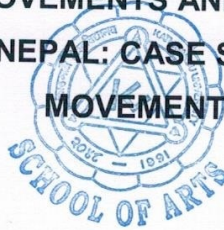




**RISE OF ETHNIC MOVEMENTS AND CONTESTED RURAL
DEVELOPMENT IN NEPAL: CASE STUDY OF THE THARU
MOVEMENT**



Mahendra Sapkota

A Thesis

Submitted to

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ABSTRACT



An abstract of the thesis of

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Title: *Rise of Ethnic Movements and Contested Rural Development in Nepal: Case Study of the Tharu Movement*

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This thesis presents an analysis of how rural development is contested in Nepal with the profound political, social and economic changes in the society. The contestation has been observed from a perspective of the Tharu movement, one of the largest ethnic movements. The thesis critically engages with this movement by researching its emergence, its strategies, and above all its claims to represent the Tharu people as a whole. Analytically, the key research questions were related to (i) the social movement (causes and characteristics); (ii) the contested rural development (issues and agendas of the movement); and (iii) the people (expectations and well-being).

The study was based on the interpretive epistemology and social constructive ontology with a critical-dialectical perspective. Empirically, it followed grounded theory approach for an in-depth case study and analysis of the Tharu movement in the two districts of the Tarai region: Dang in western and Sunsari in eastern Nepal. The study sites and research participants were selected by using the theoretical sampling method. Four Village Development Committees (VDCs), two from each district, were selected on the basis of their geographic-political setting, demographic structure and historical background of the Tharu movement. The nature of the study was thus qualitative, and sources of data were both primary and secondary. The methodological cut-off-point for the study has been remained from 2006 to 2015- the era of the popular movement and constitution-writing. However, subsequent analysis of the post-constitutional and federal context is also a part of the study due to rapidly changing political situations and fluidity in the scope of present research.

The study concludes that the causes and characteristics of the movement were multidimensional, and often remained structurally rooted in the national politics in general and local development activities in particular. The Thesis notes that the Tharu movement has come up with three historical phases: a) phase of social and cultural mobilization in the Panchayat era; b) phase of political campaign after 1990-2006; and c) phase of ethnic and regional movement manifested as 'identity politics' in the post 2006-context. While the Maoist movement has contributed to shape out the political mobilization of the Tharus in the name of 'Tharuwan', the contemporary Tharu movement has been popularly known as 'Tharuhat' movement. The thesis arguably rejects this narrow world view of the movement as Tharuhat or Tharuwan and sees how the broader framework has been created to construct 'Tharu movement' in general. Historically, movements of Kamaiyas and Kamlaharis and the agitations for land rights and the peasants' welfare have also contributed to shaping the present-day Tharu movement, though the agendas of these groups were still kept lagging behind in the framing of mainstreams of the Tharu movement. Moreover, the movement did not have a well-defined ideological base and unified leadership foundation in the villages inviting a number of spaces for political complexities in the region.

The shifting of agendas from narrow material world-view to a broader political and non-material world-view after 2006 was significant. However, the entry of Tharu movement in the national politics and international concern has occurred with a number of internal as well as external factors. The thesis outlines such factors as leading to the increase of political awareness among the Tharus and their thrust for identity, continuity in the

movements of Kamaiya and Kamlahari, the rise of Madhes movement, ethnic movements, and identity-based claims, movements for and against the autonomous regions in the Tarai region and the subsequent debates in the process of constitution writing and state-restructuring. The findings reflect that the political dimension of the rural development has been extended both empirically and theoretically. Most importantly, the movement has also contributed to shaping and legitimizing the issues of ethnic identity, inclusion and proportional representation in the constitution. It has also widened the presence of Tharu movement as a detrimental factor of Tarai politics in the changing context of federalism.

In spite of having significant achievements in civil and cultural rights and ethnic identities, the movement in grassroots still has some prominent issues related to political and economic rights, including the transfer of power in favor of poor strata of the Tharus, tenancy and land reforms, recognition of customary practices, rehabilitation of the Kamaiyas and Kamlaharis, and reduction of poverty and inequality. Along with these factors, the findings reflect that changing of power relations in the villages and widening of economic opportunities had been less prioritized at the grassroots as was being done with the ethnic and regional issues at the leadership and central level. The creation of multiple identities was evidently observed in the villages which brought many people (from different class, regional and ethnic backgrounds) together at the same place for collective movements (e.g. in land and gender issues). The study concludes that the consequences of the movement were politically value-loaded, which affected development outcomes in multiple ways for the benefits of the local elites who used to represent a wider sphere of power structures in the villages, including the movements of the Tharus and others, political parties, non-governmental organizations and the state- bureaucracy. Moreover, little changed for the mass of poor Tharus – indeed, the findings of the study confirm an important contemporary critique of many movements to represent renegotiation rather than a transformation of unequal power relations.

The study recalls that already in the 1950s, organizations emerged (e.g. the Tharu Welfare Society-TWS) that started to engage with the faith of Tharus – though more along welfare and reformist agendas (e.g. fighting against child marriage, and promoting girls' education). However, Tharu-related activism exploded after 2006 in the context of the peace agreement and the subsequent negotiations for a new constitution within the Constituent Assembly and outside it. In this context, Tharu leaders quickly realized that framing demands along identity lines was a powerful

political strategy. Here, the study asserts that these leaders on the one hand consisted of the old Tharu elite, but on the other hand, of newly emerging persons who saw these dynamics as an opportunity for upward mobility. As a consequence, the number of leaders and organizations claiming to represent the cause of the Tharus mushroomed, including, among others, existing and new NGOs that now turned political. This heterogeneity in the leadership got reflected in the ambiguity of demands. On the one hand, there was the unified demand for recognition of the Tharu identity (as a whole). On the other hand, the implications of this demand were contested. While some demanded a separate Tharuhat state (including struggles against other groups in the Tarai), others wanted a quota system or positive discrimination in the allocation of funds, or even joined other groups (including Madhesi) too. But most leaders were united in the view that priority was to be given to the identity issue; once 'the Tharu' got recognition, economic improvements would follow automatically.

