

Caste Based Exclusion of Dalits in the Nepalis Community: A Study of North Bengal

A Dissertation Submitted

To
Sikkim University



In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for the
Degree of Master of Philosophy

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Date: 23/12/2022

DECLARATION

I, **Vivek Kalikotay**, hereby declare that the research work embodied in the dissertation titled “**Caste Based Exclusion of Dalits in the Nepalis Community: A Study of North Bengal**” submitted to **Sikkim University** in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy**, is my original work. Any content or any part of this dissertation has not been submitted for any degree of this University or any other University.



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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled “**Caste Based Exclusion of Dalits in the Nepalis Community: A Study of North Bengal**” submitted to the Sikkim University for partial fulfillment of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** in the Department of Peace and Conflict Studies and Management embodies the result of bona fide research work carried out by **Vivek Kalikotay** under my guidance and supervision. No Part of the dissertation has been submitted for any other Degree, Diploma, Association and Fellowship earlier to this or any other University.

All the assistance and help during the course of investigation have been duly acknowledge by him.

I recommend this dissertation to be placed before the examiner for evaluation.

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Abbreviations

NCRB	-	National Crime Record Bureau
KDS/ KADSA	-	Kami, Damai and Sarki
AINSCA	-	All India Nepali Scheduled Caste Association
DDSCA	-	Darjeeling District Scheduled Caste Association
GNLF	-	Gorkha National Liberation Front
GTA	-	Gorkha Territorial Administration
INO	-	Indian of Nepalese Origin
NIO	-	Nepalese of Indian Origin
SEU	-	Social Exclusion Unit
SCs/STs	-	Scheduled Caste/ Scheduled Tribe
PCR	-	Protection of Civil Rights

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1. Introduction

Historically, caste and caste based exclusion is a very strong social structure and practices in the Hindu society that influences the aspects of economic, political and cultural spheres of the people's lives. It has defined with the various perspectives of ideas of purity-pollution, a functional system and cohesive identity. In fact, the caste system has also seen from the subaltern perspectives as inhuman system of stratification that excludes the inferior of the stratum in the inter-caste relations and opportunities. Likewise, the caste and its hierarchical stratification of the Nepalis caste structure is no exception to this caste system. Caste in the comprehensive definition given by the Ghurye (1950), draws six main features: segmental division of society, hierarchy of groups, restriction of feeding and social intercourse, allied and religious disabilities and privileges of the different sections, lack of unrestricted choice of occupation and restrictions on marriage. Further, caste according to Srinivas (1950) "a hereditary endogamous groups which is usually localized, it has a traditional association with an occupation and a particular position in local hierarchy of castes which are governed among other things by the concept of purity". Relatively social exclusion and discrimination based on caste has always centred the caste system for the research inquiry, focused by the intellectuals, scholars and policy planners to study, to frame the policy for the rights and privileges to excluded caste at times, but somehow the Indian Nepalis Dalits castes have been struggling in this academic and scholarship attention. According to Byrne, social exclusion is a multi-dimensional process in which various forms of exclusion expressed in participation in decision-making and political process, access to employment and material resources,

and integration into common cultural process when combined create acute forms of exclusion that find a spatial manifestation in particular neighbourhoods (Byrne, 1990 in Mathieson et al., 2008). In addition, Landman (2006:19) cited by (Mathieson et al., 2008) argues that social exclusion involves discrimination against groups and individuals that is based on one or many social attributes or the elements of social identity. While looking into the Nepalis communities of India, caste system and caste based exclusion of Dalits obviously has at its inception with the Hindu creed substantiating with the caste system of Nepal called Muluki-Ain of 1854 (legal code of conduct). It stand as organized system with its five-fold hierarchical division namely- *Tagadhari* (superior caste who wears sacred thread), *Not enslavable* (Matwali alcohol Drinkers), *Enslavable* (Matwali alcohol drinkers), *Impure* (water unacceptable but touchable) and *Impure* (water unacceptable and untouchable). But it is argued that the existences of caste based division in the hills and its adjacent areas of North Bengal dispose the caste-class division of Nepalis comprises of Tagadhari (higher caste-class), Matwali (Middle caste-class) and untouchables (Lower caste-class) (Subba, 1989). Further the caste and ethnic groups that comes in Nepalis caste structures are Higher castes (*Bahun, Chhettri*), Middle castes (*Kiratas [Rais, Limboos (ST since 2002) and Yakkhas], Mangars, Thamis, Sunuwars, Gurungs, Tamangs (ST since 2002), Bhujels, Jogis, Sherpas and Yolmus*) and Lower castes (*Kami, Damai and Sarki*), (Subba, 1989). It also argued commonly that caste system or caste does not manifest in the hills and its surrounding as it is in the rest of the Indian regions but labeling of caste as ‘Thulo Jaat’ (higher) and ‘Saano Jaat’ (Lower) prevails in the maximum spaces of everyday talk of Nepalis communities. It also observed that to respond with particular ‘Jaat’ name of lower caste when asked in public gatherings such as marriage ceremonies of higher caste, rituals and any cultural events, it really

expressed an exclusionary behaviours and attitudes. Moreover, the inter-caste marriages with Dalits are still far off as convincing. Even the entry to houses, extending physical help to higher caste as social members of the same village maintain the exclusionary behaviours. There is still the prevailing of typical expression, which says '*Jaat Janaunu*' (showing caste behaviour), in the normal conversation of higher caste if Dalits does some wrongs at the individual level. Besides, the cases of discrimination or exclusion that either ignored or unreported and the caste attitudes often normalized by rationalizing the differences in culture and practices in various social events and ceremonies. In addition, the Dalits voices even unheard and subsided under the major discourses and demand of statehood and Nepalis/Gorkha Identity. However, with this understanding, it would no wrong to say that the caste-based exclusion is still the part of socio-cultural components of Nepalis communities. Therefore, this significantly makes the study on caste-based exclusion of Dalits with the modern changed forms of caste attitudes and behaviour as essential problems in the Nepalis communities. Moreover, the Nepalis caste structure in between Nepal and India apart from changing caste, perspectives, and its relations in present times of the everyday life of the individuals in the changing milieu of urban and rural settings provides the further caste exclusion and its practices to be the research of academic community.

1.2. Review of Literature

The review of literature is one of the significant techniques for making the research seeking in reflecting the phenomena under study at the present context. It also makes a viable space for the researcher to look the past and make the present scenario of the seeking areas. This also helps on how the researcher has the idea of the bringing the study at present context.

Therefore, the present literature review on caste and social exclusion has divided into three sections- Caste and social exclusion in (India, Nepal) and Media report

1.2.1. Caste and Social Exclusion in Indian Context

- i. Sarki (2021), *The Impact of Reservation Policy on Scheduled Castes of Darjeeling Hills: A sociological Study [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Sikkim University* analyses the situation of Dalits (Kami, Damai and Sarki) from the possible sides of reservation for knowing the change and mobility. She has sought the reservation impact upon the Dalits life in emancipating and progress. She tries to see the changes brought in the ambit of socio-economic and cultural life of the Dalits such as occupation, education, family structure, lifestyle, social interrelationship. The role of community organization, state development boards in creating awareness about the reservation and its protective discrimination facilities was looked. However, with the findings of mobility in the spheres of Dalits through reservation, the author has encountered the stigmatization, discrimination and exclusion of Dalits in various spheres depending upon the economic, socio-cultural background of Dalit identity.

- ii. Waghmore S. (2018), *Hierarchy without system? why Civility matters in the Study of Caste*, Argues the importance of greater civility in the study of how far caste been observed as changed in keeping the social justice and equality in contemporary society. He noted as futile to explore caste system or caste hierarchy after the scholarship on the subject had found an end of the caste system rather the persistence and dynamism still found in exercising exclusion and discrimination in the society. He argued to the preceded scholars whether the end of caste system means an end of the hierarchy. Does the change in values, ideology attached to the caste uplifts justice and equality and more particularly the greater civility without hierarchy. His emphasis explores the newer forms of caste behaviours that normalizes the caste (ism) and see the endemic nature of hierarchy that contradicts caste flexibility. As the newer forms of caste includes the values, morals and ideologies to exhibit the exclusion against the civility. While these practices also dominate in the private and public spheres, it shows the existence of hierarchical notion of Brahmanic ideas prevailing in the society apart from assuming the end of caste as a system towards the dynamic of caste dominance in the social, economic, cultural and political aspects confronting with dignity, freedom, equality and justice through civility.
- iii. Jodhka, S. (2015), *Cast (e) on the Hill: 'Divine' Power, Social Cohesion and Hierarchy in Himachal Pradesh*, mentioned that the persistence of caste in the forms divine calling in the entities of '*Devis*' and '*Devtas*'. He unlike Dumont understanding of caste as a universal system of hierarchy in all the matters of privileges has not encountered in the regions of Himachal

Pradesh. His findings about the existence of caste are present in the forms of totem, which more or less practiced by the local peoples. Apart from this, it is also a matter of fact that Himachal Pradesh was mostly rural in attributes and very small percentage of population habitates in an urban area. Unlike other regions of the country, the caste as an ideology is present in the minds of peoples and it practiced in the very specific purposes of some of the purificatory systems such as in religious worshipping. There is particularly a clear demarcation of occupation performed by different caste groups in the rituals ceremonies of the 'Devis and Devtas'. It is said that almost everyone do follow this divine calling of Devis and Devtas. Since everyone also attached with native places of the various occasion in the rural areas as compared to Urban. Although there are no relations of social status mobilization and economic ascendancy but caste as a discrete in the ecological manner is sustaining. Neither has it had any analogy with the rest of extreme discriminated regions of settings besides settled in the urban regions. Such the social bond and Hierarchy is not visible in the subcontinent nor does it serve the caste in caste (ism) structure to the peoples of state. However, caste does persist and function in its ecological aspects.

- iv. Kumar (2014), *Situating Social Exclusion in the context of Caste: A case of Dalits in India*, has provided the insights of why the dalits in India can see with the social exclusion based on caste. Apart from this the author provides the convincing background of contextual frame on social exclusion in the space of dalits life. Even the author mentioned that to understand the Dalits and their causes and consequences of social

exclusion, the six elements are required to analyses for which the dalits exclusion on the basis of caste can be encountered. He gave exclusion can be located with structural, collective, dyanmic with historicity, multi-dimensional, agency and extend to cultural spheres. He also shows the relations of social exclusion with the deprivation and discrimination. The author also gave the Book view and field view of social exclusion in the hindu social order faced by the Dalits in collectivity. Further, he aslo argued and represented with the help of table for social exclusion in the life of Dalits. while citing Ambedkar, he showed the need for the demand for inclusion in the governance for the reason of social exclusion. In addition, he showed how the dalits contributed for the society and nation in progress but unfortunately, Dalits are not counted and acknowldged and therefore argue that the nation-building could not be possible unless Dalits are mobilised.

- v. Vaid, D. (2014), *Caste in contemporary India: Flexibility and Persistence*, argue in his writings that caste has a pervasive and persisting nature but not the archaic notion of hierarchy in its traditional formations. The caste undergone elementary changes and includes the mobility of one caste into other castes on occupations. He mentions the flexibility of caste in the social, economic, political and ritual spheres that breaks the orientalist view of unchanging caste. His main thrust is the presence of caste in contemporary India but with transformed and evolution. His understanding about contemporary is as whole society is impossible now with the same idea of ritual hierarchy and purity/pollution practices. The writing also shows that forces of modernization have made uneasy in acceptance of

caste with no mobility. He rightly stated the mobility happenings and with this, its inheritance of occupations through ascribed status is declining to achieve status of wealth and power. His understanding of caste right from the scholar advocating book view of unchanged caste system of no mobility to filed view of variations of reality of mobility present the caste system is changing and adapting the flexible character of persistence. Moreover, the caste has loosened its grip from the occupational hierarchy, ritual status and paved the way for economic mobility, political resources for its manifestation in the contemporary society. Therefore, his review on caste through contemporary research highlights that caste status allows for fluidity but that does not gives the entire structural changes. It says that along with the persistence characteristics of caste, transformation dwell in the economic domain but that does not again make the end of caste instead it has changed from ritual specific to economic, political and ritual too together with these two aspects.

- vi. Kadun & Gadkar (2014), *Social Exclusion: Its types and impact on Dalits in India*, analyses the situation of social exclusion in India based on the caste system, which is still practiced by certain sections to other sections. They mentioned that exclusion based on caste, ethnicity, religion, economy, race and gender vary from palce to place. In the indian context, the prima facie is caste and its untouchabe behaviour that has constructed the Dalits since ages into the excluded groups from mobility. They even argued that Dalits are the worst impacted groups in the spheres of Social interaction, Economy, Health facilities, Education, Political spheres and even in the Government sectors of oppurtunity. They argued that Dalits

faced severe challenges and many crimes against them such as murdered, rape, kidnapped, beaten with atrocities in everyday life.

vii. Chaudhry (2013), *Caste as an Institutionalised System of Social Exclusion and Discrimination: Some evidences*, tries to provide the various empirical studies of the scholars in different regions of India where caste played dominant role of discriminating, exploiting and suppressing the Dalits across diverse spheres. He also mentioned the changes that had come into the caste rigidity with mobility in the Dalit life. However, with the changes the caste has also changed its character accordingly. Citing many scholars, he put the evidences of the practices of caste in the economic, political, social and cultural aspects of the Dalits life.

viii. Sharma, K.L. (2012), *Is there today caste system or there is only caste in India* argues the presence of caste but not the caste system in the present India. He mentions the historical explanations of caste by British officials and the subsequent scholars had equivocally put emphasis on the rigid and unchanging nature of caste. However, the very fact of caste since the beginning has embraced all aspects of social, political, economic and cultural spheres of the social structure that cannot be simply understood only through ritual hierarchy or purity and pollution model instead caste has always been resilient and flexible since its inception. He further states that to understand caste we have to know comprehensively its every matrix of social structures. He claimed that caste is rather a phenomena and purposive rationality for the interest oriented in the contemporary times and therefore there is no caste system but caste as phenomena,

which needs the comprehensive understanding with present socio-economic, political and cultural matrices.

- ix. Thorat & Sabharwal (2010), *Caste and Social Exclusion: Issues Related to Concept, Indicators and Measurement*, tries to conceptualise social exclusion with different epoch of interpretation since its terminological presence. They also added the conceptual clarity with *Individual and Group Exclusion* attributes to the existing multi-dimensional nature of social exclusion. They further stated the caste based and untouchability based social exclusion in the Indian context as well to its adjacent regions that impacts civil, religious, social, economic and political spheres of the excluded groups as in the case of Dalits. Moreover, both the author tries to put the identifying behaviour or identifiers involving social exclusion embedded in the institution of caste and untouchability procedure in the different mentioned spheres.
- x. Singh (2009), *Manual Scavenging as Social Exclusion: A Case Study*, argues that the particular work and occupation still looked with the caste notions of exclusion. The author mentioned in his studies in Ghazipur district of Uttar Pradesh that the life of the scavengers is not progressive and it needs the alternative agendas for their improvement. They excluded in the economic, cultural, social regimes of interaction by their work based on the caste occupations. Due to this occupation, they failed to access or entitled to civil and political rights, even the author mentions the 'Living mode exclusion' to this conditions of denial and failure to mobilize their status. However, he urged for the alternative tools for improving the

conditions such as by providing education, shifting to agricultural labour, basic livelihoods earning opportunity etc.

xi. Thorat, S. & Newman, K.S. (2007), in their article *Caste and Economic discrimination: Causes, Consequences and Remedies*, presented the two-year collaborative research of IIDS and Sociologist on the discrimination prevailing in the employment and wages of modern formal sector of Indian economy based upon caste and religion. Here both of them kept the understanding of how caste influences the individual economic conditions and how economy interacts with the caste ideas and values. They mentioned about the need of interventionist policy to reform for further bringing the gender, caste and regional parity in the surplus labour countries like India. They mentioned about social exclusion, which denies the rights to participate and makes inability to the lower sections of the society, which consequently brings deprivation and poverty. They gave active and passive exclusion in both bringing the occupational immobility in respect to lower caste or Dalits in the market competition. They also argued on the economic consequences, which again put the dignity of the age-old occupational division of labour at the bottom as low. The article also presented the remedies to overcome with problems of discrimination through reservation, quotas extending to private sector as much as possible.

xii. Shah, A.M. (2007), *Caste in the 21st century: From system to elements*, shows the change of caste as a system to individual caste as an element. He was focusing on the individual caste present in the rural and urban

societies since the beginning of great civilization in India but never acclaimed instead caste was identified on the structural traditional rural attributes and mainly with the ideas of hierarchy and purity and pollution. He also mentioned the legacy of sociologist and social anthropologist that follow subsequent writings with these perspectives have/had hardly put any ideas to understand caste system with its changing attributes. He accepted the changes has accommodated in the caste practices from before and argue that changes in rural an urban caste characters cannot be seen both from rural community. He explained caste as system is finding a way out to individual caste in the rural and urban community with relations to rules of endogamy. In explaining his point, he keeps that in the 21st century, caste has to understand from the urban caste characters instead rural attributes because the coming of urbanization, modernization, westernization and educational advancement there is less or no tendency to practices hierarchy and rigid constructions of caste faith. Therefore, the urban communities now more or less influenced the society as whole contrary to rural structure. In relations to caste at present, have had more influences and struck the endogamous decree at large. Urban caste overwhelming through heterogeneity, loosening the boundaries of caste into individual, practices of hypergamy at choices between and among different caste and tribes. The outcomes of dissolving caste or casteless through modern inter caste marriages, caste and relatives network as small with no primary hierarchy and the caste associations formed at the individual choices does merely changes the caste lived reality of past.

Hence, the dominant feature of caste is the dynamism of individual caste not the system.

xiii. Subba, T.B. (2002), *Nepal and the Indian Nepalis*, argue while mentioning the identity crisis in comparative study of Nepal and Indian Nepalis as different in outlook and has various differences about living in both the geographical space. He mentioned in his writings about the caste presence and functions that quite vary from the Nepal. He put the variations in the sense that caste system in Nepal is rigid and in Indian Nepalis its existences is flexible with more open and mobility between the castes. He argues that unlike Nepal caste marriages, inter-caste marriages are open in India. He further added that identifying the caste names are more specific in Nepal than in Indian Nepalis. As the people out there keep their surnames specifically with the clan names, so that it would be easy in the intra-caste identity along with inter-caste interactions whereas the Indian Nepalis have the generic surnames for the entire groups that comes under. So thus, it reflects the caste driven society is less pervasive in Indian Nepalis rather than Nepal.

xiv. Oommen, T.K (2001), *Religion, Caste and Language in India*, the Author here tries to show the different movement of mobilization by the elements of society across India over the period on culture and linguistic. Further, it shows the main part of civil society in pre and post-independent India with the predominated factors of religion, caste and language. It also mentioned that these elements of society have only seen through little significance in the march of civil society for equality and identity.

Instead, it played with the passing time a lot impact as a pertinent factor for contributing in the civil society for the privilege and non-privilege. Although, the author argues from the positive side of these elements, civil society made the equality but from the under-privilege social categories it is a mobilisation for achieving dignity too whereas the privilege social categories reinforces the hegemony. Thus, the author rightly says that both these tendencies has to be recognised and studies as different aspects of civil society. As author argues that, less significance has given to the concept of civil society in relation to elements of society that existed much before becoming the modern phenomena, the impact of British rule and the need of linguistic states and cultural uniformity paved the path of positive and negative inducement of caste, religion and language.

xv. Bhowmik, S.K. (1992), *Caste and Class in India*, was a report of one-day seminar organized in collaboration between Joshi-Adhikari institute of Social Studies and Indian Council of Historical Research on the durability and interconnectedness of caste and class in India. The report showed the views and discussion on the subject given by six academic scholars accompanied by a group of academics and activists as participants. The report gives the historical perspectives of caste and class in India and their interdependence for hierarchical exploitation. It also shows how caste in Colonial India gave many of the lower caste to upgrade their caste status as well as their representative when the caste enumeration speaks about the miserable conditions. The author also wrote in the report about the presentation on case of Bihar where new consciousness is emerging between the lower caste for self-respect and status instead economic

privilege. Further, the report also shows the caste, class and ethnicity of the different regions over the time with many social categories that needed to be studied in interconnectedness instead one over the other.

- xvi. Subba, T.B (1989), *Dynamics of a Hill Society (The Nepalis in Darjeeling and Sikkim Himalayas)*, was based on the doctoral dissertation presented the well structures of the Nepalis and their organized system in the regions with the historical backgrounds of all the caste communities in the historical formation of caste travelling from India to Nepal and to the present regions. The book presented how this caste system is of Hindu and Indian origin with the notion of superiority over the inferiority. Although the regions under study reflected, the system is not so rigid and flexible in relation to many of the social interactional process if not entirely. It argued that caste and the structures are motivated with several things such as the difference of cultures among the ethnic communities, the forceful consolidation of the diverse groups under the Nepalis umbrella certainly maintained as whole instead of parts to be hierarchical division. It also argued that the groups at the extreme higher and lower do share the common attributes but these groups were not so mobile than the ones that locate in between them. The book clearly shows the persistence of mobility among the middle caste, which has the horizontal setup instead as vertical. There is flexible in behaviour with the middle caste from the higher caste but the same is strict with the lower caste. The higher caste and lower caste although in the study regions argued that there are some few isolated case where caste based discrimination occurs but the level of punishment at the social level seems non-rigid. The reason

it has argued because by the education, urbanization and the westernization and as well the geographical spaces that somehow made the dominating caste as the minority in the regions.

1.2.2. Caste and Social Exclusion in Nepal Context

- i. C, Ram. G (2022), in article *Influence of Casteism in Modern Nepal: A Sociological Perspective*, mentioned the persistence of caste in the Nepal society. He argued the presence of caste in its archaic structure in the village rather than in Urban and Semi-urban spheres. His arguments present the legacy of casteism existing even after the promulgation of new civil code in 1963. The behaviours of discrimination to Dalits in Nepal contradict with the amendment of various rights and protection, which yet provides the academics, policy planners and makers to look into these aspects for inclusive and holistic transformations mentioned by the author.
- ii. Ghimire (2018), *Debates on Social Exclusion and Inclusion in Nepal*, analyses the contemporary situation of the excluded groups in Nepal and put the four groups at its exclusionary line, which are Dalits, Madhesi or Tarai people, Ethnic or Indigenous people and the Women. He however gave the different spheres of the discrimination and exclusion to these four groups historically. In the Dalit groups, he mentioned the exclusion happens not only from access to public utilities and places but also from the legal system and public policies. Further, he also mentioned even the development and nation building process exclude the Dalits in progress. As he said, many development projects and practices suits the elite

privileges class leaving the disadvantage Dalits in their unchanging life of low status.

- iii. Dhakal (2017), *Assessing the Role of Social Stigma in Relation to the Concept of Social Inclusion and Exclusion*, mention the importance of stigma in every society for excluding the individuals or the groups by the attributes of 'Us' and 'others'. She mentioned that this stigma correlates with the individual or group in socio-cultural setting. As she gave various examples of stigma that goes across, religion, culture, gender, race ethnicity etc. with the undesired differences by the group/individuals to other group/individuals. While in the caste notion she argued the interplay of stigma based on the caste system of Hierarchy with lower caste called as untouchables. Although she mentioned the changes had come in the Nepalese society with the constitutional protection but the living reality of lower caste stigmatised with Untouchable behaviour by their counterparts in many spheres of life.
- iv. Bhattachan, K.B, Sunar, T.B & Bhattachan, Y.K. (2009), in working paper series of Indian institute of Dalit studies title *Caste based discrimination in Nepal*, talks about the origin and development of caste system. It highlights the discrimination in various aspects of socio-economic and political sphere against the Dalits. The paper also discloses the multiple discrimination to Dalits women, discrimination in education. Further, the paper revealed the presence of caste based atrocities like untouchability at its extreme level apart from policy and programmes of the nations. It also

shows the international, national agency actors initiative to safeguard and reforms the social structure of society.

- v. *The Dalit Context* (2005), of Harkha Gurung in as Occasional papers in Sociology and Anthropology, vividly shows the genesis, definition, population and situations of Dalits in Nepal context. The author shows historical formation of the caste in Nepal with the Indian influence, different interpretation of the definition of Dalits in identifying the groups by the state, researcher, scholar and policy makers, the diversity of the population under the Dalit terminology in the course, the Muluki-Ain exclusive nature of extreme arrangement with punishment according to the status a particular caste holds. Also the persistence of Caste based social exclusion of the Dalits with the state religious ideology that sanctifies inequality based on caste.
- vi. Geiser, A. (2005), *Exclusion of caste and Ethnic group*, here as the report author mentioned that different caste and ethnic groups have unified during the Shah dynasty and Rana's rule with forceful consolidation. Having the exclusion and discrimination as part of Nepal's unification, the emergence of Maoist and the support of excluded caste in the hierarchical order gave the political instability over the time. The author showed the three models as Empire model, Nationalistic model and the minorities' model over which there was a regular attempt from the authority to exclude and discriminate even after the democratic constitutional rights and protection. The author also gave that how the Dalits and lower caste have raised their voices to fulfil their 20 demands supported by Maoist.

vii. Hofer (2004), *The Caste Hierarchy and the State in Nepal: A study of the Muluki-Ain of 1854*, gives the incisive nature of the Nepal's first legal code of conduct that structured and establishes the social, political, economic and cultural aspects of the individual and groups in the caste hierarchy. The author has mentioned about the various dimension of the law in the life of Nepalis as whole pertaining to then Theocratic rule of Hindu religion. The caste hierarchy and its impact have been shown with relations to commensality and contact, sexual relations based on impure and pure social status. It shows the nature of Ain in the personal impurity, the justification of Hierarchy in this law. Further, the varna model and the division of labour in the Muluki-Ain has been stated with relations. Even gives the insights of about the slaves and bonded servants and ascetics on the basis of this law, which was the superior law of the nation. It mentions about the mobility, customs, purification, penance and penalty with respects to gradations of caste and ethnic groups under this law. It further give the glimpses of account of the pre-1854 legislation and the administrative justice of 1854 law in the life of the Nepalis. It provides presence of the caste notions of Untouchables, the ethnic groups and past legacy of caste system even in the post 195-legislation of the Nepalis society.

viii. Thapa (1988), *Caste and Social Domination*, have tried to show the existence of caste and its evil practices for discriminating and suppressing the Dalit based on water line. He basically, argued that the eastern societies structured hierarchically where the higher caste dominates the subordinate in correspondence to status. These practices performed within

the rituals, celebration and traditional occasion. Even in the urban areas, this practice has its presence. In his studies of one of the village in Nepal called 'Katunje', he observed the caste and exclusion as an observed reality with the nature of untouchability, purification and punishment.

