF LEADERSHIP:

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

REVIEW OF THE MOVEMENT:

Meetings are organized for reviewing the progress of the movement and they have developed it as a system. During such meetings, they discuss about the

shortcomings of the movement, selection of future issues, and preparation of action plan and resource management extensively. Community people and workers of various organizations, who participate in the movement directly or indirectly, are also invited at the district level review meetings for their valued opinions and ideas.

PRIMARY PROCEDURE FOLLOWED IN THE MOVEMENT:

Different events that occurred in various localities, Village Development Committees and districts are collected at first. These events are communicated and conveyed to a gathering of eight to ten people. Women also help in this process. After the discussion, they reach 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 take part in the discussion. Special time is provided to women to share and express their ideas. Generally, decision is made unanimously.

EMPOWERMENT PROCESS IN DALIT MOVEMENT:

Empowerment is not only a process of movement, but it is very imperative too. The *Dalits* are making 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 Non-Government Organisations, social activists and others. The movement is going ahead systematically in Saptari and Siraha districts.

Women have established *Nari Sangam* after being educated through Regenerated Frarian Literacy through empowerment committee technique Circles conducted by Saraswati Community Development Forum in 5 Village Development Committees of Saptari. Women have been a great source of

motivation for men to abandon their traditional occupation. This kind of boldness and confidence in turn encourage *Janachetana Dalit Sangam* of Madhupatti to execute and implement this decision.

The *Dalits* encounter various problems in avoiding carcass disposal. They decide to solve the problems through non-violent movement. Their movement which started from a small village of Madhupatti Village Development Committee is now converted into a national issue.

CHANGE IN THE LIFE OF THE CHAMARS (During and after the movement):

The discussion have been made to identify and summarize the main changes that had taken place in the life of Chamars and also to analyze and explain the nature and factors responsible for change. Changes has been noted and described in subsequent paragraphs especially in relation to the self image, demographic characteristics, religious beliefs and practices, rituals relating to birth and death, marriage and family life, dress and diet, habitation and housing, occupation pattern, ownership of land, modern commodities, political consciousness, association and participation.

AREAS OF CHANGE:

Change in self image: The year 2006, served as reference point for this survey. This year witnessed the change in the image of Chamars about themselves has changed. They started considering themselves as “Ram”, and as also regarding themselves separate and superior to other Dalits in the region of Terai.

Traces of change in their self image first became noticeable around 2000 (as per the testimony of other castes' respondents), when some of their caste leaders (Baldev Ram, Dhodai Ram) after their visits to different places including

India, started introducing themselves to the officials and other outsiders as “Ram” and not as Chamar, and it gained momentum when they found that by calling themselves Ram, they could reasonably claim to be the highest of all sub-castes of Dalits and also reduce the possibilities of their immediate identification as lower caste members, who have been all along considered to be associated with leather work.

Several factors are responsible for this change and these include education, change of occupation, income, standard of living, contact with the outside world and above all, their strong shared desire to secure a higher position in the caste-hierarchy.

This change is in line with the change that has taken place not only in the area, but also in other areas among the lower castes, especially the Chamars. They started describing themselves as Balmiki and associated themselves with the famous epic writer and Saint ‘Balmiki’. It is observed in studying the change of status among the Chamars. They refused to use of the word “Chamar”. They said that they should not be called Chamars because they are Ram. This incident indicated the strong repugnance of the word “Chamar” for them.

Change in demographic characteristics: Over the period of 6-7 years significant changes have taken place with regard to their position, population strength in village, sex ratio, proportion of married population, literacy rate and educational standard.

Numerically they have replaced the other Dalits. It has strengthened their political influence, especially in the municipality which they have started using for improving their economic position.

Their sex ratio has increased. This is the outcome of the change that had taken place in the village and in the surrounding areas. The number of women in the village increased. Better care of women and availabilities of improved medical facilities, particularly during delivery are considered to be largely responsible for the increase in proportion of female population.

During the period, the proportion of married population among them has also decreased. The decrease in number of married population is also a common feature of the village and this decrease is because of comparative increase in the age of marriage and change in the attitude towards marriage. Explaining the increase in the age of marriage, one Chamar respondent said “earlier a person was given for marriage practically without any consideration, except family background, whereas presently marriage is usually arranged only when the boy becomes capable of earning something and this automatically delays marriage”.

There has also been a marked increase in the literacy rate and educational standard among the Chamars between this period. Their literacy rate has become proportional to national literacy rate. The literacy among them has increased. This change in the literacy rate has also initiated change in the literacy rate among women. Along with the change in the literacy rate among them, there has been a change in their educational standard, even though none of them have attained any specific skill in art, science and literature. The improvement in educational standard is more among the younger generation.

Closely following the change in the educational standard, the change has occurred with regard to the number of technically qualified and trained persons. The number of technically qualified and trained persons has increased, despite the fact that this technical qualification and training is still confined only to the males.

The change in their educational standard among the younger generation is the result of accelerated educational facilities in the form of the primary and middle schools in the village, development of communication, and introduction of several special governmental facilities for promotion of their educational and, above all, changes in their outlook and motivation for education.

This change in the literacy rate and educational standard among them has brought about change in the general literacy rate and educational standard of the people. The general literacy rate in the village has changed. The number of women literates has increased. It is significant to indicate that, while there has been an all round increase in the general literacy rates, the literacy rates of the middle and lower castes Chamars still remained low. The Chamars have higher literacy rate and educational standard in comparison to other lower castes.

The difference in the literacy rate and educational standard among different castes can be attributed to their different motivation and outlook towards education. The Chamar today visualizes educational achievements not only as an end of itself, but also as means for further change in their position in the social hierarchy.

Although the change in literacy rate and educational standard is a general feature, in comparison to other higher castes, the Chamars and other lower castes have taken up the education late. Earlier, there were practically no educational facilities in the village, and the villagers in general had little motivation for education. It was after the establishment of a school in the villages, mainly the higher castes Chaudharies, started sending their children regularly to the school. The Chamars and other lower castes people began sending their children to school regularly only during the Movement.

The Chamars realized that in order to improve one's own position and to get the acceptance of the people, one must have education and a higher status in occupation. Accordingly, they began to send their children to school and also persuaded their relatives to send their children regularly to school. This set the process in motion and the families of other Chamars and other lower castes also started sending their children to school.

Change in religious beliefs and practices: The Chamars, over the period, have adopted the worship of sanskritic deities like Rama, Krishna and Shiva and subsequently modified and altered their motivations, modes and place of worship.

They started worshipping Rama, Krishna and Shiva in their efforts to raise their position and to be identified with the higher castes through the process of adoption of their deities. Prior to this period, they worshipped mainly matas (Kalimaa, Sitlamata) and other spirits. Rama, Krishna and Shiva were considered by them as the deities of higher castes. And they were in earlier afraid of worshipping them due to fear of displeasure of the deities, as they considered themselves too low to worship them, and they also feared reprisal by higher castes, as they believed that the higher caste members would not tolerate their worship of those deities reserved for them. They started worshipping them with their changes in education and occupation, which instilled in them a desire to change their status and encouraged them to worship the above mentioned deities. Furthermore, with education they started feeling the strength of their population. They realized that the higher caste members would not like to come to direct confrontation with them because of their numerical strength. Whatever little apprehensions they had were removed with the enactment of Untouchability Offences Act. It provided them strength and legal support in their efforts to adopt the deities of the higher castes. Their faith on their caste's strength and the Act helped them to overcome their fears about the reprisal from the higher castes. Initially the worship of these deities

was started collectively by a few individuals and subsequently it was taken up by the caste panchayat. The caste panchayat, in its desire to change the status of the caste members, held a meeting which was attended by elderly Chamars including women. In the meeting of the panchayat they tried to identify the areas in their religious life which created differences between them and the higher castes, and decided to worship the above mentioned deities and also to shake away greatly their traditional religious practices, like animal sacrifice and predominance of spirit worship.

Along with the adoption of these sanskritic deities, another new phenomenon was their motivation for attaining salvation of the soul. Earlier their religious motivation was mainly their desire to secure protection from disease, death and destruction and also to obtain blessings for leading a happy life. Worship for the purpose of salvation of the soul is comparatively a new development and has been adopted as part of the general effort to fall in like with the mores, values and practices of the higher castes.

Their modes of worship have also been diversified along with their adoption of these sanskritic deities for worship. They make floral offerings, vegetable preparations and light lamps and burn incense, as part of their worship to Rama, Shiva and Krishna. In the past, by contrast to these sanskritic rituals, animal sacrifice formed the main mode of worship. Animal sacrifice becomes obsolete, particularly after the decision of the castes panchayat to initiate concerted efforts to raise their status, through assimilation of higher castes practices in the worship of deities.

With the adoption of these sanskritic deities and subsequent modifications in their motivations and modes of worship, the services of the Brahmin priests gradually began to be used by the Chamars. While the worship of "matas" and

(Kalimata and Sitalama) spirits among them is still performed by the elderly men of their own caste or caste priests, worship of these adopted deities, in some cases, is done by the Brahmin priests of the neighboring villages, as this village does not have any priest. This change has taken place with their adoption of deities like Rama. The other factors which have helped this change include change in their education and occupational position. Gradual decrease in the pre-occupation of Brahmin priests with the general loss of influence of the religion also facilitated this change. The adoption of these deities has also promoted them to enter into village temples and offer their worship, especially on occasions like Ram Navami.

This change in the religious beliefs and practices is not only confined to the Chamars in the village, but has also taken place among other lower castes of the village and the surrounding areas and have helped for reducing the gap between them and the higher castes. The other lower castes in area, besides the Chamars have been also found to worship Rama, Krishna and Shiva and make floral offering and vegetable preparation. Attaining salvation of the soul has also been found to be their goal. But, in comparison to other lower castes, the extent of change has been more among the Chamars. For instance, hundred percent of the Chamar families were found to worship Rama, Krishna and Shiva,

It is significant to note that, despite these concerted group efforts to change, the Chamars have not been able to bridge the gulf between them and the higher caste Hindu especially, with regard to their religious beliefs and practices. They have not been able to assimilate totally the cardinal concepts of Hinduism, i.e. the theory of rebirth, the Karma, because of their ignorance, and their desire to adopt the behavioural pattern of the higher castes without giving sufficient time to understand, assimilate and internalise the values and concepts which determine the behaviour. It has been observed, that they do not celebrate important religious days and festivals, such as Janamasthami, Dashera, and Ramnavmi which are

observed by the higher caste Hindu of the area. Going to temples to worship the deities has still not become a regular custom among them, not only because of the fear of opposition of the higher castes, but also to some degree because of their diffidence and lack of habits.

