

**Socio-cultural and Economic Status of Gurung women: A
study of Birendranagar Municipality, Ward no. 1, Surkhet
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Abstract

Women and ethnicity are extremely important to Nepal's overall growth. Women and ethnicity play important roles in enhancing a nation's reputation abroad. The development of Nepal's economy is largely driven by women. It significantly influences Nepalese society and the economy. Women are revered as historical figures in the country. This study is conducted at Gurung community of Birendranagar Municipality Ward No. 1 Surkhet. The main objective of this study is to find out social, cultural and economic conditions and examining the changing pattern of social, cultural and economic situation of Gurung community. This research carried out a theoretical proportion of Gurung women in the situation of contemporary society of Nepal. This study had carried out to discover the demographic socio-cultural and economic profile and to suggest some remedial measures for their better economy. This study was conducted in a descriptive research design with purposive sampling. The information was gathered using both types of quantitative and qualitative data through households' survey, interview observation and questionnaires as tools together and generalization of the study. This study has also aimed to discover the major characteristics of Gurung women in contemporary society. Even though they have need to more empowerment providing by education, loan for business, and awareness program.

Key words: *Community, economic, socio-cultural, empowerment, occupation.*

Introduction

Surface diversity along with Nepal extensive biodiversity, unique socio-cultural structure and life style and rich heritages of civilization have all rendered this land of ancient legend like a collection of wonders into immensely beautiful and consecrated. According to census 2078 B.S. there are 125 caste/ethnic group people are living in Nepal. All those ethnic groups people have own socio-cultural as well as economic practices since long ago which are getting changes according to changing of time and period in world. This study has given emphasis to explore the changes in socio-cultural practices of Gurung's community.

The study area, Birendranagar Municipality is a city in Surkhet District in Karnali Province of Nepal. It is also the capital city of Karnali province. It is a trade center in mid-western Nepal and is considered as the most expensive city to live. In February 2018, the city was made the capital of the province of Karnali.

Gurungs are hardworking Mongolian hill people; considered honest, brave and laborious. They have their own language and their cultural practices still exist.

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Generally, Gurung's live in small round, oval or rectangular houses which are clustered to form a single village. The upper section of their house is white washed and the lower part is red plastered. The traditional costume for the women is maroon velvet blouse and large cloth which is fastened over their one shoulder, a wrap-round skirt and many yards of narrower cloth wrapped around their waist. Their ornaments include gold and coral necklaces which represent the prosperity of their family. Gold ear and nose rings are given to woman at the time of marriage. Money, keys and various useful things are wrapped into the waist cloth.

The origin place of Gurung is southern slopes of Annapurna Himalaya in western-central Nepal. Their traditional land extended from Gorkha district east through Lamjung and Kaski to Syanja district, all in Gandaki zone. Gurung's are migrated in different parts with the changing of time and socio- economic situation of them. Within their historic homeland, the Gurung community is sub- divided into Western, Central and Eastern sections. Now a days, they are found all over the part of Nepal and other countries of the world (Bista, 2004).

Gurung community has their own distinct culture, customs, social traditions, songs, dances and dialect (Dhakal, 2022). Their culture is unique and they perform their different cultural practices from birth to death according to Gurung's culture. As an ethnic group, Gurung has the name and fame because of having cultural uniqueness and brave history of their ancestors. But socio- economic status is not equally well in Surkhet.

Culturally Surkhet district is very rich. There are many religious and historical sites in different areas of the district which are the identities of this district but their status is not recognized in country. This district is a multiethnic district where around thirty-four caste/ethnic groups' people are living there (CBS, 2021). They have own cultural and mother tongue but most of them are dominated by Nepali language and going too disappeared soon. It is believed that Gurungs are not the origin community of this area but they migrated from the Gandaki region in the unification period of Nepal. According to Dhakal (2022), they could not continue their culture and gradually begin to disappear due to influence of other culture. They lost their mother tongue as well and dominated by other languages and culture. As a result, socio-economic backwardness is seen in their life style. Most of them; livings in this area do not have knowledge about their mother tongue and following other languages. The present culture of them influence by Brahaman and Chhetri. Nepalese women generally fall behind men in terms of their access to property and to contemporary forms of education, skill development, and knowledge. Women in society are creative members. However, the feudal capitalist and patriarchal society has not just provided women the opportunity to possess property.

Gurung people lost their mother tongue as well and dominated by other languages and culture. There is no provision and mechanism to teach the Gurung language for new generation. The economic condition of Gurung of this municipality is not well.

Agriculture is the main source of living of them but they do not have sufficient land. Similarly, they do not have knowledge about the potentiality of soil for the type of crops. So, all over the place they cultivate same type of crop which do not provides sufficient production. They are following traditional farming system and equipment such as wooden- plough, hoe and spade and oxen are used to plough the land. Gurung women are deprived from the modern agricultural facilities like improved seeds, fertilizers, insecticides and modern instrument etc. So, there was a great realization to study on Gurung women. Culturally, they do not give much priority for education rather than agricultural and other works. Most of the children are deprived from modern and quality education facility because their parents could not afford the cost to the daughter. The general objective of this study is to find out the socio-economic and cultural practices and changes among Gurung's community of Birendranagar Municipality Ward No. 1, Surkhet district, Nepal. The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To examine the socio-economic status of Gurung women.
2. To explore the cultural practices of Gurung community in Birendranagar Surkhet.

Literature review

Literature review is a process of analyzing the existing information of related subject where includes the studies of history and we get new idea in respective field. It is very important part of research which provides the foundation of the study. It is a critical and evaluative account of what has been published on a chosen research topic. Its purpose is to summarize, synthesize and analyze the arguments of others. It should reveal similarities and differences, consistencies and inconsistencies and controversies in previous research. It provides an excellent starting point for researchers beginning to do research in a new area by forcing them to summarize, evaluate, and compare original research in that specific area. It ensures that researchers do not duplicate work that has already been done (University of Guelph, 2004).