- ix. Pandey, T.R. (1970), *Culture and Politics of caste in the Himalayan Kingdom*, put the understanding of the caste system from field view instead the values and ideas attached theoretically in the origin of caste system. He tried to look the concepts involved through literature in the caste ideas and system is actually working on the grounds. He precisely argues the cultural motivations, political will of the rulers, the caste system is persisting in Nepal but over the period, and from dynasty to democracy if not completely vanished, it has reduced to certain manners. He argues the exchange of different cultural traditions influences to caste system to lose its rigid social structure. Further he mentioned now the social unit is not a caste or ethnic groups but a new social class based on economic opportunities that which breaking the concentration of power of the caste elite.
- x. Bista (1980), *PEOPLE OF NEPAL*, has provided the very deep historicity about the peoples of Nepal in social, economic, political and cultural background. Being an Anthropologist, he has tried to showcase the every caste, ethnic and linguistic groups in details with relation to caste system and its hierarchical structure. He has even given the insights about peoples and its geographical settings provided the natives and the migrants of the places. His writings reflected the caste system and its

hierarchical order in the Nepalese society formed by the influence of Hindu traditions from the Indian subcontinent. His exploration of the people of Nepal emphasises the heterogeneous cultures and groups which in the process has embraced the caste system and its status in their lifestyle.

1.2.3. Media report on caste based discrimination of Indian Nepalis Dalits

- i. Darpan, Samai (2021), in Facebook channel News *समाजभित्र जातिको आधारमा भेदभाव गरेको आरोप लगाउँदै रोहिणी का पुजा कलीकोटेले समाजको अध्यक्ष साथै केही अन्य ब्याक्तीहरुलाई विरुद्ध गाडीधुरा पुलिस पोष्टमा प्राथमिकि दर्ता गरेका छन्*, report the case of Puja Kalikotay's caste discrimination in the Kurseong sub-division of village in Rohini, where the victim who was a women from Dalit caste has faced exclusion from their non-dalit counterpart in the death rituals ceremonies of the non-dalit deceased house on 19th October 2021. As the victim being a teacher and even the member of the community organisation initially approached in written for justice in the community organisation of the village, where the organisation in written reply justify the act as every rituals or religion has their own customs provided everyone should respects. The case of this discrimination in the Nepalis society at present time gives the deep streams of caste mentality present in the society which sometimes being noticed and many times unnoticed.
- ii. 24, AJ News (2021), in Facebook channel News, *जात पात अनि छुवा छुतको सिकार बने मेघना दर्जी* report the case of Meghna Darjee's caste discrimination in June 2021, in village of Kurseong subdivision, who had intercaste marriage and living in nucleated form with her husband because of non-

acceptance by their in-laws. The case of discrimination had become extreme when her husband died and his body was taken by his family from the Kurseong hospital and she was not allowed to perform any rituals (last rites) being a spouse of deceased person. She was even not allowed to touch her husband body during all the funeral process. As this case of exclusion on the basis caste identity reflects the persistence of caste traditions among the so called upper caste peoples even when the Dalit are mobilised from their caste occupation and life style.

iii. Dhungel (2021), in his news article *Sikkim: Is caste-based violence against dalits on the rise?* reported the case of consequences of hypergamy marriage in Rishi village of Rhenock constituency in the death rites and rituals. Both the spouses not allowed to perform any of the rituals of their Father/Father-in-laws according to the Hindu customs. The man was from Bhujel caste and woman was from Damai caste. Among the five sons of the deceased man, four sons was allowed to observe and perform the rituals by the family members and the village people whereas, the other son and his wife was not allowed because of their hypergamous marriage. Although the case of this discrimination was intervened by the sikkim Scehduled caste organisation to give the justice to the excluded persons but the cases like this is a living reality of the Indian Nepalis Dalit.

1.3. Research Gap

The available sections of literature on the caste and social exclusion in India and Nepal have shown that caste is still the living reality in the south Asian context. Apart from this, it also shows that there are changes accommodating from rudimentary to

flexible. As in the Indian and Nepal context, the sections of literature argue that caste has loosed its structural form and changes into the elements of discrete identity whereas the other sections of the literature argues that it still beholds its legacy even after the changed form. However, the former sections also shows that caste as a system is no more existing rather caste has becomes the instrument of mobilisation whether into the politics, accessing the reservation provision and as a pressure groups to produce cohesion and opportunities. It further includes that the discrimination, exclusion and untouchability has neatly reduce to the urban areas whereas in the rural areas, it has also shows the decline of caste-based exclusion in compatible with urbanisation, westernization and modernisation impact. In addition, the literature also argues that caste being able to thrive even in the present time is because of the politicisation of caste.

Whereas the other sections of the literature argue that even if the caste has changed and end its endemic system of hierarchy, the prevalence of caste through economic inequalities, discrimination, exclusion in socio-cultural aspects reflects. The notion of Brahmanic ideology of purity-pollution and values is still prevalent in the newer or changed expression of caste. Be it in the education, employment and social-interactions or in any form socio-cultural aspects has instead became dynamics through culturalisation of caste that which normalises the practice of caste(ism), discrimination, exclusion and various other vulnerable ethics. It also argued that caste is enduring with hidden attributes with Brahmins Odyssey and the very notions of Hindu with its philosophy of caste as functional group will never accept the Dalits or the lower caste as equal to superior in caste order.

Although the literature has mentioned about the end of caste as a system and does not

manifest as rigid as was attributed in the traditional pattern, the existence of discrimination, exclusion and inequalities persist on the caste lines reflected. As taking this available literature, it has found that caste studies on the Nepalis communities of North Bengal have really lack in the academic inquiry. It has not seen from the bottom-up perspective about the exclusion and discrimination rather studied as caste structure as a form of order. Moreover, the histories and change of caste system over the period in the Nepalis culture of North Bengal reflects the base for the research study to undertake for the understanding of caste and caste based exclusion. Thus, this gives the imperative account for the researcher to study the caste and caste system of the universe adding a new knowledge to the existing literature.

1.4. Rationale and Scope of the Study

The study of caste-based exclusion of the Dalits in the Nepalis communities' reckoned caste based practices and often express the discrimination in the many spheres of life. The caste structures that living in the heterogeneous communities of Nepalis since many years shows the significance of caste and its hierarchical structure as a classification in the lives of Nepalis for fulfilling the cultures, traditions and political privileges over the period. The life of Dalits or called Scheduled caste of Nepalis community has always struggled for caste identity equality in the greater space of Nepalis landscapes. Even the studies and discourses of Dalits of Nepalis community have had no such exploration rather than understanding of caste structure that functions cohesively in contrast to the caste structure of India. Thus, the study will and show the existence of caste-based exclusion in the Nepalis communities that explore the undercurrents of caste (ism), discrimination against Dalits by the other higher caste communities in the Nepalis caste structure. It will unravel the exclusion present in various socio-cultural spheres of marriage, rituals, inter-caste space of

cultural exchange on social gatherings and discrimination of lower caste with the caste label as well as demeaning with various verbal abuses of 'Saano Jaat' (lower caste) and 'Jaat Jaanaunu' (showing mean behaviour of lower caste). It will also explore the hidden and psychological behaviours towards Dalits caste in relations that normalize the persisting ideas of caste hegemony apart from various constitutional and legal safeguards. In fact, it gives the study to explore the caste pervasiveness succumbing civility in the Nepalis communities in the daily interactions. The study will also try to see the persisting untouchability notion in form and caste structures that not studied and researched yet in the academic parlance. It will also try to inquire the different spheres of socio-cultural spaces that many times overlap each other showing the invisibility or complex nature of caste based exclusion towards Dalits.

1.5. Objectives of the Study

The study will try to substantiate the inquiry for understanding the problem with the following objectives-

1. To explore the undercurrents of caste based exclusion in the socio-cultural spheres.
2. To know the forms of caste based discrimination persisting in the community.
3. To understand the caste and caste experiences at the individual level.

1.6. Hypothesis

The present problem study state that caste reinforces exclusion of Dalits in the Nepalis communities.

1.7. Research Questions

The study will seek into the answers of following few questions-

1. How caste attributes used in socio-cultural spheres for excluding Dalits?
2. What are the ways communities still preserve the notion and practices of exclusion on caste lines?
3. How caste lines still matter and maintained with visible or invisible way?

1.8. Methodology

The caste system and its exclusion on Dalits have been always a discourse of academia in relations to traditions, culture, occupations, constitutional rights and identity in the regional to national level. It has been studied insights with various cohesive and dysfunctional relations as a social institutional structure in the Indian society. It explored as a stratified hierarchical division and differences by various scholarships on caste. It has observed its influence in the lives of caste communities by penetrating or creating the socio-cultural and political spheres of human interactions in maintaining exclusion. The social exclusion based on caste reflecting the space of untouchability, discrimination and unfair exclusion and inclusion (Sen, 2000) has been the persistence of present society if not holistic. Notwithstanding the present society leap towards the modernized attributes, the Dalits and their life still paraphernalia of caste. Thus, to understand these subtle natures of caste in this present study, the researcher has involved both- from the actors' point of view (Verstehen) and from the point of researcher critical understanding.

In the above light, the present study on Caste based exclusion of Dalits in the Nepalis Community has the *Explorative* and *Descriptive* nature. The researcher seeks the caste-based exclusion on the socio-cultural aspects such as in the Religious, Rites of

passage, Marriage, and Verbal Communication.

In addition, it is likely rare that the cases of such caste-based exclusion are nominally or not registered in the panchayat or higher administrative offices and caste organization for reason of social reputation. However, even if registered, the cases are not articulated. Therefore, for the incisive look of the behaviour of caste and its exclusive behaviour, the study based on *Empirical* as well. Moreover, for the present study to undertake with the empirical, explorative and descriptive nature, it is important to have the detailed structured of the universe, sampling of the study, the sources of the information and the tools/techniques of the data collection.

Selection of the Universe

The present study focuses the two geographical locations of the two districts of North Bengal division of West Bengal state namely Kalimpong and Darjeeling. The villages under them are Homes village (Kalimpong district) and Kherjhora village (Darjeeling District). The two villages have chosen keeping with hills and foothills area for the purposeful linkages of whether caste behaviour varies and the comparison for the meaningful interpretation. However, both districts have chosen for the reason of the Nepalis population at large and particularly the two villages for the Dalits population. Further, the dynamics of sample representation and suitability to access the area seek the researcher to choose the field.

Sampling of the study

The population for the present study based on the non-probability of the *Purposive sampling* technique. Although the population of the villages has the heterogeneous composition in terms of caste and ethnic base but to represent the need of the study of exclusion on Dalits on caste attributes, well delineated the sampled population within

Dalits. The respondents are primarily the Dalits namely Kami, Damai and Sarki of the Nepalis community. Both the villages in total has the sample size of the study 80, where Kalimpong district village consists of 44 (55%) and Darjeeling district village consist of 36 (45%). Moreover, the sampled population represents diverse age groups, gender, distinct religious, different economies and educational individuals in these classified variables. As for the differences of the sample representation in both the villages, illuminates the villages as unequal because of the two different geographical area and hence to take the proper representation of the population for the study. Meanwhile after the selection of the universe and sampling it is significant to understand the sources of data collection that the researcher has undertaken.

Collection of Data

The objective and subjective understandings of the phenomenon always seek by the data gathered with incisive sources over the period and analysis of that data. As a result, the empirical nature and its qualitative and quantitative aspects reflect for the study. Likewise, the researcher has equipped the present study with the two broad sources of data collection of primary and secondary. Moreover, both the sources have independent and dependent roles to play in assisting the researchers study at deep. Therefore, the sources for the present study are as follows:

Primary Data

Researcher has given the ample importance in exploring these data for the period of allocated times in both the villages. Hence, the researcher perhaps able to find the reliable data through pilot survey, observation, fieldwork, interview and case study. Even the researcher had tried to access Dalit organization and government reports as well.

Secondary data

This form of data collection makes any research activity updated, brings the study in the fresh, and refined form from the existing work. On this line of work, the present work has incorporated the various secondary sources such as the Books, Journals Articles, Civil Society Magazines, Census, Websites, NEWS and Social media.

However, the above data collection for the present study has been able to achieve with the help some of the tools and techniques that substantiates for the reliable and productive outcome.

Tools/Techniques of Data collection

Definitely, the researcher needs these constructions according to their data collection and in times modified for the gathering of the data. As thus the respondents of the two villages are however diverse in terms of their age, gender, religion and education, the researcher has conspicuously approached for the tool of *Interview Schedule* to unearth their level of answering. Moreover, the *Open discussion* space has provided for the capillary flow of data in the deeper maxim. Since almost all, the respondents are free to interact with the lingua franca Nepali, so provided the easy medium has left no doors shut perhaps while interacting with the villagers. Further, the *Interview* techniques have made the reliable outcome of knowing the interviewee understanding and experiences in broader manner about the caste and its behaviours of exclusion in their everyday life.

Thoroughly, at the initial phases before going for the collection of data, the researcher has also used his network of communication on *Phone* and *Social Network (human source)* along with *Pilot Survey* for undergoing the research field and the presence of data for the present study.

Apart from these the researcher also uses the technique of *Observation* that has always been the key aspects of understanding the phenomenon about the life of Dalits, may be in the day-to-day interactions or the some occasional ceremony. Further, the minutely exchange of ideas on caste and its exclusionary behaviour has been helped by undertaking the detailed capturing technique, which is stated below.

Case Study

This technique of data collection was very vital from the perspectives of change and continuity of caste and its behaviours projected in the modern era of life styles. As this approached helped the researcher to note down the variations of subjective understanding of the respondents of both the villages socializing in different geographical terrain. Further, this also helped in understanding the present state of caste and its persistence at the individual and group level. Moreover, this technique assisted to explore many of the deep medium of social interactions in the life of Dalits towards their counterparts and vice versa. Consequently, it played very conducive technique to gather and know in details about the caste-based exclusion in different socio-cultural areas of the dalits in general and particular in the two studied villages.

Tabulation

This tool of data representation after the collection is also very vital for how the researcher has able to assist the rational and empirical interfaces in the research seeking activity. The tabulation also gives the researcher well-coated information while interpreting the constitutive of the phenomenon.

Based on the usages of the tool, the researcher has welded manual tabulation with analysis of the Dalit respondents on various variables such as religion, income, age & sex, marital status, education etc.

1.9. Framework for the Study

The present study on caste-based exclusion of Dalits in the Nepalis community, throws some of the mentioned concept and contextual aspects and perspective in understanding the problems.

According to Kumar, social exclusion is social process that produces particular type of experience. A process by which certain collective entity, groups or individuals experiences denial of access to social, economic, political, cultural, religious rights, privileges and resources from their counterparts of the society. Moreover, while mentioning about social exclusion, he necessitate the needs of contextualization of locating the social exclusion and in precisely for Indian context, he presented the six interrelated and interconnected elements to encounter social exclusion towards Dalits by the privileged and affluent in the Hindu caste system. As those elements are *Structural, Collective identity, Multidimensional, Dynamics & Historicity, Agency and Cultural spheres*. By which the researchers, policy makers and activist could able to figure out the paradigms of exclusion-inclusion, forces, reasons and the outline of exclusion (Kumar, 2014).

Thorat and Sabharwal (2010), in their working paper series of IIDS, understanding the nature of social exclusion in the Indian context mentioned, as one needs to look deeper into the societal relations and institutions as important to the outcome it brings as deprivation for excluded groups. In doing so, argued with two important aspects of approaching social exclusion in India namely *Individual exclusion* and *Group exclusion*. In Individual exclusion, he mentioned there is no socio-cultural identity attached to the individuals. It is apparently specific to that individual qualities or attributes of incapability on equal footings to other members. Nevertheless, on other,

group exclusion has the character of group/socio-cultural identity in excluding the individual or the members as whole in access to resources and opportunities. The case of collective identity can be caste, race, ethnicity, religion and gender in exclusion of all peoples belonging to specific social groups. Moreover, he also mentioned that this division of social exclusion approach could be helpful for formulation of the policies for the excluded groups at general parlance in society. However, caste as one of the societal/institutional relations for accessing resources and opportunities in the civil, religious, social, cultural spheres in hierarchical setup reflects these notions of exclusion.

Sen (2000), in his seminal work “Social Exclusion: Concept, Application and Scrutiny” provided the very significant concept of understanding of exclusionary behaviours towards the social disadvantaged section of the society. Apparently, he tried to relate social exclusion with that of causes of capability deprivation and poverty but in the wider scope of social exclusion, it also touches the other spheres as said. He instead of limiting to European centric module explores the penetration of social exclusion in other contextual space and time. On this reasoning, he gave the concept of “*Unfair inclusion and Unfair exclusion*”. Further, he mentioned that not all unfair inclusion or unfair exclusion is social exclusion (Thorat & Sadhana, 2010). As the former, denotes the inclusion of the certain groups, individuals or members of the groups on different terms and conditions based on norms, rules practices and principles of unfair for accessing the social, political and economic opportunities. On the other, the members of the groups, individuals and social groups if excluded from the certain access and entitlements that are not based on recognized or accepted principles of norms, rules and practices is called as unfair exclusion. Thus, this dimension of social exclusion is very much relevant to the Indian context where caste

has unevenly played exclusive role of Dalit exclusion in general and Nepalis Dalit in particular.

The postcolonial evolved studies like Subaltern perspective are also one of the frameworks to understand the subordinate group (Dalits) and their experiences. As this perspective reflects the understanding of the society through the conditions of subordinate people who belong to category such as Caste, Class, Age, Gender, Race, Ethnicity etc. it represent their viewpoint and historicity. The concept 'Subaltern' referred by the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci during 1930's in his Prison Notebook to those subordinate groups who marginalized by the cultural hegemony of ruling elite class. Indeed the term has contextual manifestation of subordinate categories where in the Indian context we can locate the Dalits at par with subaltern position for the need of the present study. Although this term in its initial phase refers to slaves, peasants, religious groups, women, races, proletariat with the idea of Marxist categories of proletariat and underclass who are subject to cultural subordination intertwined with the economic oppression. However the usage of the term by 'subaltern studies' by the group of Indian, UK and American educated extending its categories of voices to excluded/marginalized and suppressed groups to rewrite their histories of contribution for the social progress. Thus, with the institutional structure of Hindu society where caste plays the dominant cultural attributes to subjugates the group for ages under the threshold of socio-cultural practices, which aptly provide the Dalit studies of exclusion from this perspective.

Besides, the concept of 'Dalit' understanding for the present study is also most important to relate with Nepalis ex-untouchable in the caste system, which also falls at the Fifth ladder of the hierarchical order analogous to Indian ex-untouchables caste.

Interestingly, the term Dalit comes from vernacular sankrtit word 'Dalita' which means, broken, crushed, suppressed, downtrodden. However, it was first used by Mahatma Jyotiba phule (social reformer) to refer to untouchables and out caste. Having the legacy of caste ridden society in India and the labelling of 'Acchut', 'Aspriyas' to name few to lowest caste, the term Dalit used to liberate from the straight derogatory remarks given by high caste hegemony based on Chatur-varna. It was not only in India but the adajcent regions too, that the term became acceptable from the lowest rung. Perhaps, it is no wrong to say, it is a self chosen term for identity and social dignity. Further, the available literature argue that the term Dalit gave the umbrella word following the Dalit Panther's movement in then Bombay for the all the untouchables who had experienced for many years and yet also they fight against caste based exclusion, discrimnation, exploitation and isolation. Back in the time, the common ground for lowest caste had no space to raise their voice and assert identity for their mobility in terms social status. Therefore, this is why the term Dalit provided the unity and one voice to distinct untouchables in different society and community where the social stratification is based on caste and their untouchables group formation.

To locate the term Dalit for the Nepalis untouchables, ofcourse the understanding about history of orientation of hinduism in the Nepal context is necessary. According to Gurung (2008), the earliest inroad of Hinduism in the Nepal regions was during the Lichhavi rule in Kathmandu valley. Since then in many phases Hinduism was articulated by various kings and kingdoms. Even the expansion of caste system into the Nepal landscape came in resultant of hitherto Mughal and British invasion in India following the migration in the form of cultural traits carrying by higher caste to seek refuge (Bista, 1980; Hofer, 2004; Subba 2002). Finally, the complete state rule by

caste adopted in the form of *Muluki-Ain* 1854, which arranged the Nepal and their peoples into five layers. Consequently, due to the presence of diverse ethnic groups prior to the consolidation and unification of Nepal under erstwhile Gorkha Kingdom, the caste system in Nepal molded unlike Indian caste system. However, arrangements from top to bottom reflects decreasing traits of purity and increasing of impurity sharing Indian caste phenomenon. The extreme bottom ranked groups are called Untouchables (Pani Na Chalney Jaat). Moreover, the untouchables since centuries have the histories of exclusion, discrimination and suppression in the economic, political and social status where they are not yet mobilised (Sunar et al., 2009) in Nepal. On the contrary the caste system is not rigid in the Indian Nepalis (Subba, 2002). However, the historicity and dynamism of caste operating at the contextual level if varies also the presence of superior and inferior status is a living reality. Thus the exclusion, discrimination and social inequality of Indian Nepalis lowest caste has the commonality with Indian caste phenomenon where hitherto untouchables face discrimination and exclusion at social level. So the term Dalit is apt along with the official category 'Scheduled Caste' provided by the first Government of Indian Act, 1935 in providing equal space on legal and social status. As legal status gives mobilisation for Justice seeking and Social status gives for identity and dignity.

1.10. Chapterisation

The study of the present work structured into five chapters for the importance in seeking the Dalit and their caste based exclusion among the Nepalis. Therefore, the chapters arranged here represent the research thesis as follows:

Chapter-I: Introduction

This Chapter introduces the problem study and present the overview of the thesis that consist of review of literature, rationale and scope of the study followed by the objectives, hypothesis and research questions. It also includes the methodology followed by framework for the study undertaken.

Chapter-II: Conceptualization of Social Exclusion: Dalits In India

This second chapter introduces the social exclusion in brief followed by the origin of the term. It then gives the conceptual and contextual understanding in relations to present study. Moreover, it also shows the various dimensions of the social exclusion for it is multi-dimensional in nature. Lastly, the chapter locates social exclusion in the context of India.

Chapter-III: Caste Based Exclusion of Dalits in Nepalis

The chapter purely deals with the Nepalis community and caste based exclusion of Nepalis Dalit in general. In the first, the chapter discusses the Nepalis peoples in the Indian context. Thereafter, it also gives the caste and ethnic composition in the Nepalis as whole. The chapter also gives the insights about the cast structure in the Nepalis community. Moreover, it reflects the caste and Dalit interplay in the Nepalis community. Further, the chapter alas gives the social exclusion of Nepalis Dalit in the community.

Chapter-IV: Social Exclusion of Nepalis Dalit: A Field Study

The chapter here presents the fieldwork study of the two villages of the Dalits exclusion in the Nepalis community. The chapter starts with reflecting the two-village composition and their population. It then presents exclusion based on data collection, the pattern of social exclusion in various spheres of socio-cultural aspects. The chapter also deals with the dalit narratives from both the villages. In addition, it also shows the history of civil society's of Dalits and their role in present situation of Dalit.

Chapter-V: Findings and Conclusion

This chapter is the last chapter that gives the entire findings and summarizes in seeking to produce critical observations of social exclusion of Dalits in the Nepalis community.

CHAPTER 2

Conceptualization of Social Exclusion: Dalits in India

2.1. Introduction

Since the study on this subject over the period with great attempt tried to understand in every spheres, still it stand in the academic parlance and in everyday life of the individual social reality such that the understanding of the caste even became more complex and analytical for its subtle look in these modernized world and globalised era. As one can ask questions how caste and its exclusion is still holding its grip in the society and why caste is still important in the life of the individuals where modern education is bridging the gap of inequalities that prevailed in the pre-modern age when education was a fruits of higher caste or so called dominant caste. Even when diversity of jobs opened for everyone based on non-traditional occupations. Even the marriages, food habits, clothing are no more eccentric to caste ranking. Further the role of ritual significance though not completely waned but not rigid in the practices. However, the sociologist, social anthropologist and social scientists have repeatedly come up with their explanations about the origin, functions, role and other characteristics but still the present discourses in the social, political, economic and cultural spheres of individual life is highly overwhelmed with it. The social reality still reflects the caste practices if not the caste system, may be of the constitutional safeguards and provisions along with the diverse opportunities of education, jobs and other accessibilities. However, in the diverse ambit of individuals' life it shows caste based exclusion and discrimination for not less than mere category of caste distinctions but a way of life in their everyday existence.