Change in rituals relating to birth and death: While the rituals and practices relating to death have almost remained unchanged among the Chamars, the adoption of the practice of immersion of ashes (phool) in the Ganga, and performance of saradh (termi) on 13th day after the death, instead of 30th day, i.e. reduction in the length of period of death pollution, the rituals and practice relating to birth has changed. Those who can afford it have started celebrating the news of new pregnancy and rituals, like Chatti Puja and Kuan Pujan respectively on the 6th day and 21st day following the birth of a child.

The observance of Chathi Puja and Kuan Pujan and performance of Termi on the 13th day after the death of a person are all recent phenomena. They rarely observed these rituals because they considered them as the rituals of the higher castes. Their poor economic conditions and their inability to secure the services of Brahmin priests also dissuaded them from performing such rituals.

The adoption of higher castes rituals by Chamars of the village, especially the rituals relating to birth, is not an isolated fact. This has become common to all the lower castes in the village and its surrounding areas. During my stay in the village, I observed two termi ceremonies and a chathi pujas performed by the Chamars and other lower castes in the village.

Change in Marriage: While the concept of marriage (marriage is a sacrament and not a contract) has remained unchanged and very little change has taken place with regard to selection of marital partners, arrangement of marriage,

attitude towards remarriage, and marriage ceremonies, certain changes have taken place in the marriage age and rituals associated with solemnization of marriage.

“Asura” form of marriage, which was the common form in earlier, has been practically replaced by “Prajapatya” form. It was observed, during the period of data collection, that Prajapatya form of marriage is practiced by them because of their desire to reduce the differences between them and the higher castes and thereby to improve their status (the higher castes in the village exclusively practice Prajapatya form), along with their change in education, occupational pattern and income. They thought that, along with their efforts to improve their position through adoption of higher castes values and practices like adoption of Rama, Krishna and Shiva for worship and use of the services of the Brahmin priests, this should also be noted that this has also contributing to bridge differences between them and the higher castes. It is worth mentioning that this change in the form of marriage has resulted in the adoption of payment of dowry in the place of bridge price.

Age of marriage of the Chamar boy and girl has also significantly changed, even though, in comparison to statutory regulations relating to the age of marriage, it is still an early marriage. Age of marriage of a boy and girl has increased. Increase in the age of marriage is mainly due to the changes in their socio-economic conditions and also in the attitude towards marriage. The change in the attitude towards marriage can be explained in the words of the Chamar respondents, “earlier, while arranging marriage for a boy, nobody thought about his capacities to maintain a family. Now a father would not like to arrange marriage for his son unless he has a job or is going to get a job, even though this delays the marriage”.

Solemnization of marriage presently is not done exclusively by the caste priests or elderly male members of the bride's family which was earlier practiced, but also by the Brahmin priests, even though the use of the services of Brahmin priests in the solemnization of marriage is confined mainly to the richer families. Services of the Brahmin priests in marriage are gradually being used by them as a consequence of their adoption of the Prajapatya form of marriage and as part of their effort to assimilate some of the higher caste practice with a view to improve their position.

The change in the form and solemnization of marriage are more marked among the Chamars than other lower castes, while the increase in the age of marriage is common to all the castes. Others are still found to practice predominantly Asura form of marriage and get their marriage celebrations performed by their own caste priests or elderly caste members. The differential level of change in the practices associated with marriage among the lower castes can be explained on the basis of their differences in education, occupation and finally motivation for change of status.

Change in Family Life: Several changes have taken place in the family life of the Chamars and these include change of polygamy by monogamy and joint families by nuclear families, decrease in family size and sharing of family authority.

Polygamy, which was earlier very common among the Chamars, has been almost completely stopped. This change is the result of various factors, which can be classified into two categories viz. external and internal. The former refers to restrictions imposed by the government on polygamous marriage by Hindus and increase in expenditure in marriage. The latter factor covers changed attitude of the Chamars towards marriage and family life and their desire to reduce the

distance between them and the higher castes. This is a change which has taken place among all the castes as a natural process of change along with the change of time and situation.

There has been a rapid reduction in the number of joint families among the Chamars. This change is largely perceived by the interviewees to be because of their desire to avoid conflicts and preference for living independently due to the increase in their levels of education. While the general reduction in the number of joint families is common to all castes, the rate or speed of reduction differs on the basis of landownership and economic conditions of the family. The higher castes owning land, for instance, have more joint families than others. Within the lower castes, Chamars have more joint families because of their comparative better economic position.

Closely following the change in the structure of the family brought about change in the size of the family. Reduction in average family size is a common phenomenon and it has taken place among all irrespective of castes, due to increase in age of marriage, spread of education and dissemination of family planning knowledge, increased expenditure in child rearing and change of joint families into nuclear families.

Male heads of families are gradually sharing their authorities with other family members, which was previously. The sharing of authority within the family, mainly with old parents, wife and grown up children is most noticeable with regard to matters of education and occupation of the children, arrangement of marriage, purchase of property and entering into legal suits. Sharing of authority by the male head with other members, especially with the grown up children, is common to all and has gradually started taking place along with the spread of education among the younger generation.

The changes that have occurred in the family life of the Chamars are, paralleled to the changes that have taken place among all other lower castes. While monogamy has become common to all, joint families are more among the Chamars than other lower castes.

Change in Dress and food: The Chamar men wear dhotis folded up to their knees, their women use only two pieces clothes as of the earlier times. They are, with the change in their economic conditions, using the same dress pattern as that of the higher castes. This change has been also found among other lower castes in the village.

The Chamars have started giving preference to vegetarian food. Increasing number of them has changed over to vegetarianism, which was only confined to about low percent earlier. Preference for vegetarian diet is a recent phenomenon among the Chamars not only of the village, but of the region as they were traditionally non-vegetarian, having no compunction against taking various varieties of flesh including mutton, pork and fish. The influence of the higher caste and the values attached to the vegetarianism has brought this change. The initial change in the food pattern was initiated collectively by a few individuals. The caste panchayat of the Chamars decided to change do given to priority their food pattern and asked their members do given to priority to take the vegetarian food. The present change simultaneously took place line with the instructions of the caste panchayat. Another significant change which has taken place among them with regard to diet, due to change in their economic conditions, is that they have stopped accepting the left-over food after feasts held by various higher castes. Among the lower castes, this change is more marked among the Chamars.

Change in the housing pattern: While there has not been any change in the location of their housing sites, significant changes have taken place in the

nature and structure of houses. They still live in the localities fixed for lower castes for the purpose of housing construction. They also do not get any house on rent in the higher caste localities. Changes, however, have taken place with regard to their housing pattern and facilities, even though there is an acute accommodation problem. They no longer live in kutchra houses whose lands are owned by others. Majority of them live in pucca houses, some of their houses are double storied, having one or two rooms, mostly two, with or without a kitchen, but with one attached verandah and an open space in front. The overwhelming majority of the houses have electricity. Some houses have hand pumps for drinking water. Most of the houses, irrespective of the nature of their construction i.e. pucca or kutchra, have an assortment of furniture, such as benches, tables, chairs and stools meant mostly for guests. The household possessions have also increased both in quantity and quality. The earthen vessels have been replaced gradually by those of aluminum, brass, glass, and ceramics. The general standard of cleanliness in the house is good, although many of the houses lack proper ventilation.

The change in housing pattern is a common feature among all villagers irrespective of castes, and is mainly due to change of economic conditions. Along with this factor, the governmental facilities offered to the lower castes and housing sites have further facilitated the change in the housing pattern among the lower castes. This change took place around after movement, when large scale change and diversification of occupation occurred.

Change in occupation: Occupation is another area where significant changes have taken place among the Chamars. Not only has there been an increase in the size of working population, including the number of working women, but there have been also diversification and disassociation with traditional occupation. Significant changes have also taken place in the number and nature of their self

employments. (Working women here are taken to be women either employed or self-employed in some economic pursuits).

The number of working population among them has risen. The number of working women (in the sense defined above) has increased and diversification of employment opportunities, along with the spread of communication and education, has largely contributed to this increase in the size of working population. Along with the increase in size of working population, diversification of employment and dissociation with their traditional occupation have also taken place. Working population are still carrying on their traditional occupation, i.e. leather work of field labour, whereas the great majority are now engaged in agriculture as cultivator, trade and business which were not followed earlier.

The number of self employed persons among the Chamars has increased. Change and diversification of their occupations have also brought about changes in the nature and sources of their self employments. They are employed now in trade, business, agriculture, besides their traditional leather work, which was the only source of self employment earlier.

Several factors have contributed to these change and these include the spread of education, greater entrepreneurships and desire among them to change their traditional occupation and carry on occupations like agriculture, trade and business which were once considered the occupations of higher castes. Development in communications and change in economic life in the village which increased the diversification of business and attracted many people to start business further accelerated the process of change of occupation. Of all these factors, improved communication, greater desire amongst them to take up occupation of the higher castes along with the spread of education, constitutional privileges provided to them and increased job facilities in other places are most

important, and these facilitated their efforts to change their occupations with the objectives of improving their social and economic position.

These changes have taken place at a much more rapid pace. Diversification of occupations has taken place with the entry of a number of Chamars into the field of agriculture and trade and business. In the field of trade, they are now working as tailors and cycle repairers.

The changes in occupation among the Chamars are a general change and these have affected all the people irrespective of caste both in the village and its surroundings, primarily because of increase in employment opportunities, spread of education and communication. But within the lower castes, the diversification of occupation has taken place more among the Chamars than others.

Change in land ownership: It is also worth mentioning here that, although they do not own more agricultural land, some of them have taken agricultural land on lease from others. Change in the economic condition, organizational support and the desire among them to adopt occupations of the higher castes have greatly contributed to the change.

Taking up cultivation as an occupation is prevalent not only now among them in the village, but also in the neighbouring areas. None from any other lower castes have taken up cultivation. They are doing this in order to identify themselves as agriculturists.

This change-over, i.e. from landless labourers to cultivators however, has not been a very smooth affair. The higher caste people in general, who had all along controlled agriculture, did not encourage them to take up agriculture and work as agriculturists. Initially they refused to extend their support and guidance to their Chamar fellow brothers, who lacked knowledge about the intricacies of

agriculture and also the required ability in planning cropping pattern and using inputs. As a result, in the beginning they faced several problems in cultivation, especially with respect to use of agricultural inputs and subsequently incurred loss. In their efforts to overcome their problems they attended farmers' training programmes organised by the government (agriculture Office), visited the Agricultural Research Centre participated in the agricultural activities and took up the other agriculturists as their reference group. The moral support from their own caste members also helped them to overcome the problems. Their persistent and determined efforts have helped them to overcome the initial antipathy of the higher caste agriculturists and to gain their support, though not their recognition as agriculturists, which they (Chamars) feel is not an easy affair, particularly in the absence of permanent ownership of land.