Regarding the origin of the district's name, Sharma (2014) noted that there were seventeen mounds (hills) in the area when Limbuwan was in power. The tax on the land in this area was collected from Dhankuta once this region was integrated into greater Nepal. Later, thirteen of the seventeen hills were divided, and starting in 1952 B.S., a separate tax office in Myanglung began to collect the land tax. In 2018 B.S., the late king Mahendra split the nation into 75 districts.

There were six districts in Limbhuwan in the past, according to Thapaliya (2013) account, while some have argued that there are now nine districts in Limbhuwan's easternmost region, starting from where the Arun River falls. Limbu ruled in this area at the same time as the Malla King of the valley and the Baise and Chubise states of the Karnali and Gandaki regions. They were known as "Hang," the Limbu Kings. While Nepal was being united, Gorkhali also attacked the Limbhuwan, but they were unable to entirely subdue them. As a result, a deal was reached between Gorkhali and Limbhuwan in which Limbhuwan agreed to recognize Gorkhali as the superior civilization and made a commitment not to interfere with Limbhuwan society and culture. So, Limbuwan came under the Gorkha administrative system after 1831 B.S.

Nepal's socio-economic and political status has been examined by Caplan (2000). In his book "Land and Social Change in East Nepal," he said that the Limbu started to steal money from Brahmin in order to pay for their cultural activities, and over time they came to rely on them financially. Later, they also misplaced their Kipat. Following Nepal's unification, numerous other ethnic groups also immigrated to this region, gradually converting the Limbu into a minority.

The southern slopes of the Annapurna Himalaya in western-central Nepal are where the Gurung people first appeared, according to Bista (2004) in his book "People of Nepal." Their traditional territory covered the entire Gandaki zone, extending from the Gorkha district in the west through Lamjung and Kaski to Syangja district. In the districts of Kaski, Parbat, Syangja, Lamjung, Tanahu, Manang, and Gorkha, Gurungs can be found. The Kathmandu Valley and the far east of Nepal are secondary centers of Gurung concentration.

According to Ragsdale (1990), the Gurung group can be divided into Western, Central, and Eastern divisions within their historical homeland, or they can be categorized as highlanders, Lekhalis, and lowlanders. Gurung (2007) provided information on the Gurung's civilization. He asserted that their forefathers originated in kannoj with the use of references to Gurung chronology. Gurungs are also referred to as "Tamu" in the Gurung language, Tamuqwi, which is a cognate of a Tibetan word. Tamu is a horse-riser, if not a horse heading, according to etymology. The Gurungs are said to be descended from Tibetan forebears who moved to central Nepal many years ago in search of better socioeconomic opportunities as a result of these cognates.

According to renowned Limbu ethno-historian Iman Singh Chemjong (1967), the Gurung arrived in Nepal as cavalry during the 7th century Tibetan invasion of Nepal under SrongtsenGampo, the first known historian of Tibet. Their biological, linguistic, and socio-cultural traits are closer to Tibetan. The Gurungs are one of the "seven tribes" of northern Tibet, according to him. They first appeared in central Nepal as mercenary soldiers working for Yunnanese Shah lords and already going by the moniker "Gyarung". In the Gandaki region, nine Gyarung officers founded a federation of tiny republics with a focus on villages that was later known as Gya-rong, or "nine chiefs." They are thereafter referred to as Gurungs.

Regarding the definition of "Tamu," Ghale (2008) said in her book "Adibasi Tamukeveda" that "Ta" stands for "above" and "mu" for "Aakash" (Sky). She asserted that the Gurungs' ancient predecessors were highly cultured and held to a high regard for the divine, but that Brahman and Kshetri's influence and involvement had caused the Gurungs' culture to decline.

Ragsdale (1990) outlined the variety of the Gurung economy. In place of their former sole reliance on highland herding, hunting, and swidden agriculture, military service and sedentary agriculture (including wet rice cultivation and diverse dry crops such as maize and millet) have emerged as the two main pillars of their economy. The Gurung economy has traditionally been heavily dependent on long-distance trade. Although

they no longer play a significant middleman role in Nepal's trade with Tibet, new opportunities for military service abroad have emerged.

Sheep farming is the primary ethnic occupation of Gurungs, according to Bista (2004), who wrote on the economic and social life of the Gurung people. Sheep are raised for both meat and wool. Depending on the size, each community has two or three flocks of sheep. Typically, a flock contains 200 to 300 sheep. They transport their sheep to higher alpine pasturelands in the summer, and in the winter they bring them to low-lying areas or basian to graze. He went into further detail regarding the economic and societal way of life of the Gurungs, mentioning that they had a propensity to trade ghee for domestic necessities like salt and food grains.

To exchange goods, some Gurungs traveled to the border regions of Tibet and India with ghee and wool products. He claims that the pensions and salaries of people who join the military are the primary source of income for Gurung families. The bulk of Gurungs enlist in the Indian and British forces and deploy to England, Malaysia, and various locations in India. A limited number enlist in the Royal Nepal Army (now the Nepal Army). Only a small minority accept any other paid employment. Ragsdale (1990) asserted that prior to the formation of the Gorkha state, Gurung involvement was in the trading of salt with Tibet and the raising of yaks and sheep. Gurung were soldiers in the Gorkha army, and the jagir (land grants) Gorkha state gave them for their service to the state attracted them from northerly, higher altitude communities where pasteurism and trade were significant. Later they continued in Nepalese army and that became the economic source of their family.