Thus, it has become now more important to understand the nature of caste based

exclusion and its adaptability with its wider potentiality in the society or whether it's rigid form of expression has loosened or sustained with its modern Avatar at present society. Although caste system in generalized manner had/has, received wider scholarship for understanding the Indian society since its inception but the caste system, in particular (one region to another) is of a recent exploration. To mention about the sections of scholarship who saw caste with the Hindu traditions and its essence lies in the principle of purity and pollution whereas the other sections emphasizes caste has its local attributes that vary from regions to regions and have their tales of local hierarchy and domination and even found in the non-Hindu traditions. Moreover, the traditional caste system had challenged over and again as the society changes from many external influences of westernization, modernization, decentralization, land reforms and various other constitutional measures. Such that the changes also affected the functions of social relations that were base on purity-pollution exclusion, customs and norms of discrimination, occupational inequalities, religious disabilities, culturally segregated and politically suppressed in the processes. Meanwhile the persistence of caste with the religio-cultural notion is still reflects even when some argue caste is more or less political establishment for power and privileges providing what Srinivas termed 'Vote banks'¹. So, to understand the caste based exclusion and its exclusionary nature imbibed in the society needs comprehensive theoretical lens such that the present study can be substantiate.

2.2. Origin of Social Exclusion

The term 'Social Exclusion' is relatively of recent origin that dates back to 70's in the history of Europe. It said that it emerged at the backdrop of post war crisis that outbreaks many social problems when economic restructuring was happening which

¹ See M.N. Srinivas, (1955) *The Social System of a Mysore Village*, in Marriott, McKim (ed.), *Village India: studies in the little community*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 1–35

attracted many policy makers and analysts to frame the affirmative action of eradicating these social misfits for the progress of the societies. However, the concerned of social exclusion can be trace early in the times of Aristotelian account, as Sen (2000), argued that Aristotelian perspective has given the idea of exclusion stating an impoverished life is without freedom and choice to undertake activities which is a central part of the necessity for humans in the society to be included.

In particular at first the term coined in 1974 by Rene Lenoir, then Secretary of Social Action for (Gaullist) Chirac Government in France to mitigate the problems of longing unemployment, poverty and social disintegration (Silver, 1994). However, with this initiation the term became a core part of France policy and planning for the next few decades to overcome from the existing situation through state inclusive policies. Meanwhile the dissipation of the term is not limited to the France instead it catches wildfire to entire Europe and even in the other continents. Its seem that In France back then, the conception of exclusion incorporates those categories which forms one tenth of the population in unemployment, poverty and social disintegrated because of economic restructuring. As excluded primarily connotes in French context-

The mentally and physically handicapped, suicidal people, aged invalids, abused children, substance abusers, delinquents, single parents, multi-problem households, marginal, asocial persons, and other social misfits (Sen, 2000).

Thus, the expression of the term has a lot to do with the kind of economic and socio-political situation prevailing in the societies at that particular point of time. Such, it was deeply embedded with the said categories as social problems and that solidarity is weakening down at the level of moral and social integration. Thus, in Durkheimian lens the problems of social disintegration was evolving and thus there is a disruption

of social bond and cohesion because of exclusion. Indeed, individuals are lacking the integration and inclusion with the society as a whole. However the exclusion is further seen with diverse ways and approach in understanding the social problems for inclusive outcomes later when it spread in the contextual and conceptual manner.

2.3. Social Exclusion: Concept and Context

It observed that this subject originated to categorize and implement the inclusive policies and programmes in order to retain the economic instability that out broke in Europe general and in France particular. However, the conception and contextualization of social exclusion did not cage itself within the purview of material and physical aspect. It rather uncoated and extended to non-material and symbolic aspects making a nature and character of dynamic and multi-dimensionality. In the light of above, Social exclusion is a complex and multi-dimensional process. It involves the lack of or denial of resources, rights, goods and services, and the inability to participate in the normal relationships and activities, available to the majority of people in a society, whether in economic, social, cultural or political arenas. It affects both the quality of life of individuals and the equity and cohesion of society as a whole (Levitas et al., 2007).

Further, some argue that the problems of social exclusion was past and still a present but if anything is not done it will remain in future. As in the academic literature as well as in the policy-planning agency various definitions have formulated to define and encounter the concept of social exclusion best of the manner. To mention, Social Exclusion Unit (1997), defined social exclusion as *'A shorthand term for what can happen when people or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad*

health and family breakdown'. It explains the process, structures and characteristics of the society as well as the individuals experience to these situations. Moreover, it defined as a lack of or denial of access to the kinds of social relations, social customs and activities in which the great majority of people in British society engage (Gordon et al., 2000). It thereby provided the contextual understanding of the conceptions of social exclusion where the minority of the groups excluded when they do not able to enjoy the social standards of the British society. As does explains the cumulative of the symbolic (norms, social rules) and non-material (culture) resources in the life of the persons to be included.

The concept of social exclusion and poverty at times looked by the policy analyst distinct. They saw poverty as distributive and social exclusion as relational. However, with emerging literature of various different issues that related with one another in influencing the conditions and situation, Poverty not only seen as shortage of income but the absence of socio-cultural and political rights and privileges of the individuals of certain sections in accessing the opportunities and freedom. Further, Sen (2000), argued that it should understand with relational and causal manner in deprivations, poverty and social exclusion. The presence of exclusion as separate entities will however make the researcher to limit it with particular attributes but the comprehensive and analytical insights will make researcher to give the social cause which present in any of the exclusion. In addition, it is very much important for any policy planners while formulating the inclusive and integrative policies for human development.

Sen (Ibid.) while explaining mentioned different kind of exclusion such as Active exclusion as deliberate in excluding peoples from the opportunities through state or

national policies, where as Passive exclusion that is non-deliberate but the social process and the conditions of the society that exclude the peoples. Further, social exclusion holds the group concept, Amartya Sen says that some people is kept outside and were some people are included describes the two situational of unfair exclusion and inclusion. He said that the act of exclusion in excluding the people from access and entitlements given to certain social groups based on recognized rules, norms, and fair principles considered as unfair exclusion. Likewise, the inclusion that provides the access and entitlements from certain social groups but on different terms and conditions considered unfair inclusion.

Moreover, Sukhdeo Thorat (2010), argue that social exclusion is the defined as the social process, which involves the denial of fair and equal opportunities to certain social groups in multiple spheres of society resulting in the inability of individuals from excluded groups to participate in the basic political, economic and social functioning of the society. It therefore embraced all spheres of life that gives the discrimination and deprivations to particular groups. He thus said that certain groups is excluded partially or wholly from the full participation in society based on their group identity and having two-dimension, as societal relations causing exclusion and the outcomes causing deprivations. While Adam smith's deprivation certainly express that it involves not "being able to appear in public without shame" is seen as a capability failure or deprivation that takes the form of social exclusion.

So it is seen that social exclusion with varied notions and meanings had incorporated different dimension in the context and conceptual way that gives us to see this social problems with every possible perspectives in able to study the excluded groups in the political, economic, social and cultural arena.

2.4. The Dimension of Social Exclusion

In a way, 'Social Exclusion' is so ambiguous, evocative, multi-dimensional and expansive such that it is able to define in many different ways (Rao, 2010). It has its roots not only economic spheres but also cut across socio-political and cultural aspects. Over the time, the transformation of the exclusion since its initiation has enriched its field across economies and cultural boundary in different spheres and dimensions of societal studies. Indeed, According to Jenkins and Barr (2006), argued that social exclusion requires holistic approach promoting population of excluded in the community participation, access to basic services, promoting behaviour change, income growth and the other core elements of exclusion. Thus, understanding social exclusion is the complex process for it carries various aspects and context of social reality. In a simple way, it speaks of non-inclusion or prohibition of unit or group of individuals in the socio-economic, political and cultural opportunities and justices. Generally, it is the practice or the processes of keeping out the peoples from the participation, freedom and opportunities where a society formed in some manner of social structures. It behaves in the multiple forms and decree with varying magnitude that vary from regions to regions with societies structures. Thus, to view exclusion as constraint may not be wrong because it controls the mobility of the individuals and groups in relational to the social structures and institutions of the societies. However, to see exclusion as constraint is not complete in itself as there is the different relational and causal components for its behaviours (Sen, 2000). Such that the individuals or a group to avail the freedom and actions in their everyday life relative to the others that enjoys in society if not provided shows exclusion.

Further, by its versatility and richness, the dimension of exclusion cut across many spheres such as Caste, Class, Ethnicity, Gender, Health, Employment, Religion,

Culture, Poverty and Region to name many others in the recent understanding.

While some group of scholar, argue social exclusion as consequences of poverty and deprivation and some argue it is relational and processes that give way to another deprivation that is unlikely to poverty or economic failure. The way social exclusion has its dominating policy for many decades with the contextual understanding of French societies was incommensurable largely in the other countries besides European Union. Even at times, the European countries came up with reforms and inclusion of new social issues that keeps the dimension of exclusion broader, unstable and limitless. Having the understanding of other regions often contradicts with the very notion of social exclusion as it was. So the dimension has its ever widening scope and do not fixed to particular rod of poverty or unemployment rather its elastic nature make every possible way to incorporate issues that vary from regions and context. Thus, argued by Silver (1994), that social exclusion carries over the period the three paradigms “Solidarity, Specialization and Monopoly” in the conception of approaching social problems.

In the solidarity paradigms, social exclusion is the rupture and disintegration of social bonds of individuals with the society. It explains about inability of social order and social solidarity for cohesion. The exclusion here talks about the inconsistent of social order that divides the individuals or groups forming dualistic categories. Since social order can be, explain as external to individuals, moral and normative from the Durkheimian perspectives. It is then see that inclusion or the order is the assimilation of minority into the dominant culture. However, the contemporary uses of the term contains multi- cultural meanings and see that social order or solidarity is maintained with two way process of even the majority needs to assimilate within minority fold.

In the specialization paradigm explains social exclusion as consequences of differentiation, division of labour and separation of spheres. Here the exclusion has been located with the inability or lack of mobility of an individual's across boundaries of spheres. The individuals are the central here to form structures by their either co-operation or conflict ideas of interest. Therefore, individuals have their ability and freedom to participate and form their interest-oriented groups and structures but when the individuals and groups excluded for not securing mobility to perform freely in the market and social groups it forms exclusion in this paradigm. As individuals differ in many ways and they create different markets and social groups but when the dominated structures with their rules and norms disallow for separation of spheres and mobility between the spheres is certainly brings exclusion in society. Unlike the two paradigms, the monopoly paradigm saw social exclusion as consequences of formation of some group's monopoly over the others. Here exclusion can occur with the interplay of class, status and power relations. This paradigm sees social order as coercive and hierarchical in arrangements. It benefits to those who are included and look after the benefits of the already included while excluding those that also forms the part of the societies. As a result, the social closure seen as existing because of the existing institutions and cultural distinctions, in which not only boundaries but also inequality perpetuates. Then the monopoly over scarce resources by the dominant groups further enriches their delimited status, power, and class such as it becomes a common interest even for the excluded groups to locate that consequentially put them as outsiders always.

Even Sen (2000), had argued in his essay on social exclusion that to comprehend it every possible ways required seeing not only in the constitutive components but also in instrumental features and relational aspects of capability failure. As every regions

and context is diverse from one another. In the context of British societies, social exclusion emphasizes the importance of individual choice because individual not excluded if inclusion is possible in undesired manner, which means equal opportunities and not with the conditions applied.

In the British context, the dimension of social exclusion is the individual approach, which based on the inability to exercise social rights of citizenship, which also include rights to decent way of living. The approach looks the social exclusion like a social stratification.

Often, the social scientist had argued that exclusion is multi-dimensional and multi-faceted in its manifestations and to comprehend the exclusionary happenings, the comprehensive and holistic way of addressing its behaviour is important. Therefore, to ascertain exclusion and its behaviours the historical roots and context is a matter of insights. As the idea of exclusion is not a recent phenomenon, but can trace back to the Aristotle era (Ibid. 2000). Hence, it states that over the time exclusion was present and had different way of seeing in its approach of addressing the social problems.

As said that exclusion primarily has long history that exist when the humans tried to live their life with some forms of decency and maintenance since then the constraint and deprivation made a knock at the life of individuals and groups based on the casual and processes in human organized life. On this note, the exclusion had over the time shows the diverse nature in context and regions. The dimension of exclusion is still the matter of non-similarity in the universal form.

2.5. Social Exclusion in the Indian Context

India has a long history of division of groups into various strata in forming a diverse cultural space together with discrimination, isolation and exclusion for lower caste or

Dalits. It said that India has a rich diversity of socio-cultural spheres in terms of its nature and behaviour. As one, if had a sky view then veritably agree with the notion of unity in diversity irrespective of caste, creed, sex, ethnicity, and culture to mention among others. However, with the close look, one realizes the changed behaviours of different components of Indian society. So, to mention about caste and caste system been one of those components or the innate nature of Indian soil is the historical fact of caste being significant institution if not only. In line with, to mention about the exclusion in India can be inescapable from the caste-based behaviours. As Rao (2006), rightly said that in India social exclusion embedded in the societal interrelations and institutions that exclude discriminate, isolate and deprive some groups based on group's identities such as caste and ethnicity. It is then very important to understand the conception of exclusion based on its different caste behaviours. Therefore, exclusion in Indian context can refer to group based rather than individual that which can be in the other regions.

It is also societal in the way the person of certain social groups excluded based on their group identity of caste, religion ethnicity and others rather than individual attributes of specific achievement and failure (Thorat & Sabharwal, 2015). As caste has always played a pivotal role in the life of individuals and groups from birth to death and one cannot avoid the existence of life with caste and its attributes of ascribed identity in any way. As caste and its behaviours in the social, economic, political and cultural spheres over the time facilitate the existence of exclusion in reality.

Besides, India being the Hindu majority country and have evolved since ages with various types of religious social order. Particularly, the Hindu social order based on

caste influenced by religion and scriptures that not only exclude the lowest caste called Dalits but also motivates by preserving the traditions of scriptures and texts. Thus, one can reflect exclusion in Indian Hindu system in two spheres namely from the sacred texts, religious philosophy and at the day-to-day social interaction which are motivated by former, which are termed as Book view and Field view of exclusion of Dalits living reality (Kumar, 2014). He argued that Hindu social order based on Varna model where there is no utterance and written form for the fifth Varna, which forcefully created to subjugate the lowest sections. However, the construction of castes by the Varna, influenced by the divine theory and management by the written scriptures and process shows the exclusion in the Indian context primarily at large on caste basis.

Further, social exclusion embedded in social institutions and interrelationship, operates as the system of fundamental characteristics of fixed civil, cultural and economic rights of each caste, which provides no change and mobility implying *forced exclusion* of one caste from rights of other caste or the no change of occupation of one caste from the others (Ambedkar, 1987 in Rao, 2010). It has been seen the Indian contextualization has sufficiently proved to be caste based exclusion at the foremost and particularly for the Dalits in its worst way of exclusion in number of spheres.

On the other, in the Indian context, the untouchability is also important to know the social exclusion. The presence of caste based Indian society resulted in the formation of untouchability in spirit and theoretical the status of Untouchables called present Dalit and legally Scheduled caste. Untouchability was born around in the Hindu social order back to AD400 (Ambedkar, 1990). It is a state of mind where the other caste Hindus

thinks the Dalits are unworthy of touching (Ramaiah, 1998). Further, it is also a way and means, which caste Hindus consistently assert their caste purity, superiority and rights over the Dalits (ibid.). However, the social exclusion through untouchability shows the two-way process where the caste higher suppressed the Dalits and the Dalits inculcate the values of being suppressed as a part of their life. As seen since ages that the Untouchables have suffered from the stigma of polluting, unapproachable and impurity in the Indian society (Thorat & Sabharwal, 2010).

In addition, it is known in India, Dalit exclusion since ages had resulted to many forms of anti-caste movement in the history of Dalit struggle for mobilization. In this line, Ramaiah (1998), mentioned the various kinds of Dalit Movements in India. He said that because of the presence of caste-based discrimination, physical suppression, social maladjustments, inequality in the social, economic, political and cultural spheres gives birth to this movement. He argued that in the turn of nineteenth century, there were various regional movements namely- *Satnami Movement* (1820-1830) of Madhya Pradesh, the *Adi-Dharm Movement* (early nineteenth century) of Punjab, the *Ezhavas or Iravas Movement* (early nineteenth century) of Kerala, the *Nadars Movement* (1920's) of Tamil Nadu. Nevertheless, the *Ambedkar's Movement* (1920 onwards) *Dalit Solidarity Programme* (from 1992) was an All India Movement. However, with all these movements of Dalits involving for the mobilization from the grip of caste-based exclusion did not bring the fruits of liberation, empowerment from the age-old practices of untouchability. Thus, it became an important issue for how to protect the Dalits and their rights in the Indian society through constitutional measures.

When India became independent, the challenges before the constitutional makers

were to protect the social dignity and self-esteem of the extreme excluded sections of the Indian society called Dalits among various other parameters. However, with the initiative of the Ambedkar, being the architect of Indian constitution able to ban legally the practice of untouchability. The articles amended and included in the Indian constitution to protect and safeguard their life from social evil practices of discrimination, exploitation, untouchability in every walks. The constitution included Article 17, which abolished Untouchability and the practice of it in any form is an offence and shall be punishable in accordance with law. Further, viewing to curb the increasing atrocities against the Dalits the '*Untouchability Offences Act, 1955*' formed, which later amended further in 1976 and renamed it as *Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955* (PCS). Apart from these, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, which amended again in 2015 that came into force in 2016 formed with specific focus to protect from any attempt of atrocities based on caste lines. Besides these, the affirmative action implanted to mobilize the Dalits from the subjugation and inequality. It was reservation policy, programmes into the political, educational, and employment, with 15% to SCs and 7.5% to STs, following the constitutional provision and articles amendment.

The Dalit who are the lowest rank of the caste system also called Untouchables is/ was primarily a worst excluded group in the Indian soil historically and they form core part in the Indian diversity. However, even today, they are not still mobilizing from their stigmatised social status of impurity and therefore the atrocities upon them are still present. The total population of Indian Dalits consists of 16.6% (census, 2011) of total India's population, which accordingly the Uttar Pradesh consists of 21% followed by West Bengal (11%), Bihar (8%) and Tamil Nadu (7%) that constitutes the half of Dalit population of India's total. According to National

commission for SCs and STs Report of 2017-18, the annual growth of crime against Scheduled Caste (Dalits) has shown the increase from 38670 (2015) to 40801 (2016). Further, even according to National Crime Record Bureau of 2021 report the increase of atrocities cases against the Scheduled Castes from 50291 (2020) to 50900 (2021) with an increase of 1.2%. The state with highest crime reports from Uttar Pradesh with 25.82% followed by Rajasthan with 14.7%, and Madhya Pradesh with 14.1%.

Apart from this, the figure of atrocities on SCs women report 7.64% cases of rape including minors and including all forms of violence on SCs women report 16.8%. Moreover, the report also shows that the total 70,818 cases of atrocities are pending investigation until 2021, which shows the delay of cases outcome. However, this is only the cases that came under the purview of administration but with this increase of atrocities, it obviously revealed the presence of caste based exclusion of Dalits in the present reality.

Moreover, the Indian space has a more or less longing of caste based identity from birth until death in matters of birth rituals, naming ceremonies, marriage rituals and death rituals. In fact, the caste and its behaviours if not taken as a system also in the present society still replicates the importance in the life of the individuals. As under the aegis of caste and untouchability, the society divided and isolated for many centuries leaving the outcome of impoverished, deprived and excluded group from progress and development. However, in the post independent India, the role of constitution played important part to eradicate this situation, societal norms and rules through many policies, and affirmative action but still the holistic development is far from the reach. The problems of Indian exclusion is very much institutional and societal for it carries the customs, norms, traditional attributes for socializing the

person in living the life. Even in the education, Jobs and other aspects, the excluded sections to mobilize their life in a decent manner is a matter of long journey in the socio-cultural umbrella of caste and untouchability, which still carries the notions of what Dumont called purity and pollution. As the Indian reality of exclusion showcase, the persistence of caste, based exclusion in different spheres of the civil, religious, cultural and political rendering the formation of discrimination, exploitation, suppression by different means of caste expression. To mention few are unfair exclusion and Unfair Inclusion situation of what Amartya Sen said. Besides, prevalence of Purity-pollution in the Inter-caste Marriages, the higher caste dominance in the matters of Social norms, rules for the social interactions, the Jobs, education, religious and political exclusion for accessing the opportunities by the lower caste or Dalits.

So when exclusion promotes the attributes of inequality, prohibition of lower caste identity, and non-acceptance of Dalits as same within the fold of fraternity lest the freedom, rights and equality becomes a source of caste based exclusion in the Indian reality.

2.6. Summary

Social exclusion as term and concept has the wider connotation in every society. It is seen that the literal term has its origin during the late twentieth century in French society where the analyst and policy planners wanted to understand and formulate the strategy to alleviate some negative social effects of economic restructuring (Rao, 2010). However, the term gradually became the centre of focus across Europe with its literal usage in France for the need of social order (Kummitha, 2015). It was associated with individual, social, economic and political denial of rights. Further, it

was also associated to diverse groups of disadvantaged such as specially able(d), delinquents like drugs addicts, homosexuals etc. who were socially excluded in the western society (Taket et al., 2009 in Kumar, 2014). On the other, social exclusion has the multidimensional nature, multi-defined and contextual aspects, which makes its existences, vary from societies and different in nature of exclusion. In India, social exclusion revolves around the societal interrelations and institution that isolate, exclude, discriminate, deprive based on the identity like caste, ethnicity and religion (Thorat & Louis, 2003, in Thorat and Sabharwal, 2010). The socially excluded groups on the basis of caste system since the ages were the Untouchables known as Dalits and legally called Scheduled castes at present has faced the structural and social discrimination at large. Even this exclusion has upsurge many anti-caste movements across length and breadth of the country at different period (Ramaiah, 1998). However, is still present in which Dalits severely faced losing life from the atrocities of higher caste sections across different regions in India. As the Constitutional and legal measures have implemented various protections and affirmative action to look after them however there is still the caste based exclusion in different spheres. As per NCRB 2001, report there was increase of 1.2% Crime against Dalits. With this background, social exclusion though originated in the Europe has the contextual, dimensional, historical, structural, agent etc. in understanding the Dalits in India (Kumar, 2010).

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CHAPTER 3

Caste Based Exclusion of Dalits in Nepalis

3.1. Introduction

The Nepalis community over the period both in pre and post independent and yet too evince the presence of the caste behaviours in many of the socio-religious and cultural lifestyles. There is a presence of Dalits and non-Dalits caste and ethnic groups in the Nepalis fold. Thus, it is however indeed that Nepalis are the very rich and diverse community where distinct culture, traditions and language includes parallel with the Nepali lingua-franca and attach with emotions and historical and geographical shared feelings, the division of caste (Jaat) incorporating all these castes and ethnic groups form hierarchy and functions in various social aspects. It can be say that Nepalis Dalit has seldom voices over caste atrocities; but not the movement against caste hegemony just like other parts of India. One may be able see this as a reason of demographic minority where identity crisis of Nepalis as whole is more important than caste behaviours. Although the nature of societal inevitable change has influenced the physical, visibility of caste and its expression of exclusion and discrimination, are not only social issues but challenged by legal and constitutional too. However, one has to rethink, is it so in the Nepalis? Or, whether the caste based exclusion in Nepalis has turned down from the rudimentary laps of the caste based hierarchy and exists in some other way or the identity crisis of the Indian Nepalis certainly unified all caste and ethnic groups irrespective of purity-pollution duality of Hindu caste system.

Therefore, before knowing the Nepalis community and its various aspects of caste based relations within, it is immensely important to know the nomenclature of term Nepali in the India as well as Nepal context. Further, the identity crisis of labelling

Indian Nepalis as 'Foreigners' or Nepal's people in India make the predicament of multiple layers in the life style of Nepali Dalits.

The term 'Nepalis or Nepalese' often interchangeably used by the non-Nepali communities in India primarily with the notions of perhaps sameness in socio-linguistic, cultural and biological features shared between the Nepal and Indian Nepalis. Unlike, the term Nepalis, the Nepalese is to denote peoples from Nepal. Here, Subba (1989), mentioned that the suffix 'ese' according to the concise oxford dictionary means the people and language of foreign habitation. Thus, the Indian Nepalis are not foreign but often misrepresented. Apparently, the spellings of the term do not make any difference before the other communities who is non-Nepali. However, in the academic parlance the apt for Nepalis is preferred over the Nepalese in general consent by the Indian Nepalis such that the consciousness and awareness about the identity issues can solve for being not from Nepal. Again, the Nepali language prevailing in both the countries hardly resist of differences such that it again confuse the other communities in the middle of nowhere. Moreover, somehow reduce this confusion even Sinha (2009), had tried to give nomenclature of INO (Indians of Nepalese origin) and NIO (Nepalese of Indian origin) yet this still again did not hold any acceptance to Indian Nepaliness for the community. Thus, one group of scholarship argues that Nepali represent nationality and language of Nepal and gives the political expression, while the other groups argue that is represent the ethnic groups that has no spatial significance, even the language doesn't have spatial character. Thus, the use of term Nepalis is widely accepted rather than Nepalese in India. Further, the Indian area expanded to Himalayan kingdom during British rule finally subjugates the present Darjeeling, Siliguri, Kalimpong and Duars from the erstwhile Gorkha and Sikkim kingdom. Thus, the peoples permanently settling out

here also came under its administration in the initial period and later within the Independent India. Hence, the people of these places with permanent settlement and generation that originated over time obviously recognized as a part of India nationality. In the light of above lines, mentioned that it was the migration of border over peoples rather than migration of peoples over border.

Since, with this habitation over the period, the predomination of Nepalis also had their traditions and customs, primarily the division and arrangement of Nepalis in the caste structure fold. Besides the fight for Indian Nepalis identity, one of the groups of the community is struggling with inbuilt problems of exclusion within the community. Though many of them claim caste, based exclusion is not the modern society phenomenon, where class occupied the pivotal role. Even the caste-class relations is widely dismantled if not completely is a point of progress against the caste identity assertions. The Nepalis community in due historical facet of changing social organizations takes the two courses in India context, firstly the Indian Nationality and other is the revivalism of the ethnic cultures and caste identity. As the study, seek to explore the caste and its exclusive operations in the present situations, the history and the continuity of Nepalis lifestyle in the socio-cultural milieu is important.