On enquiry from higher castes cultivators, it has been revealed that the Chamar agriculturists do not lag behind much with respect to adoption of new agricultural practices and in agricultural production. On the contrary, they carry on their agriculture on the same lines as other agriculturists and have been able to produce good crops. Within a few years of their taking up of agriculture, they are able to produce paddy, wheat and vegetables. A brief description of their agricultural practice is given to reveal that their agricultural practices do not differ from that of other agriculturists of the area.

Changes in the ownership of modern commodities: Changes, both quantitative and qualitative, have taken place among the Chamars with regard to possession of modern commodities. They now own radios, cycles, watches, furniture, fans and stainless steel utensils, which was unthinkable for them earlier primarily because of their poor economic condition. While the majority of these commodities have been purchased by them along with their change in economic

condition due to change in their occupational pattern, a few of them have been received by them as gifts.

Change in the ownership of modern commodities has taken place among all people irrespective of caste in the village, but the quantity and quality of commodities owned by individuals depend on their economic conditions.

Change in political consciousness: The Chamars are not neither politically ignorant, nor do they presently consider politics to be a domain of only the rich, higher caste people and the educated few. They are now aware about the national problems, leaders and their background and parties and their ideologies. Furthermore, they have also become conscious about the intricacies of politics in their village life, importance of their vote and also roles played by different political leaders including their caste members in ameliorating their conditions, whereas few years ago they were completely ignorant of all these aspects of politics.

The factors which contributed to arousing political consciousness among them particularly, lower castes in general are many and these include development of communications, government, parties and above all, elections on the basis of adult franchise and the election campaigns organised at different levels. These factors, especially the development of communications and universal adult franchise broke down the isolation of the village and first affected the higher castes people and then percolated to lower castes. They gradually started understanding the importance of politics when the people belonging to different parties approached them for their votes during the general elections and made several promises to improve their conditions. According to one Chamar respondent "it was for the first time I was told by one of the election campaigners

during the parliament election that if I vote for them they will help me to secure a job for my son, and loan for purchasing animals and land”.

The first incident, which marks the beginning of politicization among Chamars, was the visit of one party member from Lahan who addressed them in a meeting. This meeting was attended by them in a large number and this for the first time provided them with an awareness of the vastly changed situation brought about by the new constitution of the country. They came to know that they could expect a new deal from the government, since untouchability has been constitutionally abolished and protection of their interests and several special privileges for their development had been ensured. They were also informed that there are people from among their communities who have been accepted and regarded as leaders not only of their own community but also by others. And last but not the least; they realized that there is a machinery to protect them and to save them from day to day humiliation and social disabilities. The people were also told about some Dalits leaders in their efforts to improve their status.

No doubt, the meeting had a great impact on the minds of the people, but beyond that it failed to produce any long term results partly because it was not followed up by further discussions and meetings and partly due to the fact that they were still governed by their traditional thinking that politics was not their cup of tea. Therefore, they continued to remain apathetic and indifferent to politics and gave little thought to their involvement in local or regional politics to assert their rights and secure benefits.

The factors that really shook them from their centuries of apathy and ignorance and forced them to think about politics, was the elections held at different levels of the Local, Regional and Parliament. The general election helped them to realize the importance of the vote as well as the benefits they could derive

from their vote, because they found the contestants of the elections, even if they were higher caste people, came to their houses, listened to their problems and promised to solve their problems and grievances. This was something, which was absolutely new to them and they had not bargained for it. An elderly Chamar respondent expressing his state of mind at that time said “I was awestricken when I found men belonging to higher castes of my own village coming to my house. I was first afraid, but after some time I came to know that they had come to me to solicit my vote. They talked politely and told me they would help to improve my conditions”. These election campaigns further enabled them to understand that they could exercise influence, if they could unite as a group both in and outside the village and use the influence for their own benefits.

A few years after these elections, the new municipality was introduced which offered statutory representation to the lower castes at the Local level. The Local election was held in the village with great enthusiasm. This brought the village people, particularly the Chamars, face-to-face with politics and brought about a change in their thinking process with regard to their position and status in the village. The Chamars, especially the educated people among them, realized that they could not stay away from politics for long but could bargain for their votes in the local election in order to strengthen their power and influence both in and outside the village. Since then, they gradually started taking interest in the local elections and lately have started playing important roles in these elections, through alliance and reliance with different groups according to their own needs and interests. They have been successful in using the local body to gain several benefits. For instance, many of them succeeded, through their representatives to get loan for construction of houses very easily. The local body also reconstructed the lanes in their locality with bricks.

Another factor, which has greatly contributed in raising and developing political consciousness among them and also in their emergences a group of political influence not only in the village but also outside the village, is the establishment of the Dalit organisations, relating to untouchability and representation in different bodies brought them closer to party politics and enabled them to understand the root causes of their political and social subservience and methods of dealing with them as a group.

They have also brought their caste people closer to other members of the village and their inter-relationships have fostered a healthy political life in the village, which even spread to other parts of the territory.

The efforts for arousing political awareness, which started by an active political worker reached its culmination when some Chamars became active members of the Political party. It was through their efforts that the party became popular among the lower castes who felt that their own good lay in the strength of the Political party and its ideologies. They were told of the benefits they could derive by supporting the Political party, which was then a ruling party and in a position to deliver the goods to them. Due to their efforts, the majority of the adult Chamar males became aware not only of the different political parties and the importance of the vote but also of the particular of politics in their village life. Almost all of them now know the broad policies of different political parties. Particularly of the then ruling party, the programmes of the Government and the roles played by different leaders including their caste leaders in ameliorating their conditions and improving their status.

Changes in political association: Change in the political consciousness among them has also brought out corresponding changes in their political association. From the silent ignorant onlookers at the hinges of politics, they have

turned into active supporters, even active members of political party, which was then the ruling party.

Their association with the ruling party was a matter of convenience, rather than of ideology. The majority of the respondents whosoever talked of their political associations, said that they support Congress because it is in a position to help to improve their conditions. They were of the opinion that the Congress alone can provide the desired results because it had necessary strength.

This close political association of the Chamars with the political party had become possible because of a number of factors, namely (i) the influence of the Chamars of the village over other lower castes because of their numerical strength, better economic conditions and political influence; (ii) closeness of the village to the city and development of communication; (iii) emergence of caste leaders, who are comparatively educated, understanding, young and command respect and support not only of the Chamars but also of other lower castes; (iv) increased political awareness among them and realization of the importance of political association with the ruling party for betterment of status within the village – almost all the young Chamars feel that their political association with the political party has made them to change their economic conditions and, thereby, to improve their status; and (v) realization by the political party leaders of the importance of the Chamar leaders and their influence over the lower castes.

Changes in political participation: Growing political aware and close political association with the Parties have contributed to the political participation of a few Chamars, in both regional and local politics even though the nature of participation has remained confined to organize the election campaign and selection of contestants for election.

While changes in political consciousness, association and participation have appeared to be common to all castes, the nature of Chamars is not the same among all the castes, particularly among the lower caste Chamars, in comparison, to other lower castes, have changed more with regard the above mentioned areas because of their comparatively higher education, better occupation, and above all the leadership. For instance, none from any other lower castes have become active members of the parties. The memberships in the Local body have all along been confined to Chamars. At no time during the period of data collection, any political leaders from outside was found to visit their houses. In all the meetings, they were found to follow the decision of the Chamar leaders.

NATURE OF CHANGES:

The analysis of the changes that have taken place among Chamars in various aspects of their life reveal that the change is mainly marked by the change in their education and occupation combined by their desire to improve their position and thereby their status in the social hierarchy. The characteristic features of this change are:

Continuities and discontinuities: Many aspects of the life of the Chamars have almost continued to remain the same as it was in the earlier times, despite various changes. The areas which have remained almost unchanged include mainly their concept of marriage, selection of marital partners, arrangement of marriage, attitude towards remarriage and death ceremonies etc. The areas which have changed include primarily the religious beliefs and practices, their rituals relating to birth, their family structure and size, their literacy rate and educational standard, occupational pattern, ownership of land, modern commodities, and their political consciousness, association and participation etc. An examination of the aspects of continuities and discontinuities reveals; (a) elements of change are more

pervasive in comparison with elements of continuity, and (b) continuities are more noticeable in some areas of their socio-ritual life. The factors which have contributed to the continuity of the above mentioned aspects are many, but the most important of them is that they, while making their efforts to improve their status much, also wants to retain their own identity as a group or community i.e. as Chamars.

Gradual and Cumulative change: Changes in different aspects of their life is both gradual and cumulative and has taken about years to come about. The first sign of change was seen in the areas of education. This change set a series of uncomitant changes, by increasing their awareness about their own position vis-à-vis other castes. This found expression in the meeting of their caste panchayat. Wherein they discussed the factors which were differentiating them from other higher castes and took a decision to put an end to such practices and adopt those practices which would help bridge their gap from the higher castes and, thereby, facilitates their efforts to change their position. Educational change was followed by important economic and political changes. Change of occupation gave them a diversified field of employment, ensuring higher income and an important role to play in the economic life of the village, particularly in the formation and functioning of the cooperative society. The changes in all these aspects lead to changes in certain aspect of social life. An important political effect of the solidarity of the lower castes with the Chamar leaders was that it gave them a political edge in the election to the Parliament and other local bodies. This was also a factor which helped enable the Chamar leaders to exercise their significant influence in the village as a whole and outside it as well. Their support to the ruling party brought many direct and indirect benefits to them in particular and to the village in general. In projecting their leadership in political and other fields, Dalit Sewa Sangh has played an important role. As a result, the leaders of their

community, on their part, continued their fruitful association with these institutions.

Result of both individual and collective efforts: Changes in different aspects have been the result of both individual and collective efforts, each of which has supported and supplemented the other to change their status. Of these two, individual efforts were started earlier, by some Dalits learned from their life experience that for improving one's own position and gaining acceptance of the higher castes people, one must have education. Accordingly, they persuaded their fall castes members to send their children to school. The efforts to diversify the occupational pattern also started with the individuals like them. But the Chamars in their own efforts to change their status have given greater emphasis to collective efforts because of their gradual realization of (a) the strength of their own united action, and (b) the fact that change of socio-religious status calls for collective action. The chief instruments through which collective efforts have been channelized are the caste panchayat of their own village.

An intimate relationship between the areas in which efforts for change have been initiated and the area of actual change has been observed. Individual efforts for change have started more in secular (non-religious) areas, like education, occupation, whereas collective efforts have been made more in the socio-religious spheres such as adoption of deities of the higher castes, and also the methods and modes of their worship, besides their food pattern.