After Sugauli treaty the recruitment of Gorkhas began in British army and later in India army as Gorkhas' regiment where most of Gurungs got priority due to their simplicity and honesty which contributed to bring significant improvement in economic condition of Gurung's community. According to Gurung (2011)'s analysis of the traditional socio-economic situation, the traditional vocation of the Gurungs is animal husbandry, which includes sheep farming and hunting. But hundreds of years ago, after living in the shadow of the Annapurna and Machhapuchhre mountains, they started farming and cultivating the soil. The Gurungs rear sheep by shifting them to higher and lower altitudes according to the seasons. They have shepherds to care for all of the sheep at once. The employment of Gurungs in foreign armies is currently another important occupation, and the income from this employment has grown to be the cornerstone of the Gurung economic structure. The Gurung people's traditional occupation also involves commerce with Tibet and India.

The primary economic activity of Gurungs, according to Pandey (2008) in his book "Nepal's Janajatiharu," is agriculture. Gurungs who choose not to seek military service remain at home to tend to their land. They grow the crops according to the seasons, and some are also involved in animal husbandry. They cultivate crops like potato, millet, paddy, and maize. Gurungs are courageous and trustworthy in their work. Numerous Gurung villages can boast that many of their young men served in the Gurkha regiment

of the British and Indian forces, and that they imported large sums of money into Nepal to help them improve their economic situation.

According to Moissala's (1985) description of Gurung economic life, the Gurung people mostly depend on agriculture, animal husbandry, and military services. They cultivate potatoes, rice, wheat, corn, and millet. Terraced farming is the standard practice. They also raised sheep for meat and wool, which provided them with a living. When herding sheep, they utilize powerful mastiffs (sheepdogs). The pensions and salaries of the family members who serve in the army are an important source of income for the majority of Gurung families. They still include the illustrious soldiers of the British Gorkha Regiment, who were awarded Victoria Crosses for their valor.

Gurung (2005) examines the position of Gurung of Pokhara in higher education in his baseline study. He made comparisons between Gurung enrollment, performance, and dropout rates. He discovered that compared to non-Gurung students, Gurung students enroll in and perform much worse in many faculties at Tribhuvan University and Pokhara University. Gurung (2011) discussed the detrimental effects of the lahure system on education and how the sociocultural environment encourages the recruitment of Gurung adolescents.

Bista (2004) has explain about the religious and cultural practice that the early Gurungs religion was animistic and shamanic, akin to the Pre- Buddhist Bon religion of Tibet. Their main deity is their Kul (Ancestor). They venerate and worship the spirits of their ancestors and they believe that those who have led a good life are reborn as human beings after they die. Their patron deities are phailu (manakal), Lu (nagdevata) and Simu(prakritidevata). These deities are worshipped twice a year, the majority of Gurungs practice Bouddha, and Lamas serve as their priests. The industry has been challenging with a significant contest related to staff turnover over the past several years (Khairy et al., 2024). Decision-making regarding job departure is shaped by psychological factors, working conditions, and the interplay of various workplace events, as emphasized by turnover experts like Yavuz et al. (2020). Hense, Gurung women also face the issues as stated by Khairy et al. (2024) and Yavuz et al. (2020).

Gurung(1999) has explained about the cultural practices of Gurungs that the Gurungs are mainly animists or followers of the Bon religion. Their oral text is called Pye (Uthan) and their traditional religion is known as Pye-ta Lhu-ta. The Gurungs later came to adopt Buddhism. Some Gurungs of eastern Nepal have also been influenced by the Hindu religion. However, the Gurungs celebrate their feasts and festivals and carry out the ceremonies and practices related to worship, birth, death and marriage in accordance with the Bon and Buddhist religions. Nepali women are dependent on men; their basic survival is at stake if their partners refuse to provide them with shelter. Although, women are given more authority, have greater access to money and property, and are more likely to carry out business on behalf of their families in Gurung communities.

Research methodology

In this research, descriptive research design had been used with the help of various research tools and techniques. Primary and secondary data had been collected, analyzed and interpreted for the final presentation. This research design would yield more valid data as socio-economic condition of the Gurung community of Surkhet district to study the problem outlined earlier and to achieve the objective of the present study.

To achieve the objectives of the research, both qualitative and quantitative data had used. This study had mainly based on primary data but background information was obtained from secondary sources. Birendranagar Municipality Ward No. 1 had been purposively selected among the Sixteen Wards. The chosen Ward No. 1 represents the diverse culture, religion and caste/ethnicity. In this ward total household are 2124 and the total population is 8667 among them only 50 households of Gurungs are inhabited. Total population of the Gurung is 230, out of them 113 female and 117 male. For the research work only 40 married women of age group between 20-50 years had been taken from different house by applying purposive sampling method.

Result and discussion

Social aspects of the respondent

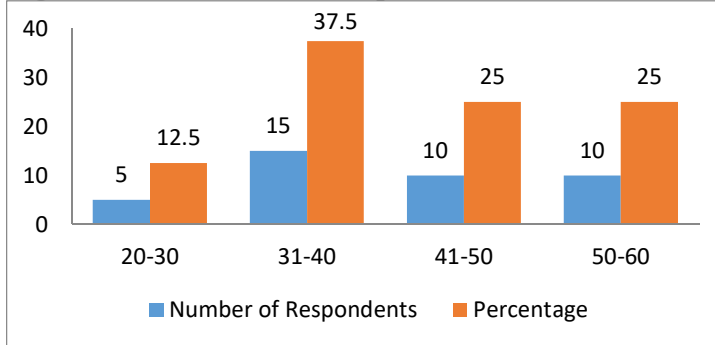
According to a sociological perspective, social component is concentrated on the study of issues relating to social relations between persons. Aspects of life known as "social" relate to other people or society at large. This encompasses any method or custom used to facilitate group cooperation, organization, and harmony that incorporates components of shared experience. Social characteristics include the relationships people form and their interactions with others in society. The roles that people play in their families, the clubs they join, the relationships students have with their classmates and teachers, women who "fight for" equal rights, people who practice their religion, people who participate in crime, relationships at work, donations made to charitable organizations are a few examples.