3.2. The Land and People

The Nepalis also known as ‘Gorkhas’ in synonymous initially was predominated in the hills district of Darjeeling, Kalimpong and the Terai regions of present Jalpaiguri district bordering Bhutan at the east, Nepal at the west and Sikkim and China at the north and North east. The demography of Nepalis is not only confined to this region, yet the uneven distribution of Nepalis habitation is across length and breadth of the country with major adaptation and assimilation of host society for more than the

centuries. It is therefore not correct to hold the population only in the hills, terai and Duars. The population census of India 2011 shows that the Nepalis speaking population as mother tongue are 29, 26,168 with major chunk in West Bengal and Sikkim. However, the population well distributed to Northeastern states, and many other Indian states and union territory too. The Nepalis having their traces from the Gorkha kingdom does conventionally linked with peoples from Nepal, although the nomenclature Nepalis itself is Indian origin and Nepalese represent foreign land following the peoples included with British delineating the political boundaries after the land was brought under the British India from Independent kingdom. Over the time, Nepalis not only contained in the three-hill subdivisions subjugated to Indian region but moved far away across different regions. It is a matter that officially the migration still on and either side it happens following the Treaty of Peace and Friendship, 1950, but many times the Indian Nepalis identity asserted for being Nepalese (word for Nepal's immigrants). However, with the communication of Indian Nepalis and Nepalese, the flow of caste habits is also revived that certainly gives the existing hierarchical caste structure to not lose its essence. It though said by Subba, the presence of caste obligations is not rigid as compare to Nepal and the mobility of the each lower caste and middle caste is flexible, if not completely based on caste prescription. Moreover, the openness of border and before this 1950, Treaty of peace and Friendship, the population of Nepali was a seldom entertained as British army that later absorbed as Indian army, construction labourers, Tea and Chinchona workers among others. However, with the diverse histories and geography of Nepalis, the important of knowing populations across states is most important.

Figure 3.1 Major state wise population of Nepali speaker

States	Population of Nepali speakers (Mother Tongue)
Arunachal Pradesh	95,317
Assam	5,96,210
Manipur	63,756
Mizoram	8,994
Meghalaya	54,716
Nagaland	43,481
Sikkim	3,82,200
Tripura	11,61,107
Uttarkhand	1,06,399
West Bengal	11,55,375
Maharashtra	75,683
Himachal Pradesh	89,508
Total	29,26,168

Source: Census, 2011

The history of the region before imperialism shows apparently that adjoining places of India, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan and Tibet had a kingdoms administration. However, over the period many of the kingdoms turn into nations besides present Bhutan. During the kingdom, erstwhile Nepal had its territory expanded as far eastwards to the erstwhile Sikkim kingdom comprises of Darjeeling, Mirik, Kurseong, Kalimpong, terai regions of Siliguri and Duars. However, the conflict and war between the kingdoms roses the many kingdoms to engage in the front to safeguard overran of the land by the other kingdoms. It was then during the colonialism when British first had footprint in the Bengal and saw the Himalayan landscapes in conflict between and among the kingdoms. Over the period, they approached the Sikkim kingdom and tried to assist them from the Gorkha king of the erstwhile Nepal whom known as fiery and fearless. So then in the 1814 war of Anglo-Gurkha, the latter was conquered and then in 1815 the *'treaty of Saugali'* was signed that made the Gurkha kingdom to cede the territories taken from the Sikkim. However with this British victory, the land was now tasted its first foreign race in the eastern Himalayan region. Soon after that, the British

negotiated with the Sikkim to gift them this region for establishing the sanatorium for their troops to recover from the health difficulties. With the consistent effort from the British, Sikkim was not been able to avoid, finally leased to British with some monetary taxes annually. However, the British did not stop here and expanded their territories further in the Himalayan routes. The inclusion of Kalimpong and Duars from Bhutan following Anglo-Bhutanese war ended with the '*treaty of Sinchalia*', which made Bhutan to compromise many areas of their trans-Himalayan route of trade and commerce with Nepal, Sikkim and Tibet.

In the course of their Imperialism, many kingdoms were cropped and seized having trans-Himalayan exchange of peoples that facilitates no difference in the ecological, cultural and economical aspects.

Soon then, the new area that formed has different political connotations after the kingdoms were bifurcated British being between the Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan. So far, the concern about the Tibet was having relations with Sikkim untill China occupied with their clever game of sending their troops to Tibet in assisting against Sikkim like British assisted Sikkim. Finally, in the rage of four kingdoms, Britain and China was vantage in getting the fruits of land in expansion.

3.3. The Caste and Ethnic Groups

The Nepalis community is literally a vase of several diverse groups with its own distinct cultural, linguistic, traditions and practices. In the meanwhile, these diverse groups make uniformity as whole making little or no differences in living the life style. To put it in Functionalist perspective says that, a society is a system of interconnected parts that performs in co-ordination to stabilize the order, cohesion and unity to whole. Likewise, the Nepalis society formed with the interconnected parts of

distinct cultures, languages, traditions to thrust the Nepali as whole in the functioning of community. Moreover, the presence of caste, indifferent to every ethnic group, along with division in the hierarchical order exemplifies the bonding and order of the social organization. Having this phenomenon of caste and cultural attributes with the common lingua franca earns the Nepalis to have integration with the deep embedded notions of unity. On the other hand, following the commonality, the community has its heterogeneity and the insights about the diverse groups and caste is vital in understanding the particularities of the Nepalis as whole. Such as these understanding of the communities will make any scholarship on this to delve certainly with the rooted posture and process of the forming the Nepalis caste and the division as whole without any limitation and unjust with the research inquiry. So, the castes and ethnic groups incorporation has not only historical traces but also the sharing of the socio-cultural milieu over the period. Thus knowing the communities each gives the subject of study clarifies with the community's existence in relation to Nepalis society. As known, Caste system is collection of several groups embedded in the some form of structural hierarchy thereby functioning on certain rules and regulations that they performed in the socio-cultural, political and economic milieu. However, to understand the status and role played by the different constituent parts or groups in the Nepalis community, one has to undergo the historical sketch of each group suitably.

A. The Higher-caste status groups

Bahun (Brahmins)

Bahun known as the superior caste in the Nepalis community originally belong to Indian subcontinent. Sources and account say that they migrated from India to Nepal during Muslim Invasion in 12th century but it is also a fact that not all Bahuns sweep to Nepal. Hence, it is by their social and cultural revivalism that established their

Hindu caste hierarchy over the time through various kingdoms retaining the highest position of caste too. They belong to the Caucasoid race, which is also an Indo-Aryan family and language (Bista, 1971). They speak Nepali, which brought from 'Devnagri Script' like the Sanskrit. They seen as caretaker of religious scriptures and books compare to their other fellow groups and have different respected status in the society along with their wealthy position. Along with their population growth, they identified with two divisions over time namely 'Upadhaya Bahun' and 'Jaisi Bahun' with some sorts of differential role and functions in the society (Subba, 1989). The former holds the superior status and performs the priestly works as well as hold the credibly of learning Vedas while the latter do not and engage in learning 'Astrology or Jyotish'. In marriage, it found they follow monogamous but some of them also go for polygynous but do not practice cross cousin and parallel cousin. Endogamy is preferred but Exogamy is also maintained vis-à-vis 'Gotra and Clan'. Hypergamy is preferred in with Chhetri, Newar and Thakuri though in the present time some of them do no restrict to higher caste but prefer to have spouses from the other lower caste category too, yet the preferences of the lowest caste (Dalit/Untouchable) is certainly less.

Chhetris

This caste falls next to Thakuris in terms of their status in the hierarchy. The word 'Chhetri' refer as a corrupt form of Sanskrit word 'Kshatriya'. They are even claimed by the anthropologist as the offspring of Brahmins and Khas race, the predominate race in the western Nepal before the arrival of Brahmins. After Brahmins contact with them and their already nearness to Sanskrit language and racially akin to Brahmins, they were not given the equal status but bit lower than they were. As Bista (1971), argues, the progeny of Brahman man and local Khas hill woman became to call as

‘Khatri’. They then had given the status of Chhetri and Khatri chhetri. While on the rituals and ceremonies status, they wear the sacred thread like Brahmins and some of them are Matwali Chhetri (drinking liquor), who do not wear sacred thread. In addition, they have little difference in social ceremonies and ritual practices. As Subba argued that the Chhetri though have some mixed origin, yet there are three probable sources for their variation-

- a. The progeny of the Brahmins with local woman.
- b. The converted from hill tribes through the process of sanskritisation of the local inhabitants.
- c. The descendants of Rajputs or Kshatriyas of the plain, who had at time taken refuge in Nepal and served as military adventurers.

Moreover, they prefer endogamy, and sometimes prefer hypergamy. Although the hypogamy cases come to see at present, the preference for lowest caste is still against the caste-based rules of orthodox family even in the urban society. Traditionally, they known as warrior caste but now they found in various occupational sectors of primary, secondary and tertiary.

Newars

Newars has known the first settlers or the inhabitants of Kathmandu valley. The writings on them states that the word ‘Newar’ first used in the seventeenth century. Scholar like Regmi claimed it is a geographical term rather than any racial attributes. Therefore, Bista (1980), is of the opinion that the term Newar derived from the country name and vice-versa. Unlike, the other ethnic group, they are not single homogenous and have their own caste hierarchy that underwent changes after their consolidation in the Gorkha Empire. They are today mixture of both Hinduism and

Buddhism along with the races of mongoloid and Mediterranean type. They also speak Nepali and Newari, the Tibeto-Burmese language that contains several dialects. While in the rituals practices, they have their own things like 'Ihi'-the rituals of marrying with fruits called wood apple by female at the age of five to ten such as this marriage symbolizes more auspicious than with the partner. Apart from this, they have an institution called 'Guthi', which guides them in undertaking various responsibilities of worshipping their common ancestor.

B. The Middle-caste status Groups

Rais

History, suggest that the origin of this ethnicity lean towards mystery. They called one of the Kiratas who ruled up to the Indo-Gangetic valley. However, the term denotes technically the 'Headman' but in the course, it is absorbed as the generic nomenclature for the entire ethnic group (Bista, 1980). It is claimed that they known to be largest ethnic group along with Limboo initially in eastern Nepal. Since then there population has scattered in many other regions during the consolidation of Nepal. However, in the process they became the settlers in far away regions of eastern extensive areas of present Indian region. They have their own religious practices of Animism worshipping local deities. In (Northey and Morris, 1974: 238) cited by Subba (1989), mentioned, they are divided into ten major residential clans of which three clans descent to 'Lhasa Gotra' hail from Lhasa, Tibet and the remaining seven descent to 'Kashi Gotra' form Banaras. The religion among the Rai ethnicity is Hinduism, Buddhism and Animism. They speak their own dialect too with Nepali. Their culture varies according to their variations in the ancestor worshipping. However, the marriage preferences are within the group, the inter-ethnic and other caste groups preferred too. The preference of lowest caste category accepted with the

changing social settings by the education and modernization, yet it is not often than with the other higher caste.

Limboos

Limboos, who belong to the family of Kiratas, often synonymously called 'Subba'. They share much of the similarities with their other Kiratas groups. In the writings of Subba, the origin of them has three-belief perspective. Firstly, they came from the north (from the province of Tibet). Secondly, they trace their origin from Kashi or Banaras. Thirdly, they believed to have come from mother earth. In the religion perspective, they are Hindus but sometime practice Animism. Presently some of them have also converted to Christianity. The primary marital preference of course within the groups as this ethnic group has divided into numerous 'Thars' (sub-tribe). In the recent time, the inter-ethnic and with the other caste category preferences also practiced in the marriage. However, the lowest caste preference is still the uncertain. They have culture and traditions very diverse, speak their own dialect but often prefer Nepali as their mother tongue too.

Tamangs

The Tamangs are also one of the ethnic tribe of southern slopes of the Himalayas of Nepal. According to some sources, they called as 'Dhamang' as synonymous. It believed that the term Tamang came from the Tibetan word 'Ta' means horse and 'Mang' means traders that is the horse traders. Even some of them also believed that they were the horse riders in the Tibetan kingdom. Tamang belong to Buddhist religion but some of them also follow both Hindu and Buddhist culture. In addition, few of them also converted to Christian. They form the major group of Tibeto-Burmese speaking communities in Nepal. Like the other ethnic groups, they also

divided into numerous 'Thars' (sub-tribes). As stated by Bista, that each 'Thar' has its own name and they are exogamous and can intermarry besides few clan. However, the marriage beyond the clans is also accepted but with lowest caste in the Nepalis hierarchy, the preference is very low. The marriage type are arrange and mutual capture. Their presence in the hill areas of the present West Bengal and Sikkim and to the various other regions of India is prior to the annexation of Sikkim and inclusion of Darjeeling by the British India.

Sunuwars

This is another ethnic group of Nepalis community of Nepal. They are also timely called 'Mukhia' according to the usage in the situations. Although the history of their origin has the different version, one of the accounts says that, they are migrated from the three regions (Chemjong, 1966: 86-87) cited by (Subba, 1989). The first group migrated from Tibet to Kashmir, Punjab and Bihar and reached to eastern Nepal. The second group also migrated from Tibet following the Brahmaputra and reached eastern Nepal. The third group migrated from Simangarh to eastern Nepal where some them habituated on par with Rais and undertook the Rais nomenclature. Even this groups are also divided into 'Bara Thar' and 'Das Thar'. The former clans practice Hinduism and latter performs the lamaistic Buddhism (Bista, 1980). The marriage among them allowed but they also accept from the other caste yet the lowest caste acceptance is not full-fledged unless it based on partner permission. The rituals and practices of them are both the Hindu and Buddhist way. At present, they are found with Christian religion too.

Gurungs

Gurungs are previously belonging to the tribal family but over the period, they lean

towards more Hindu caste category. Often they practiced both Hindu and Animistic culture. They even encountered to be the Buddhist follower. However, regarding their origin Subba writes, they are one of the tribe of the Northern Tibet who came down to the eastern Tibet and from there spread to various regions of South and west of Asia (Chemjong, 1966: 58) cited by (1989). The Gurungs further divided into 'Char jaat' (Four clans) and 'Sora jaat' (Sixteen clans). For marriage, they prefer traditionally cross cousin that is the Father Sister's daughter however, the present time not bounded by within group, therefore also preferred to opt from other caste too. The rituals and cultural practices as mostly now subjugated by the Hindu ideals.

Sherpas

The Sherpas as one of the highlander tribe best known for their energetic high mountain expedition and living in the extreme hills are also one of the groups in the Nepalis community. According to some scholar, the word 'Sherpa' denotes the corrupt word of 'Sharva' means the people of the east. Moreover, it believed that they have come from the eastern part of the Tibet where they habituated the frontier district of Tsing-Lai-Sechwan provinces of China (Hermanns, 1954: 23) cited by (Subba, 1989). They practiced fraternal polyandry but not the cross-cousin marriage. Their culture and rituals reflects the Buddhist oriented.

Bhujels

About the origin and history of their existence is still unknown however, the presence in the Nepalis community felt undeniable. They synonymously called as 'Khawas' and sometimes 'Gharti' (Subba, 1989), in the usage manner. They are Hindus in respect to their cultural and rituals orientation. However, some of them also converted to Christian in recent times. As Subba mentioned that, they had the status called as

untouchables but that does not carry over the time (Subba, 1989). As they even, do not have their any own language except the generic language Nepali. Their practice of marriage is within the group as well outside the caste group.

C. The lower-caste status groups

Kamis, Damais and Sarkis

The history of this caste groups commonly called under the nomenclature of Nepalis caste hierarchy as “*Pani Nachalney Jaat*” meaning untouchables. They according to the Hindu caste order carry under the termed used for untouchable as ‘Dalit’ and ‘Harijan’ in recent times after the term became popular universally. However, the origin of these caste groups traces with the Brahmins or the higher caste migration to Nepal in the 12th century in the various regions of Nepal where a sections among them are excluded into the mean position of services caste during the Monarchical rule since the beginning. As Subba, cited in Bista (1980: 110), mentioned that these caste groups belong to the Indo-Aryan race sharing the cultural affinities of Bahuns and Chhetri have migrated from India are the progeny of both the caste but with some unsocial behaviour, their position had dropped in the social hierarchy. As Bista also stated that, they perform the simple form of socio-cultural practices of Bahuns and Chhetris way of life (Bista, 1980). They are collectively belonging to Hinduism but presently they have also converted to Christian in response to their immobile social status within the caste structure.

3.4. Caste among Nepalis

Caste is obviously an important institution in the Nepalis community of India in particular and in India general. Although the caste system in this community in India traces from Nepal but the history and its existence sway from Indian sub-continent

when the people especially the higher caste (Brahmins and Rajputs) when migrated to Nepal in the 14th century B.C. sown the seeds of the Hindu caste order over the period during Muslim invasion to India. It was known that present Nepal had its many principalities in those days and prior to dominating Hindu caste system; the Newari caste system was functioning in one of the region called Kathmandu, the native land of Newar, if not the entire principalities. It mentioned that Newari was the first to include in the legal code of caste system by King Jayasthiti Malla by the assist of Indian Brahmins (Nepal, 1965). It based on the Varna and caste ideology of the Hindu notions. This then slowly made the Newari to form own caste structure with six layers that almost survive for 400 years in the Kathmandu valley. However, the Nepal was having many aborigines in many different places with diverse ethnic group different from one another untill the starting of 14th century (Subba, 1989). Then Soon, It was during the regime of Prithivinarayan Shah in 1769 who consolidated the entire region of present Nepal and as well as reached far away to other areas of the present Indian region of Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Dehradun etc. Thus, over the time, the ruler has tried to embrace all the diverse and distinct socio-cultural groups within the fold of Gorkha Empire with the Gorkha identity. With this establishment of regime, the common social structure formed in the course has naturally absorbed all the exclusiveness with the shared feelings of nationality and common lingua franca 'Gorkhali' with the Hindu caste structure superimposing on the Newari caste structure too. Apparently, with the caste structure imposition, almost all the ethnic groups came under the system forming the mixture of both Newari and Hindu Nepali caste system. The non-ethnic groups such as Kami, Damai and Sarki put into the extreme low caste in parallel to Newari untouchable caste namely Pore-Kullu, Chyame and Hare Haru theoretically but the Newari untouchable's castes are higher from the Nepali

untouchable caste in reality. Such as the caste and ethnic groups that holds the position in the caste hierarchy on the ritual and occupational manner that to certain way also gripped the economic and political spheres. Thus, the new caste hierarchy that formed after 1769 was-

Figure 3.2 Caste Hierarchy 1769 onwards

Varna	Caste
Brahmin	Upadhyaya, Kumai, Jaisi and Deva Bhaju (Newar)
Kshatriya	Thakuri, Chhetri, Khatri
Double order	Mangar and Gurung
Vaishya	Newar high castes
Shudra	Limbu, Rai, low caste Newars, Sunuwars, Murmis, Thamis, etc.
Untouchable	Nepali (Kami, Sarki and Damai) and Newar (Chyame, Pore, etc.)

Source: (Nepali, 1965: 148) in T.B. Subba, 1989's Dynamics of a hill society

Following this system quite for many decades, there was the time that the caste system became more rigid, firm and channelized through the State- caste relations. As already, the caste was solidifying the entire sections of ethnic and non-ethnic collections of masses under the functioning of inter-caste behaviours, it became more stringent during the Rana's rule when the state legal code of conduct formed in 1854 called Muluki-Ain. Therefore, the Structure of the caste system that formed was more evolved with the institutionalization has produced more rigid and immobility towards inter caste relations.

Figure 3.3 Nepal Social Hierarchy, 1854

Hierarchy	Habitat	Belief/religion
<u>Water acceptable (Pure)</u>		
01. Wearers of Sacred thread/ Tagadhari		
- Upper caste Brahmans and Chhetris (Parbatiya)	-Hills	Hinduism
- Upper caste (Madhesi)	-Tarai	Hinduism
- Upper caste (Newar)	-Kathmandu valley	Hinduism
02. Matawali Alcohol drinkers (non-enslavable)		
- Gurung, Magar, Sunuwar, Thakali, Rai, Limbu, Newar	-Hills	Tribal/Shamanism
	-Kathmandu valley	Buddhism
03. Matawali Alcohol drinkers (enslavable)		
- Bhote (including Tamang)	-Mountain/hills	Buddhism
- Chepang, Gharti, Hayu	-Hills	
- Kumal, Tharu	-Inner Tarai	Animism
<u>Water Un-acceptable/ Pani Nachalne (Impure)</u>		
04. Touchable		
- Dhobi, Kasai, Kusale, Kulu	-Kathmandu val	Hinduism
- Musalman	-Tarai	Islam
- Mlechha (Foreigner)	-Europe	Christianity, etc.
05. Untouchable (achut)		
- Badi, Damai, Gaine, Kadara, Kami, Sarki (Parbatiya)	-Hill	Hinduism
- Chyame, Pode (Newar)	-Kathmandu valley	Hinduism

Source: Gurung (2002) in Bennett, Dahal & Govindasamy (2008), Caste, Ethnic and Regional Identity in Nepal

The consolidation and imposition of newly social structures by the subsequent ruler in Nepal was also main reason for the many of the Nepalis to migrate from mainland to the adjoining regions. However the places in the extensive eastern Himalayas of the erstwhile Nepal was already having the Nepali population of ethnic groups following

the Gorkha kingdom expansion that naturally settled the existing population along with the natives namely Lepcha and Bhutia of that regions under Sikkim kingdom before Gorkha expansion. Further, with the colonization the kingdoms occupied territories move into the hands of the British that later added with the independent India. Therefore, the journey of the caste system of Nepalis community in the present region under study is also the consequences of Nepalis already existing in the region before the present India formed. In addition, the migration of the Nepalis during the recruitment in the forces, workers for the tea and cinchona plantations, labour for the constructions and various other sources for the British is also the reason to have this area still sustaining the caste system that came along with them. It said by the scholarship on Indian Nepalis that the first groups of Nepalis migrated from the lower sections in relations to the economic instability of the Nepal as well as kingdom's coercive attitude of caste system. While, the other says that it is for the cheap labour that attracted Britisher to hire them as well as knowing the bravery of the Gorkha in the Anglo-Gurkha war of (1814-1815). Soon then, the scholar like Sinha (2009), mentioned that Nepalis had entered India much officially from 1857 onwards as British Gorkha, regiment formed and in course scattered towards many parts of Indian region. However, the migration is still officially following the 1950 Indo-Nepal treaty of Peace and friendship on both side and indeed that does not captivate the either of the nationality for the exchange of social, cultural, economic aspects. So the Nepalis carrying the caste system is still a matter of fact in the regions though some of them argue the intensity is less compare to Nepal, because of the maximum concentration of Nepalis population in the hills of Darjeeling, and Kalimpong shows less higher caste and more ethnic groups having their own socio-cultural distinct traditions.

In the words of Subba, the caste system in the hills shows three level divisions that do

not subscribe the orthodox pattern of Caste-class social relations based on the occupations and to some extent rituals superiority of purity. He said that far away from Nepal and its cultural ethos, the Nepalis high caste are not dominating prior to their arrival in this region and therefore the existing tribal social structure although intertwined with caste system is not that assertive in social interactions. However, the presence of caste and its functions is not waned in the form of socio-cultural milieu of Nepalis, if not in rigid visibility.

As stated by Subba (1989), the Nepalis caste are divided into three level namely Higher middle and low, the following table would helps to understand-

Figure 3.4 Caste Hierarchy in the Darjeeling-Sikkim Himalayas

Status	Caste	Traditional occupation
Higher (Upper)	Bahun Thakuri Chhetri	Priests Aristocrats Warriors
Middle (Lower)	Newars Rai, Limbu Yakha Mangar,Thami, Sunuwar Gurung Tamang Bhujel Jogi Yolmu Sherpa	Businessmen Agriculturists Agriculturists Shepherds Horse traders/cavaliers Beaten-rice makers/palanquin bearers Ascetics Paper- makers Porters
Lower caste (Untouchable)	Sunar Kami Sarki Damai/Dirji	Goldsmiths Ironsmiths Cobblers Tailors/musicians

Source: Subba (1989), Dynamics of a Hill Society

Thus, it is very interesting to see that the constituent's parts of Nepalis community have different genealogy and evolution at times yet the Nepaliness and caste provides the unity within larger diversity of India. However, the present study would seek to

know the Dalits social exclusion based on caste lines amidst the Nepalis community being cohesive and integrated.

3.5. Nepalis Dalits and Caste Relations

Caste indeed in the Nepalis community of India is the Socio-cultural aspects if does not claim to be the economic privileges and political status of caste higher. The tracing of caste hierarchy from the Malla kingdom to Muluki-Ain 1854, has always put forth the vital instrument that never change was Caste structure in the consolidation of Nepalese in Nepal besides language and religion. However, Indian Nepalis often uphold the flexibility and change in constraint of caste imposition on the one side to mobility at the other in terms of educations, jobs, marriage and political freedom. Such that over the time shattered the caste hegemony if prevailing in the Nepalis groups, prior to the independent India. Since then one has to understand that the Indian Brahmins and Rajputs brought the caste system to the land of Nepal during various social, cultural, political and economic disturbances by the Muslim invaders and expanded to erstwhile Gorkha Empire. Perhaps the Nepalis that believe caste system has lost its grip in the independent Indian soil, is one way of condoling themselves that they are far from the Nepal's caste system of still following the legacy of hierarchical structure even if not on the official way. The other aspects can be the identity issue and nationality in the Indian homeland that still compare the natives as well the origin of India with the foreign land which make Nepalis to majorly cohesive at the surface level rather in actual. Further, the constitutional and legal rights protection against caste discrimination and exclusion in the part of individuals Rights and freedom as a whole manifest only when the system reach towards the unaware and unconscious masses. In addition, the numerous ethnic-groups of Nepalis community present in the Indian regions of erstwhile Gorkha kingdom following their

own culture and traditions perhaps believed in no constrict with Hindu caste ideology and therefore, the impact of caste-based relations is less. Therefore, these are perhaps some way in addressing some of the view towards the community on caste that caste is rather disintegrating. However, the caste based social manner of exclusion and discrimination found in the community. Unlike the above, believe of analyzing the caste relations, the atmosphere of 'Treaty of Peace and Friendship', 1950 provide the space of migration of caste culture with human exchange even the clauses of this treaty do not deal with this subject.