The thesis critiques this identity-based strategy through the eyes of the grassroots. In short, the empirical data allow to argue that the masses of poor and ultra-poor Tharus – though initially supportive of the movement – increasingly got disillusioned. Through a number of evidence-based reflections and narrations, the study shows how people assess many of their old and new leaders as actually responsible for their misery, and that the emphasis on Tharu identity as a whole hides intra-Tharu exploitations. He gives many empirical examples of Tharu leaders having kept Tharu bonded labor, or newly emerging leaders appropriating state schemes that were meant for the poorer strata. The study then shows that the leaders' emphasis on Tharu identity at times created tensions in villages between Tharu and other groups – people that were neighbors before. This theoretical and methodological approach allowed the thesis to generate highly interesting, differentiated and relevant insights into the Tharu Movement. The study then details, for example, that the Tharus are a highly heterogeneous 'ethnic group' which is almost impossible to generalize as “one people”. Above all, empirical works at the grassroots show the socioeconomic differentiation within this group, with a mass of households struggling with utmost poverty, and a small stratum of influential and well-off families on top. These strata are interlinked through social relations of dependency incl. tenancy and even bonded labor relations.

Coming to the conclusions and recommendations, the study takes a careful and differentiated position as well. The Thesis concludes with a theoretical framework of

“Movement Mobilization Framework of Contested Rural Development”. Through this grounded theory of the empirical findings, the study seeks to make apparent the power relations and their implications that are exerted by the state to the Tharu movement and vice-versa. This framework demands to contextualize the Tharu Movement as closely interwoven with its (changing) context, i.e. within the broader historical, social, political and economic conditions and processes in the Tarai region, and this region's position vis-à-vis Nepal (in general) and adjoining India. To some extent, the movement has challenged the institutions of the state through its advocacy and campaigning against the dominant nature of the development. Yet ironically, the movement has played a critical role in creating an elite-manipulation through different channels of civil society and political activism. The findings thus conclude that, contrary to the rhetoric of liberal foundations, there was an increasing manipulation of identity, welfare and democracy to promote elite interests. This manipulation, in turn, has been evident with the fluid nature of networks and alliances.

This research was framed within the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR North-South) core issues of comparative and transdisciplinary study of ‘Contested Rural Development’ (CRD). Through the present study it is therefore expected to contribute to the emerging debates in the fields contested development through the viewpoints of social and ethnic movements in Nepal and the beyond. In particular, the rationality of this study lies in understanding the post-conflict agitations of the Tharus in Tarai-Nepal and their nexus with the state-restructuring process, identity politics and the idea of development in the federal context.

PhD in Development Studies



Thesis of Mr. Mahendra Sapkota presented to the School of Arts Research Committee on 15 October 2017

Title: *Rise of Ethnic Movements and Contested Rural Development in Nepal: Case Study of the Tharu Movement*

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FOR DEDICATION...

I lived on the shady side of the road and watched my
neighbours' gardens across the way revelling in
the sunshine

I felt I was poor, and from door to door went with my
hunger

The more they gave me from their careless abundance
the more I became aware of my beggar's bowl

Till one morning I awoke from my sleep at the sudden
opening of my door, and you came and asked for
alms

In despair I broke the lid of my chest open and was
startled into finding my own wealth

-Rabindranath Tagore

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the contents of this thesis entitled “**RISE OF ETHNIC MOVEMENTS AND CONTESTED RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN NEPAL: CASE STUDY OF THE THARU MOVEMENT**” are a product of my own research and no part has been copied from any published source (except the references and works cited). I further declare that this work has not been submitted for the award of any other academic degree or qualification. The University may take action if the information provided is found inaccurate at any stage. I understand that my dissertation will become part of the permanent collection of the Kathmandu University Library. My signature below authorizes release of my dissertation to any reader upon request.



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Finally, I express my sincere acknowledgments and wishes for all with following Sanskrit verse that prays for the happiness and well being of all:

ॐ सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः
सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु मा कश्चिद्दुःखभाग्भवेत् ।
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

[Om, May All be Happy; May All be Free from Illness; May All See what is Auspicious; May no one Suffer; Om Peace, Peace, Peace]

Mahendra Sapkota

October 2017

ACRONYMS

APM	All Party Mechanism
APP	Agricultural Perspective Plan
BASE	Backward Society Education
BCN	Bahun-Chettri-Newar
BS	Bikram Samwat
BYVYP	Build Your Village Yourself Program
CA	Constituent Assembly
CACs	Citizen Awareness Centers
CBO	Community Based Organization
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
CDO	Chief District Officer
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CPN (M-C)	Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist-Centre)
CPN (UML)	Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist Leninist)
CPN-M	Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DAO	District Agriculture Committee
DAP	District Administration Plan
DCWB	District Child Welfare Board
DDC	District Development Committee
DEO	District Education Office
EM	Ethnic Movement
FA	Federal Alliance
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FKDF	Freed Kamlaharis Development Forum
FORAWRD	Forum for Rural Welfare and Agricultural Reform for Development
FYDP	Five Year Development Plan
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GO	Government Organizations
GoN	Government of Nepal
HDI	Human Development Index
HDR	Human Development Report
HEI	Human Empowerment Index