General and specific: The changes that have taken place in the various aspects of the life of the Chamars have been both general and specific in nature. These changes may be regarded as general which have take place universally among all categories of people in the village The degree of change may differ because of their different levels of aspiration and socio-economic conditions of

specific group. Such changes include changes in family structure and size, literacy rate and education, occupational pattern and housing structure. Specific changes are those changes which have taken place only among the lower castes, especially among the Chamars, and these cover the changes that have occurred in the area of religious beliefs and practice marriage, diet pattern, and land ownership pattern, political consciousness and participation. Within the specific changes, there are so changes that have taken place only among the Chamars are not other lower caste and these include changes in the ownership of land and political association and participation. It is worth mentioning that general and specific changes are also related to the areas of change. General changes have taken place in more secular areas, (non-religious areas which include for instance education, occupation etc.), whereas specific changes have occurred mainly in social or spiritual areas.

Selective and planned: The changes that have taken place among the Chamars in different spheres do not include all the members of the community. They are also not indiscriminate. On the contrary, it has been observed that in certain spheres of the activities, they are particularly planned and selective. The selective qualities of changes are determined by the fact that in certain spheres, like religious belief and practices they have retained several items of their traditional pattern of behaviour. It appears that they have selected certain items for changing and in most of the cases; these changes are brought about in a planned way. The whole community in a planned manner tried to bring changes in their position by adopting some new deities, and accordingly, they have tried to modify their mode of worship. They have also tried to use the services of the Brahmin priests, adopted prajapatya form of marriage, and vegetarianism. Some of the changes particularly in occupational structure, literacy rate and educational standard however cannot be regarded as deliberately planned at least at the village level, as these types of changes were observed all throughout the country.

Absence of Uniformity: Changes that have occurred among the Chamars are not uniform either in terms of their population coverage or area. The changes have taken place particularly in educational and occupational pattern, more among the younger generations. The younger generation has shown more willingness to the forces of change than the older generation. Within the different area of change, changes have been mostly marked in the areas of education, occupational and housing pattern. In the areas like religious beliefs and practices, marriage, rituals relating to birth and death, changes are qualified and partial. Change is total, in other words, in only those spheres where change is dependent chiefly on their own efforts and draws legislative and organizational support from the wider encapsulating system.

Periods of change: Changes have taken place in different areas in different periods of time and it has taken a total period of about 7 years to arrive at the present situation as mentioned earlier. An effort to compare the changes in between the year 1998 to 2006 reveals that changes have taken more during the earlier period. In fact this period could be regarded as decade of change, as during this period many of the major changes in the life of the Chamars, have started taking place especially in the field of education. The year 1998 was a land mark in the history of change, as the change, in the socio-religious life started taking place with the active support from municipality.

Changes are more among the Chamars than other lower castes: The changes in various aspects of life have occurred more among the Chamars than other lower castes. Multiple factors have worked for differential level of changes between the Chamars, but most important of them are differential level of aspiration and leadership among the Chamars brought about by their improved education, better occupation, greater contact and unity among their caste members.

FACTORS OF CHANGE:

The changes that have occurred among the Chamars in various aspects of their life are not the result of one single factor, but an inter play of a large number of factors, of which about 20 aspects are given below and they include spread of education, change in occupation, change in population size, desire to improve position by reducing the gap between the higher and lower castes; increased income, spread of communication, changes in the attitude towards marriage, contact with outside world, migration, better care of women, improved health facilities, increased age of marriage, governmental facilities provided to Dalits, adoption of new deities, adoption of prajapatya form in place of Asura form, governmental restriction over polygamy, increase in expenditure on marriage, preference of independent life, desire to avoid conflicts, greater entrepreneurship, political consciousness, election and votes and organizational support.

Of all the factors stated above, education is most important. It has, along with other factors, directly contributed to the different areas of change. Change in education set in motion a number of changes by initiating change in occupation, income and aspiration of the Chamar. Change of occupation and desire to improve the position by reducing the gap are respectively second and third important factors of change and they have individually attributed greatly to the changes in areas of different aspects of their life.

Factors of change can be broadly classified into two categories: universalistic and particularistic. Universalistic factors as we have already noted, are those which have contributed to the change in different aspects of life not only among the Chamars but also among other higher castes. Particularistic factors cover only those which have attributed to the change mainly among the Chamars. Universalistic factors include all, except the desire to improve the position by

reducing the gap, governmental facilities provided to the Dalits, adoption of new deities and adoption of prajapatya form of marriage in place of Asura form, which are categorised as particularistic factors.

Several factors of change serve to reinforce other factors of change, the results of one factor becoming in turn the cause of another. For instance, adoption of deities, which is the result of change of education, occupation and legislative support, has in turn brought about changes in modes, motivations and venue of worship of the Chamar. Furthermore, change in political consciousness has brought about change in political association and participation.

This serves to underline the fact that the different factors of change that have been identified should not be treated in isolation. They have been differentiated only for analytical purposes, but in real life they operate as a complex matrix of factors inextricably intertwined, in a manner relative to the specific situation obtaining in an area.

CHANGE OF STATUS:

In the previous chapters, various aspects of social, economic and political life of the Chamars during and after the Movement have been analysed, and the changes brought about along with the factors of changes have been identified and explained. Based on the analysis, an attempt has been made in the present chapter to describe and explain the change of status among the Chamars, both in ascribed and achieved status.

Change of status among the Chamars refers to alterations that have come about over time in the ascribed and achieved positions occupied by them. This change of position among them has been studied and indicated in detail while explaining the term status with reference to several parameters reflecting

important areas of social privileges and status symbols. These parameters are as follows:

1. Adoption and worshipping sanskritic deities;
2. Temple entry;
3. Using sanskritic literature;
4. Using the services of the Brahmin Priests;
5. Serving of food to higher castes;
6. Entering in the houses of the higher castes;
7. Use of common wells;
8. Use of common schools;
9. Use of village roads;
10. Mode of address;
11. Education;
12. Occupation;
13. Housing pattern;
14. Participation in the village economic life;
15. Participation in the municipality; and
16. Participation in the village politics.

The changes in most of the above areas have been far-reaching as well as complex. Before the nature and factors of change in each sphere is discussed in detail, a highly simplified summary of the broad direction of change among the Chamars in between and after the Movement have been stated.

CHANGE OF STATUS: AREAS, NATURE AND DIRECTION:

Adoption and worshipping Sanskritic deities: Changes in the worship of deities have been discussed. Based on the discussion, it can be said that worship of deities is another area where significant changes have taken place and the trend of

change is towards adoption of sanskritic deities for the purpose of worship. The Chamars worshipped mainly the matas (Kalimata, sitlama) and the spirits (prêt, pisach and rakshasas). The worship of Rama, Krishna and Shiva was not in vogue among them mainly because of their fear of displeasure of the deities as they considered themselves too low to worship them and the feared incurring the wrath of higher castes.

Earlier, they were observed to worship Rama, Krishna and Shiva along with their traditional deities and spirits. They were also found to observe fasting on important days like Rama Navami, and Shiva-Ratri. They started worshipping them (Rama, Krishna, Shiva) along with their changes in education and occupation. These changes installed within them a desire to adopt the deities of the higher castes in their efforts changed their status. Their efforts were further strengthened with the enactment of the Untouchability Offences Act, combined by their faith in their own castes strength. By providing them the legal and mental support has helped them to overcome their fear of reappraisal from the high castes. To start with, the worship of these deities was initiated by and confined only among a group of few individuals; subsequently it became a practice because of the encouragement and support of their caste panchayat of the village. This change is very significant along with this change; the Chamars had modified their motivation and mode of worship and also started entering into the temples of higher castes etc. For instance, they not only worshipped to secure protection from disease and death. Securing salvation of the soul has also become their motivation for worship. In the same way, animal sacrifice, which was once their primary mode of worship, is gradually becoming obsolete.

The worship of Rama, Krishna and Shiva has not only been adopted by the Chamars, but also by the other lower castes in the village in their efforts to reduce

the gap between them and the higher castes along with the changes in their education, occupation and income.

TEMPLE ENTRY:

Along with the adoption of sanskritic deities, changes have taken place in the areas of temples entry for the purpose of worship, even though it has yet to become a regular practice. The Chamars worshipped matas and the spirits in their own houses or shrines. The worships were performed mostly by their caste priests or by the elderly men from the families. Animal sacrifice was very common. During this period they neither felt the need and urge of entering into the temples of Rama, Krishna, and Shiva, wherein the higher caste members offered their worships, nor did they have the courage because of their fear of resistance from the higher castes.

The Chamars has been found entering into the temples of the higher castes, even though this has not become a regular practice. They have been observed to enter in the temples only on special occasions like Rama Navmi and Janamasthami, largely because of their acquaintance within the traditional forms of worship, either in their own homes or in their own shrines.

The question of their entering into the temples arose along with their adoption of Rama, Krishna and Shiva for worship and subsequent changes and modifications in their motivations and modes for worship after and during the movement. Initially, a few Chamars, performing non-traditional jobs, like agricultural cultivation and service, and were strongly motivated to change their position along with their adoption of the above mentioned deities, felt the urge of entering and subsequently started entering into the temples of the higher castes for offering their worship. The Untouchability Offence Act and their caste panchayat

provided them the required legal and mental support. The efforts of this group caught the attention of others and they also started entering the temples.

Temple entry, thus, is the result of their effort to adopt higher castes values and norms with regard to deities and modes and motivation for worship initiated by change in their education and occupation. Legislative enactments and organizational support further provided them to acquire strength in their effort to improve their position. This has become a common practice also among other lower castes, even though in comparison to Chamars, temple entry is confined to other lower caste families. About the lower caste respondents other than Chamars have not yet entered any temple.

USING THE SERVICES OF THE BRAHMIN PRIESTS:

Using the services of the Brahmin priests in the worship of the deities, and also in the performance of rituals relating to life cycle (birth, marriage and death), is becoming common and finding a favour particularly among the well-to-do Chamar families, which is completely a new phenomenon among them. Prior to 1998, this was unthinkable, partly because of their inability to secure the service of the Brahmin priests and partly due to their traditional practices and poor economic condition. Traditionally, they used the services of their own caste priests, or elder persons of their own families to worship and in the performance of other rituals. No Brahmin priest was also willing to serve them because of their (Chamars) low social position.

After the movement, using the services of the Brahmin priests had become a common practice, for those who can afford it, i.e. pay the fees demanded by the priests. As a result, it has remained confined to only rich families. These families have started using the services of the Brahmin priest in the worship of deities, like

Rama, Krishna and Shiva and also in the performance of many other rituals like Kaun Pujan, Chhathi etc. This change has taken place after the movement with the active support of the caste panchayat.