The Nepalis are called heterogeneous and diverse vis-à-vis the rich linguistics, cultural and rituals traditions of groups. Nevertheless, the unity of Nepalis are seen in Common language, probably in 'Nepali', the shared religion of Hinduism, Buddhism and Animism, the caste consciousness that is deep inside the fabric of shared relationship in matters of mixed rituals, ceremonies like marriage, birth, death, preferences of priest, preferences of higher and middle caste in the civil society, etc are manifested. As Subba (1989), mentioned the Nepalis community would fall apart if caste system loose because it is more united by caste rather than language. On contrary, moreover the practices is so deeply embedded that if it loose its social fabric also the caste relations would be untiring way of transmitting even in another way. The Nepalis caste process although seem to be one way of historic Gorkha Empire consolidation, the Indian subcontinent has its history of caste based exploitation of the Dalits, and there model of caste ranking is similar to higher and lower caste if not the middle caste such that the power and privileges was not a cup of Dalits space.

Many scholarship, argue that caste system is more or less disintegrated and changed into the new form of vote politics, appeasement and pressure groups. They even find

the reason for reservation and affirmative action in sustaining it. As Subedi (2016), mentioned that caste system is breaking down to new forms of collective identity and collective bargaining for limited resources in India and Nepal. He also mentioned that it eroded from the ritual level producing the politics of difference in economic and political level.

However, Nepalis Dalits in caste-based relations in particular to the community is still far from the equality of social interactions. There have been reported cases that might sound in few but there are more hidden caste violence cases that have become stories without end and that either goes unheard or not suits to the modern Nepalis higher caste including the middle ethnic caste groups. Dalits (Pani Nachalney Jaat) are the worst category in the social ladder since its inception. Perhaps to this label given by the higher caste raises in every Dalit minds one questions and I think the answer to this perhaps not present satisfactory, and it ask ‘जात अपवित्र हो कि अपवित्र नै जात हो’ (Is caste an impure or impurity is caste).

3.6. Social Exclusion of Nepalis Dalits

The presence of Caste and Untouchability is a structural phenomenon in the Nepalis society since before the formation of Muluki-Ain (1854). As known from certain sources, that Hindu form of caste system migrated to Nepal in 14th century during the Muslim invasion and thus the landscape of Nepal over the time assimilated the Caste system over the existing ‘Newari hierarchical system’ of classification in the society. However, the Nepal’s Newari caste system is still presence parallel with Hindu caste system. Since then it articulated and established well with the consolidation of Nepal during the various Monarchial authority. As a result the formation of caste system in Nepal and across adjacent countries where Nepalis are present based on Hindu social

order, therefore divides the population with the notion of purity and pollution in their everyday life mechanism. The Hindu caste system traditionally categorized people into four groups Brahmins (scholars and priests) at the top, Kshatriyas (warriors) just below, then the Vaishyas (merchants and traders), and lastly, Sudhras (peasants/laborers) (Dumont, 1998).

Likewise, the division of diversified population of Nepalis castes and various ethnic groups of Hindu caste system through the political and legal power of king has reflected in the rigid rules and principles of Muluki-Ain (1854). Such as the caste, system became more rigid in the spheres of socio-economic, political and cultural life of the certain groups. Even the Muluki-Ain brought the Adivasi- Janjati (Non-Hindu indigenous nationalities) into the folds of this hierarchical caste system (Hofer, 2004). Often the status of higher and lower in the society began to decide in matters of rights, privileges, opportunities as Brahmins and Kshatriyas put on the highest privilege status, the ethnic groups in the middle status and the extreme low status occupied by the Dalits (Kami, Damai & Sarki).

The lower castes of the society seemingly face the discrimination and deprivation in social order and structure of the society by the caste identity. The inhumane work of the society such as cleaning, sweeping, and manual scavenging, doing filthy work according to norms and rules of the society allotted to the lower caste. They excluded from any kind of community participation with untouchable notions. The Dalits community not only discriminated to use and access the public places and utilities but also excluded from the legal system and public policies in Nepal. Prior to the dissolution of legal code of conduct (M.A) in 1963, the caste system, was a superior rule beyond humanity and the rights to protect this evil system guarded by the

privileged higher castes? The caste system of Nepalis community distinctly excluded the lower sections in the hierarchy for every opportunity of freedom, rights and equality that better the quality of the life individuals. Primarily the physical exclusion of the Dalits was more common in spheres of temples, houses of higher caste, public gatherings, schools and panchayat to name among many others. As the impoverished conditions and deprivations of the Dalits clearly interlinked excluding from economic, socio-cultural and political rights. However, the dissolution of Muluki-Ain in written rules accepted non-practice of caste system but not been able to create equality or non-discrimination in reality rather the caste expression adapted new forms of articulation in social interaction with hidden expression of caste based exclusion.

As Hofer (2004), rightly said besides the profession of spiritual teaching and priest class by the Brahmins, other occupations like handicraft, trade or agriculture closed to caste affiliations but the occupations such as blacksmiths, weaving and tailoring ascertained to the lowest status profession. It invariably produces the caste notions by fixing the profession that certainly influences the other open occupations for the Dalits.

According to working paper series of IIDS (2005), the Dalits and Dalits women in Nepal are discriminated in education, political participation, economic mobility and social conditions of interrelations. The worst discrimination and exclusion in this expression are the women compare with their male counterpart. However, the various civic organization and state policies as well as international agencies in eradicating the social exclusion based on caste and untouchability after the overthrow of oligarchy and the establishment of democracy with democratic constitution is still the far way to accomplish.

Thus, Nepalis society of caste structure have always played the significant role even if oneself detached from the traditional occupations, access modern education, mobilization in the class (income) position. It has able to prefix even if one is able to included in the political leadership by various democratic measures or affirmative action, lest the group identity (Dalits) always count at the backdrop of Dalits so far the caste and ideas of hierarchical notion assumed to be the social order in the socio-economic, cultural and political life of the population.

3.7. Summary

Caste and exclusion of Dalits in the Nepalis society although relates to Nepal governing system of Muluki-Ain 1854 but it is influenced by the Indian societal reality of caste system. It seen that a caste features was taken to Nepal spaces by the Higher Hindu caste following Muslim invasion (Subba, 1989). This was however, abolished by the 1963 New Muluki-Ain but the presence of division and manifestation is still intact in social, political, cultural and economic spheres. Moreover, the Nepalis across the different regions of India are no exception provided major cultural components of Hindu in general and Nepalis in particular. As the lowest caste among the Nepalis' caste structure called 'Pani No Chalney Jaat' (water unacceptable caste), who are *Kami, Damai and Sarki* among others which in the Indian context called Dalits was magnificently a depressed/untouchable caste in the Nepalis community. They were not thought of worthy in any of the social, political, economic and cultural spheres of mobility in the Nepalis social order. As in the Nepal context even, the severe punishment for them was mandatory over the violations of prescribed norms maintained by the hierarchical division and guarded by state rules in the Muluki-Ain 1854. However, the reality of caste in the Indian Nepalis community shows the variations following the constitutional rights and affirmative action; it is

still the matter of fact in the rituals and ceremony, political and economic mobility of the everyday life of Dalits living in the Nepalis community. Thus even the caste and its attributes not seen as rigid as the traditional age, the importance of caste and its exclusionary behaviours for the Dalit caste peoples located to the traditional identity of caste, which accordingly can be *Group exclusion*.

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CHAPTER 4

Social Exclusion of Nepalis Dalit: A Field Study

4.1. Introduction

Nepalis community has the character of caste and its identity based on ascription. As historically, found that the social exclusion of Dalits based on caste was the social phenomenon that affected severely. Therefore, in the present work of two villages under study, this caste based social exclusion has been looked from the Dalits perspectives. Moreover, for understanding the Dalits and caste experiences, the chapter has divided into two sections-

Section I: Socio-economic profile of respondents, Dalit exclusion, pattern of exclusion and case studies

Section II: Role of Civil Society

i. The Village Profile

The universe under study is the two villages in two districts of North Bengal that has its own historicity of geographical and social composition. The District Darjeeling in recent time divided forming the district Kalimpong on 14 February 2017, which was a part as sub-division earlier. According to present political marking, the researcher's universe falls under the two districts- in the Darjeeling's 'Village Kherjhora' and Kalimpong's 'village Grahams Home'. Like every villages, it is also the representation of part of the larger population of the districts. The villages further represent the caste richness in terms of demographical and socio-cultural profile that certainly represents the essence for the Present study. The following sections here show the village and the population.

i.a. Kherjhora village (Darjeeling)

The village also known as Khairjhoda/Kherjhora forest village is located in the Darjeeling district within the GTA (Gorkhaland Territorial Administration). It is 8.7 km from Champasari More, where it touches NH10. The village is the end road to *Gulma Railway station* that lies in New Jalpaiguri-Alipurduar-Samuktala road line of Northeast Frontier Railway, Alipurduar railway division. The village surrounded by its natural beauty on the three sides with Mahanadi River on the east, Mahanadi wildlife Sanctuary on the North, Mohurgaon Tea Estates on the west and southern side by the metal road that joins many other villages via Champasari road. This village also falls under the Champasari Gram Panchayat of Matigara Block. While talking about the geographical area of the gram panchayat, it is 99.15 hectares. However, the official geographical area of the Kherjhora is not accounted. The village in recent times have transformed into a tourist place where local as well as far distant places peoples comes and enjoy the Gulma view point (located at the North-eastern side) and soothing atmosphere of the River and Jungles. Earlier according to the natives of the village says that this area was dense forest with a particular species of tree called '*Senegalia Catechu*' also called Kher/ Khair tree prior to 1949. The native settlers of this village came from the Gulma forest village, which is in between Mahanadi River and Gulma River on the east side of the Kherjhora. The first total household that came from other side of the Mahanadi River was 25. The peoples back then were involved in either the plantation or the forest labour. Many of them even say that due to the flood that came from Mahanadi River in the 80's have made them to shift into this village.

Later the plantation culture cropped down among the peoples of this village and soon started their own agricultural activity in this village. At present, the village drastically

changed its nature of economic activity from agricultural to non-agricultural, where the majority of the peoples are engaged in wage labour, private job, govt. job, retail shop. There is countable number of restaurant at Gulma viewpoint on the east side owned by the local villagers that gives them some commercial earning too. The village also has one Primary school called '*Singimari Primary School*' at the middle of the village. Apart from this, the village also consists of different religious groups such as Hindu, Buddhist and Christian. Moreover, the Nepalis community in the village forms the diverse background such as Bahun, Chhettri, Tamang, Gurung, Rai, and the occupational caste.

i.b. Homes village (Kalimpong)

The history of the village goes back to pre-colonial times, when the hill stations including Kalimpong and Darjeeling was a forest habituated by first settlers from ethnic, linguistic and few caste groups in the process of trade relations across Himalayan Kingdom's. In the course of time, British India expansion had made the hill stations as Sanatorium and the presence of population then increased. So far, the present village also had the footprint of British settlement and shaping the geographical area. It was the Scottish missionary leader John Anderson Grahams, who came to Kalimpong on 1889, established the institution called Cottage schools/homes for the Small number of orphans and Anglo-Indian abandoned child. The school situated at an altitude of some 4600 feet on Delo Hill in the lap of Mighty Kanchenjunga with green and lusty ambience of nature. Later on, the village area where this institution established called by as Homes' village. The village falls under district Kalimpong of Block-1 with panchayat known as Dr. Grahams Homes

Panchayat, which has the total area of 26.34 square kilometres². The Various difficulties of roads and mountains communicating with the main Bazaar of Kalimpong include this panchayat constituency. It has various tourist attraction spot such as Delo viewpoint and park, Kalimpong Science Centre and Home-stay for the traveller and tourist to explore the regions and beauty of the place. Over the time, the village has also developed with its connectivity apart from narrow path and uneven terrain. Besides, the village is habituated by diverse groups and different religions such Tamang, Bhutia, Bahun, Chettri, Gurung, Sherpa, Mangar etc. with Hindu, Christian and Buddhist and Islam religiosity.

i.c. Population

The total population of the Champasari Gram Panchayat is 306516 (census, 2011), and the total population of Dr. Grahams Homes Gram Panchayat is 306222 (census, 2011). However, the official population of both the villages not published yet, so the researcher here tries to bring the total household population of the Dalit respondents of the two villages combined forms 320 population where Homes' village forms 176 and Kherjhora village has 144. The percentage share of the respondents according to the total population is 25%, where Homes' village has the share of 13.75% and Kherjhora village has 11.25%.

Moreover, the table below shows the sample population of the Dalits of both the villages under study-

² geoiq.io was first indexed by Google in August 2018,
<https://geoiq.io/places/Dr.-Grahams-Homes/AurKFQcWQk>

Table: 4.1 Sampled distribution of Dalit respondents of villages

Districts	Villages	Total Sampled Respondents
Kalimpong	Homes	44 (55%)
Darjeeling	Khairjhoda	36 (45%)
Total sampled respondents	-	80 (100%)

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

Further, the total male and female respondents from both the villages were 59 and 21 (refer table no. 4.2) Meanwhile the total Kami respondents in both the villages is 35, Damai respondents has 22 and Sarki respondents has 23. Particularly, the Kami respondents of Homes have 17 and Kherjhoda has 18, whereas the Damai respondents of Homes have 13 and Kherjhoda has 09, finally the Sarki respondents of Homes have 14 and Kherjhoda has 09.

4.2. Section I

4.2.1. Socio-Economic Profile of the Respondents: An analysis

The present section will focus on the socio-economic profile of the Dalits respondents in both the villages under study. The section would provide us the detail account of the respondents' with respects to Religion, Education, Occupation, Income, Marriage, Age & Gender variables. However, the present profile of the respondents will give the base of examining the objectives of present study. It further locates the present status of the respondents in the Nepalis community, which brings the Dalits profile of knowing the experiences of caste. Thus, the table form has arranged to represent for the mentioned variables:

i. Age and Gender of the Respondents

The villages' demographical features show the presence of Dalit in the different age

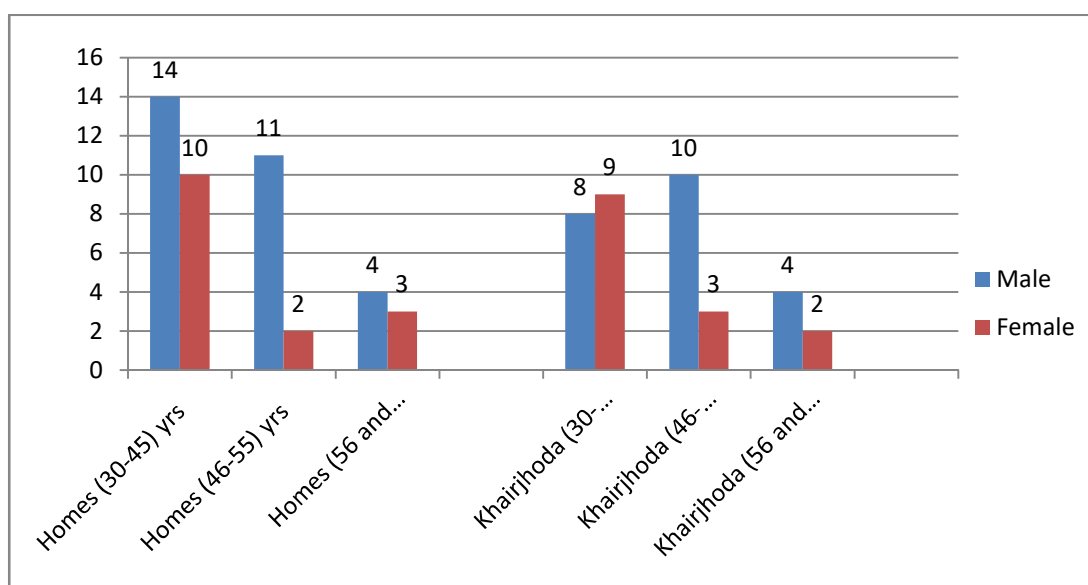
and gender categories, where the present sampled respondents has reflected with too. The age and gender of the respondents has fragmented on the same table keeping both the villages intact.

Table: 4.2 Age and Gender distributions of Respondents

VILLAGES	30-45 (yrs.)				46-55 (yrs.)				56 and > (yrs.)				Total					
	M	F	T	%	M	F	T	%	M	F	T	%	M	%	F	%	T	%
Homes (Kalimpong)	14	10	24	30	11	2	13	16.25	4	3	7	8.75	29	36.25	15	18.75	44	55
Khairjhoda (Darjeeling)	8	9	17	21.25	10	3	13	16.25	4	2	6	7.5	22	27.5	14	17.5	36	45
Total	22	19	41	51.25	21	5	26	32.5	8	5	13	16.25	51	63.75	29	36.25	80	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

Figure 4.1 Age and Gender distributions of Respondents



Source: Fieldwork, 2022

The table no. 4.2 represent the variations of the respondents in the Age and Gender in the two villages. As in the Homes village, male respondents shows with 29 (36.25%), which is higher than female with 15 (18.75%), whereas the Khairjhoda village's have male respondents population with 22 (27.75%) higher again against female with 14 (17.5%). Consequently, the total male and female population of both the villages in

total shows 51 (63.75%) and 29 (36.25%).

On the other, the age group distribution shows that age group (30-45) yrs has maximum respondents with 41 (51.25%) followed by (46-55) yrs with 26 (32.5%) and (56 and >) yrs with 13 (16.25%). In the village wise, the Homes village in the age group (30-45) yrs has maximum with 24 (30%) contrast to Khairjhoda village with 17 (21.25%). However, in the age group of (46-55) yrs both the villages' shows the equal respondents with 13 (16.25%). While there is small difference in the age group (56 and >) with Homes village 7 (8.75%) and Khairjhoda village with respondents 6 (7.5%).

While in the figure, 4.1 represent the number of respondents from different age groups such as from Homes village, in the age group of 30-45 yrs, 14 male and 10 female respondents present, from 46-55yrs, 11 male and 2 female and lastly from 56 yrs and above 4 male and 3 female. On the contrary, Khairjhoda village, in the age group of 30-45 yrs, 8 male and 9 female respondents. From 46-55 yrs, 10 male against 3 female and from 56 yrs and above, 4 male and 2 female.

ii. Education of the Respondents

Both the villages have reflected the variations in the educational parameters. With the importance of education in an individual life, the present table gives the vivid idea about the Dalit respondents and their educational status in the village.

Table: 4.3 Educational distributions of Respondents

Villages	Caste	Pre-Matrix	10 TH	12 TH	Graduation	Total
		M F T %	M F T %	M F T %	M F T %	M F T %
Homes (Kalimpong)	Kami	5 5 10 12.5	2 1 3 3.75	1 1 2 2.5	2 - 2 2.5	10 7 17 21.25
	Damai	6 2 8 10	2 - 2 2.5	2 - 2 2.5	- 1 1 1.25	10 3 13 16.25
	Sarki	5 3 8 10	- 1 1 1.25	1 - 1 1.25	3 1 4 5	9 5 14 17.5
		16 10 26 32.5	4 2 6 7.5	4 1 5 6.25	5 2 7 8.75	29 15 44 55
Total (T1)						
Khairjhoda (Darjeeling)	Kami	4 3 7 8.75	5 - 5 6.25	3 - 3 3.75	2 1 3 3.75	14 4 18 22.5
	Damai	3 3 6 7.5	- 1 1 1.25	1 1 0 2.5	- - - -	4 5 9 11.25
	Sarki	2 3 5 6.25	1 1 2 2.5	1 1 2 2.5	- - - -	4 5 9 11.25
		9 9 18 22.5	6 2 7 10	5 2 5 8.75	2 1 3 3.75	22 14 36 45
Total (T2)						
Total (T1 +T2)		25 19 44 55	10 4 14 17.5	9 3 12 15	9 1 10 12.5	51 29 80 100

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

The table no. 4.3 shows that there is maximum dropout (Pre-matrix) of respondents including both the villages in total with 44 (55%) which could correlate with their economic standards. However, there is also mobility of the respondents of both the villages with 14 (17.5%) in Matriculation, 12 (15%) in Higher Secondary and 10 (12.5%) in Higher studies. Nevertheless, it observed that with the increasing educational level, there is decreasing respondent's educational status. On the other with their unequal sampled population, apart from dropout, the two villages have shown the difference of their dalits mobility, as in Homes village the respondents from all caste have seen in the Higher studies with 7 (8.75%), where as in the Khairjhoda village, only Kami caste has seen to reach the higher studies ladder with 3 (3.75%).

iii. Occupation of the Respondents

Occupation is an important source of earning process, which gives the individual or the family a support of living their life. The villages in studies also show the various forms of occupation in the life of the Dalit for sustaining their life. Thus to know the

Dalit respondents in detail in about their economic background of living in the village, the following table help to represent occupational standard.

Table: 4.4 Occupational distributions of Respondents

VILLAGES	CASTE	GOVT.	PRIVATE (Labour, sales-service Driver)	Self (Business) (Caste occupation, Restaurant, Shop)	Unemployed (House wife, Job seekers)	TOTAL
		M F T %	M F T %	M F T %	M F T %	M F T %
Homes (Kalimpong)	Kami	1 - 1 1.25	4 2 6 7.5	3 1 4 5	2 4 6 7.5	10 7 17 21.25
	Damai	1 - 1 1.25	5 1 6 7.5	2 - 2 2.5	2 2 4 5	10 3 13 16.25
	Sarki	1 1 2 2.5	4 1 5 6.25	2 1 3 3.75	2 2 4 5	9 5 14 17.5
Khairjhoda (Darjeeling)	Kami	1 - 1 1.25	9 - 9 11.25	3 1 4 5	1 3 4 5	14 4 18 22.5
	Damai	- - - -	2 1 3 3.75	2 - 2 2.5	- 4 4 5	4 5 9 11.25
	Sarki	- - - -	3 - 3 3.75	1 1 2 2.5	- 4 4 5	4 5 9 11.25
Total		4 1 5 6.25	27 5 32 40	13 4 17 21.25	7 19 26 32.5	51 29 80 100

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

The table no. 4.4 gives the occupational character of both the villages' respondents in different forms of categories. As it, shows in the above table that total only 5 (6.25%) number of respondents doing government, which is least compare to other occupation of Private 32 (40%) number of respondents and Self activity which has 17 (21.25%) number of respondents. However, the noticeable sections of unemployed carry 26 (32.5%) number of respondents in total of both the village.

In addition, it found that with their unequal sampled population taken for the study, Homes village carry all the castes in different forms of occupation. On the other, only Kami caste seen in the government job in Khairjhoda village whereas in the other occupations are shared by all the caste groups.

iv. Income of the Respondents

The everyday life of fulfilment of basic or higher needs rest on the income earned, which plays the important role in individual and family. Likewise, the two villages

have also shown different level of income earned from their respective occupations mentioned in table no. 4.5 therefore for understanding their level of fulfilling needs.

Table: 4.5 Annual Income distributions of Respondents

Income	Homes (Kalimpong)						Khairjhoda (Darjeeling)						Total					
	K		D		S		K		D		S		M %		F %		T %	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	%	F	%	T	%
No earning	2	4	2	2	2	2	1	3	-	4	-	4	7	8.75	19	23.75	26	32.5
Rs.15000-45000/-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	2	2.5	2	2.5
Rs.45001-75000/-	4	2	5	-	4	1	8	-	2	1	3	-	26	32.5	4	5	30	37.5
Rs.75001-105000/-	2	-	2	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	7.5	1	1.25	7	8.75
Rs.105001-135000/-	1	-	-	-	-	-	3	1	2	-	1	-	7	8.75	1	1.25	8	10
Rs.135001/- And >	1	-	1	1	1	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	5	6.25	2	2.5	7	8.75
Total	10	7	10	3	9	5	14	4	4	5	4	5	51	63.75	29	36.25	80	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2022; K- Kami, D-Damai and S- Sarki

The table no. 4.5 shows both villages combined respondents of their annual income. There are 26 (32.5%) respondents from both the villages in total non-earning level. On the other, there are only 2 (2.5%) female respondents, who earn the income level of Rs.15000-45000/- Further, the income earned in the level of Rs.105001-135000/- has the second higher number of 8 (10%) respondents of both villages together with 7 (8.75%) male and 1 (1.25%) female. However, the income earned in the level of Rs.75001-105000/- has the number of 7 (8.75%) respondents with 6 (7.5%) male and 1 (1.25%) female, whereas in the income level of Rs.135001-> has also 7 (8.5%) but with 5 (6.25%) male respondents and 2 (2.5%) female respondents. While the majority of the respondents with 30 (37.5%) have the income earning level of Rs.45001-75000/-

In addition, the higher number of non-involvement of female with 19 (23.75%) respondents as against male with 07 (8.75%) respondents in the earning process shows female are less income earner.

v. Religious of the Respondents

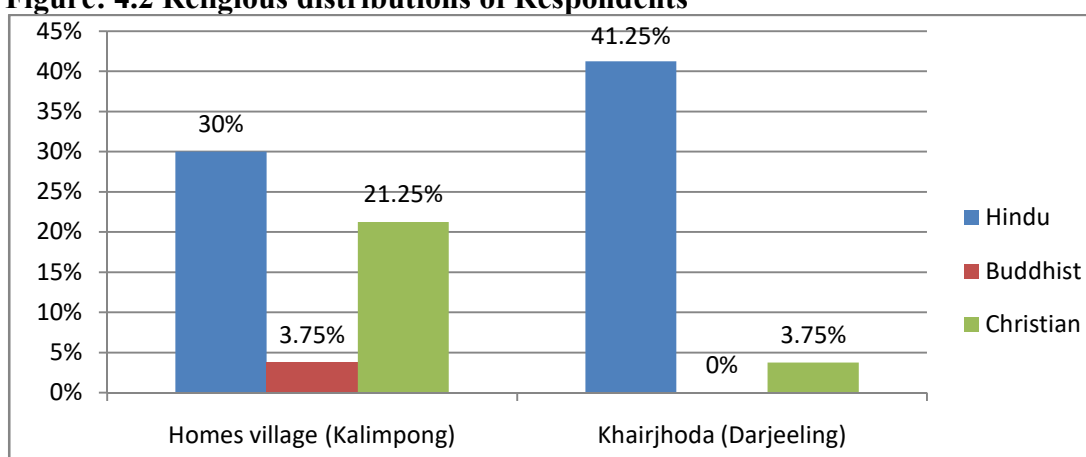
This is one of the important backgrounds of the individual and group in the society. It has a very crucial part of identity in the country like India where diversified religion has its innate nature. So knowing the importance of this aspect, the Dalits respondents have encountered with different religion in both the villages. Thus, it represented for better understanding in the following table and figure.