HUDEP	Human Development and Peace Campaign
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICERD	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
INGO	International Non-governmental Organization
IRDp	Integrated Rural Development Program
LSGA	Local Self Governance Act
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MO	Movement Organization
NC	Nepali Congress
NGOs	Non-Government Organization
NLSS	Nepal Living Standard Survey
NPC	Nepal Planning Commission
NSA	Non-State Actors
PCRW	Production Credit for Rural Women
PCRW	Production Credit for Rural Women
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RCIP	Rural Community Infrastructure Program
RD	Rural Development
RRA	Rapid Rural Appraisal
RRN	Rural Reconstruction Nepal
SA	State Actors
SADP	Small Area Development Program
SADP	Special Area Development Program
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SFDP	Small Farmer Development Program
SHG	Self-Help Group
SLMM	Samyukta Loktantrik Madeshi Morcha
SM	Social Movement
SMI	Social Movement Industries
SMO	Social Movement Organization
SPA	Seven Party Alliance
SSI	Semi-Structured Interviews
SWAN	Social Welfare Association of Nepal

T/TJSC	Tharuhat/ Tharuwan Joint struggle Committee
TASC	Tharuhat Autonomous State Council
TDC	Tole Development Committee
TINF	Tharu Indigenous NGO Federation
TJSC	Tharuhat Joint struggle Committee
TM	Tharu Movement
TS	Tharuhat Sena
TTPN	Tharuhat Tarai Party Nepal
TVDP	Tribhuvan Village Development Program
TWS	Tharu Welfare Society
TYIP	Three-Year Interim Plan
U-CPN (M)	United Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
UUDCP	<i>Upekshit, Utpidit and Dalit</i> Community Program
VCPC	Village Child Protection Committee
VDC	Village Development Committee
WCF	Ward Citizens Forum
WDP	Women Development Program

Land and weight area measures

Bigha: 1 bigha= 0.67 hectares (ha) = 20 kattha

Dhur: 1 dhur= 0.0077 ha; 20 dhur= 1 kattha

Hectare: 1 hectare = 1.5 bigha= 30 kattha= 20 ropani

Kattha: 1 kattha= 0.038 ha; 20 kattha = 1 bigha

Maund: 1 maund= 40 kg.

Ropani: 1 ropani= 5,476 sq. feet = 508.74 sq. meters

1 US \$= approx. 103 Nepalese rupees (NR) (provided in May, 2017)

GLOSSARY

Nepali Terms	Meaning in English
<i>Adhiya/ Batohiya</i>	A system of land tenancy or sharecropping in which land owner or authority (<i>khetihar</i> or <i>malik</i>) takes half of the total produce as rent or tax by the tenant (<i>bataiya</i> , <i>batohiya</i> or <i>bardar</i>). The production costs are divided between the two parties. See also <i>thekka</i> .
<i>Adivasi</i>	Indigenous peoples or group of people. The terms <i>adivasi</i> and <i>janajati</i> are sometimes used as a more of a cultural category to describe former tribal communities from outside the Hindu caste or <i>varna</i> system. See also <i>janajati</i> .
<i>Ailani</i>	The non-registered land.
<i>Begari/Jhara</i>	A kind of forced or compelled labour; if not attended or performed, had to pay fine (cash or agriculture produce).
<i>Bekh buniyad</i>	A type of land grant that gives full rights to the recipient and his family from generation to generation in the manner of a <i>birta</i> grant; abolished with the <i>birta</i> system.
<i>Bhasa</i>	Language, e.g. Tharu, Nepali.
<i>Bhumiputra</i>	Literally, the “son of the land or soil;” a group of people exclusively identified with a particular land since a historic time; Tharu people claimed as being <i>bhumiputra</i> of the Tarai region.
<i>Bigha</i>	Land measurement unit in the Tarai region which equals to 0.67 hectares or 1.6 acres. One bigha is equivalent to 20 kathha.
<i>Bikas</i>	Development, positive transformation.
<i>Birta</i>	Land granted by the state or authority to the individuals close to the bureaucracy, usually tax-free and on an inheritable basis. This land could be subdivided, sold or mortgaged. Recipient of <i>birta</i> grant was called <i>birtawala</i> . The system was abolished in 1959.
<i>Brahman (Bahun) /Chhetri</i>	High castes under the Hindu <i>varna</i> (caste) system; the top ebb of the classification.
<i>Budhan</i>	A historical process in the Rana regime and even in the 1960s of Land reform era where the most of the poor Tharus of Dang were denied to register their land, and were charged unbearable land taxes. Therefore they went to the Budhan, i.e. neighbouring Bardiya and Banke districts, which were comparatively less settled regions.
<i>Chaudhary</i>	Tax collector in the Tarai who supervised the tax collection in the given territory of <i>praganna</i> . Today, it has become a common surname for Tharu people.
<i>Dalits</i>	So-called <i>achhut</i> (untouchables) under the Hindu <i>varna</i> (caste) system; the lower ebb of the classification. Recently known as occupational castes.
<i>Dangaura Tharu</i>	Tharu community living in the mid-western region of Tarai, particularly in Dang district of Rapti zone. See also Tharu.
<i>Gaun Bikas Samiti (GABISA)</i>	The smallest administrative system of Nepal at village level; Village Development Committee (VDC). Now adjusted with new local-level administration, i.e., rural municipality (Gaun Palika)
<i>Ghardhuriya</i>	Each of the households is referred to as a <i>gardhuriya</i> , and has its own household leader.
<i>Guruwa/ Gurao</i>	Tharu faith healer or priest
<i>Guthi</i>	Land owned by a monastery or institution, without limitation, granted to maintain the institution.