This change has occurred only among the Chamars and not among other lower castes because of their differential level of changes. Two factors have worked for this change. Firstly, the changes that have taken place among the Chamars. The Chamars, along with the changes in their education, occupation and income, adopted deities like, Rama, Krishna and Shiva and also other sanskritic rituals, and in this process started utilizing the services of the Brahmin priests. Secondly, the changes that have taken place among the Brahmin priests. The Brahmin priests are gradually becoming less pre-occupied due to general lack of faith in the religion. As a result, they are finding it difficult to maintain their own families and are, therefore, accepting the offer of better-off Chamars, who pay higher fees.

USE OF SANSKRITIC LITERATURE:

Along with the use of the services of the Brahmin priests, the Chamars have started using the sanskritic literature. The sanskritic literature in the worship of deities were not used by the Chamars earlier. They followed their traditional forms of worship, which were performed by their own caste priests. In 1998, the Chamars have been found to use sanskritic literature, even though it has remained confined among those who have started using the services of the Brahmin priests.

This change has occurred along with the changes in their religious beliefs and practices along with the changes in their education, occupation, income and also in their aspirations. The process of this change has also been facilitated by

their caste panchayat, which in a meeting decided to shake off some of their traditional beliefs and adopt the values of the higher castes people.

This change has taken along with the change in use of the services of the Brahmin priests. Among the other lower castes members, this change has taken place only among the Chamars.

SERVING OF FOOD TO THE HIGHER CASTES:

Changes are also taking place with regard to serving of food to the higher castes. Serving food to the higher castes in the earlier period was simply unthinkable. None from among them dared to serve food to the Brahmins and other higher castes. But the situation in this is not the same. They had started serving food to the higher castes including the Brahmins, even though it has remained confined to serving of food outside one's own houses. The higher castes including the Brahmins do not mind taking food from them, even from among the other lower castes, outside their own houses, and mainly outside the villages. In fact the Chamar respondents have stated that the Brahmins and other higher castes people have accepted food from them outside the village. Some of them said that the higher castes people have accepted food from them even from the village tea-stalls. The adherence to double standards with regard to acceptance of food by the higher castes can be explained on the basis of their fear of social condemnation, which they may receive because of violation of tradition rules relating to acceptance of food. One of the Brahmin respondents said, "Personally, I do not mind taking food from the Chamars in their houses, but I am afraid of doing so". The same feeling was shared almost unanimously by other higher castes respondents. The Chamars are also aware of this and therefore, even if they invite the Brahmins and other higher caste people to their houses during marriages or other festivals, they do not insist on their taking food in their houses.

These changes have occurred not only among the Chamars, but have also taken place among all lower castes. These are the result of changes in the socio-economic and political conditions of the people in general and the lower castes in particular as well as changes in the attitude of the higher caste people. All the higher caste respondents, who were interviewed, stated that they did not mind taking food from the lower castes provided that it was offered to them outside their own homes. They do not take food at the houses of the lower castes, because of several social and cultural pressures in the village. For instance, if a Brahmin takes food in the house of a Chamar or lower castes then he is looked down upon by his fellow caste members because this is still considered a violation of caste rules regarding commensality. This problem does not arise if they take food from the Chamars outside their houses.

ENTRY INTO THE HOUSES OF THE HIGHER CASTES:

A change in the norms regarding entry of Chamars into the houses of the higher castes is nothing sort of dramatic. Before the movement, entry into the houses of the higher castes was practically forbidden, excepting on certain special circumstances like delivery of a child, which was a job of a Chamar or a lower caste Dai. They could not even expect to enter within the courtyard of the houses without a specific reason, whereas none of them, irrespective of sex, face any restrictions with regard to their entry into the houses of the higher caste people. On the contrary, many of them, like the Teachers of the School, Postman, Dai and caste leaders are welcome in the houses of the higher castes. They are also offered a seat in the rooms of their houses when available and served tea and snacks. On official occasions, they are also invited to have food with them, even though the food is served in separate utensils, usually glass or stainless steel.

This change has also taken place gradually after movement not only among the Chamars, but also among other lower castes. It is the result of overall changes in the society and the changes in socio-economic positions of the lower castes, brought about by changes in their education and occupation followed by their increased involvement in the socio-economic and political life of the village.

USE OF WELLS, ROADS, SCHOOLS AND HOSPITALS:

Changes have also taken place with regard to the use of wells, roads, schools and hospitals by Chamars. Before movement, Chamars faced several disabilities with regard to the use of wells and roads. None of them were allowed to draw water from the common well, and had to depend on the favour of other for getting their pitchers filled with water, if they wanted to have water from the wells used by the higher castes. They were also not parallelly, allowed to use the roads of Brahmins and other higher castes localities, except in special circumstances when the higher castes people required them, such as at the time of delivery. During the movement, the situation has changed vastly. None of them now face any problem with regard to the use of wells and roads. They are not prohibited to draw water from the wells used by the higher castes, if they did not go to do so, nor they are prevented to use the common roads and enter into localities of the higher castes. This change has taken place not only among the Chamars but also among the other lower castes gradually along with the change in the socio-economic conditions of the lower castes people and the introduction of new legislations providing punishments to the individual for imposing caste disabilities on the Dalits.

MODE OF ADDRESS TO PERSONS:

With regard to modes of address to the person, not much change has taken place during the movement. Chamars never expected that the higher castes people

will call them by names without using derogatory terms. The Chamars addressed the higher castes people by using such honorific terms like 'panditji' (for Brahmins), 'Malik' (for Chaudhari), and Lalaji (for Kayastha), and the higher caste people called them by taking their first name. Adherence to these modes of address was very keenly and enthusiastically observed by the higher castes especially the elderly people, because of their desire to maintain the social distance and violation of this by the Chamar people would bring punishment to them.

Despite several changes in their socio-economic and political life, not much change has taken place in this regard. It has occurred in only those Chamar persons, who are mostly either matriculate or have studied above matric standard, performing non-traditional occupation and established some leadership over their caste people because of their contact and influence with the political leaders. Only these people have been found to address the higher caste people by taking their names or by using some honorific and turn address by them in their own names without any derogatory term, Malik, which has become a common term is address an important man.

All efforts of the lower castes to bring about change in the modes of address because of the changes in their education, occupational and economic conditions and style of life have been, in general, frowned upon by the higher castes. And they have not been able to gain much, although the members of the younger generation, among them, have decided to carry on their resistance in respect of the modes of address.

EDUCATION:

The change in the educational sphere of the Chamars has been already dealt in detail in earlier chapters, while indicating the change in the literacy and

educational standard of the Chamars. It has been observed that the changes in the educational level of the Chamars before the movement have been nothing short of dramatic. From the initial situation, where there was among them very little motivation and awareness of the need for education. After the movement the educational position of the Chamars has improved immensely.

This change, as already indicated, is the result of a complex factor, the most important of which are the increase in the motivational level of the Chamars with regard to education and their increased awareness of its importance combined with the establishment of the basic educational infrastructure in the village and facilities made available to them through constitutional provisions.

Two points should be noted in this regard, based on earlier information; one is that the rise in the educational level of the Chamars is broadly in consonance with the general rise in the education level of the village, although the Chamars have performed much better in this regard than other lower castes of the village. The second point to be noted is that within the Chamars, the increase in educational standard has not been uniform. It has been a more conspicuous among the younger generation.

OCCUPATION:

The change in the occupational pattern has been already discussed in the previous chapters, on the basis of the available information, that occupation another area where significant trend in this process of change has been increased diversification of occupation among the Chamars, and as a consequence of this, a relative disassociation from their traditional occupation. Before the movement the working Chamar population was engaged in agricultural labour or leather work. During the movement the situation has been vastly changed. All, with an

exception who are still now agricultural labour or who deals with leather work, are engaged in occupations other than their traditional occupation. Another significant change is the entry of the Chamars into agricultural cultivation on leased land and business for the first time. Last but not the least, there has been an increase both in the number of self employed persons and also in the sources of self employment. The number of self-employed persons has increased. The sources of self employment have also increased leather work, business, trade and commerce and agriculture.

According to the available sources the trend towards seeking new-traditional occupation, most often linked immediately with rise in social status is perceived more among the younger generation. This may be explained by the greater spread of education among the younger generation as said above, combined with a much higher level of entrepreneurship and aspirations among them. They have also been assisted significantly in their quest for new occupations by the statutory reservations in services and also by the development in communication. Also this trend of diversification of occupation is a greater or lesser degree a common trend observable in all caste during the period of study. However, as with education, it is noted that the Chamars have taken greater advantage of the new employment opportunities available to them in comparison to other lower castes.

HOUSING PATTERN:

The changes in the housing pattern of the Chamars have again already been indicated. Based on this information, it can be said that the housing pattern of the Chamars have changed considerably and has become very similar to that of the higher castes, even though the limitations with regard to the location of their habitation sites have almost remained unchanged. Before movement although

Chamars had lived in the houses that they owned, these were only kutchra single storied houses without basic amenities including electricity and drinking water facilities. After the movement they live in pukki houses, including some double storied houses. Majority of these houses are provided with electricity and with drinking water facilities. Most of these pukki houses have an assortment of furniture such as benches, tables, chairs etc. meant for the guests.

The changes in the housing pattern have not remained confined only among the Chamars. It has occurred also among other lower castes. But the degree of change, as indicated earlier, is more among the Chamars comparative increase in income followed by change in occupational and aspiration pattern combined with governmental assistance contributed greatly to this change. There is yet another factor that is the Local body, which greatly helped them in securing financial assistance from the government. It should be mentioned that their influence in the Local body because of their numerical strength in the village and their political association, greatly helped in moving the municipality to take necessary steps to help them.

The only aspect in this context with regard to which no change can be observed is the location of their houses. The Chamar colony remains separated from the colonies of higher and middle castes, despite the improvement in their economic conditions reflected in better houses. The Chamars who are living in rented house have acquired these only from among their own and other lower castes members, and not from the higher caste colonies. In this regard, no difference has been noticed between the situation of the Chamars and that of the other lower castes.

PARTICIPATION IN THE VILLAGE ECONOMIC LIFE:

The participation of the Chamars in the economic life of the village beyond the traditional sphere of their caste has market a beginning, all though this is confined to the males. This is evident from the Chamars contribution in the field of agriculture cultivation, tradition and business as observed earlier. Prior to this, their participation in the wider economic life of the village was virtually nil, primarily because of their lack of entrepreneurship and the absence of organised institutions in which they could participate combined with the various factors obstructing the spread of education and diversification of occupation among them.