Table: 4.6 Religious distributions of Respondents

Religions	Homes (Kalimpong)			Khairjhoda (Darjeeling)			Total	
	Kami	Damai	Sarki	Kami	Damai	Sarki	T	%
Hindu	13	04	07	16	08	09	57	71.25
Buddhist	03	**	**	**	**	**	03	3.75
Christian	01	09	07	02	01	**	20	25.00
Total	17	13	14	18	09	09	80	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

Figure: 4.2 Religious distributions of Respondents



Source: Fieldwork, 2022

The table no. 4.6 and figure 4.2 shows that the respondents belong to the three religious backgrounds where Hindu forms the majority with 57 (71.25%) respondents who are from all the three castes of both the villages. In Christian religion, there are 20 (25%) respondents from all the castes except Sarki caste of Khairjhoda village. However, the Buddhist religion reflects only 03 (3.75%) respondents from Kami caste of Homes village. Moreover, the Homes village has 30% respondents Hindu, 3.75% of respondents as Buddhist and 21.25% respondents as Christian. On the other, Khairjhoda village has 41.25% respondents from Hindu, 3.75% respondents from Christian with no Buddhist respondents.

This therefore, reveals that there is the persistence of different religions among the Nepalis Dalits over the period against their Hindu identity since ages.

vi. Marital status of the Respondents

Marriage is the social institution and universal in nature. It has different forms form society to society. It also varies with it prescribed and proscribed rules involved in the marriage process. Like its universal nature and presence in society, the Dalits respondents for present study shows different forms and preferences of Marriage, which are mentioned below for understanding their one of the social background.

Table: 4.7 Marital distributions of Respondents

Indicators	Homes (Kalimpong)			Khairjhoda (Darjeeling)			Total	
	Kami	Damai	Sarki	Kami	Damai	Sarki	t	%
Status → Single Married Widow/Widower	6	2	4	5	1	3	21	26.25
	10	11	9	12	8	6	56	70
	1	-	1	1	-	-	3	3.75
Total	17	13	14	18	9	9	80	100
Forms → Arranged Love Both	-	-	-	2	-	-	2	3.38
	9	7	8	10	7	4	45	76.28
	2	4	2	1	1	2	12	20.34
Total	11	11	10	13	9	6	59	100
Preference → Intra caste Inter-caste Other	10	10	9	11	8	6	54	91.53
	1	-	1	2	-	-	4	6.77
	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	1.70
Total	11	11	10	13	8	6	59	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2022; Other =Inter-Religious or Inter-community

The table no. 4.7 gives the percentage of respondents' in different forms and preferences of marriages done in both the villages together. However, the table 1.7 have included the section of Single (un-married) to know the percentage in relative to married. The villages together shows the 56 (70%) of married respondents. On the other, the widow/widower respondents form 3 (3.75%) while the single (un-married) respondents are quite convincing with 21 (26.25%).

Further, among the married, the respondents, who have done the arranged marriage, consist of 02 (3.38%). However, the love marriage shows the highest number of 45 (76.28%) respondents while the respondents with 12 (20.34%) have done the both forms of marriage (love and arrange).

In addition, the preferences of marriage undertaken by the married respondent's shows that, 54 (91.53%) respondents have done the intra-caste marriage, while 04 (6.77%) of the respondents have done inter-caste marriage followed by the lowest 01

(1.70%) respondent have done the other (inter-religious/intercommunity) marriage.

It thus seen that most of the dalits preferred for Intra- caste and intra religious marriage as well against inter-caste and other. It found that they prefer mostly love marriage or both against arranged marriage.

4.2.2. Exclusion of Dalits Based on Data Collection

The Nepalis community based on the caste divided into hierarchical precedence of higher and lower status from decades has provided the privileges and rights for only the higher caste relative to their lower caste in order. Nevertheless, in these hierarchical order, *Kami, Damai and Sarki* who known as Untouchables then and Dalits now fall under the lowest rank relative to others for this they did not had any privileges and rights at par with their higher counterparts. The caste discrimination, exploitation, suppression, subjugation, untouchability and exclusion were the everyday life of their living. The chance to mobilise their life was restricted to only of their caste occupations. Their religious and rituals presence was not accepted and even they had to pay compensation for violating. Since then with the various constitutional safeguards and policies, the age-old practices of untouchability abolished making the peoples at large with equal status at the constitutional level. However, there is low social status in the society. With this background, the present sections look into the responses of Dalits of both the villages.

i. Exclusion experience based on educational background

The educational mobility of Dalits is one of the social transformations contrary to their historical position. It gives the Dalits to empower them for exploring the same and equal status in the large canvass of the society. However, the progress of educational level is also one the indicators to understand whether the presence of

caste based exclusion experienced in relative to their educational level. Therefore, this present section would provide us to know the Dalit's responses of the two villages on caste based exclusion in accordance of their educational ladder.

Table: 4.8 Caste based Exclusion Experiences based on educational background of Respondents

Response	Pre-matriculation	10th	12th	Graduation	Total
Yes	30 (37.5%)	10 (12.5%)	8 (10%)	2 (2.5%)	50 (62.5%)
No	14 (17.5%)	4 (5%)	4 (5%)	8 (10%)	30 (37.5%)
Total	44 (55%)	14 (17.5%)	12 (15%)	10 (12.5%)	80 (100%)

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

The table no. 4.8 shows that respondents belong to different category of educational accomplishment have shown the variations in the answers of whether caste based exclusion faced or not. It also seen that there are group, which was not sure whether caste based exclusion present or not and this group forms with 30 (37.5%), which was the total responses of all educational level. Contradictorily, the highest number of respondents says that caste exclusion is present and that forms 50 (62.5%) number of respondents from all categories in total.

However, if we see the each category level of responses then it found that in all the educational level of responses there is a present of either Yes or No, which means that there is change and continuity of caste in the Nepalis community. Further, if we see the figure of total dropout 44 (55%), then maximum 30 (37.5%) number of respondents has accepted the exclusion whereas 14 (17.5%) respondents have shown its non-presence. Similarly, in the matriculation status of 14 (17.5%) respondents, there are 10 (12.5%) respondents, who says it presence but only 04 (5%) says it is not

present. Likewise, in the higher secondary level of 12 (15%) respondents, it is still higher with 08 (10%) respondents, who say it is present and again only 04 (5%) respondents argue it is not present. In addition, in the Graduate level of total 10 (12.5%) respondent, only 2 (2.5%) responded caste exclusion presence but maximum of 8 (10%) responded as not present. Therefore, it can say that caste based exclusion experienced among all the sections of educated and dropout respondents despite its non-presence response in all the educational level of respondents too. On the other, the maximum response of non-presence found among the graduate level that shows the educational role for mobilising the Dalits in their everyday life.

ii. Exclusion experience of Different religion

The religion plays an important role in an individual life. May it be in the birth, Marriage, Death or in any cultural events, the practices of religious duty certainly socialises the individual towards particular experiences in their everyday life. On this point, the present village study represents the respondents from different religious creed, which helps us to understand their experiences of caste based exclusion with respects to their religious socialisation. Therefore, the mentioned below table would assist to gives us the clear experiences of both the villages of Dalit's respondents with wider source.

Table: 4.9 Caste based Exclusion Experiences by Different Religious Dalits Respondents

Religion	Hindu Dalit	Christian Dalit	Buddhist Dalit	Total
Responses				
Yes	50 (87.72%)	-	-	50 (87.72%)
No	7 (12.28%)	20 (100%)	3 (100%)	30 (100%)
Total	57 (100%)	20 (100%)	3 (100%)	80 (100%)

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

The table no. 4.9 shows the responses of all Dalits according to their religious creed

of experiences. As it can clearly locate from above that the total response for the presence of caste based exclusion is only found in the Hindu respondents of 50 (62.5%) out of 57 (71.25%) respondents and only 7 (8.75%) respondents mentioned for non-presence of caste based exclusion.

The other religion among the Dalits respondents such as in Christianity, all the 20 (25%) responded for caste exclusion not present. Similarly, the small number of 3 (3.75%) Buddhist respondents have argued for non-presence.

It can be note therefore that only major Hindu respondents have experienced social exclusion on caste and in the other religious Dalits has either not experienced caste as such by the Hindu or in their religious background; they have not come across the caste exclusion in everyday life.

iii. Exclusion experience of Gender

As social exclusion is multi-dimensional, dynamic and cultural, the gender aspect and their view are also much crucial in this institutional body of the exclusion. From this perspective, the Dalit's respondents from both villages have convincing female portions relative to their male portions, which is also significant in understanding both male and female experiences of their caste-based exclusion from both the villages. Thus, the following table helps to determine the gender response in caste based exclusion.

Table: 4.10 Caste based Exclusion Experiences by Gender

Response	Male	Female	Total
Yes	31 (38.75%)	19 (23.75%)	50 (62.5%)
No	20 (25%)	10 (12.5%)	30 (37.5%)
Total	51 (63.75%)	29 (36.25%)	80 (100%)

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

This table no. 4.10 gives the clear correspondence of how many male and female has the experience of caste or no experience of caste-based exclusion from among the respondents. Although, the total number of male and female respondents are unequal but this also gives the idea of gender experiences on social exclusion.

In the total number of 51 (63.75%) male respondents, the higher number of 31 (38.75%) respondents argue for its presence against 20 (25%) respondents. Likewise, out of 29 (36.25%) female respondents, Higher respondents of 19 (23.75%) has said the presence of caste based exclusion and only 10 (12.5%) respondents says its non-presence.

The overall figure on gender basis gives the idea that both male as well as female experiences social exclusion on caste line whereas; there are also the no experiences of caste based exclusion by both the gender.

iv. Exclusion experience on different age groups

Understanding Social exclusion is a complex process that not only faced by certain sections but minutely cut across different ages of those sections with their experiential form? Moreover, this exclusion sometimes has diverse experiences and many times common experience. With this, the study also looked the different age groups from the Dalit's respondents from the two villages to understand the experiences of their caste based exclusion. However, the table below has mentioned to know the

respondents from different age groups from the both the villages respondents together for their experiences of caste based exclusion.

Table: 4.11 Caste based Exclusion Experiences based on different age groups

Response	30-45 yrs	46-55 yrs	56- > yrs	Total
Yes	21 (26.25%)	16 (20%)	13 (16.25%)	50 (62.5%)
No	20 (25%)	10 (12.5%)	-	30 (37.5%)
Total	41 (51.25%)	26 (32.5%)	13 (16.25%)	80 (100%)

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

The table no. 4.11 gives the understanding of the respondent's age-group response of social exclusion. In all the age-group categories, there are more number of respondents who argue for the presence of caste-based exclusion and less number of respondents says for non- presence.

From 30-45 yrs of age group, out of total 41 (51.25%) respondents, only 20 (25%) respondents, a slight number of less respondents have mentioned that exclusion is not present whereas the 21(26.25%) respondents says it presence.

From 46-55 yrs of age group of total 26 (32.5%) respondent, the 16 (20%) response shows the presence of exclusion while the 10 (12.5%) response shows for non-presence.

Lastly in the 56- > yrs age group, the total respondents of 13 (16.25%) has mentioned the presence of exclusion.

The experiences of exclusion based on caste in the present age group thus cut across different category along with it non-presence respondents except age-old groups.

v. Exclusion experience of two villages

The Dalits in the both the villages have representation of their individual experiences related with caste discrimination. This then gives us to locate the comparison of their experiences of caste-based exclusion from both the villages. To this understanding, the mentioned table would help us to compare the presence of Dalits response in their experiences of caste-based exclusion.

Table: 4.12 Caste based Exclusion Experiences based on comparison of respondents from both the villages

Response	Homes (Kalimp.)	Khairjhoda (Darj.)	Total
Yes	24 (30%)	26 (32.5%)	50 (62.5%)
No	20 (25%)	10 (12.5%)	30 (37.5%)
Total	44 (55%)	36 (45%)	80 (100%)

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

The table no. 4.12 has clearly shown the variations of responses according to unequal sampled population. However, it be noted that this response of variations could be reason of geographical terrain and their Nepalis composition with different religious, educational level of the Dalits in Particular and the Nepalis community as a whole in the villages.

As out of the total respondents of 44 (55%) from Homes village, 24 (30%) of the respondents argue that there is caste based exclusion whereas 20 (25%) of the respondents mentioned the contradictions of non-presence. Nevertheless, in the Khairjhoda village of total 36 (45%) respondents, 26 (32.5%) respondents argue for its presence and only 10 (12.5%) mentioned for non-presence experience. Even, while comparing both the village response, it seen that Khairjhoda village has maximum caste based experience relative to Homes village on their sampled population. On the

other, the homes villages, has convincing of small differences of responses.

4.2.3. Pattern of Social Exclusion in Both the Villages

Often the progressive society identified by inclusive nature of its social system besides the external (legal and constitutional) aid that consistently (re)build its social system has by qualities equality, fraternity and freedom. In general, all societies work for these qualities in the democratic system and India is no exception to this. However, caste is one such phenomenon, which obstructs to attain these qualities for more than centuries. It has travelled along the changing nature of society with new avatar and explosion (physical discrimination). Ascertain to this new avatar, it varies from regions to regions, peoples of different ethnic, religious, community and societies. It also varies from individuals to other individuals, one state to another state, motivated by religion and culture in majority. As a result, caste has tremendous base in the human way of life in the Asian continent particularly India and Nepal.

Whether Hindu, Christian and Buddhist to name few, the potent flow of traditions in everyday life of the individual reflects. If one has the insight view and analyses of this social hierarchize model of ranking, it persuade that the presence and functions of caste even in the present society exist. Thus, Nepali community under study of two villages also shows this phenomenon at its own way and forms.

The Nepali polis from the beginning stratified with socio-cultural label in the everyday life in the context of Nepal. On the other, the Indian Nepalis does have the stratification but not only of socio-cultural label, in addition the foreigner tag relative to other non- Nepali community. Further, the presence of native tribes and ethnic groups of the hill areas prior to the elite and higher caste of Nepali community, somehow do not favour for the Muluki-Ain just as Nepal had or may be the loss of

this regions during Anglo-Nepalese war (1814) that paved the fate of this regions under the Indian political and constitutional umbrella. To which many scholars of this regions subscribed for caste not as rigid as the Nepal had/ have. At a larger picture, Nepali society shows attributes of the Indo-Aryan and Tibeto-Burmese reciprocation. Therefore, with these ingredients of Nepali community, still the society had/ has a caste prejudices, traditions and cultures as their way of life. Therefore, the following socio-cultural spheres marked taken for the study of caste-based exclusion:

i. Bahun (Priest) and Exclusion

Bahun (Priest) is an integral part of the Nepali community of the Caste Hindu in Nepal and India. It is the identity not confined to reading religious scriptures or performing any sacred activities rather a highest social position in total. Paradoxically, this Priestly class does exist within the Dalit castes also for performing similar functions, but not as highest social positional carrier. It can see at large that culturally, Sanskritisation produces the behaviour of Bahun role in the Dalit community but seems failure at the social level of mobility.

As existences of Bahun is literally a two different social position in the everyday life of the Nepali community, the history of Nepali caste system, show the social distribution of population into five-fold hierarchical division where Bahun as a rank holds the highest place *contrary to Pani Na Chalney* (Dalit), the extreme bottom rank. In that, the rank of Pani Na Chalney Jaat did never have the social recognition of their Bahun role-play even with the Bahun nomenclature of their priest in total. This means that ascription is more important to hold that social position. Therefore, it is clear that Nepalis caste Hindus do have two types of Bahun (Priest) based on social position.

1. Bahun (Brahmin Priest)

2. Bahun (Dalits Priest)

These bahun (priest) further have their social position superiority based on the acceptance in the Nepalis caste Hindus:

- i. Bahun (Brahmin Priest)- these priests are accepted by the all the caste sections of the caste structure, they enjoys the privileges in matters of any community activities.
- ii. Bahun (Dalits Priest)- these castes Bahun are confine to relative caste group they hold by birth. As these priests, do not have any privileges in the collective Community activities except within their own caste.

There is a clear exclusion in the lines of social acceptability to Dalit (untouchables) Bahuns at larger picture. However, as the Dalit caste Bahuns has no role beyond their respective caste, the role of higher caste Bahuns overwhelms in the psychological state of Nepalis community. Thus, the two villages reports such non-acceptance of Dalit Bahun to other non-dalit caste, such that according to some of the respondents from Kherjhora, mentioned-

हाम्रो मा ठुलो र आफ्नो जात को बाहुनहरु चल्छ,तर उनिहरु मा स्यानो जात को चल्दैन।'
(*We accept the higher and our caste Bahun but they do not accept lower caste*)

The above lines indeed unleash the persistence of caste potentiality in the society where Bahun from Higher caste is pure and acceptable than Dalits Bahuns. However, one can make sense that within the Dalits, the two Bahuns are of equal status but in the non-dalits settings, one Bahun socially entitled to be impure and unequal. This is the harsh reality of invisibility of visible caste based discrimination.

Further, the respondents mentioned-

'हामि ले ठुलो बाहुन प्रयोग गरे पनि हामि मा स्यानो को हैसियत छ। किन कि, ति बाहुनहरु ले हाम्रो घर मा पकाएका खाना खादैनन। तर दक्षिणा स्वीकार्नु हुन्छ।'।

(Even using higher caste priest, we are still lower in status because those higher caste priest, they do not eat cooked food from our hearth but accept Dakshina (offering of monetary or commodity in return of service given)

Unfortunately, practices of many of the Dalit families in this village where they use either their caste priest or higher caste priest respond to this existing phenomenon.

Further, it seems that material offerings are acceptable contrary to cooked food but acceptance is selective based on the priest caste. Apart from this one respondent from Kalimpong village even mentioned that with the frequent use of one of the higher caste priest from their village by the lower caste peoples in their various rituals and ceremonies, ostracizes him from any invitation from higher caste peoples.

This, again make us understand about the intensity of the social position of the Dalits which can even affect the higher caste priest if they consistently serve the lower caste families. Consequently, this may at least give us the answer for- why there was a need of Dalit caste Priest. In addition, the same cultural rituals and ceremonies between the higher caste and Dalit caste of Hindu religion further tighten the ground reality of Bahun role as an integral part for both the opposite extreme ranked in the discriminated social institution. Therefore, the following table shows about the experiences of respondents on Brahmins Bahun attitudes.

Table: 4.13 Exclusion based on the Brahmin Bahun's (priests) attitude towards the Hindu dalit's ceremonial performances experiences by respondents

Field Area Indicators	Homes (Kalimp.)				Khairjhoda (Darj.)			
	Accept	Deny	No response	Total respondents	Accept	Deny	No response	Total respondents
When inviting for religious practices	10 (41.68%)	07 (29.16%)	07 (29.16%)	24 (100%)	07 (21.21%)	17 (51.51%)	09 (27.28%)	33 (100%)
When offering to eat cooked food during rituals performances or else	00	17 (70.83%)	07 (29.16%)	24 (100%)	00	28 (84.84%)	05 (15%)	33 (100%)

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

The table no. 4.13 shows attitudes of the higher caste Bahun (Priest) towards the Hindu Dalits while inviting for them in the various religious and rituals performances. It can see clearly that from Homes village (Kalimpong) out of the total Hindu Dalits respondents, 07 (29.16%) of respondents have mentioned that Priest refuses to perform, whereas other 07 (29.16%) respondents did not response of whether they refuse or accepted. However the majority of 10 (41.68%) of respondents have said that they accepted to perform. Further, it can see that majority of the 17 (70.83%) respondents says that they deny to accept food from the Dalits houses even after performing in the Dalit's houses while 07 (29.16%) didn't response.

In the Khairjhora village (Darjeeling), it can see that majority of 17 (51.51%) respondents out of the village sampled population of Hindu Dalits mentioned that Bahuns (Priest) refuses to perform in the houses. While 07 (21.21%) respondents says they accepted and 09 (27.28%) respondents did not response whether they refuses or accepted. In addition, it can see that in that majority of 28 (84.84%) of the respondents mentioned they refuse to take cooked from the dalit houses while 05 (15%) did not response.

ii. Rituals and Exclusion

Rituals are a core part of any society since time immemorial. It has legacy of traditions and belief that indeed play the cohesive role of binding the individuals into group forming social relationship over the centuries. According to Durkheim, rituals and beliefs are the two components of religion that produces sacred entity in people's life in total. In a way, it produces collective effervescences. The rituals are also universal in a sense it presence in different forms of human beliefs through human action and as the society has rituals vary from community to community; the Nepali community also upheld various types of beliefs that manifest from its practices. Such practices like '*Rite of Passage*' (from birth to death), Religious rituals and other worshipped practices are all the essence of one's collectivity. In addition, the Nepali community being the heterogenic in accumulation does represent the differences of such rituals practices but with open form to community. However, within this open space, Dalits primarily hold the small gate of entry of participation at societal level. Whether, the practices of -*Nauran, Chewar, Marriage, Funeral, Religious ceremonies, Dashain, Diwali, Makar Sankranti* and various other traits of way of life, the essence of caste has intervened in visible and invisible ladder of discrimination. Thus, the two villages by the present study explore these areas of caste-based exclusion in Nepali community.

ii.a. Rite of Passage

This is a well compulsive universal practice accordingly to society, community and various respective groups, where individuals from birth untill death have to undergo certain respective societal norms purification process in their life and death. In Nepalis Dalit and the first two higher placed castes of Nepali caste system this process is marked chronologically as *Nauran* (naming ritual of child), *Bhaat Khilai* (Feeding

ritual of child at certain age) Chewar (Hair cutting ritual of child). Besides this, one has to undergo the rituals of Vartamaan (Sacred thread wearing ritual before marriage). Further the rituals play important role during Marriage and Death happening.

As seen that, there is a well connected similar rituals performed by the first two higher placed caste and the Nepalis Dalit but the inequality between them is not an ignorable fact. The Foremost exclusion is their social position in respect to them having similar practices. On the contrary, when practices of similar rituals do not mobilize the status how so ever there is a consistent practice of similar rituals among Nepalis Dalit. This may be the impact of Sanskritisation of '*Brahmanical culture and values*' over centuries.

The exclusion of Dalits by their higher counterpart in all these rituals is an old age phenomenon, and at present time, this still have its hold in various manners particularly in the two studied villages.

As the respondents from both the villages, argue-

'कुनै आयोजित कार्य मा निम्तो दिए का छ भने पनि हाम्रो उपस्थिति एवं सम्मान तुलनात्मक रुप मा समानान्तर देख्न पाइयेना।'

(Even inviting in any of the event also, our presence and dignity never looked equal)

Evidently, the expression beholds in both villages the experiences of their inequality. There seems lack of acceptance on achieved traits contrary to birth membership in Dalit caste.

Moreover, at times the Dalit villagers have also mentioned the exclusion in participating food preparation in some occasion of Samaj member's houses in Death or Marriage ceremonies. In this light one respondent from Kherjhora village stated-

‘गाउँ को शंघ संस्थाहरु को सदस्य को नाता ले कुनै घर मा पाक कार्य वा खाना बनाउने सामुहिक कार्य मा आमन्त्रित भये का अन्य उच्च जाति ले हाम्रो उपस्तिथि राम्रो मान्दैनन।’

(As a member's of a village organization, if invited to a collective function of cooking at a member's house also, the other upper castes will not consider our presence good)

This is quite a frequent observable phenomenon in our village, stated further by the same villager. He mentioned, at one way they wanted to show us that as a member we are allowed in the occasions to enjoy equally but not acceptable to take food cooked by you (Dalit).

Usually, this exclusion is common in the other's non-dalit houses. However, even in the Dalit caste houses too, the heterogeneous members extend their help of preparing food but Dalits even from ceremonial house not allowed entering in hearth prepared for particular occasion for making food for the guest and locals. Because the higher caste members who extended help of preparing the food if intervenes by any Dalits deny to take for themselves. As this is primarily happens to see in the death ceremonies. However, in the non-Dalit houses, the Dalits face even more exclusion in this ceremony.