<i>Haat/Hatiya</i>	Weekly market or bazaar (once or twice) system in rural Nepal; developed as local transit point and market centres for rural-urban linkage.
<i>Haliya/Haruwa</i>	System of hiring a ploughman; sometimes his family members too (<i>haliya</i> in hills, <i>haruwa</i> in Tarai); often as a bonded arrangements with ploughman working for free to pay off a debt.
<i>Janajati</i>	Alternative term to refer indigenous people in Nepal. See also <i>adivasi</i> , a term which is used across south Asia, while <i>janajati</i> is a Nepal specific word.
<i>Jaat</i>	General term to refer all castes or ethnic groups in Nepal (glossed as tribe, nation, caste, ethnic group in English).
<i>Jhara</i>	An unpaid labour called on for community activities; abstaining often involves a fine. In some regions, the paid fine for the absence is also called <i>jhara</i> .
<i>Jimidar</i>	Often called <i>jamindar</i> ; an individual responsible for tax collection at village level in the Tarai under the <i>Ranas</i> . They were also entitled to free farm labor by the farmers of the village and often became wealthy landowners.
<i>Jirayat</i>	Taxable lands granted to tax collectors or <i>jimidars</i> as payment for their services.
<i>Kamlahari</i>	Bonded child worker (female) of Tharu origin in mid and far-western Tarai districts; usually involved in domestic works.
<i>Kamaiya</i>	Bonded laborer of Tharu origin in mid- and far- western Tarai districts; usually contracted for farming activities in the home of big farmers, <i>jimindars</i> and <i>chaudharies</i> .
<i>Khalya</i>	The term <i>Khyala</i> literally denotes “game”. It is a crucial social system that ties together all the members of a given Tharu community, as well as their neighbouring Tharu villages in a public forum, having influence over nearly every aspect of Tharu communities.
<i>Kisan</i>	A farmer or peasant.
<i>Kut</i>	Taxes and revenue, particularly to be paid for land ownership; different terms like <i>mal</i> and <i>tiro</i> were also interchangeably used.
<i>Lal mohar</i>	Issued document by the king granting rights to a subject, i.e. land ownership, and tax relief
<i>Madhes</i>	A commonly used term for the Tarai plain; literally it is the ‘midland’ between the hills in the north and the Gangetic plains in the south.
<i>Madhesi</i>	Dwellers on the Tarai, comprising three groups: Tarai <i>adivasi</i> (or <i>janajati</i>) groups, Tarai Hindu caste groups and the Muslims.
<i>Mahato/ Mahatawa</i>	Village headman in the Tarai; today a Tharu surname. In different regions of the Tarai, different terms are used for the same, e.g. <i>badhaghar</i> , <i>bhalmansa</i> , and <i>aguwa</i>
<i>Mechi-Mahakali</i>	The term to denote Nepali nationality in terms of geography. All are Nepali – inside the Mechi River in the east and the Mahakali River in the west.
<i>Mohi</i>	Statutory tenant
<i>Mohiyani hak</i>	Tenancy rights
<i>Muluki ain</i>	National (or Civil) Code which defines public concerns regarding customary laws; executed in Nepal in two times - 1954 and 1964.
<i>Mukta kamaiya</i>	Emancipated ‘bonded labourer’; i.e. the <i>Kamaiyas</i> , who had been declared free in 2001 and presently living as ordinary peasants or squatters.
<i>Pahad/ Parbat</i>	The hill area of Nepal; the northern part of the <i>Tarai-Madhes</i> .
<i>Pahadiya/</i>	The people of <i>pahad</i> or <i>pabat</i> living in the hills; <i>pahadi</i> or <i>parbate</i> in

<i>Parbatiya</i>	Nepali language and <i>pahadiya</i> or <i>pahariya</i> in Tharu language. In Tarai region, people migrated from the hilly region are called <i>pahadiya</i> or <i>parbatiya</i> .
<i>Panchayat</i>	(a) The smallest unit of local administration during the period of Rana. At village level, there was a system of <i>gaun panchayat</i> . Since 1990, the system has been replaced by Village Development Committee (VDC); (b) The political system of Nepal in 1962-90; a party-less system established by king Mahendra with a military coup of 1960 and replaced by people's movement in 1990.
<i>Praganna</i>	Administrative district comprising several villages under the supervision of the <i>Chaudhary</i> .
<i>Raikar</i>	Lands on which taxes are collected from individual landowners.
<i>Raja/Rajtantra</i>	Feudal lord, a king. More than two and half century's old <i>rajtantra</i> (monarchy) was abolished by the People's Movement in 2006.
<i>Rishidev or Mushar</i>	A Dalit community residing across the eastern Tarai; traditionally marginalized community with high levels of landlessness and illiteracy.
<i>Sukumbasi</i>	Someone with no apparent means of livelihood; landless person, squatter.
<i>Tharu</i>	The main indigenous ethnic group of the Tarai, with communities divided into distinct ethno-linguistic groups, such as <i>Dangaura</i> , <i>Kathariya</i> , <i>Rana</i> , <i>Chitwaniya</i> , <i>Saptariya</i> and <i>Morangiya</i> Tharu.
<i>Tarai</i>	The Gangetic plain; southern part of the Nepal. Related terms are <i>Madhes</i> and <i>Tarai-Madhes</i> .
<i>Tarai Congress (Tarai Kangres)</i>	The first regionalist party formed in 1953 by Tarai bureaucrat-intellectuals. Now not active; though regarded as pioneer of political organization in Tarai-Madhes which raised issue of federalism in the region.
<i>Tarai-Madhes</i>	The binary term, popularly used in recent literatures of Nepalese political economy to refer the whole Tarai or Madhes region of Nepal.
<i>Tharu Kalyankarini Sabha</i>	Tharu ethnic organization established in 1949 and popularly existing till today (in English: Tharu Welfare Society (TWS)).
<i>Thekka</i>	A form of land rental contract between the landowner (<i>malik</i> or <i>khetihar</i>) and tenant (<i>thekedar</i>) whereby a fixed amount of a crop (preferably quality varieties of paddy) or certain amount of money or both is decided prior to the landowner on an annual basis.
<i>Tole/ Basti</i>	A hamlet; a settlement; a number of toles form the village or the ward. A tole-level committee is also known as <i>Tole bikas samiti</i> .