The major factors which have contributed to their wide economic participation, along with the change in their education followed by change in their occupation and ownership of land and animals and the formation of the cooperative society in the village, are changes in the levels of their aspirations and political association as well as influence and control over their own caste members and other lower castes. For example, all the Chamars, who are members of the cooperative, are literate and educated and are engaged either in the prestigious non-traditional occupations of cultivation or business, besides being active members of the ruling party. They are also regarded as leaders of the Chamars and other lower castes.

Among all the lower castes in the village, only the Chamars have been only able to participate in the village economy, although this has been confined to a few members of the Chamar caste. Nobody amongst other lower castes has been found to be engaged in agricultural cultivation or business. Also none of them are the members of the Multipurpose Credit Cooperative Society. Differences in their large levels of entrepreneurship and political influence have largely contributed to this differential level of participation in the economic life of the village.

PARTICIPATION IN THE MUNICIPALITY:

The Chamars participation in the municipality was taken indirectly, that is through their caste representatives. Prior to the period, they had no participation in the municipality, although there was a municipality functioning in the village. Membership of the early municipality was confined to higher castes and there was no provision for compulsory representation of the lower castes. So far, some persons have represented the Chamars and other lower castes in the municipality at different periods of time. All of them have been elected.

Despite the opportunities made available to them the participation of the Chamars in the municipality mainly at the initial period was far from satisfactory. Earlier, the Chamar members rarely initiated any discussions and most of the time performed a passive role mainly because of their initial inhibitions, ignorance and lack of understanding about their role in the municipality. It is only after the movement the situation changed considerably and the Chamars have now started playing important roles in the municipality through their elected caste members.

The Chamars now perceive the municipality as an instrument for their own development and they try to utilize it for the betterment of their socio-economic conditions and, thereby, improve their power and influence in the village. They not only play an active role through their representatives in the decision making process of the municipality, but also determine a great extent the functioning of the municipality and election of its office bearers. The Chamars, through their strength of votes make a decisive impact on the victory of their chosen candidate. Owing to their electoral strength, the contenders for municipality election try to

appease them, which have further contributed to the increase in their position and influence in the village.

Among the lower castes, participation in the municipality be it village organization has remained confined mainly to the Chamars. The factors which have facilitated their election and participation in the municipality, besides the statutory provisions and caste-wise population strength, are their organizational ability, education, adoption of new occupation, political awareness and participation.

PARTICIPATION IN VILLAGE POLITICS:

The participation of the Chamars in the village politics is a recent phenomenon and it has been facilitated by their participation in village economy and the municipality. In early, their participation in the village politics was nil because there was no scope for participation and partly due to the fact that they had very little ideas about the details of politics or votes and they considered politics and the domain of higher caste and educated people. The municipality elections held and they called for their participation in the village politics and it was further strengthened with subsequent elections held at different levels. It was around this time that the educated among them started realizing (1) that politics is not an exclusive preserve of the higher castes; (2) that they also have a role to play in the political process and (3) that their involvement in village politics as a group would strengthen their power and position. The realization found expression in their active participation in the municipality.

The participation of most of the Chamars in politics is mainly an indirect one, as this is done through their leaders who happened to be the members of the

municipality at certain period of time, and are also the members of the Political party.

The political participation and dominance of the Chamars, which started gradually with the understanding of politics and involvement in the municipality, reached its culmination when the political leaders, recognizing the strength of their votes and influence entrusted the Chamar leaders, along with others, the responsibilities of organization of the election campaign in the parliamentary election in the village and its surrounding areas, not only among the lower castes but also among others. Their political dominance was given further momentum when the leaders in the municipality elections informally ascertained their views prior to selection of contestants for the area. All these, while resulting in their recognition as a political force in the village, strengthened their political participation and dominance in the level of the village. All the political discussions, like the political creditability of the persons seeking nomination, the organization of the campaign, and decision regarding the village are now regularly made after consultations with their leaders. The people, interested in political contacts for recommendations of employment or other reasons often come to them and seek their guidance and assistance.

FACTORS OF CHANGE:

The analysis of change in the different spheres of both ascribed and achieved status reveals that change of status among the Chamars is directly related to the changes that have taken place in different aspects of their life, as well as in the life of the whole village.

The information reveals that multiple factors have contributed to change of status and these include mainly change in aspiration, change in motivations for

education, increased education, diversification and disassociation with traditional occupation, change in ownership position, and entrepreneurship, increased income, development of political awareness, political association and participation, adoption of higher castes deities as well as their modes and motivation of worship, use of service of the Brahmin priests and sanskritic literature, adoption of vegetarianism, governmental support in the form of legislation and finance, development in communication, and infrastructure, and change in the general attitude of the people have also greatly contributed to the change of status.

Of the above stated factors of change of status, individual education has been found to be most important and this is evident, along with other factors, education have helped in initiating change in 12 different areas of status. Next to education, is occupation and governmental legislative support Change in aspiration of the Chamars themselves has worked as the third important factors of change.

Many of these factors serve to strengthen and reinforce other factors of change, the result of one factor becoming inturn the cause of another. For example, change in education has brought out change in occupation, housing and aspiration which intern promoted the Chamars to adopt and internalise the values, norms of the higher castes.

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 30th 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 20th 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 Sanskritic 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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APPENDIX

Appendix-I

Achievements of the movement Government formulated the following policies for the upliftment of the Dalits as well as Chamars. It is the major achievement of the movement. The strategies are as follows:

Cultural and Religious Strategies

S N	Policies	Steps of Implementation	Responsible institution or authorities
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Gradually reducing the caste -based discrimination • Enhance the implementation of legal provisions, • Harmonise live-together model among Dalits and non-Dalits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Identify the severe cases, Consider the hill and mountain of Mid-and Far western development regions, and Parsa to Saptari Districts in Terai o Mobilise NGOs and Political Parties, o Reorientation the o Judges and Government advocates about Dalit issues o personnel in semi-judiciary and DDC. VDC members be trained o Involve both Dalits and Non-Dalits in every NGOs, INGOs and political as well as civil society. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o NPC, MLD, DDC, VDC, NDC, NDUC o INGOs, NGOs o Political Parties o Radio (national; and community and private FMs), o TV o Print Media o Ministry of Home, CDO o Ministry of Local Development, LDO, DDO o DDC, VDC o Central level and local level NGOs, INGOs, Political Parties and CBOs
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Awareness campaign with the help of pundits of all sects • Ensure equal rights to enter into temples, restaurants and common places • Disseminate messages of no harm in accepting hygienic food and drinks from anyone. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Identify the severe cases of caste-based discrimination o Organise orientation to Hindu orthodox Pundits and Janjati Gurus, as well as Dhami Jhankri o Make them convinced about the issues and mobilise them as advocates of equal rights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o UUDUVS, NDC, NDUC, DDC, DDO, CDO, LDO, VDC o Media
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Participation of Dalits in religious and cultural mass meetings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Invite Dalits to participate in all rituals from local to national level o Organise "All-Ethnic/Caste mass meetings in all five regions annually 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Central level government o NDC, NDUC, UUDUVS o DDC, VDC

		o Conduct inaugurations, and foundation stone laid by Dalits	o NGO,CBO o Political Parties
4	Enhancement of traditional musical instruments as cultural symbols	Respect Dalits while playing traditional musical instruments o Identify the best musical groups in the district level o Instruct for using traditional musical groups in all National festivals and National Days	Central level government o DDC,MU,VDC o NDC, UUDUVS, NDUC, o All
5	Stop immediately the coercive practice against Dalits; regarding managing Sino; Katro, etc.	o Instruct all DDC, VDC to stop immediately if they have such practice Instruct district level government advocates to file the cases of coercing persons o Instruct district authorities to monitor the cases.	o Central level government o MLD, MOH o CDO, LDO o DDC, VDC
6	Dalits be given rights to use sacred musical instruments such as Shankha and Ghanta Dalits be enrolled to study Sanskrit according to their demand and desire	o Ask pundits, Gurus and Dharmis and Jhankris to tell others that there is no harm in using sacred musical instruments as Shankha and Ghanta by Dalits o Conduct discussion with Sanskrit University and other scholars-for enrolling Dalits to study Sanskrit	o Central level government o Religious Organisation o Ministry of Education o Sanskrit University o Bada Gurujyus and other scholars o Dalit Organisations including commission and council
7	Eliminating cultural and ritual practices of derogating Dalits	o Identify those practices as "Chhod de Chamar" o Conduct media campaign against such practises	o Dalits Organisations in national and local level o Non-Dalits civil society o Media
	o Dalits; are to be provided with Prasad and other sacred foods as others after worshipping the deities	o Dissemination of information is essential so that nobody should be discriminated in taking Prasad	o Dalits Organisations in national and local level o Non-Dalits civil society o Media
	o Discrimination within * Christianity against Dalits	o Identify the discriminatory behaviour of other religious groups o Report to local authorities o Case file seeking-maximum punishment for those discriminators	o DDC,DDO,NDC, UUDUVS, NDUC,VDC o Local Police o Government Advocates o NGOs, CBOs

* Hindu caste-based hierarchy has religious ground for discrimination and attempts are made to reform. Other religions are advocated to have no such discriminatory behaviours. Indeed Dalits are no more Dalits and untouchables when they are converted into Christianity. Therefore, discriminatory behaviour in other religions must be identified and concern persons anti institutions should be punished.)