Sociologists view society as a group of individuals who adhere to similar ideals and lifestyles. The institution of society is heavily reliant on social features, which encompass all facets of it. The sharing of traits or characteristics among elements within a certain culture is referred to as social aspects. Language, standards, rules, integrity, notions, and traditions are all examples of social aspects.

Age structure of the respondent

Respondents in the survey category included different age groups. On the basis of economically active and marriage age groups were taken as in respondents. Following table shows the age group of the respondents.

Figure 1: Distribution of Respondents on the Basis of Age Group

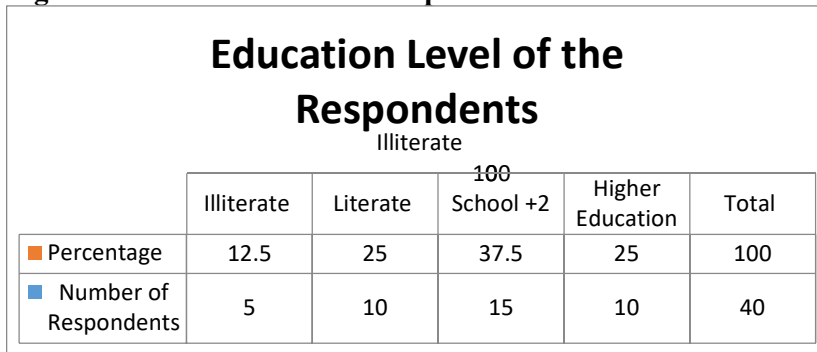


Source: Field survey 2024

Education status of the respondents

Everyone everywhere should be able to build their literacy and numeracy skills. It's time to eliminate gender disparities and ensure equal access to education. Education is the backbone of the country that helps to empower the people. Education is *a purposeful activity directed at achieving certain aims*, such as transmitting knowledge or fostering skills and character traits.

Figure 2: Distribution of the Respondents on the Basis of their Education

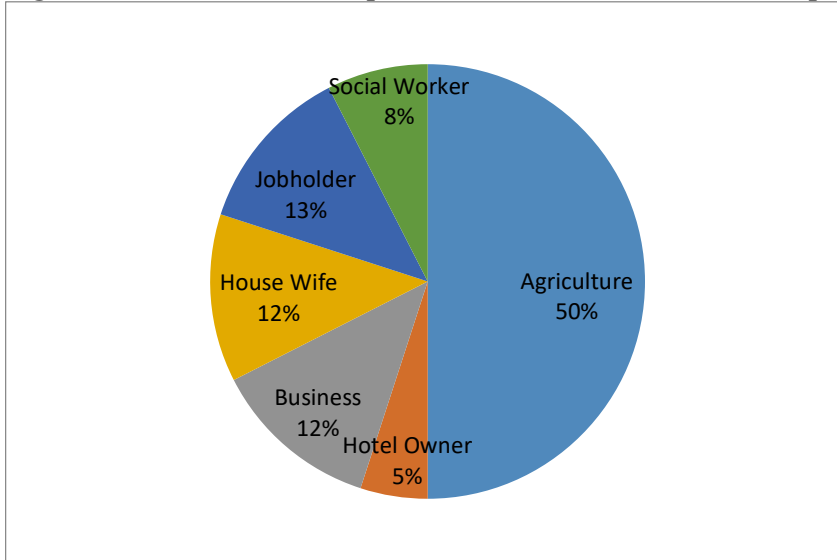


Source: Field Study 2024

Occupation of the respondent

Occupation refers to the trade, business, and profession so it is a general term which indicates the individual's economic activities. There are different kinds of occupation in the community. In this research researcher categorized the occupation as; farmer, house wife, hotel owner, social worker, business and jobholder.

Figure 3: Distribution of respondents on the basis of their occupation



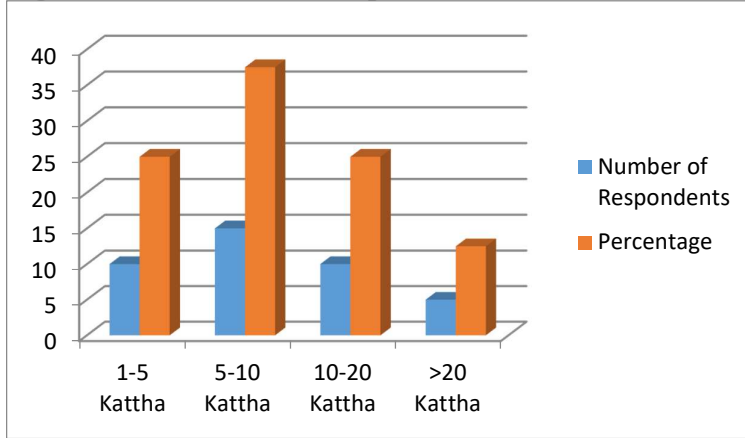
Source: Field Study 2024

The above figure shows that there are 50 percent of the women are involve in agricultural activities. Five present of the respondents are involve in hotel profession, like this 12.5 percent of the total respondents involve in business activities. Near about 12 percent of the respondents involve in their household activities, neither they have business nor they have own sufficient land for agriculture. They are fully dependent on their husband's profession. Some of the respondents are jobholder, it consists the 12.5 percent. Apart from these activities, near about 7 percent of the respondents is social worker. It shows that women in Gurung community are involved in different profession in the study area.

Land holding of the respondent

Nepal is an agricultural country. Near about 60 percent of its people are dependent in agriculture. Land was found to be the main source of living in Gurung community too. A person is called wealthy who possess large size of land. Not only economically, but also socially Gurungs have lower position, because of smaller number and less sufficient of land. Regarding the land holding, Grung women mention that the land on the basis of their families ownership. The land holding of the respondents on the study area was found as given below.