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CHAPTER- ONE

INTRODUCTION: SETTING THE CONTEXT

This chapter presents an introduction to the study on why rural development is contested with the rise of ethnic movements in Nepal and beyond. It provides a definition of the problem, the crisis in development studies and the linkages between social movements and rural development. Then, the chapter moves on to provide a brief introduction of the Tharu people and their movement, which has been an emerging ethnic movement in the Tarai region of Nepal. Finally, the chapter goes on to the setting of research questions and objectives to have a conceptual framework for the study.

1.1 Locating Rural Development as a ‘Contested’ Discourse

1.1.1 The conceptual issues

The concept of development is not neutral; it is rather fundamentally multidimensional and value-loaded. In many countries of the contemporary world, particularly in the Global South, discourse of development is being questioned. Though the notion of development has become a melting pot for all kinds of academia, research and policy debates, its meaning in everyday lives has become essentially diverse and often contradictory too. It is not a venture, limited to a certain niche within given social, economic or political processes, but influences, directly or indirectly, the lives of most people, and specifically so in the countries of the South (Geiser, 2014; Johnson & Wilson, 2006; Nash, 2009). In empirical sense, the challenges and problems at the grassroots are much more complex and largely overlooked, which call for a critical and innovative thinking, going beyond established lines of framing or theorizing of development in general and rural development in particular. Crush (1995) rightly proposes it as a development ‘industry’ which is ‘implicated in the operation of networks and of power and domination’ (p. 5).

The term ‘Rural development’ (hereafter RD) is used here as a subset of the broader term ‘development’. It connotes an overall development of rural areas through

enhancement of the living standard and the promotion of sustainable livelihoods for the people. Singh (2012) conceptualized RD as an integrated process of a phenomenon, a strategy and a discipline that includes different institutions, networks and factors (p. 3). In global discourse, RD has been interpreted in different perspectives and approaches (Chambers, 1997, 2004a; Gandhi, 1997; Griffin, 1977; Lipton, 1977; Schulz, 1964; Chambers and Conway, 1992; Todaro and Smith, 2009). However, Van der Ploeg et al. (2000) assert that conceptualization of rural development is a complex one, because “it is not possible to construct any comprehensive and generally accepted definition of rural development. The notion of rural development (emerges) through socio-political struggle and debate” (p. 1).

1.1.2 Issues on the outcomes of development

The practice and methods of RD are highly contested because of multiple issues and changing paradigms (Ballard et al., 2005; Dixon, 2015; Eliis and Biggs, 2001), and Nepal seems no exception (Manandhar, 2011). The vision and priorities for rural development closely reflect changing global development trends and relations of power and influence. In turn, these approaches are characterized by a nexus of theory and practice “that is both ideas about how ‘development’ should or might occur, and real world efforts to put various aspects of development into practice” (Potter, 2002, p. 61).

However, the ideological and philosophical aspects of rural development have rarely been explored in any detail. A similar argument can be made regarding how there has been constant debate about the relationship between the state and the rural society, the market and the state, central government and local government (including local bodies), and between the production relations and social forces to direct and influence the rural development (e.g. Phuhlisani and PLAAS, 2009). In spite of several efforts and strategies by the governments, development projects and the private sector towards rural development and the considerable success of development programs in some fields supported by international aid, the issues of rural poverty and inequality have not been resolved in the South, and even the Millennium Development Goals admitted that poverty can only be halved by 2015 (Ballard et al., 2005; Geiser, 2014). Power relations and the nature of governance in the rural region have also been critically contested since it was mostly the rural elites who benefited along with emerging opportunities created by political and economic reform strategies (Geiser,

2014). As a matter of fact, many development agencies have taken up this challenge, and are in the process of refining their strategies, priorities and procedures, within an overall guiding paradigm of market-led, democratic, social, and globalized economic progress. Thus, rural development continues to be an enormous challenge both at the theoretical and empirical level.

The structure of power within the social context has been an ever debated issue in social science discourse. The ultimate source of power and its manifestations are essentially diverse. The scholars are divided in critiquing the way of constructing power and its shifting within the structure, agency and beyond them in a different context of social life (Bourdieu, 1980, 1984, 1986; Foucault, 1986; Giddens, 1994, 2009). There has been an emergent question regarding the outcomes of development even though a tremendous amount of investment had been made in achieving those outcomes in terms of reduction of poverty and inequality and enhancement of sustainable livelihood for the rural poor. As a matter of fact, the development outcomes and well-being of people could be promoted by the one-way supply of investment for material needs without changing the power dynamics in the societies. Consequently, there have been investigative models and frameworks to study the power relations in modern societies which have been part of contemporary development studies.

The contestation is becoming a universal phenomenon in questioning the traditional development discourses and practices and establishing the new alternatives in place of them. The roles and duties of the state, state actors (SAs), non-state actors (NSAs), authorities, assumptions, research works and academia are becoming contested by the contrasting understandings of mainstream development. The mainstream of development, therefore, has been created as the established frameworks and practices, often defined and advanced by governmental agencies and large donor institutions. In contemporary development studies, it has been using in the context of critique, and to describe frameworks derived from, or predominantly developed in, the global North and that support neoliberal economic approaches and governance models in line with the current status quo (Hayness, 2013; Kothari, 2016).