Social and Women Specific Strategies/Social Strategies

S N	Policies	Steps of Implementation	Responsible institution or authorities
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Recognition of family name, and o Record caste/ethnic background in government documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Instruct all local level authorities to record the family names of all people in official documents o Have a separate column for ethnicity/caste 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Ministry of Home, Foreign Affairs, Education and others o CDO, LDO o DDC, VDC o School, Colleges
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Acceptance of food and drinks from dalits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Instruct all co-operatives including milk and food producing co-operatives to have at least one Dalit member o Have at least one Dalit member in every consumer groups, board of school management, local level government and/or non-government social institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Ministry of Agriculture. o Loan Sanctioning Commercial Banks and Finance Companies o DDC, VDC o Political Parties and CBO, NGOs
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Protection of family-rights of couples in case of inter-caste marriage between Dalits and non-Dalits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Urge such inter-caste marriages to register o Provide appropriate employment to at least one of the spouses, especially the girl/woman o Conduct advocacy programmes for the rights to live in family of the couple 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o DDC, DDO, NDC, UUDUVS, NDUC, VDC o District level government advocates o Local Police o Government Advocates o NGOs, CBOs
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Arrangements of social gatherings in nationally important Days and Festivals, with participation of both Dalits and non-Dalits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Declare the first week of the Year (i.e. Baishakh 1-7) as Dalits Emancipation week o Conduct several programmes in local and national level on New Years Day, Constitution Day, and Democracy Day o Focus on Far and Mid-west and Parsa to Saptari in the Tarai 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Council of Ministers o DDC, DDO, NDC, UUDUVS, NDUC, VDC * District level government advocates o Local Police o Government Advocates o NGOs, CBOs
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Focus programmes on preventing unnecessary spendings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o NGOs and VDC be reoriented to mobilise Dalits to prevent spending in drinking and gambling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o NGOs, VDCs
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Removal of inferiority syndrome among Dalits and mitigation of religious fundamentalism among non-Dalits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Identify the severe cases in VDCs within district o Prepare a module-type presentation scheme o Mobilise the district level NGOs to campaign against such an issue o Request political parties to act for the equality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o DDC, DDO, NDC, UUDUVS, NDUC, VDC o NGOs, CBOs o Political Parties

Women-related specific strategies

S N	Policies	Steps of Implementation	Responsible institution or authorities
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Stop sexual harassment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Use IEC to create awareness o File court cases o Seek punishments for guilty persons including dismissal of employment, restriction in credit facilities and candidature in the elections at any level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Dalit-watch group o Civil society o Dalits Organisations, DDO, NDC, UUDUVS, NDUC o Government Advocates and Police o DDC, VDC o Political Parties o Judiciary
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Compulsory enrolment of Dalits girls (aged 6 to 14) in schools. o Maintaining the legal age at marriage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Form a Dalit Watch-group in Ward, VDC and DDC levels o Have records of all population including girls in the ward of VDC/Municipality o Have records whether or not the girls attending schools through Ward Chairperson and Women member of the respective local organization. o Adopt scholarships, tiffin, clothing, textbooks and stationery schemes o Create awareness on the importance of marriage after 18, highlight infant, child and maternal mortality o Mobilise GOs, VDC and NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Dalit-watch group o Civil society o Dalits Organisations, DDO, NDC, UUDUVS, NDUC o Government Advocates and Police o DDC, VDC o Political Parties o Judiciary o Youth clubs o NGOs/CBOs o Health post personnel (for household records)
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Attempts to reduce domestic violence, dowry and vixen-bitch hunting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Identify VDCs with prevalence of such events o Use IEC package for awareness with punishments provisions for human rights violation o Forfeit the rights of candidature, elections/ selection in Public positions and govt facilities as credits of persons proved by law as involved in malpractice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Dalit-watch group o Civil society o Election Commission o Dalits Organisations, DDO, NDC, UUDUVS, NDUC o DDC, VDC o Political Parties o Youth clubs o NGOs/CBOs o Health personnel o Pundits and key persons
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Empowering Dalit women with decision-making process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Seek participation of Dalit women in various national issues o Conduct separate meetings in the district and regional level o Include Dalits women in consumer groups and management committees o Urge political parties to provide opportunity to Dalits women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Dalit-watch group o Civil society o Dalits Organisations, DDO, NDC, UUDUVS, NDUC o DDC, VDC o political Parties o NGOs/CBOs

Educational Strategies

SN	Policies	Steps of Implementation	Responsible institution or authorities
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0 Enrolment of Dalit children at school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Maintain the record of Dalits population in the VDC/MU o Monitor whether or not the school going children in Dalits have been attending the school o Use measures to attract Dalit children to attend schools 0 Keep eye on barriers that prevent Dalit children from attending the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> C Dalit-watch group o Civil society o Dalits Organisations, DDO,NDC,UUDUVS, NDUC c DDC, VDC C NGOsCBOs
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Quota or reservation for Dalits in the formal, informal, vocational, and technical field of education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Quota in Admission (focusing on women) for Dalits, especially in medical sciences, and other technical education must be reserved. o Recommended: 10-15 per cent in medical science, agriculture, engineering, forestry, science and education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c Ministry of Education c UGC, Universities c INGOsNGOs o Dalits Organisations, DDO,NDC,UUDUVS, NDUC o DDC, VDC c NGOsCBOs
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Employ at least one Dalit teacher, preferably women in every primary school 0 One Dalit teacher in all schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Instruct all District Education Offices to manage for at least one Dalit teacher in all primary schools o Instruct all school management committees to hire Dalit teacher o Monitor the situation in every three month 0 Recruit at least one Dalit staff in administration if a teacher is not available o Instruct all private schools to follow the similar norms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c Ministry of Education c District Education Offices c DDO,NDC,UUDUVS, NDUC c School Management Committee o PABSON o DDC, VDC, MU c NGOsCBOs
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0 Dalit personnel in school board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Re-manage the scholarships in equitable (proportionate) basis of population, but not equal quotas for all development regions. o Develop a system of monitoring the scholarships awarded student for the level passed or dropped conditions o Insist scholarship to Master level students in conducting thesis work on Dalit issues o Request the Master level students scholarship receiver to submit a copy of thesis to UUDUVS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c Ministry of Education o University, Colleges o District Education Offices c DDO,NDC,UUDUVS, NDUC C School Management Committee c PABSON o DDC, VDC, MU c NGOsCBOs

5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o The discriminatory languages against Dalits in the formal and informal curricula should be suitably amended 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Immediately form a task force including Dalits teachers currently teaching in the primary, secondary and higher level, and others professional in language and culture-related subjects. o Analyse the contents within three months and obtain recommendations o Proceed for amendment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c Ministry of Education o Universities c PABSON c NDC, LAJDUVS, NDUC
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Incorporation of Dalits traditional skills in formal and informal and vocational education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Amend formal and informal vocational education curriculum and add Dalits skills where appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c Universities o Ministry of Education o NDC, UUDUVS, NDUC
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Special opportunity to be given to Dalit girl-students to join the ANM, CMA, HA, Nursing, MBBS, BPH and other medical science courses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Arrange special Dalits quotas at least 15 per cent in Nursing, ANM and CMA c Negotiate for others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o NDC, UUDUVS, NDUC o Ministry of Education c University and Medical colleges C CTEVT

Health Related Strategies

S N	Policies	Steps of Implementation	Responsible institution or authorities
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Improvement in living conditions, food habits including balance diet and sanitation within Dalit communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c Produce a hand-book for a minimum level of sanitation, health and food habits conditions o Identify the poor living conditions of Dalit communities in the VDC and the District level o Mobilise NGOs and CBOs to create awareness and perform cleanliness practices o Inspection should be made by the DDO, and DPHO in every month 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Dalit-watch group o Civil society o Dalits Organisations, DDO, NDC, UUDUVS, NDUC o DDC, VDC, MU o District Public Health Office o NGOs, *CBOs, local clubs and schools o Social organisations
2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Mobilise the village health worker (Junior AHW) in association with VDC/MU; o Urge all Dalits to contact local health post once in a month; o Also mobilise schoolteachers o Disseminate knowledge in schools also o Have a package of immunisation, knowledge on Family planning, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Dalit-watch group o Civil society o Dalits Organisations, DDO, NDC, UUDUVS, NDUC o DDC, VDC, MU o District Public Health Office o NGOs, CBOs, local clubs and schools o Social organisations

		STDs and HIV/AIDS, trafficking and domestic violence	
3		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Mobilise CBOs and NGOs in association with DPHO o Use existing IEC materials on nutritious staple foods o Organise awareness programmes in VDC/MU-ward levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Dalit-watch group o Civil society o Dalits Organisations, DDO, NDC, UUDUVS, NDUC o DDC, VDC, MU o District Public Health Office o NGOs, CBOs, local clubs and schools o Social organisations
4		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Mobilise VHW, CBOs and NGOs in association with DPHO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Dalit-watch group o Civil society o Dalits Organisations, DDO, NDC, UUDUVS, NDUC o DDC, VDC, MU o District Public Health Office o NGOs, CBOs, local clubs and schools o Social organisations
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Antenatal and postnatal health check-up focusing on Dalits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Prepare a scheme that includes Dalits paramedical staff o Identify Dalits settlement and VDCs o Mobilise VHW, HA, DPHO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Dalit-watch group o Civil society o Dalits Organisations, DDO, NDC, UUDUVS, NDUC o DDC, VDC, MU o District Public Health Office o NGOs, CBOs, local clubs and schools o Social organisations
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Access to safe drinking water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Mobilise INGOs and NGOs as well as DDC, VDC o Extend the drinking water facilities in Dalits communities with only one tap at a place (so that the discrimination is removed) o Clean the existing Dalits water spots (Kami Dharo or Damai Kuwa) ensuring equal chances of free from contamination so that everybody could use it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o INGOs, NGOs, CBOs, local clubs and schools o Dalit-watch group, a Civil society o Dalits Organisations, DDO, NDC, UUDUVS, NDUC o DDC, VDC, MU o District Public Health Office o Social organisations
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Focus on Prolapse of uterus among Dalits women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Identify the high prevalence VDC and wards o Have a flying squad of medical team for on-the-spot health check-up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Ministry of Health o DPHO o Dalit-watch group o Civil society o Dalits Organisations, DDO, NDC, UUDUVS, NDUC o DDC, VDC, MU o NGOs, CBOs, local clubs and schools o Social organisations

8	Prevention of STDs HIV/AIDS among Dalits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Mobilise DDC, VDC, DPHO, VHW, NGOs and CBOs o Identify high risk areas (example: Badis in Mid-western and Far-western), and other CSWs o Identify high-risk age group (10-49 as a whole-, but segregate them into <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a less than 15; b. 15-19; c. 20-29-, and d. 30 and over). Give more emphasis on b and c o Orient on safe sex measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Ministry of Health o DPHO o Dalit-watch group o Civil society o Dalits. Organisations, DDO, UUDUVS,,NDUC o DDC, VDC, MU o NGOs, CBOs, local clubs and schools o Social organisations
9	First-aid training to Dalits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Identify the high prevalence areas of snake bites, dog-bites, falling from the tree and other accidents o Provide first aid training and boxes to one person in at least 50 population (approx. 10 households) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Ministry of Health, Regional Directorate o DPHO o Dalit-watch group, o DDO, NDC, UUDUVS, NDUCDDC, VDC, MU o NGOs,CBOs, local clubs and schools o Social organisations

Economic Strategies

S N	Policies	Steps of Implementation	Responsible in'stituti-on or authorities
1	o Poverty alleviation among Dalits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Identify severe poverty cases among various Dalit groups in the VDC levels <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare schemes • Implement with the help of DDC, VDC and grassroots level NGOs and CBOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o MLD, MF, MAC, NPC o Dalit-watch group o Civil society o Dalits Organisations, DDO,NDC UUDUVS, NDUC o DDC, VDC, MU o NGOs, CBOs, local clubs and schools o Social organisations
2	o Reservation in employment opportunities for Dalits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Categorise employment in government, non-government and private sectors o Implement reservation scheme for Dalits, based on the population proportion in allsectors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o PSC, CM, NPC o Dalits Organisations, DDO,NDC,UUDUVS, NDUC o DDC. VDC, MU
3	o Land redistribution schemes for the landless Dalits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Identify the landless Dalits in VDC level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Have a special resettlement programme for Dalits only 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o DDC, VDC, MU, MHO o MLRM o Dalits Organisations, DDO,NDC,UUDUVS, NDUC
4	o Modernise the traditional skills of Dalits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Organise advance training for Dalits focused on tailoring, manufacturing of jewellery and mechanical tools. and shoemaking o Organise CTEVT's Skill Tests in district levels and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o DDC, VDC, MU o MOE, CTEVT o Dalits Organisations, DDO,NDC,UUDUVS, NDUC o Commercial Banks