On this note, there is however, the exclusion in the sphere of Death ritual frequent too. As many of the respondent have argued in commonality that it is two way process of exclusion, from the non-Dalit and from the Dalit to accept that exclusion. The structure of observing and following the ritual of death activity is neatly and well performed so to please the traditional legacy.

iii. Religion and Exclusion

The Dalit respondents form the majority of caste Hindu besides Christian and Buddhist religion in two villages. Among the Christian respondents, although

mentioned the feeling of discrimination but not from their religious peoples rather from the non-Christians higher caste. As most of the Christian Dalit from Kalimpong district village says-

'हामि क्रिस्चियन धर्मावलम्बिहरू मा कुनै जातिय मत-भेद गरे का देख्दैनौ सबै सरावरि भये को देख्छौ। तर हिन्दु धर्मावलम्बिहरू मा आज सम्म पनि जातिय मत-भेद रहे को पाइन्छ।'।

(We in Christians all are same and equal but there is still discrimination in Hindu)

As this expression reflects the absence of caste based inequality among the Christian population, however the presence of caste impression for the Christian Dalit persists in their Psychological mental spheres. It may be of their Hindu counter-part. On the other, the respondent from the caste Hindu of Darjeeling district village shares in emotions and as mentioned-

'कामि द्वारा निर्मित भाडा-वर्तन, दमाइ द्वारा सिलाए का वस्त्र,सार्कि द्वारा बनाए का जुता-चप्पल उपयोग गर्न हुने तर यि सबै का निर्माता जाति का मान्छे चाहि न चलने। रिति रिवाज को कस्तो यो बिडम्बना?'

(The Utensils made by Kami, Clothes made by Damai and Shoes mend by Sarki accepted but not men. What kind of custom is it?)

He further extended his suppressed emotions as like this-

'दलित संग बस्यो भने नर्क मा पुग्ला जस्तै!'

(As they go to the hell while sitting with Dalit)

This response of the man raised inner feelings of Dalit psychological and each Dalits query about what mistakes the Dalit have does. On the other, the mention of salvation is also literally important to observe that they too wanted to attain just like upper caste in this life course. Therefore, the Dalit also wanted to live as pure as other caste in the same social status.

Again in the religious rituals, majority of the respondent from Kherjhora village mentioned that whenever any of the socio-religious functions (Bhagwat Puraan) are organized by the community organization(civil society), there seen a tremendous

'chuttauney'(Discrimination) phenomenon. For instance, they collect the monetary expenses for the ceremonies, from all the members but for active participation, they do not prefer us. This again signify exclusionary attitude.

Here they mentioned-

'हामिलाई जजमान मा पनि राख्दैन, कुनै देवि-देवता को नाटक मा पनि भागिदार बनाउदैनन, पाक कार्य मा पनि अंश ग्रहण वन्चित गर्छन। साथै अन्य कार्यहरु मा पनि सम्मिलित गर्न चाहदैनन।'

(Do not keep us in Jajman, Devi Deuta's play, do not let us to join in making Bhandara, and try not including us in other necessary work)

This clear expression of distancing even being a member of the community organization recognizes the caste role in this village. However, the Dalit caste Hindu tries to stand there for their dignity given by the constitution consciously or not provided social status in this village. As one of the respondent from this village even said-

'मलाई जहा छुट्टाउछ, म अटेरि भयेर बसि दिन्छु। र कसै ले तर्क गर्न खोज्यो भने राम्रो संग उत्तर फर्काएर आउछु।'

(Wherever, they excluded me, I never move from there and if someone argues, I reply them with needed answer (verbal/physical))

Evident from this experiences, Dalit now are awake regarding their dignity and life at some level. They are now building themselves at certain height of individual assertion but not all. Nevertheless, caste based exclusion is also playing its own course just like the famous saying "Law will take its own course".

iv. Discrimination in Verbal sayings

The Nepali community communicates through 'Khas Kura' (Nepali), irrespective of diverse groups of linguistic and ethnic background. It forms the major language in exchange of ideas and meaning among the community peoples. On the contrary,

historian, scholars over the time have justifiably located the multi-dimension of this term “Nepali” denoting as Language, Community and the Nationals of Nepal. However, the verbal language plays significant part in exchanging the ideas and values in the society such that, it becomes an important aspect of locating the presence of the Dalit within caste structured community in the conversational space of Verbal exclusion. There are several constructions of oppressive remarks on verbal language. Some are-

‘कामि नोई गर्नु,दमाई खाए जारि।’

(It refers that Kami caste groups never bathe, they remain filthy and they are untouchable for doing the filthy work always. Whereas Damai keeps on stitching clothes just like winter never goes)

‘कामि धर्नु दमाई स्वांग,सार्कि लहुछे तिन भल्ड्याड।’

(This refers as Kami’s are good for nothing, Damai’s are boaster without anything and Sarki never does the work at once)

The verbal abuse literally does have the historicity and structure for its expression, which preserves its kind even in the present studied village. The Dalits in these villages at major accept that interaction with other caste happens to be at ease in every-day life. The start of communication often based on greetings each other as *Namaste*³ with exchanging *Haal-Khabar* (Individual’s update of life) of each other’s at longer gap meet. However, sometimes this language plays the dynamics of intense height of fight between the Dalit caste and non-Dalit caste. Seemingly, one villager from the Kherjhora mentioned that his one non-Dalit local fellow at some context verbally abused him on caste lines as-

‘कामि को बेउरा देखाइस।’

(Shown dalit (Kami) behaviour)

³ A gesture of showing respect with two hands-folded from both sides and bowing head (depends upon who is younger)

The demeaning articulation with inferiority, puny and untouchability through the tonal language medium re-caste the legacy of caste hierarchical traditions hidden in the back of the head that outburst still in verbal manner.

More over the language of discrimination is not limited to only Kami, but extended to Sarki and Damai as well with sometimes the verbal language sounds as-

‘के हामी कामि, दमाई, सार्की जस्ता अछूत हौं?’
(*Are we untouchables like Kami, Damai, and Sarki?*)

These kinds of derogatory remarks still exist in the villages, where it is between not only the Dalits and non-Dalits fight but even cross to give the reference by any of the other peoples who sometimes feel excluded from certain groups or individual behaviour at some conversational process.

As the behaviour of verbally abusing on caste lines is literally not confined to any place or time of any Puja (religious act), or the rituals but Unwittingly (Many times) and knowingly (sometimes) comes out of individual behaviour where they had socialized or dealt with this subject as it is in life.

Therefore, the verbal abusing of Dalits is also one of the common phenomenon in their life that reinforces caste based exclusion and inequality in the present study area.

v. Caste names and Exclusion

The three castes Kami, Damai and Sarki has preponderant in its historical fact since its division into the hierarchical structure as *Saanu Jaat, Choi Chitto No Haalnu Parney, Pani Na Chalney, Untouchables* (Hofer, 2004) . It has generation after generation accepted the status for granted and the socialization of each individual and groups has not resisted fully out-cage from this inhuman segregation of human

civilization if so. This caste penetration of pure and impure still carried in the everyday life through mental construct, which percolates between unconscious and conscious interface in the human progress. Evidently, it sometimes expressed willingly by the Dalit caste and indirectly established the castes importance in the life of Dalits as well. However, the prolonging of this caste behaviour within the Dalits some way locates the distribution of society and its social behaviour of particular castes un-suits to be in social equal. Although the process of Social exclusion is not only from the non-Dalits directly but the experience and projection over the period has made the Dalit dealt their caste names also as mode of low feeling, weird, shy etc. Therefore, the journey of the Dalit and Dalit's caste names is also not equal in the space of social exclusion. The following table no. 4.15 shows the respondents feeling of low self-esteem on their caste names.

Table: 4.14 Exclusion based on Caste Names (Kami, Damai and Sarki)

Respondents View	Have you ever felt low self-esteem while introducing your caste name to unknown person?
Yes	70 (87.5%)
No	10 (12.5%)
Total	80 (100%)

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

The table no. 4.14 shows the respondents of both the villages' experiences of inferiority, about their caste names relative to other non-Dalit caste names. It is clearly, seen that major respondents of 70 (87.5%) says that had felt low, inferior while introducing their caste names at certain point of time and only 10 (12.5%) mentioned they have not felt.

Moreover, it can see that this feelings of the not only caste peoples as inferior but also even caste names as low, inferior on equal footings shows the deep undercurrents of

age-old caste lines of exclusionary impact among the Nepalis Dalit at present time also.

It seen from quite the major respondents, when asked about their caste names, the replies to the first conversation, always started with little fumble. The two villages have tremendously shown these phenomena of feeling shy and substituting with some normalize names when asked about their generic caste title/surnames.

As many of the respondents from both the villages mentioned on a similar tone with-

‘कामी, दमाई र सार्की भन्नु अफत्यारो लाग्छ।’
(*To say Kami, Damai and Sarki seem absurd*)

To understand the reality of the expression of caste, the nature of acceptance is obvious and as such, the Dalits themselves seen entangled to this division where they had constructed their caste as abnormal at the social status. However, the conversation with suitable number of respondents also argued-

‘किन लाज मान्नु कामिलाई कामि, दमाइलाई दमाई, सार्किलाई सार्कि भन्नु। जसरि बाहुनलाई बाहुन, तामंगलाई तामंग, छेत्रीलाई छेत्री भनिन्छ।’
(*Why to be ashamed of saying Kami as Kami, Damai as Damai, Sarki as Sarki just like Bahun as Bahun, Tamang as Tamang and Chettri as Chettri?*)

The feeling of conscious attitude has even seen among the Dalits peoples so far with an attempt to normalize their past weird living reality but that again needs the paradigm shift of including the non-Dalits for holistic progress for inclusion in accepting the Dalit’s titles. On the contrary, the few of the respondents, has even mentioned-

कामि को ठाउँमा बिश्वकर्मा, (*Biswakarma in place of Kami*) - *Kami respondents*
दमाईको ठाउँमा दर्जी, (*Darjee in place of Damai*) - *Damai respondents*
सार्कीको ठाउँमा मिजार वन्नु रामरो लाग्छ (*Mijar in place of Sarki*) – *Sarki respondents*

This shows how the Dalit has evolved them for mobilizing their status and presence in the society by reforming their caste names without continuing the past legacies of traditional caste names. Nevertheless, the identity of Kami, Damai and Sarki beholds the trajectories of uncivilized, impure, inferior against their counterpart even among the Dalits who does not have undo the caste hierarchical obligation in their caste names.

4.2.4. Case Study of Respondents

Kherjhora Village (Darjeeling district)

Case Study- I

Ashok Biswakarma (Alias) is a resident of Kherjhora village, an old man of nearly 70 yrs of age and by profession was daily wageworker with a family of five members at present after his two sons, and their family nucleated. He illuminates the experiences of discrimination on caste behaviours.

As he stated that quite just 2-3 years ago, there was a village religious ceremony (Bhaagwat Puraan) organized by the village civil society, that happens to be five to seven days. In this ceremony, all the villagers participated and as well from the adjacent regions, also peoples come and join for all this days, particularly from the Hindu religious background. He further stated that it came to notice that peoples from our caste background are least included apart from their Hindu identity. Meanwhile there were no such things called as equality in distributing any work against being the members of the society. As being the members, we all from the Dalit caste have contributed equally as per the token of member slip (Amount) for organizing the religious event. However, he stated that there were no any inclusive feelings in the ceremony because of the dominating nature or frontal behaviour of non-Dalit caste by

overwhelming each and every pursuit such as in Hearth (Socially arranged kitchen to cook food for devotee), in the play (the Gods and Goddesses character), to offer the pray together. This thing is not limited only in ceremony but extended deeply in the minds of the non-Dalit caste and if they find any chances to discriminate, they do not hesitate.

Case Study- II

Mamta Biswakarma (Alias), is a 56 years old woman of Kherjhora village, is a Hindu and particularly living with his family of five members including husband, son and two daughters. Her husband does some private work as Driver and their children are in school and college. She recalled her experience of discrimination being a Dalit in the village. She expressed particularly about the ceremony in the village. As she stated that, there is still the presence of attitude in non-Dalit peoples when they talk with Dalit. She apparently told her case of discrimination when she was invited in the birth rituals (Haircutting ceremony of child) being a neighbour. Although she said that, they rarely invite us but again in this invited ceremony also, our presence is not looked equal. She told that when she reached to the house where every other invited non-Dalits are also present, the course of communication with her was not welcoming. Moreover, she said that when she also extended her help for making food along with other non-Dalits of the village in the ceremony but refused with excuses by the family members and other few non-Dalits woman who were preparing (cutting, washing vegetables) and she was told to just sit and have meal of the occasion. She said then after her attempt for helping and receiving refuse, she realises not to interfere and just as invited guest gave, the gift to child had meal and came back to home. She also said that when she came back home and discussed this issues with their family members particularly with husband, she then realises about the situation.

Case Study- III

Prakash Sarki (Alias), a 44 years man, who work as driver in Taxi car and a resident of Kherjhora village with five members in family. While stating about discrimination he told discrimination happens many times in funeral (अन्त्येष्टि) ceremony in the non-Dalits houses in village. While mentioning the funeral, he mentioned that as a villager, they go to the other non-Dalits houses in this type of grief situation and also they extend help as being a member in village Samaj (organization) but on the contrary, as the deceased family members are also belong to the same organisation prefer non-Dalits hands primarily. This happens from the day of death until the rituals gets over. However, as member of the same Samaj and the Samaj has some role for every member's houses during Death of any members to extend some monetary help too apart from physical help from the membership fee that deposited in the organization. He said although he and the other Dalits members though not preferred by deceased house their physical help but gives this monetary help, which are collectively given form the Samaj fund. He also put that even if they insist them to provide some work during this ceremony for reducing the load and burden on behalf of village organisational members, they would give them some external work like making Pandal (temporary made shelter outside the house), bringing chairs and tables for gathered people to eat food. He also said other non-Dalits members of course do this work but they have liberty to enter in the deceased house, touching the things like food, vegetables, make the food, in need serve those food to the arrived people also. However, this is not preferred by the same houses when done by the Dalits. He also mentioned, on the other when Dalits houses have funeral and non-Dalits comes for visit, they help them with Samaj fund, erecting Pandal. However, they do not eat in the house if the food is not prepared by them provided no separate kitchen.

Homes Village (Kalimpong district)

Case Study-I

Meenu Darjee (Alias) is resident of Home's village and a mother of two children, a Hindu by religion of 41 years of age with four members at present including her husband after their mother-in-law passed away. She and her husband works in their own restaurants. As she has shared her experience of the Marriage event invited by their non-Dalits counterparts in the village. As a marriage in village, every other known person help the house physically in all the things like decorations, arranging the chairs and tables, preparing food, and many other social arrangements. However, she mentioned that during an event women normally involve in helping for making vegetables and other raw food ready for cooking but this becomes not preferred for the woman like them. She was not preferred to help in this collective work as the others are involved. She even said that this happen in the case of decorations and other arrangements too. Nevertheless, the family members though invite them in the marriage but that is limited to offering gift to the Bride/Groom and eating the meal prepared.

Often there is no any inclusiveness of gathering together in this kind of ceremony along with them with exchanging talk and work. She said they are also not preferred to enter in the kitchen. Further, she also mentioned about the other event such as death ceremony, where she said that she also faced discrimination like the one she was refuse with excuses to serve the food for the people who comes to visit the funeral house. She also mentioned that during any child ceremonial invitation also the same things happens but this does not happen when they are invited in the Dalits houses. They are welcomed and not refuse with/without excuses to participate and extend their help in all possible manners.

Case Study-II

Suparna Sarki (Alias) is a widow of 65 years old woman with three members including one daughter and son presently after her another daughter marriage and husband demise. Her son who works in some private job is the only breadwinner for the family after her husband demise. While telling her experience of caste discrimination she mentioned that caste is crucial in many of the aspects in present time also and especially in Marriage.

She told her married daughter case where they being a Dalit had to face many problems. She said her daughter was married to higher caste through elopement but unfortunately, her daughter faced several problems by this marriage. At first, the in-laws did not accept her daughter when they know about such things. Secondly, her daughter did not accepted in her Husband home, which made them to live in nuclear manner in some rented house. Thereafter, her in-laws even made the last rite of their son for marrying with lowest caste girl. As she even said that after two three years of my daughter's marriage, there was mutuality between her daughter's husband and her in-laws but that was restricted with accepting their son and the grandchildren but not her daughter. She mentioned her grandchildren and son-in-law visit to their parent's house but her daughter never. Her daughter's in-laws still do not accept even after both of them are living happily. She said her daughter, son-in-law and grandchildren comes to visit her house during certain occasion yearly but still the relations between both the families is not good in terms. Further, she said that her daughter's in-laws family have not organised the social marriage but fortunately legal marriage undertook and from their side they already organised the social marriage.

Case Study-III

Pritam Darjee (Alias), a man of 44 years of age who has a family of 4 members including him is a permanent resident of Homes village (Kalimpong). He works in a garments shop and the only breadwinner of the family. He stated that cast based discrimination is still there for Dalits. While stating this he recalled his experiences about the religious event. As he said that just a year ago when his family organises a small religious ceremony at home, where he invited all his known neighbours irrespective of their caste. In this ceremony, usually they used to invite their caste Bahun (Priest) but due to the engagement of their caste priest, they had to invite higher caste priest who actually accepted to perform the religious duty. Then during this religious performance, whatever demand has made by the priest was reciprocated with monetary and with commodities in exchange of his service in possible manner. However, he mentioned as a part of offering food to the priest with due respect for his service as always provided to our caste priest, whenever used to perform was refused by higher caste priest in this ceremony. He also mentioned that the priest even did not take the water from their house instead demanded to borrow from shop. He also stated that because of long hours of day service they even borrowed some juice and light eating stuff from the shop, which was but accepted. Moreover, he said with all the hours of services, the priest was not at ease until the completion of reciprocating times came and finally after receiving his service wage, the priest was hurry to leave the place also.

4.3. Section II

4.3.1. Nepali Dalit's Civil Society: Glimpse and Role

The idea of civil society is not a recent origin in the human world. Such as the philosophers and administrator have talked and seek to provide very largely in the

realms of society, state, nations and countries. It had often interpreted with the system of governance and governed. On the other, the stand of civil society has also undergone the series of changes in the course of societal changes with the change in existing social structure and institutions. Moreover, the invoke of civil society has a deep rooted history of its origin in addition, with the transformation towards extended outlook for catering the unity, co-operation, action, equality, liberty etc. in human network.

The term civil society can be trace back to philosopher's writing of Aristotle as *Koinonia Politike* in Greek which later translated to Latin as *Societas* or *Communitas* and later to English as *Civil Society*. It said that the term used in the context of political sphere in the hitherto where culture, individual and private sphere was not given important in better administration of the society. However, with the changing society, the term has gained changes and now in the modern era Civil society is one of the very basic structure for culture and social assertions of the human network for the common cause. As the term though originated from west but the presence of its principles were universal and thus not the imitation of west but the idea of civil society depends upon the circumstances and conditional of the countries (Kocka, 2004). As such with the changing contents of civil society, the Asian continent is also no more distant to these. For particularly to India and Nepal, there are different types of civil societies formed with the various purposes and reason which substantiate with the core lines of what Aristotle said that man is a political animal and been in association by purposefully (Dewiel, 1997). In these line Dalit civil society is one unlike many other civil societies, which works at the societal, constitutional, legal and historical issues of Dalits. At the most, for the mobilization of their status from what it was to what it can be. Largely, for bringing social justice, equality, Access to rights

and privileges, mobilization from the ages exploited traditions, culture, and increasing awareness among the Dalits as well as the non-Dalits mass with the nature of human equal treatment in the everyday life.

Mentioning about the first Dalit civil society can be locate to the year 1873, the establishment of *Satya Sodhak Samaj* (the society of Truth Seekers) by the Dalit leader Jyotirao Phule in India for the aim of mobilizing Dalits through educating, protecting and liberating from the vicious cycle of caste based discrimination against Dalits (Nepali, 2019). Nevertheless, this was not the end rather the initiation of civil society in different parts of the country for the different exploited sections such as the caste, gender to name few. Further, the greatest leader of all the time Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in 1924, started an organization named *Bahiskrit Hitkani Sabha* (Excluded Welfare Assembly) for the Dalit youth for the moral and material progress (Nepali, 2019).

In Nepal, the formation of Dalit civil society dates back to 1946 when the first organization named *Vishwa Sarvajan Sangh* (World people Organisation) started by Bhagat Sabhajit Bishwakarma. One year later Tailors Union was formed by Saharshanath Kapali in 1947 and in the same year Jadubir Bishwakarma formed *Nepal Samaj Sudhar Sangh* (Nepal Social Reform Organization).

As the objectives of these Dalit civil societies in the Nepal and India was indeed the uplift of Dalits who were/are caged in the caste barricades of living the impure and untouchable lives. There have been several programmes organized by these civil societies in their respective zones since its formation to make consciousness and awareness about the significance of the life of Dalits in the everyday life. May it be the case of temple entry, participation of ceremonies, inter-dining, connubial relations,

social status and economic possession have not left any of the pit buried that exploit Dalits in equal footings. It also make persuading attempt before the non-Dalits for acceptance of what they are as human rather on the Varna system. As the practices and behaviour of caste, system (Jaat Vyvastha) in totality reflects Asian and particularly the Hindu oriented system, so from the extant of literature, its genesis, mechanism and development has been always a centre stage of study in the India as well in Nepal society. Both the countries share many of the legacies that exhibit the religious as well as cultural traits and that certainly bridged them together in the fold of caste system practices. Even like the population of India, Nepal population and the Indian Nepali community with the fusion of various ethnic communities for many decades upheld the Hindu religion as a way of life. Unfortunately, was it the religious scriptures about Karma and Dharma chakra or the deliberation of the small clever groups of individuals able to segregate the majority of the human solidarity and unity in the hierarchical structure of pure and impure? Thus, the answer to these queries is still gradual in time but the existence of Dalit civil society is the reason of caste-based behaviours against the Dalits.

i. Kalimpong and Darjeeling Dalit Civil Society: A Formation

The caste-based exclusionary practices express not only in the visible form of action or attitudes against Dalits in the Nepali community, the invisible way of discrimination is also one way of keeping the age old practices. It happen to be that most of the educated and modern way living individuals deny to accept caste as still the parameter of exclusion in the society, however in reality at present period too, caste is a deciding factor of Individual life in various facets of interaction. Be it in the rituals, marriage, introducing oneself and in the larger canvass of political participation, caste plays an important role. In simple and concise, it starts from birth

of an individual in particular caste to death of that individual. So the core essence of caste is not so simple to have a sky view and make the assumption, it needs to deconstruct and hold back with the incisive look from the actors and its agency point of view. Thus, the researcher in the present study tries to mention some Dalit civil society history and their role in the Nepali community that in a way tries to provide voice to the voiceless sections.

In India while marking out the Nepalis Dalit particularly based on caste system, three names are prominent, *Kami Damai and Sarki* (from here now KDS/KADSA) unlike the Nepal caste system where *Newari caste system* runs parallel to Hindu caste system in the everyday life. Therefore, with three Dalits Jaat (caste) does have their own civil society with one uniform umbrella civil society. To mention they are *All India Nepali Schedule Caste Association* (AINSCA), *Kami Samaj*, *Damai Samaj* and *Sarki Samaj*. Moreover, the role and functions of each society is equal to one another for in building the Jaat with unity and resisting the caste based discrimination and untouchability.

ii. All India Nepali Scheduled Caste Association (अखिल भारतीय नेपाली अनुसूचित जाति संघ)

Everyone knows the importance of education in changing the life of any individuals, groups and the society as whole in better way; however, this was not the spoon for Dalits during the formation of AINSCA back then. Due to this, there are various contentions on the date of formation of first Dalit Civil society in the major chunk of population in North Bengal region of West Bengal. Despite this contention, majority of the Dalit activists and Dalit social workers do agree that the first Dalit civil society formed just after four days of India independence in 19 August 1947 in the Kurseong subdivision under Darjeeling district then. Consequently, in the year 1997, this

organization had even celebrated the 50th year of Golden jubilee in the origin place.

Moreover, with the establishment of this organization, according to some of the activist at present time even reminisce, at times about the unsuccessful nature to unify the three Jaat in one umbrella. Then soon also argue the fatalistic conditions erewhile prevailed which posed many challenges to our Dalit leaders to bring and make conscious to huge population of voluntarily accepting the fate of caste based discrimination. Nevertheless the population being somehow under uniform umbrella in the course set for the feelings to have separate civil society (*Jaat's Samaj*). Here the Pierre Bourdieu's concept of 'Habitus' fits very much relevant to understand the subjective experiences of three Jaat while even remaining together under one umbrella shared their distinct Dalits experiences.

Besides this, at present the branches of AINSCA have able to spread locally to Siliguri, and hoping to enlarge further in the other regions. Interestingly the present formed district of North Bengal in Kalimpong shows the formation of AINSCA in constitutional India. According to one Article published in the yearly Magazine of AINSCA in 2015, share some nuances of Formation of AINSCA in Kalimpong instead of Kurseong subdivision of Darjeeling district. It argued that before the constitutional amendment of scheduled caste list of Nepali Dalits, in the year 1953, the concept of scheduled caste could not substantiate for the Nepali Dalits. However, the argument also poses for the better research and discourse on this contention.

Meanwhile the author of this article mention, when India and Tibet used to have free trade relations through Kalimpong, the then Prime Minister of India Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru was once in a visit to Yathung/Yadong (Tibet Autonomous region of China). During this, venture of the Prime Minister, the two personalities, Late Mr. L.S. Shah

and M.B Mothey fortunate enough to communicate and present him the concise scenario of the three exploited and untouchable Jaat through letter. Soon then, the commission of Schedule caste has sent the team to encounter the ground reality, which results for the inclusion of the KDS into the Scheduled caste list constitutionally. However, the present name of AINSCA⁴ association established replacing Darjeeling District Scheduled Caste Association (DDSCA) on 22 March 1959 during the general Meeting of the Dalits in Kalimpong. The portfolio Members of this organization for the first time under this official Organization shown in the table below:

Portfolio Members of the AINSCA-

Sl.	Body	Name	Address
1	President(सभापति)	Man Bahadur Mothey	Banarhaat (NearRailwayStation)
2	Vice President(उपसभापति)	Nandalal Kalikotay	Darjeeling (NagarpalikaBuilding)
3	Vice President(उपसभापति)	Jungabir Ramtel	Kharsang/ kurseong (Hill Cart Road)
4	General Secretary(महासचिव)	Ratnakumar Sunam	Kaleybung/Kalimpong (Dharmodhaya)
5	Joint Secretary(संयुक्त सचिव)	Premlal Darnal	Kalimpong (paiyung Busty)
6	Joint Secretary(संयुक्त सचिव)	Man Bahadur Pariyar	Kalimpong (Baghdhaara Paath)
7	Cashier(कोषाध्यक्ष)	Birdhoj Singh Khati	Kalimpong (Naya Dhakghar)

Source: Baghdas, B. (2015, July). अनुसुचित जातिको संक्षिप्त इतिहास. *ALL INDIA NEPALI SCHEDULED CASTE ASSOCIATION*, 47–54.