1.1.3 Development discourse and social science research

The purpose of social science research is to contribute to the knowledge of the empirical world. As 'development' is being practiced for several decades by now with mixed results, there is a crucial need for development researchers to reflect not only

on development strategies' effectiveness, but on their guiding paradigms, underlying assumptions and implicit meanings and realities as well. Methodologically, it is challenging to reflect many local and grassroots realities which might have been bypassed by modern development, and to be dominated by customary norms and deep-rooted relations of power. The present thesis takes such worldview as an entry point into a constructive-critical reflection on the potentials and shortcomings of present development approaches. Conceptually, the researcher approaches these contestations on the meanings and practices of rural development dialectically through two strands of theoretical thoughts, i.e. political-economic and subaltern.

Following this, the present study attempts to analyze the contestation in Nepal's rural development from the perspective of emerging ethnic movements and the Tharu movement in particular. As a synthesis, the study has conceived CRD as an emerging contradiction between the dominant discourse (and practice) and alternative discourse (and practice) of rural development. This definition assumes rural development as non-static, frictional and a dialectical 'political' construct of the discourse(s).¹

1.2 The global 'Interconnectedness' of rural development and social movements

Development cannot remain in isolation, nor can the society. In the postcolonial context of South Asian nation states, the idea of the development project came as a part of modernization and growth strategies (Rigg, 2015). Despite the state's role was primary in such a development process, there was a massive increase in rural poverty, inequality and livelihood insecurity due to which non-state actors and movements have gained prominent momentum. The contemporary world has witnessed different kinds of struggles by people for justice, equity, emancipation, special attention, recognition, rights and legal status. These struggles are often organized as a social movement by non-state actors. The social movement, in general, is a kind of group mobilization, campaigning for a new social order where people voice their claims for welfare and well-being as their rights (Tilly, 2004a). Following this, a number of scholars argue that

¹The works of post-structural and critical theorists (including Michael Foucault, Jacques Derrida and Jean-François Lyotard, among many others) have profoundly raised question on the centrality of master narrative, crisis in enlightenment, historical development, knowledge and power. Following them, there is invincible to critique of deterministic modes of reasoning in the grand narratives of development. Therefore, the researcher has used the term 'mainstream' as synonymous to 'dominant' throughout the thesis. This is to question the relevancy of western dominant design of ideology in development and thereby seek a new 'alterative' discourse. This very notion has been also followed in the positioning of methodological world view of the researcher.

the contemporary global politics has been transforming into the discourse of power-based society (Mikesell, 1999) and what rightly called as 'movement society' (Tarrow, 2006) and 'revolt society' (Wallerstein, 2002).

In the changing context, there have been different arguments to reflect a descriptive relationship between contemporary development, the states and social movements. Neo-Marxists argue that the present world has reached the point of reorientation of the system in which it has lived through the last four centuries. In the face of that challenge, the contemporary period is certainly characterized by the entry on stage of an immense cohort of movements in the struggle, referred to for the lack of a better term, as 'social movements' (Amin, 2010, p. 139). For them, a social movement is a progressive discourse; the inevitable consequence of underdevelopment shaped by the dominant streams of ideology and power structures of the society. In consequence, the outcome of a social movement is to challenge the hegemonic opinion and to politicize poverty or inequality (Bebbington, 2007). In the same direction, McMichael (2010) argues that social movements all over the world challenge the predominant path of development and epistemic assumption through developing some "unthinkable alternatives".

The need to see this alternative picture is somehow complex though. There is an emergent hypothesis that the recent spread and emergence of movements that 'fundamentally' question the legitimacy of the state can be read as a manifestation of dissatisfaction with mainstream development paradigms, and an expression of alternative visions of what 'development' might mean (Geiser, 2014). Despite some recognition in recent literature indicating some sort of link between social movements and rural development, the nature of this link and its possible implications have rarely been explored in academic research. Such movements either make references to religious statements (e.g. in north-west Pakistan), or to more customary claims (e.g. Bolivia, India), or to 'orthodox' political visions (e.g. Maoists in Nepal; Maoists and Naxalites in India). These movements have been framed with the specialty of class, caste/ ethnicity, region and other issues consequently conquered state control, and are in the process of 'fundamentally' re-shaping the state's rural development strategies. The strategies have been often linked to the issue of 'access' to the productive resources. In their livelihood struggles, access to land, water, employment opportunities, or produce outlets plays a crucial role for rural poor (Amin, 2011).

A similar argument can be made in the context of rapidly firing issues of development, triggering social movement at large, such as identity politics, power relations and livelihood of rural people. These gaps arise because the dominant discourses from both rural development and social movements are not analytically theorized or equipped to grasp the common world view regarding the emerging contestation. Empirically, however, the interrelationship has been exposed in a global context as how Bebbington, Abramovay and Chiriboga (2008, p. 3) maintain that:

In sharp contrast to this necessarily technocratic and centralized approach to territorial [Rural] development, ethnic and grassroots politics have become increasingly important in debates over rural development, be this as a result of armed protest (Mexico), the emergence of national indigenous (Ecuador) and landless or family farmers (Brazil) movements, the movement of indigenous organizations into government (Bolivia and Ecuador) or the emergence of organizations contesting this infrastructural expansion (e.g. Peru, Argentina, Chile) (Ospina et al., 2006; Bebbington, 2007; Lucero, 2007; Wolford, 2004).

1.3 Changing dynamics of post-2006 Nepali state

Nepal lies at the crossroads of political change and its institutionalization through the Constitution-making by Nepali people themselves. This is important for the settlement of historically rooted political and economic contradictions of Nepali society (Malagodi, 2013). Given the post conflict political transition and increasing frustration with the Kathmandu based politics in Nepal, the elections of the Constituent Assembly (CA) for two times (2008 and 2013) has further complicated the process of political negotiations. Consequently, it created a number of spaces for different actors and movement groups. There is a rapid emergence of Non-state actors (NSAs), including I/NGOs, social movements, policy debates, regional actors, self-help groups, and civil societies which claim to be better representatives of local people in the context of increasing dissatisfaction and frustration with the state (Bennett, 2008; Manandhar, 2011). But, do they really represent the people's grievances, or are they just manipulating the grievances – the question is becoming blurred.