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o recognise the skills of Dalits o Establish of co-operatives of such Dalits; services o Provide credits o Encourage Dalits to establish garment, jewellery and shoe workshops 	
5	<p>Ensure employment to Dalits in -arment factories. mechanical and jewellery workshops and machinery manufacturing corporations, and shoe making factories</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Identify the total number of garment factories, mechanical and jewellery workshops and shoemaking factories o Segregate workforce between Nepali and foreigners o Further segregate Nepalese by Dalit and non-Dalit Status o Ensure at least 15 per cent , employment for Nepalese Dalits with their skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled categories o DDO, DDC, VDC prepare a scheme of monitoring, of these establishments and reporting 6 monthly to MLD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o NPC, DDC, VDC, MU o Dalits Organisations, DDO,NDC,UUDUVS, NDUC

6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Dalits representations in proportion to the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o VDC(s), MU(s) have to recommend the proportion of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o CM. NPC, MLD, MAC DDC, VDC, MU
	<p>population in all consumer committees related to resources as forest, water and minerals from grassroots to national level.</p>	<p>Dalits population before forming consumer or any committees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Ensure Dalits representation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Dalits Organisations, DDO,NDC,UUDUVS, NDUC
7	<p>Training to Dalits on income generating programmes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Identify Dalits population with absolute poverty in the VDC level o Prepare income generating schemes o Conduct training in District level by national Dalits organisations and NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Dalits Organisations, DDO,NDC,UUDUVS, NDUC o INGOs, NGOs
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Availability of credit facilities from commercial banks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Establish a provision of credit facility of banks with the recommendations of NDC, and UUDUVS, DDC and VDC o Rural development banks reserve at least 15 per cent credits to Dalits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Commercial Banks o Rural Development Banks o NDC,DDC, UUDUVS, DDC/VDC, MU
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Credit to Hotels and Restaurants run by Dalits o Tax exemptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Identify the areas with high degree of discrimination and untouchability regarding food and drinks. o Provide credits for hotels and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Commercial Banks o Rural Development Banks o NDC, DDC, UUDUVS, DDC/VDC, MU

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ restaurants run by Dalits in such areas ○ Encourage government programmes in such hotel and restaurant in national and local level ○ Provide tax exemptions for such establishments for initial five years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ MF ○ Local and national level organisations
10	Recruitment of Dalits in foreign jobs by manpower agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Instruct all manpower agencies to recruit Dalits in number at least 15 per cent of the total recruitment annually. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ministry of Labour ○ NDC, DDC, UUDUVS, ○ DDCNDC, MU
11	○ Increased resource allocation for Dalits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The currently allocated Rs. 125,00,000.00 is inadequate for UUDUVS ○ Also, some resources should be channelled through home, local development, women, children and social welfare ministries as well as by council and commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ministry of Finance ○ NDC, DDC, UUDUVS ○
12	○ Harmonious settlement management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identify the isolated settlement areas ○ Have specific policies to incorporate at least one household among seven (15%) each for Dalits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rural Housing Settlement Development Company, MLD ○ NDC, UUDUVS ○ DDC, VDC ○ Landless Commission

Administrative and Legal Strategies

S N	Policies	Steps of Implementation	Responsible institution or authorities
1	Amendment in the Article 19 of the 1990 Constitution is required	must be constituted to study all legal provisions and render suggestions within three months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ CM, Ministry of Law ○ Parliament ○ Political Parties ○ NDC, DDC, UUDUVS
2	○ Amendment in number of related laws, acts and regulations are also to be amended		
3	○ Since the Commission and Councils are 'central' and 'auxiliary functioning bodies' by nature there is a need for the provision of government institutional set-up in local level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Establish a line functioning Dalit Development Division under the Ministry of Local Development ○ Establish five regional Dalit Development Directorates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ CM, MLD, ○ NDC, DDC, UUDUVS ○ DAWAG National Federation

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Establish separate "Dalit Development Officer" (preferably a Dalit person is appointed) in all districts under the LDO o Make the position responsible for co-ordinating all district level government and non-government agencies in favour of Dalits development; and formulate plan and policies and implement the projects according to the local need. o Establish "Dalits Watch Groups" (DAWAG) in ward, VDC/MU and DDC level as non-government pressure groups 	
4	Enforcement of the existing law related to Dalits oppression and discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o The legal task-force will have to identify the weak enforcement points of Dalit related laws o The regional level conference of Justices of the courts, government advocates, CDOs and LDOs must be conducted periodically o The district level seminar-cum-training for the DDC, VDC representatives must be conducted. o Separate seminars and training must be conducted in the VDCs where Dalits population is more than 10 percent or as needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o CM, Ministry of Law o Supreme Court o Office of the Attorney General o Political Parties o NDC,UUDUVS o CDO,LDO o DDC/VDC
5	o Sensitisation of the government administrative network to cope with the caste-base discrimination.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Periodic joint seminar and workshop of judiciary and semi-judiciary personnel, police and military, NGO partners and Dalits activists in District level o Also inclusion of fundamentalist Hindu high caste and Janajati Gurus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Political Parties o NDC,UUDUVS o CDO,LDO o DDCNDC o Social and religious organisations
6	Provision of the special court(or special bench) for the trial of anti-Dalit discriminatory behaviours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Since Dalit oppression cases - require treating special sentimental norms, there must be the provision for the special court or benches for trial of Dalit oppression related cases o Also vixen-bitch hunting trials should be treated in separate benches or courts o Guilty persons must be forfeited their rights to be candidate in any type of election and state facilities as credits and others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o CM, Ministry of Law o Supreme Court o Office of the Attorney General o Political Parties o Election Commission o NDC,UUDUVS o CDO,LDO o DDCNDC
7	o Establishment of adequate legal-base for stabilising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Make provisions for financial supports especially- to the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o CM, Ministry of Law o Supreme Court

		of ordinary member of each party and should ensure the involvement of Dalits in respective party positions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o NDC,UUDUVS o Dalits Watch Groups
3	o Inter-party -discussion programmes to educate politicians regarding Dalit representations	o The central level institutions should conduct such interactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Parliamentary committees o Political Parties o MLD, NPC, NDC, UUDUVS
4	o The Dalits watch groups must be formulated in DDC, VDC and ward levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o DAWAG formulated in District, VDC, MU and Ward levels o A national level Federation of DAWAG be established 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o NDC,UUDUVS o Political Parties
5	o Bridging the gap between planning and target group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Prepare/maintain a Dalits data bank o Conduct some small case studies o Consider the recommendations of all studies and have reality based plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o NPC, NDC, UUDUVS, MLD o DDC/VDC
6	o Recognition of Dalits professionals in national level appointments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Maintain the roster of Dalits professionals in central level o Appoint capable Dalits persons irrespective of their party-affiliations in suitable positions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o NDC, UUDUVS, MLD, NPC, o DDC/VDC
7	o Dalit representations at all decision making levels	o If Dalits population is in the programme areas all community and local level consumer committees, management board of school, temple and other institutions must include Dalits representations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o NDC, UUDUVS, MLD, NPC, o DDC/VDC
8	o Educating non-Dalits to respect the Dalits rights in every walk of life. o Empowering Dalits to seek their rights Of representation.	o Conduct a number of joint programmes of Dalits and non-Dalits in DDC and VDC, MU level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o NDC, UUDUVS, MLD, DDC/VDC o INGOs, NGOs o Political Parties

Research Related Strategies

S N		Steps of Implementation	Responsible institution or authorities
1	o Conduct research on Dalits to identify their problems and to develop policy recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Formulate a nationally representative sampling based survey research on Dalits o I n c l u d e ethnicity/cast classifications and some specific questions to assess the Dalits conditions in Census and demographic sample survey questionnaires o Maintain a channel of obtaining Dalits related data by Censuses in every 10 year and by sample surveys in every 10 years but after 5 year of Census operation. o Thus Dalits related data will be up -dated in every 5 years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o NPC, CBS, o Universities (Population and Anthropology, Ethnology Departments; Research centres) NDC, UUDUVS, MLD, o o DDC/VDC o INGOs, NGOs

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Instruct all government and non-government organizations to produce data with ethnicity/caste segregation of all variables included in the questionnaires. 	
2	○ Maintain and update segregated multidimensional Dalit-related database	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Create a data bank for Dalit issues ○ Urge all research organisations and INGOs, NGOs to supply their documents ○ Maintain a "Library of Dalits Literature" ○ Produce regular Bulletin with Dalits-related data ○ Assist researchers and needy institutions and individual professionals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NPC, CBS, ○ Universities ○ Research centres ○ NDC, UUDUVS, MLD, a DDC/VDC ○ INGOs, NGOs
3	○ Provision of research fellowships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identify the areas of higher education in which Dalits have more interests ○ Or, identify the areas in which the society requires Dalits manpower Establish Dalits fellowships for the Master level theses and PhD dissertations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NPC, ○ Universities ○ Research centres ○ NDC, UUDUVS, MLD, ○ DDC/VDC ○ INGOs, NGOs
4	○ Adopt basic research methodology for the validity of data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identify those GOs and NGOs producing data based reports on Dalits ○ Organise research methodology training for those involved in Z~ these organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NDC, UUDUVS ○ INGOs, NGOs
5	○ Encourage small researches on Dalits in the district and region level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Assign small and short term sociological, anthropological, demographic and health status researches on Dalits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NPC, ○ Universities ○ Research centres ○ NDC, UUDUVS ○ INGOs, NGOs
6	○ Dalit Non-Dalit joint academic programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identify the issues of common interest ○ Urge for a joint proposals from Dalit and Non-Dalits researchers ○ Select study area that compares the behaviors of both groups ○ Obtain recommendation of harmonious social life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NPC, Universities ○ Research centres ○ NDC, UUDUVS ○ INGOs, NGOs
7	○ Inclusion of Dalits related subject matter in formal curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identify the appropriate issues ○ Conduct seminars and workshop with educators ○ Prepare outline of subject matter and discuss with related authorities ○ Proceed for inclusion in curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NDC, UUDUVS ○ Universities ○ Ministry of Education