Figure 4: Distribution of respondents on the basis of land holding



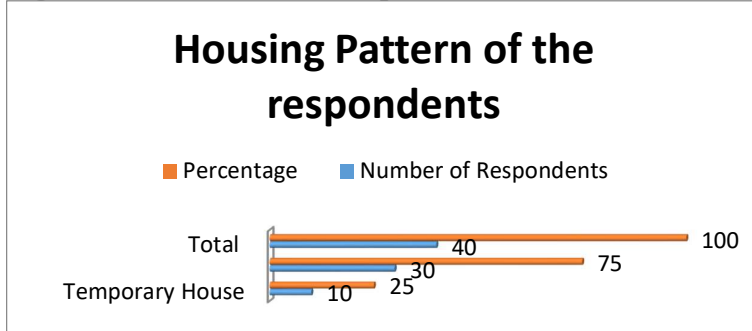
Source: Field Study 2024

Regarding the land holding situation of the respondent's family, 25 percent of the total percent have one to five kattha of the land. Near about 37 percent of the respondents have 5-10 kattha of the land, like this 25 percent have 10-20 kattha and rest of the 12.5 percent have more than 20 kattha of land. But all family have land, so no one family of the Gurung community of the research area are landless.

Housing pattern of the respondents

The house and housing are two of the most important and actual phenomena with which humanity has been grappling for a long time, seeking to find an appropriate response to the many shifts and changes in this area. This phenomenon not only highlights the various facets of social and economic issues, but it is also influenced by climatic factors. It has always been assessed in terms of appropriateness factors, but there are now many various ways to address the issue. In this study, researcher recognized the quality and quantity processes of the contemporary houses. The evaluation of the housing pattern of represents that the optimized concept of the house and its indices being defined as following; an appropriate home must meet all the prerequisites, including accessibility to safety, welfare, sustainability, and structural stability. Additionally, it must allow for the development and strengthening of ties between family members and the surrounding community for all occupants.

Figure 5: Distributions of respondents on the basis of housing pattern

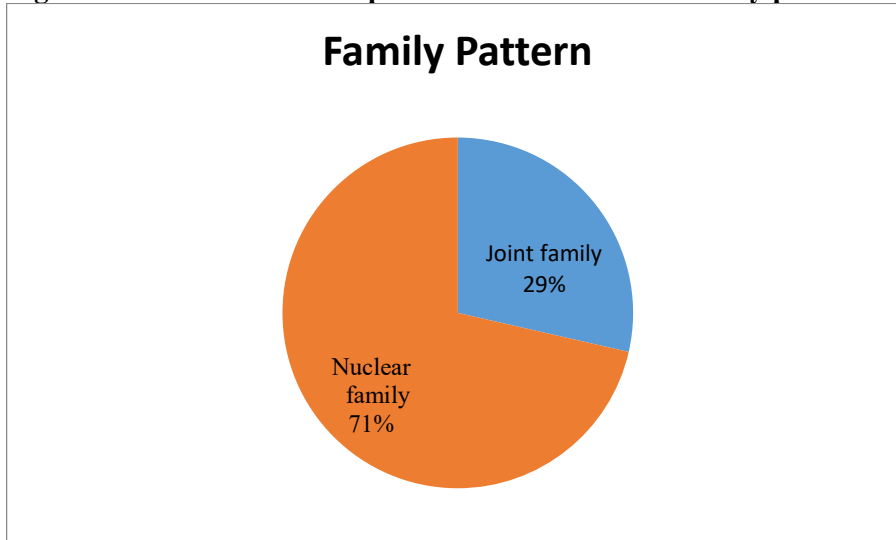


Field Study 2024

Family pattern of the respondents

Joint families like other communities of Nepal were observed in Birendranagar Municipality Ward No 1. But now separate family system has increased due to the effect of modernization and urbanization. People of study area came to know that separate family and individual family system is much better than joint family system. Every individual earns the money engaging in different jobs which is affiliated to manage the basic needs of the family.

Figure 6: Distribution of respondents on the basis of family pattern



Source: Field Study 2024

Regarding the family pattern of the Gurung community of the respondents only 29 percent are joint family and rest of the 71 percent are nuclear family. It indicates that most of the Gurung people of the study area are nuclear family.

Culture of the respondents

The Gurung are indigenous groups who have their own language and traditional culture. The Nepalese hierarchy placed the Buddhist and Hindu middle hills and mountain groups in a middle-ranking position the name, Gurung, is derived from the Tibetan word, Grong, which means farmers. The Gurung call them *Tamu*, which means horseman in the Tibetan language. It is said that the Gurung are descended from the historical Hun people of Central Asia (Gurung, 2035). The main place of settlement of Gurung are Kaski, Lamjung, Mustang, Manang, Gorkha eventhugh Gurung are settled in the districts of karnali Province, like Surkhet, Salyan, Dailekh. The Gurung have their oral text is called Pye and their traditional religion is known as Pye-ta Lhu-ta and Gurungs later came to adopt Buddhism.

Dress and ornaments

Traditional dress of the Gurung includes a short tied across the front and a short skirt of several yards of white cotton materials wrapped around the waist and held as if wide belt. The Gurung women wear cotton or velveteen blouse tied at the front and a sari of printed material usually a drink reddish color. Their ornaments include gold and coral necklaces, gold earrings and nose and bangles.

Food habits

One of the best-known Gurung dishes is *Sel roti*, a circular lightly sweetened doughnut. *Sel roti* is deep-fried in a cast-iron pan after hand-mixing rice flour, ground rice, milk, butter, and sugar. A commonly eaten staple in Gurung villages is *Dhido*, *Roti*; homemade alcohol is given to the guest as their culture. Gurungs are fonu of honey hunting .The Gurong community usually have homemade alchohol and *Jand*, which is used in dailey life and feast and festival.