Nevertheless, the Nepali state is being transformed because of new popular demands for inclusiveness, participation, representation, empowerment, distribution of power, and resources through the properly redesigned state structures and representative policies. The state has become an inclusive platform, multilingual, multi-ethnic and multi-religious by definition². Regarding this, there is a dominant view among many

²There are 125 caste/ethnic groups, 123 mother tongues and 10 religions in Nepal (CBS, 2012). Addressing this diversity in a collective form, the constitution of Nepal 2015 (Article 3) maintains that “all the Nepali people, with multi-ethnic, multilingual, multi-religious, multicultural characteristics and in geographical diversities, and having common aspirations and being united by a bond of allegiance to

scholars (e.g. Bhattachan, 2012; Hachhethu, 2009; Jha, 2014) who claim that ending of male-dominated, Hindu upper caste based, *parbate/ pahadiya* or hill people-centered social relations and all the feudal forms of exploitations is the basic issue of 'New Nepal'. The concept of New Nepal, along with the Maoist legacy, has entered into the discourse without marking clear visions and ideologies. For many of them, different kinds of social and ethnic movements are the alternative worldviews to create pressure and challenge the state-led discriminations. This perspective largely negates the history of glorification and unification of Nepal, labelling Nepal as a unitary state designed in a way to favor the upper caste elites.

Critical to this, there is another perspective of the history of Nepali state which insists on a nationalist perspective, arguing that we should respect the history and civilization of our own to create a Nepali identity in the global historical arena (see Acharya, 2012; Prashit, 2012; Saurav, 2014, 2017). This school of thought further criticized that the history writing of the Nepali state in the past and constitution writing at present is largely influenced by the foreign/donors' influences who have deliberately attempted to narrate the Nepali history as of brutal, cruel, inhuman and anti-development. This perspective largely suspects the emergence of elites within the ethnic categories, Madhesi regionalism, Dalits and feminist groups. Another claim is that elitism, secularism, and ethnic activism in Nepal have been a donor-driven agenda of western countries who often try to maintain Nepal as an unstable and failed state largely neglecting its great history, independence, sovereignty and national symbols of state-building.

1.4 Emerging Discourse of the Constitution and its Implementation

Previously, the Constitutions in Nepal were enacted in 1948, 1951, 1959, 1962, 1990 and 2007. Through a series of confrontations and dialogue that elapsed nearly a decade, the second Constituent Assembly (CA) finally executed a new constitution on 20th September 2015 - a task left uncompleted by the first CA (2008-2012). Out of 598 CA members, 538 voted in favor of the constitution while 60 voted against it, including few Tarai based political parties refrained from the voting process. Critically, one can recognize the need for an in-depth analysis of the broader political situation in the country, including the issues and debates of identity, social movements, political referendum, federalism, emergence of movement actors, the role of the political

national independence, territorial integrity, national interest and prosperity of Nepal, collectively constitute the nation" (Constitution of Nepal, 2015).

parties and leaders and a review of international relations which had influenced the constitution writing process of Nepal overtly. To reemphasize again, a number of studies have pointed out fundamental processes, challenges and contradictions about the constitution writing and implementing process in Nepal.³

Empirically, the essentialism of the constitution has dominated Nepal's political economy, thereby inviting a number of claims and counterclaims. This empiricism has always glamorized the constitution under the rhetoric of 'New Nepal'. Following this, the Constitution-making is important in Nepal at least for three reasons. First, this is the first opportunity for Nepali people to write their own Constitution. Second, the constitution is an inevitability to fulfil the aspirations and demands of Nepali society which was/is manifested in different ways, e.g. in terms of Maoists movement, 2006 movement, Madhesi movement and other regional and ethnic movements. Third, it is desirable to make a conclusive termination of the peace process to promote peace, harmony, non-violence and co-existence in the society. In this context, Nepal has adopted a participatory process of constitution making. However, this collaboration received mixed reactions – from being touted as a highly polarized step creating more differences, to being acknowledged as the ultimate solution to end pressing deadlock and challenges. Over the past ten years, the constitutional debate also glamorized the constitution under the rhetoric of 'New Nepal'.

The fundamental characteristic of the constitution is that it has restructured the Nation into a federal republic. The constitution has divided the nation into seven states and finalized the march of the Nation towards republicanism from constitutional monarchy and federalism from unitary system. It is the first Nepali constitution written by the people's representatives, which also counts as the 43rd constitution in the world written through the CA. At present, there is a pessimistic sentiment outside Kathmandu and against the political parties, not exceptionally to the Madhes and Tarai-based forces. This sentiment is politically disorganized though it has a power to erupt as a new social movement. The mood of extremism, fundamentalism and negation has been started with this very process of constitution writing and federalism (INSEC, 2016). Meanwhile, anti-federal movements, movements of minority groups (e.g. Muslims) and movements of backward class groups, and non-ethnic movements (led by upper caste nationalists)

³ See Acharya (2012), Bhandari (2012, 2016), ICG Reports (2012a, 2012b, 2016), reports on Centre for Constitutional Dialogue (CCD), Jaiswal (2015), Kumar (2015) and Suhrke (2014) for more comprehensive studies on the major debates and challenges in Nepal's constitution writing and state-restructuring process.

also became powerful and widespread. Another crucial dimension of the movement was of the Dalit movement which could not come into the mainstream discourse.