⁴ See the details in Baghdas, B. (2015, July). अनुसुचित जातिको संक्षिप्त इतिहास. *ALL INDIA NEPALI SCHEDULED CASTE ASSOCIATION*, 47–54.

iii. Jaat (Caste) Based Civil Society within the Dalits (जात को समाज)

It is indeed conspicuous to see the three (KDS) Jaat has their own civil society or association in the history of Dalit voices. The past and its present formation have probably covered several milestones in their way of success for the association. Unlike forming only a uniform umbrella association, the determination for working more deeply and boldly against the social ill behaviour, outlet the formation of Jaat based civil society that sounds more an additional support. However the, Jaat based organization is the first organization to work for the cause of particular Jaat in the Nepali community. With the increasing need for more and powerful assertions, the map for general Dalit organization never became a bitter. As the similarities and the experiential narratives of the three Jaat, really overlap against the rest of the Nepali community, therefore Dalit identity also became strong.

In the Journey of different caste association, Kami Jaat has the first and older formation years of their association in the year 1929 in Kalimpong, followed by Sarki association somewhere around 1944 in Darjeeling and in Kalimpong around 1961 and the Damai association in the 30's in Darjeeling district(not sure about the year). The name of the Nepali Dalits association are-

- a. Kalimpong Biswakarma Samaj**
- b. Darjeeling Sarki Kalyaan Samiti and Kalimpong Sarki Samaj**
- c. Kalimpong Damai Samaj**

Later, the branches and sub branches established in adjacent regions in Kurseong, Dooars, Siliguri, and Mirik to name few. All the association had/ has seen different phases of the evolution of preserving and carrying the legacy of retaining the identity in pride. Above this, the initial stage after formation of these three associations has

suffered a severe setback at time to time, such as Dalit in total was not educated to run the association. In many ways they were not been able to give their presence in the association from their busy schedule of professional caste work like Metal forging, tailoring and mending the shoes. Fortunately, with the passage of time and with their determined optimistic effort brought fruitful result to three Jaat (KDS) of enlisting in constitution where Dalits protected with legal and constitutional traits. This on the other, credit goes to Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar, whose restless effort of bringing the Dalits in the same social level as the other sections devised the constitution in more equal terms for the citizens. Particularly to Dalits who were treated, as second class citizens or even not as human prior to the constitution.

Mostly, the formation years of the Nepali Dalits like the rest of the other Dalits association upsurge to emancipate the Jaat, Jaati⁵ (in Nepali called community) from the odds due to which presently all the three Jaat based civil society still able to exist and functions in this modern age of where caste has not fully wane through constitutionally.

iv. Role of Nepalis Dalit Civil Society

The Role is a dynamic behaviour of the status that an individual, group, or the organization, institution holds in the society. It is also the expected obligations, duties and responsibilities manifest by the receiver of social position and rank relative to other rank. Likewise, the Dalit civil society or the association has also produced and reproduced the obligations, duties according to their social status in the society.

The traditions of caste system in the Nepali society has never lay the space for the

⁵In Nepali vocabulary, Jaati refers to large canvass of group or groups that shares the same but not equal socio-cultural status relative to others whereas Jaat refers to part of that group, which shares equal social and cultural status in the society.

hierarchically bottom ranked Jaat named KDS in the same line of interactions. In the past, they had even the social position not counted as the human rather worst than the animals. For instance, Dalits do not allowed to enter in the other non-Dalits houses where Cows, Dogs and Goats domesticated on the contrary. The history of torture of the Dalits population during the dynasty after dynasty sounds today a matter of fairy tale in life of both non-Dalits and Dalits. However, with the innate dynamism of society, the rules, regulation have also changed with the transformed social structure and the intervention of legal aid and affirmative policies that do played a mobility approach in these groups of untouchables/Dalits/Scheduled caste in Nepali community.

Nevertheless, the absolute mobility of Dalits seems next to impossible; the relative mobility is also far to succeed in the everyday life. The present study thus encountered Nepalis Dalits civil society is still working for the relative social position besides the modern liberating tools of constitution in protecting and providing the social dignified status.

The Dalit civil societies such as *AINSCA*, *Biswakarma Samaj*, *Sarki Samaj* and *Damai Samaj* had/has playing to protect, progress and proclaim the dignified social position since its inception. At different levels of their position, they come forth to safeguard their peoples against the ill behaviour, caste practices of higher and lower Jaat in the Nepali community.

The civil society also works for protecting the cultural and traditional heritage of the KDS. At times, they even present through their Mahasabha (Dalit Mass Gathering) about their presence and release for relatively the same social positions in the social-cultural spheres as that of their counterpart.

Principally, AINSCA work for the three Jaat (KDS) and the other particular Jaat specific association work accordingly to their caste association. The areas that they focus are primarily the social, cultural, economic and even at times political. Here the political means the proper representation of the Scheduled caste sections in various govt. sectors in the hills and its adjacent regions given by the constitutional rights that somehow or might be deliberate attempt to keep vacant through the powerful or influential non-Dalit circles. They also raised voices for proper representation of Dalits in the administration setup where they account for 7.24% (census, 2011) total population of the Nepali language speakers. Even, the opposition of the sixth schedule demand of Gorkha National Liberation Front led by its supreme Late. Subash Ghising, to reservation in (Gorkha Hill Council) of then administrative setup to Gorkha Jan Mukti Morcha (1or 2) led GTA (Gorkha Territorial Administration) setup, the constant voice is always raised by the civil society. However, roles of every Dalit civil society are common and that is the liberation from age-old customs, behaviours, prejudices and social position towards better and equal acceptance by their counterpart.

Specifically to mention the frontal role in the present day of caste based discrimination, domestic violence; day-to-day to conflict of the Dalit with non-Dalit, the organization is growing stronger. Be it the recent cases⁶ of 2021 in the district of Darjeeling, has able to provide justice and support to the victim and their family. In addition, in this age of technological advancement and higher youth population in India, this organization is also trying to create awareness and consciousness to deconstruct the psychological transmission of caste behaviours through discourses

⁶On 19th of October 2021, a woman named Puja Kalikotay, who was a resident of Rohini, Kurseong excluded from the death rituals of the non-Dalits house when she as member of local village organization and as a neighbour of the same village extended certain physical help.

and research.

v. Civil Society and Recent Caste-Based discriminatory Incidents

As we, all know, since age's thinkers and social scientist like, Marx, and Morgan & Tylor to name few have gave the evolution, and transformation of society from one structure to another with human progress towards better civilised. Naturally, the social dynamics is an inevitable in every society. However, to eulogise the Indian Nepalis society with its inevitable change of social dynamics beholds the soft corner of Caste structure even at present context. This certainly questions the societal relations that bind and take the individual and groups to past legacy and mentality of inhumane archaic authority, where the reasoning surrender contradicting with the social dynamics of progressive society.

As the cases of caste based atrocities upon Dalits within the community ionises the living reality of Nepalis into caste stratification. Nevertheless, with the social dynamism in Nepalis community, the role of civil society has also accumulated massive responsibility to churn for awareness, justice and creating equality.

The recent cases of *Puja Kalikotay* and *Meghna Darjee* in the year 2021 in the North Bengal has again put impetus to the role of Dalit civil society at the centre stage of fighting for not only legally but socially as well. The Umbrella body of civil society in North Bengal AINSCA has always taken the major steps for helping the Dalit from the evil practices of caste and untouchablity. In this cases also, they fought and fighting on behalf of victims unless the justice prevail. The major task in these cases has always been challenging for victims from reporting to follow legal procedures and keeping themselves in the same community where they faces discrimination. In such unstable and stigmatised setting, the AINSCA has played the role of holding the

hands of each crawling victims towards justice and smashing the high wall of segregation in the Nepalis community.

4.4. Summary

The present chapter based on the fieldwork shows the two villages namely Homes village (Kalimpong) and Khairjhoda village (Darjeeling) for understanding the caste-based exclusion of Dalits in the Nepalis community. It shows the socio-economic profile of the respondents, which helps to locate for understanding the experiences of exclusion faced by the Dalits. It presented the Dalits exclusion of respondents view from different variables taken. Further, the patterns of social exclusion had shown where they still face the discrimination. Moreover, it also shows the cases of study on caste based exclusion faced by the respondents for better understanding the subaltern perspectives of Dalits. Further, the role of civil society of Dalit is in general for combating and creating awareness about the caste-based exclusion shown.

CHAPTER 5

Findings and Conclusion

5.1. Findings

This chapter has discussed about the findings and conclusion of the present study on Caste based exclusion of Dalits in the Nepalis community in context of Darjeeling and Kalimpong districts.

Based on the field study it revealed that the caste-based exclusion in Nepali society of these two districts has still existences in various socio-cultural spheres, such as religious performances, rituals practices, inter caste marriage, stigmatisation of caste names and discriminatory verbal sayings.

Religious sphere

In this sphere, from the findings found that Christian and Buddhist Dalits do not have faced any exclusion from their religious structures provided in the everyday life. However, it seen that Hindu Dalit respondents have mentioned that they faced exclusion from their religious background within the Hindu fold of practices such as majority of the respondents says that they are not invited in the non-Dalits houses whenever there are some religious event (Pujaa and reading holy scriptures in the home) but the other non-Dalits neighbours are invited.

Moreover, In the Khairjhoda village (Darjeeling), the respondents argued they excluded many times whenever the village organized any Puraan (religious event) of five to seven days for not accepting the Dalits in the common hearth in making religious event food for the village people. They also said that they not allowed touching the food items before it serve.

The study also indicates that while inviting higher caste Bahun (Priest), some invisible distance maintained by the priest. The majority of the respondents from Darjeeling district's Khairjhora village (84.84%) and Kalimpong district's Homes village (70.83%) mentioned there is still the presence of exclusion in terms of food taking by the higher caste (priest). They say although the higher caste priest accepts our invitation for performing in various ceremonial events but refuses to eat cooked food while offering and gives excuses of fasting. However, offered in the non-Dalits houses they accept. Besides, the priest's service reciprocated with monetary exchange but they do not want to share their social position eating from the Dalit's houses.

Inter-caste Marriage

Similarly in the marriage spheres, which is an important institution where caste play an important role reveals in the table no.4.8 that still there is a low preferences of inter-caste marriage among the Nepalis Dalit. As many of the married respondents of the villages has shown the intra- caste marriage against very few inter-caste such as the number of inter- caste marriage respondents mentioned that they had to face lot of problems after marrying with caste higher groups. For instances, two respondents *Seema portel (Alias)* and *Deepika biswakarma (Alias)* from Homes villages mentioned that they had to live nucleated after marrying to their caste higher husband for their non-acceptance by the in-laws.

Further, the majority of the respondents argued that they faced discrimination even in the non-dalits marriages such as during invitations and participation. As the respondents from the Kherjhora village (Darjeeling) mentioned rightly that in non-Dalits marriages, often, not allowed to enter in the kitchen and help the family members as a member of the same village organisation.

Rituals practices

The findings also indicate how in the Rituals spheres of Birth and Death, in the Hindu family Dalits are still facing the caste discrimination. The Hindu respondents out of 57 (71.25%) respondents, 50 (62.5%) respondents of majority has mentioned caste based exclusion reflects in various rituals ceremonies while the Buddhist and Christian respondents denied the presence of caste based exclusion in their rituals spheres. They mentioned even though they are mobilised from their economic occupations, they are still looked by their caste identity in various birth and death ceremonies.

From the gender experiences as shown in the table no. 4.11, major female respondent's show that the presence of caste-based exclusion presence and this exclusion is specially happens in the birth rituals. As the female respondents from both villages stated that while inviting in the non-Dalit's houses at seldom, they could not freely interact like their non-Dalit counterparts in the ceremonial house for there is always some restrictions against going in the kitchen, or talking freely with the family members and helping the ceremonial house physically is not accepted at ease.

Stigma of caste names (Kami, Damai and Sarki)

The caste name, which brought the identity of an individual, has become a stigma among the Nepali's Dalits in day-to-day routine. As the present study also found that the majority (87.5%) of respondents has felt low self esteem when they introducing themselves with the unknown person. This stigmatise has also found in other religious Dalit (Christian and Buddhist) group who have never experiences the caste based exclusion. As it has discussed that instead of using their caste names, they always prefer to substantiate with more socially accepted names like, Biswakarma in place of

Kami, Darjee in place of Damai and Mijar in place of Sarki that can provide them more space to social interaction in society. Further, it has discovered that the reason behind this stigmatisation of caste name was due to the unworthiness feeling of low social acceptance and the traditional derogatory remarks on caste names.

Discriminatory verbal sayings based on caste

The study also indicates that in the life of Dalits they also had to face lot of verbal abuse on their caste names retaining the age-old caste structure mentality among the non-Dalit caste groups. The Three respondents namely Amar (Alias), Pradeep (Alias) and Bhupen (Alias) from the Homes' village mentioned that they were abuse by the derogatory remarks such '*jaat ko beura dekhais*' (*showing caste behaviour*). Further, they even said that this is a regular practice of non-Dalits if they see any of the unworthiness upon the peoples of not able to do work. Even they argued that these abuses sometimes turn into the physical fight also.

Role of Dalit's Civil Society

The Dalit civil societies such as All India Nepali Scheduled Caste Association (AINSCA), of both the districts has playing a positive role to unite all the three Nepalis Dalit's groups under one umbrella, to campaigning the awareness programme on protecting the rights of Dalits and caste based discrimination at the individual level and to fight against the caste atrocities.

Subsequently, it has also found that apart from AINSCA others organisation based on each Dalit group such as *Biswakarma Samaj*, *Sarki Samaj* and *Damai Samaj*, has always guiding the individual at the grass root level. Further, all the Civil society also playing a vital role for protecting the cultural and traditional heritage of the Dalits group. At the same time, they also organised an annual meeting (Mahasabha)

regarding the whole years discussion and prepare the strategy for further events.

5.2. Conclusion

Caste system and Social exclusion has always been the two sides of the same coin of South Asian reality particularly in India and Nepal. The ages of exclusion in the form of pure and impure practices in the Caste based society has showcase in the various forms of socio-cultural traits over the period. Consequently, in the greater canvass, Social exclusion has the structural embodiments of caste and various group identities, which culminates into the denial or refusal of certain sections by the other sections. Therefore, the present study has entailed the Nepalis Dalits in the lines of this exclusion based on caste.

The Nepalis as known has divided into the hierarchical structure where diverse groups arranged under the state law called Muluki- Ain 1854 in the most concrete form. However, in the Indian context, the Indian Nepalis has shown the resemblance of caste structure but with the social arrangement of three classes called Higher, Middle and Lower. Along with this, the common space for Dalits (Kami, Damai and Sarki) in both the Indian and Nepal Context, represents lowest social ladder of 'पानी नचल्ने जात' (water unacceptable caste).

Moreover, social exclusion based on caste has the multidimensional nature, which affects different spheres of socio-cultural, political and economic in the life of Dalits. As the study shows that social, exclusion in relation to Dalits has been more Group identity rather than the individual. The Nepalis Dalits has been suffering from different elements of invisible and visible exclusion in the Nepalis community based on caste identity. Further, the caste importance as such has more relevance in the various traditional and cultural practices in the Hindu way of living that served the

base of exclusion of Nepalis Dalits.

In addition, the concept of Social exclusion is the denial of equal opportunity of certain groups from any socio-economic, cultural and political rights by the dominant group based on the group identity of caste and ethnicity (Thorat & Sabharwal, 2010). Based on the conceptualisation it uncovers that the caste identity holds the important elements of excluding Dalits individual despite their occupational mobilisation in the village. It is seen that caste identity preferences in the rituals though there is little mobility of using higher Bahun (Priest) role for performances because of economic exchange but it is not equal still in the social status of sharing the food. Further, it seen that the inter-caste preferences is very low for the Dalits caste. It also shows that the village still caters the denial of low caste in various religious and rituals practices in the non-Dalits houses. Therefore, the present study able to explore the objectives of the socio-cultural spheres of caste based exclusion in its two studied villages with its nature and dimension. However, the study is still in the process provided caste as an integral part of Nepalis community in general and Dalits in particular.

Thus, caste and its identity remains the poignant base of articulating various behaviours against Dalits in many of the socio-cultural ambit of social interaction. With caste has been the source of ascription that excludes certain sections makes exclusion. Hence, to sum up the caste based exclusion in the present study has-

1. Bahun (Priest) role and their exclusion of touched food
2. Inter-caste marriage with higher counterparts
3. Rituals and rites discrimination
4. Caste name's stigma to introduce
5. Verbal discriminatory sayings

Thus, it found that Nepalis Dalits are still facing the various types of caste-based exclusion in the society.

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Appendix 1

Socio-economic profile

Name.....Caste/Ethnic

group.....Sub

caste.....Sex.....Age.....Mothertongue.....Reli

gion.....Village.....Locality(Panchayat/Municipality).....Di

strict.....Family structure(Joint/ Nuclear/ living alone).....

Educational qualification:

	Pre-Matrix	10 th	12 th	Graduation	Post-Grad	Higher Studies	Others (Vocational & Skill)
Rural							
Urban							
Govt.							
2Private							

Marriage:

<u>Status</u> (Single/Married)	<u>Forms of Marriage</u> (Arrange/Love/others)	<u>Preference</u> (Intra/Inter/others)	<u>Community</u> Inside/Outside	<u>Country</u> Inside/Outside

Occupation:

Name of the Profession	Formal Sector			Informal Sector		Nature of Work		
	Govt.	Semi-Govt.	Pvt.	Own	others	Permanent	uncertain	Contractual

Family Chart

Members	Name	Age	Degree	Institution				Occupation
				Rural	Urban	Govt.	Pvt.	
Grand Father								
Grand mother								
Father								
Mother								
Spouse								
Daughter/Son								
Daughter/Son								
Daughter/Son								

Annual Income

Less than Rs. 15,000/-	Rs.15,001- 45,000/-	Rs.45,001- 75,000/-	Rs.75,001- 1,05,000/-	Rs.1,05,001- 1,3,000/-	More than 1,35,000/-

Interview Schedule:

Caste identity:

1. Have you faced any discrimination with your low caste identity in the village or anywhere else? Y/ N/ No-Response
2. Have you faced any verbal abuse upon you in the village saying “Jaat ko beura dekhais”/ Saano Jaat ko Beura”/ Jaat ley paako Beura” etc. Y/ N/ No-Response

Psychological:

1. Have you felt anytime to hide your caste while talking with the strangers for some purpose? Y/ N/ No-Response
2. Have you felt awkward to introduce your caste when somebody asks you? Y/N/ No-Response
3. In village while interacting with the non-dalit, do you feel shame/ humiliation about your caste? Y/ N/ No-Response

Educational:

1. Have you faced discrimination from non-dalit who is educated? Y/ N/ No-Response
2. Have you faced discrimination from non-dalit who is uneducated / Y/ N/ No-Response

Religious:

1. Have you ever faced discrimination in religious places such as Temple? Y/ N/ No-Response
2. Is the Temple has only higher caste priest? Y/ N/ No-Response
3. Had you experienced making distance in the Temple and worshipping? Y/N/No-Response
4. Could you please tell us more in detail about this discrimination?

Marriage:

1. Do you prefer if your family members have inter-caste marriage? Y/ N/ No-Response
2. Have you or family faced any discrimination if done inter-caste marriage? Y/N/ No-Response
3. Do you prefer high caste or low caste for inter-caste marriage? H/ L/ Any
4. What is your experience in the village regarding the inter-caste marriage with high caste if you had seen someone else's?

Rituals:

1. Are your family invited in the birth rituals (Nuraan, Bhaat khilai and Chewar) from known non-dalit fellow? Sometimes/ often/ N/.
2. If you had attended any of the invitation, do they make any discrimination in the houses? Y/ N/ No-Response
3. What kind of discrimination you see or experienced?
4. If unfortunately, death occurs, will the non-dalit attend and help without discrimination. Y/N/ No-Response
5. Do they touch the heavenly body and offer pray, flower, piece of cloth and Incense stick. Y/ N/ No-Response
6. Will they allow you do the same thing if in the village the non-dalit dies? Y/N/No-Response
7. Could you please explain the kind of discrimination occurs in the death rituals?

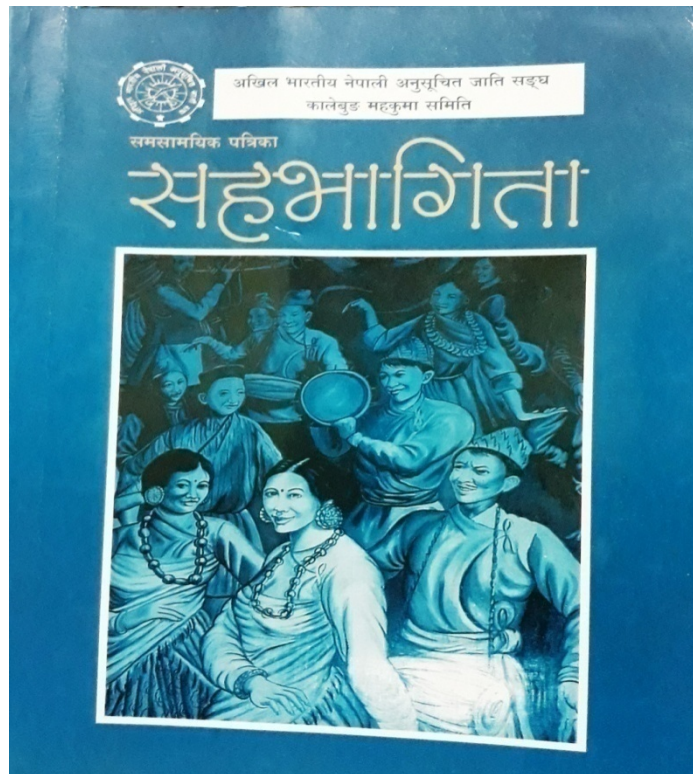
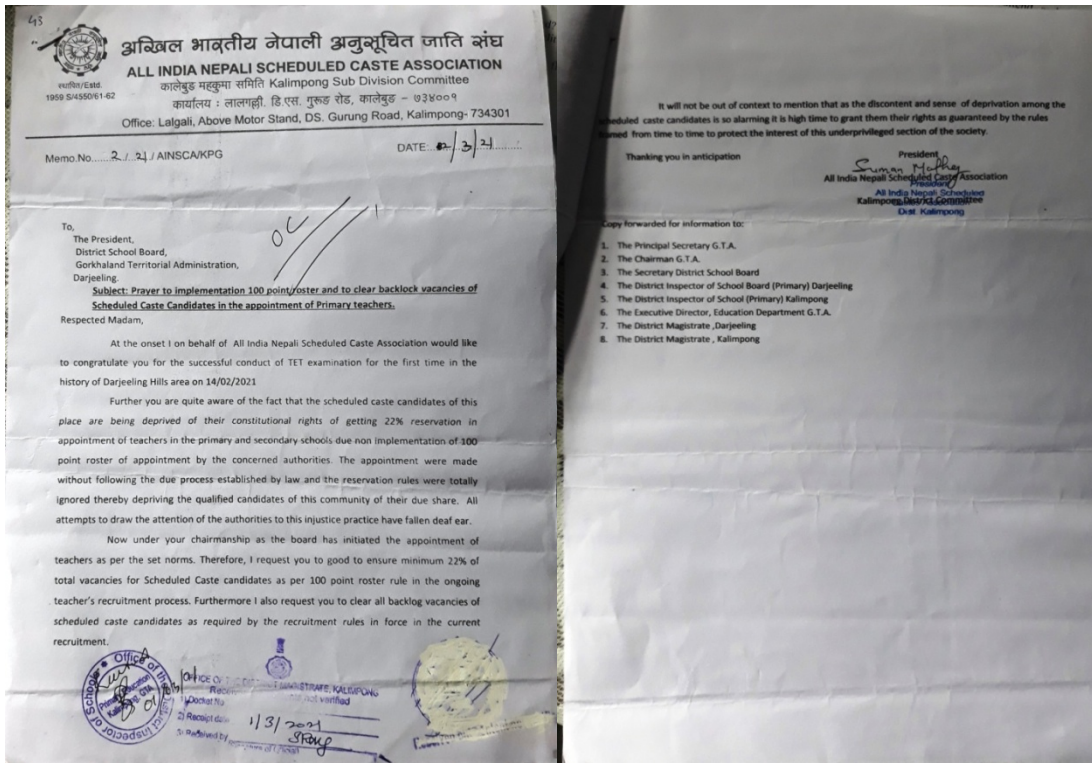
Village Civil society:

1. Does the civil society have dalit caste as its panel members? Y/ N
2. Do the civil society organizes programme(religious, social and cultural) Y/ N
3. Did you face any discrimination in these programmes? Y/ N
4. Explain.

Social interaction:

1. Do you have Non-dalit friends in the village? Y/N
2. Do they come in your house for meeting and spending time? Y/ N
3. Do they allow you to enter their houses if you know them personally? Y/N/ No-Response
4. Was there any conflict with respect to caste in this village since with your habitation and experience? Y/ N/ No-Response

Appendix 2



Picture of Respondents



Source: Fieldwork, 2022



Source: Fieldwork, 2022