Dance

Gurung are traditionally well known for their humor, singing and dances. They have very interesting dance traditions Main popular songs and dances are *Dohori song*, *Ghantosong*, *Sorathisong*, *Marunisong*, and *Chudka dance*.

Dohori songs

Gurungs are traditionally well known for their humour, valour and singing and dances and therefore fond of merry making and enjoyment. Singing of *Dohori* song are very popular among the Gurungs. It is a folk tune sung in duet between males and females at fairs and festivals, either as part of competition or just as a form of entertainment.

Ghanto dance

The *Ghanto* dance or dance festival takes place from the day of *Magh Panchami* and ends on *Baisakh Purnima*, which falls around the end of April to May. This final performance lasts from morning to evening for three days. Not a single episode must be omitted; if a mistake is made it is believed that the dancing girls will become sick and may die. Young girls around the ages of 12 perform the ghanto and are called ghansaris or ghatonis. They wear typical ghanto dress comprising of traditional Gurung dress, jewellery, and special headgears.

Sorathi dance

A sorathi dance is a typical Gurung dance, which is a re-enactment of an ancient legend about a king who had 7 wives and no children. It relates the story of the youngest queen who at last bears a daughter and the other queens out of jealousy hatch a plan to murder the child. The child is thrown into the river but gets saved by a fisherman who rears the child as his own. At the end, the plot is revealed and the mother and daughter are reunited while the guilty ones are punished. This dance is held for sixteen days and falls between *Dasain* and *Tihar*.

Maruni dance

Maruni dance is one of the traditional dances of Gurungs performed in the month of *Shrawan* (July-August) and lasts up to month of *Poush* (December-January). Various Hindu male and female deities are worshipped and offered ten varieties of flowers, among which, one kind of the flower is set aside for Goddess Saraswati of arts and learning.

Birth ritual

Gurungs consult astrologers when a child is born and three days after the birth, a naming ceremony is held. On the sixth day the Chhaiti is held. It is to be noted that a married daughter is not permitted to deliver at her parent's house, since the after birth (*placenta*) fallen within the premises is considered an ill omen.

Nawaran

Nine days after birth, pollution is observed for a male and seven days after for a female child and it is only after these days are over that the new mother is purified. The purifying liquid used is called *Gaunth*, (*Maharkyu*) in Tamu language. This is sprinkled on the woman's body and on this day the navran is held. This purification brings the woman back into the social circle and simultaneously welcomes the newborn baby whose name is announced on this *Nawaran*.

Pasni ceremony

Pasni ceremony in the Gurung language involves the child being fed his/her first grains. It is also called the *bhatkhuwai*. This weaning ceremony occurs five months after birth for female children and six months after males. The astrologer is consulted prior to this ceremony, so as to set up an auspicious time and date. On the stipulated date different types of foods are prepared and possibly some meat must be included. The child is fed first by a *Kumari Keti*. Everybody present puts a white *Tika* on the child's forehead, feeds him or her with a little of the foods laid out and makes a present of some money or clothes.

Chhaewar

At the age of five, seven, nine, or eleven, a Gurung boy has to go through a ritual called chhaewar or kraprehiba in Gurung language, meaning the initial hair cutting. His maternal uncle must do the clipping of the boy's locks or if none exists another man is made his mother's brother and this pseudo-maternal uncle carries out the task. A Gurung astrologer is consulted for an auspicious day. The ceremony cannot take on an even month and even age. A boy is taken to a cowshed and his Mama cuts off part of

his hair. After the ceremony the child is taken inside and put on white tika by parents and relatives, put on rupa and given a feast.

Gunyo-choli

Just a *Chhaewaris* held for a boy; a girl child is given *Gunyo* and *Choli* and also called *Neabimba* after she completes her 12 years of age. The *Gunyo-choli* represents a woman's dress and signifies the coming of age of a young Gurung girl.

Marriage

Marriages among the Gurungs are of two types: arranged marriage and marriage by elopement. Arranged marriage is done through a formal agreement between the prospective two families and in the second case, the couple elopes against their parents will. The traditional match for marriage is a cross-cousin marriage, where a boy marries his mother's brother's daughter. A mediator plays the role of contacting either the prospective bride's father and his lineage brothers or their own representatives.

In an elopement marriage, the boy makes known to the girl of his intention directly and if the girl is agreeable, both of them go into hiding. Message is relayed to the parents of the girl. In a few days time, he sends his representative to the girl's father to reason with him and request him to accept the new relationship putting aside the offence to his dignity and to cancel other arrangements that he may have made. If the bride's father agrees, the new son-in-law comes with gifts of compensation and a ceremony takes place to accept the wedded couple.

Festivals of the respondents

Many festivals are observed by Gurung people, which attract the tourist in a mass volume in the study areas. Some major festivals are as follows;

TamuLhochchar/Puspandra

The *TamuLhochchar* is the New Year for the Gurungs; they celebrate on every 15 *Poush* of Nepali calendar, which falls on month of December. It marks the beginning of the Gurung *Sambator* Gurung Calendar year. *Lhochchar* also heralds the change in 'Lho'. Gurungs divide time into cycles of twelve years to each year of which a special name is given, which is known as *barga*.

Sildo-naldo

Sildo is basically the worshipping of natural deities and to show respect and honor towards gods and spirits that protect the village. The name *sildo-naldo* could be analysed in the following way: *si* means rice grain; *na* means rain; and *ldo* is the verb to do (*la-ba*). *Sildo-naldo* thus means the divinity that 'made the grain and the rain'. It is done five times in a year in *Chaitra*, *Jesth*, *Bhadra*, *Asoj* and *Kartik*, on a Tuesday nearest to the fullest moon.

Dasain

At *Dashain* festival, Gurung people paint their houses from top to bottom. The white tika put on the forehead by the head of the family and gives blessings along with some token of money. People then visit the houses of their relatives and older people to receive tika and pay respect. Children are happiest at this time because of the money

they receive from their elders. There is much feasting among the people and merry making during this time.

Tihar

On the occasion of *Tihar*, houses are cleaned and decorated with garlands of marigolds, in the evening, brightly lighted by wick lights, colored electric bulbs, or candles to attract the Goddess Laxmi, the Goddess of Wealth. The third day is a day of honouring and respecting sisters by brothers, and is called Bhai Tika. On this day colourful *Tika* on her brother's forehead, and is given a good feast. The brother in return gives present to his sister either in cash, clothing or other items. There is much feasting and merry making like in during the *Tihar*.

Death Rituals of the respondents

To the Gurungs, dead is a serious matter and funeral assume exceptional importance in the eyes of the Gurungs. The death memorial rite is an elaborate three-day post mortuary rite in the name of the deceased. The Gurung death ceremony is a much more elaborate than those of any of the other ethnic tribes. The dead ritual of the Gurungs is very long and complex and performed in two stages burial or cremation of the body and soul cremation, which also indicates the end of mourning. The body cremation is called roho-waba and the soul cremation is called pae or arghun.

Religion of the respondents

Gurung people follow Bouddha religion. But still there is in practice Bon Religion. Mostly the Gurung people feel proud to say Buddhist to them. They go to Gumba (Buddhist Monastery) and pray to their God Buddha. They follow the Buddhist customs in their social activities. They invite to Lama in their birth ceremony and cremation. Lamas give name to new birth child according to their religious book. Their culture is closely related with Tamang, Sherpa. Eventhough Gurungs both Hindu and Buddhist.

Occupation of the respondents

Gurung peoples' main occupation is still agriculture. Gurung caste is also very famous for Nepal Army and Indian Military. And they are also good position in the Nepal Army and Nepal police. Gurung people have the strong and brave so they are involve in force sector. But these days divers occupation they follow. Gurung people are also involved in different occupation like tourism, business, official job, and go to abroad employment in these days.

Economic aspects of the respondents

In economics and other related social sciences, "community" often has an important reputation. Since Mancur Olson, we have linked groups from unorganized, traditional communities to structured ones to a number of growth-restraining vices, such as rent-seeking and resisting change. Several theories, including as contract theory, public choice theory, and the economics of information, contribute to a second unfavorable view of organizations. It paints a picture of the ways in which collective life thwarts the achievement of preferences: it is impossible to perfectly aggregate voices; leadership invariably encounters principal-agent issues; and groups produce insider-

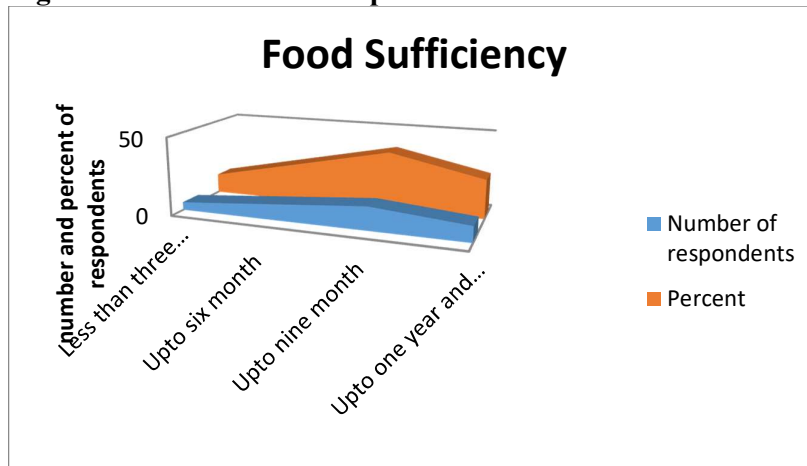
outsider dynamics, which in turn obstruct the factor mobility thought to be essential for long-term economic growth. Participation in or support of an organized program or entity that, in order to further its mission, engages in activities intended to encourage the establishment and/or expansion of commercial and manufacturing businesses and/or industries in community is referred to as economic development.

Food sufficiency of the respondents

Food is one of the basic necessities of life. Food contains nutrients substances essential for the growth, repair, and maintenance of body tissues and for the regulation of vital processes. Nutrients provide the energy our bodies need to function. Food is a basic need of an organism for survival. We all consume different types of food items which give us energy required to perform work and various life processes. We can obtain food from either animal or plant sources. It is identified that the animals and plants provide around 90 percent of the food required for the world. Examples include dairy products, honey, grains, meat, vegetables and fruits.

Food production has been evolving steadily with the technological and economic advancements made by mankind since the hunter-gatherer epoch until the modern fully-industrialized agricultural system. The sufficiency of food production indicate the economically sustain family. Food production as demand and sufficiency of food grains is the pre requisite of the farmer family. The following table shows that food sufficiency of the selected research area.

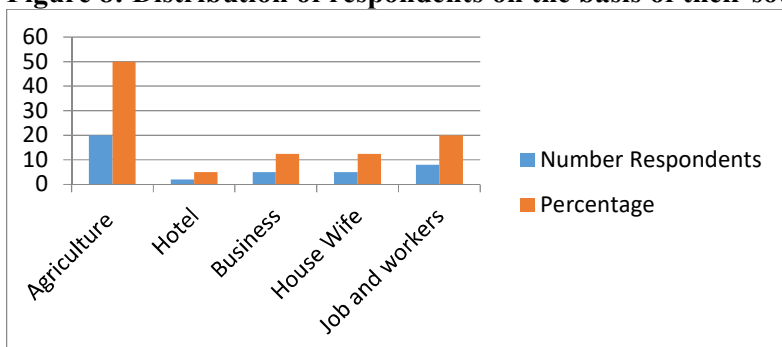
Figure 7: Distribution of respondents on the basis of food sufficiency



Source: Field Study 2024

Near about 12 percent of the total respondents could not success to produce food grain, their production is sufficient only for three month. It is evident that either they involve in other occupation or they have no sufficient land for agriculture. Only 25 percent of the respondents consume their food production for six months. Like this 37 percent have food sufficiency for nine months, whereas 25 percent of the respondents have food sufficiency, they produce food for the year.

Figure 8: Distribution of respondents on the basis of their source of income



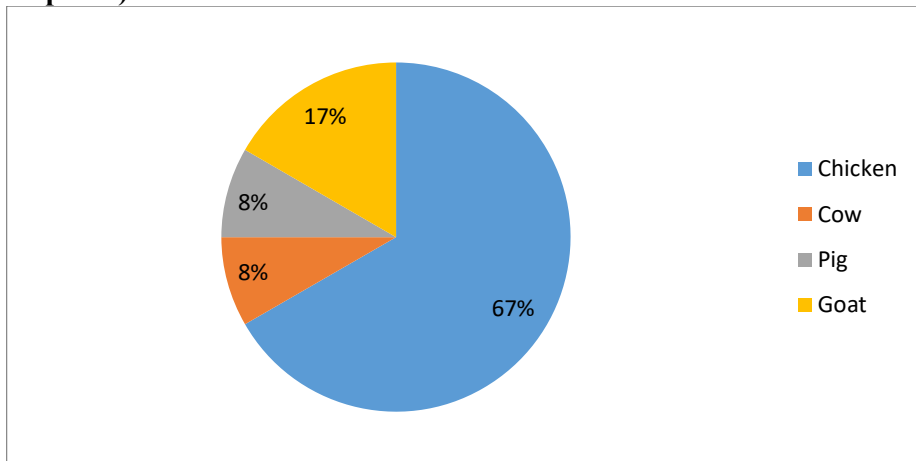
Source: Field Study 2024

The major income sources of the respondents is agriculture, about 50 percent of the respondents involve in agriculture as the main source of income. The second largest sources of the respondents is job and labor. Near about 17 percent of the respondents involve in business and hotel sector and thus, business is the major sources of income. However, 12.5 percent of the respondents did not involve in any types of income generating activities, they were only housewife.

Livestock

Apart from agriculture the most important part of Gurung' occupation is the pastoral economy. The Gurung people of Birendranagar Municipality were found keeping livestock for their economic activities and as a sources of income. The following table describes the clear picture of the animal husbandry of the selected respondents.

Figure 9: Distribution of respondents on the basis of animal husbandry (multiple response)

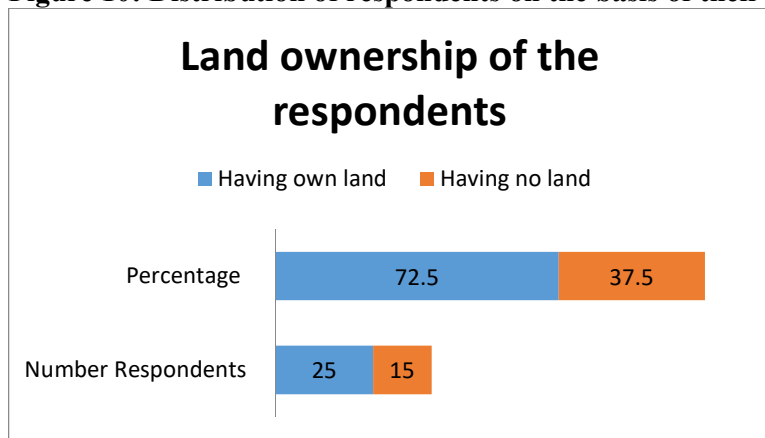


Source: Field Study 2024

Chicken, pig cow, goat are the major domesticated animals and birds of the respondents. All most all respondents have chicken, it shows that the give priority to

chicken. 25 percent respondents have goat, it is in second priority. Like this, they have cow and pig in third priority. Even though Gurung are the fund of pork.

Figure 10: Distribution of respondents on the basis of their land ownership



Source: Field Study 2024

Regarding the land ownership of the respondents, near about 72 percent Gurung women have their own land ownership, whereas near about 37 do not have their own land. It means their land ownership in in their husband.

Conclusion

The study is related to the Gurung women having the objective of explore and describe the women's status and participation in socio-cultural and economic sectors among in the study area. To carry out the objective, social science research methodology has been applied. The general definition of ethnicity, the Gurung are one of the largest ethnic groups in Nepal. Like other ethnic groups, the Gurung have their own distinctive culture, heritage, social values, and conventions. The socio-cultural and economic circumstances of each ethnic group in Nepal. One of the categories included in the study to describe diverse socio-cultural and economic ideas was the Gurung, who reside in Birendranagar Municipality Ward No. 1 and have their own customs, traditions, occupation, and language. At least five phases of Gurung rituals, such as the nwaran, pashni, chhewar, marriage, and death rites, are performed by Gurung residents of Birendranagar Municipality over the course of their lifetime.

Women and ethnicity have a significant impact on how well a nation is perceived abroad. The economic growth of Nepal is largely driven by women. It has a significant impact on Nepalese society and the economy. Women are regarded as significant national figures. The Gurung community has great important of cultural value. All the respondents are married and totally conscious for the women empowerment. The major income sources of the respondents is agriculture, about 50 percent of the respondents involve in agriculture as the main source of income. There is an interational relationship of Gurung women community with other communities.

The political access of the community is very poor in the study areas. About 72 percent Gurung women have their own land ownership, whereas near about 37 do not have their own land. It means their land ownership in in their husband.

The decision making right of Gurung women is considerably perfect both of the male and female are equally responsible according to the nature of work. Because the modernization the fundamental dresses of Gurung is affected only old generation of Gurung women are using the dresses in the special occasion.

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