With an enactment of the new constitution, most of the political achievements have been institutionalized. Yet the supportive policy instruments have to be devised. The issues of social inclusion and proportional representation had now become central to the political transformation and state-building process to the post-2006 public discourse. The period also witnessed several identity-based movements, claims and voices for autonomy and self-determination. The implications of the peace process and Maoist's mainstreaming were highly contested, even though they indicated some distinct interlinkages with national and international relations (Bhandari, 2016). Meanwhile, it also facilitated an emergence of new elites and actors along with the frontiers of political parties and movement groups. The Tarai region, in particular, became a land of contestation in terms of its regional and political contradictions in the changing context (Jha, 2017). With these spaces, the present study critically analyzes the contribution of the Tharu movement in making sense of the grievances of the poor people, whether it would contest the interaction of state and rural people or not.

1.5 Nepal's Rural Development and Ethnic Movements: The Issues and Gaps

The political economy of Nepal is persistently characterized by traditional power-structures and relations (Bhattarai, 2003; Regmi, 1976a) It is predominantly a rural country in which about 83 percent (or 21.98 million people) of the total population (26.49 million) resides in rural areas (CBS, 2012). This diverse setting structurally influenced the formation of power relations in the societies. The irony is that rural poverty (27.43%) is almost two-times larger than the urban poverty (15.46%), and even within the national average of poverty (25.16%), it is unevenly distributed among the people of the lower class and castes, female heads of households, landless people, *Dalits*, *Adibasi/ janajatis* and small farmers (CBS/NLSS, 2010/11). Though considerable success is being claimed by the government and donors in the reduction of poverty and the increase in people's participation in development, these facts are disputed, which is leading to growing dissatisfaction, despair and frustration among the people in the rural areas where the poverty-ridden development strategy of the state has failed (Panday, 2009, 2011).

As a consequence, different forms of agitation and resistance have been geared up by different caste/ethnic and social groups to claim a better representation for the poor people's aspirations and expectations (Manandhar, 2011). Though the history of social movements in the world started in the early nineteenth century (Tilly, 2004), the formal and institutional types of social movements in Nepal started in modern Nepal after 1951- the year when democracy was incepted in the country. Prior to 1950, the political regimes (including Shahs and Ranas) in Nepal were more closed and oligarch in nature. However, the researcher could not deny the fact that there were some informal types of social movements (including ethnic and regional) in the historical era of Nepal which were boosted with informal networks, poor leadership and small-scale and short-run in nature. The researcher has therefore developed a timeline of such critical events in the history till date that would politically contest the development of modern Nepal and Nepali nation-state (see Appendix-E for detail).

There are different kinds of social movements at present in Nepal, including the labor movement, women's movement, ethnic movement, regional movement, civil society movement, nationalist movement and class movement. These movements waged between the central state and local people, impose huge challenges on the state-led mainstream development strategies. It is well-evident that ethnic movements in Nepal have been started to be active since the 1950s while different kind of ethnic groups started to form their welfare groups (Gurung, 2004; Onta, 2011; Pyakurel & Adhikari, 2014). Most of these movements are led by elites in their respective communities – the ex-armies, landlords and intellectuals. The form and practice of the movements got heavily influenced by the political regimes, social change and development activities in the country. However, the origin, growth, maturation, impact and contestations of such movements have been rarely reviewed from a 'developmental eye-lens'. The post-conflict state-building and constitution writing process of Nepal largely rests on this underlying context. Following this, the link between identity politics, ethnic movement and protest behavior into the global discourse of development is still far from the interest of Nepali academia (Dahal, 2008, p. 5). It has made development essentially contested. In this regard, Sharma et al. (2014) reflect that "there are fundamental challenges and contradictions about development, and yet the political culture we see has an apparently little interest or commitment to development issues (p. iv).

Despite the long history of planned development which formally initiated in 1956, rural development programs in Nepal are largely inserted at the center with state-led

programs and their implementation carried out by the NGOs according to their strategies. People are being made passive recipients of the trickled down-flow of development benefits (Gaige, 2009; Seddon & Hussein, 2002). Nepal's geopolitics, economics, power dynamics and system of governance all have played their roles in the reoccurring 'failed development' (Panday, 2009), and what is being done in the 'name of development' (Shrestha, 1997). This has made the state - society relationship contested (Gellner, 2008). The theory and practice of development have become a more contested issue ever since. In particular, the dynamics of foreign aid, the role of civil societies, politics of local bodies, rural remittance economy, public service delivery system, rural-urban linkage, and impact of globalization and modernization are making the scope of RD more comprehensive. After the promulgation of a new constitution in 2015, the discourses are yet to be delineated regarding the future course of rural development, the power of local bodies, resource allocations and distributive justice in the federal context. Moreover, with the devastating earthquake that hit 14 middle-hill districts of Nepal on 25 April and 12 May 2015, rural development issues have further come with questions by calling them for a substantive review of the systems of service delivery, adoption of safety measures and sustainability of rural livelihood. ⁴

1.6 Study of Tharu Movement: The Case and Background

The term 'Tharu' applies to a very wide range of people across Nepal's Tarai region with diverse cultures, languages, social organizations and political affiliation. They are categorized as one of the marginalized indigenous groups in Nepal. Some Tharus themselves state that 'Tharu' is as much a community as a single ethnic group or caste. At least 26 distinct groups calling themselves Tharu have been identified, many with distinct languages and customs, though some Tharu activists have estimated that there are at least 60 distinct groups that call themselves 'Tharu' (Bellamy, 2009). This indigenusness and diversity is also a core part of the Tharu identity, as neither the Madhesi community, nor Pahadi migrants to the Tarai claim to be indigenous to the areas where the Tharus live and work.

As scheduled tribes, the Tharus are also found in the northern part of India, including Champaran of Bihar; Nainital of Uttarkhand and KheriTarai, Gorakhpur, Gonad and Basti of Uttar Pradesh. They are predominantly living in the Tarai region of Nepal, particularly in the Dang, Banke, Bardiya, Kailali, Kanchanpur, Rupandehi, Kapilvastu,

⁴ The quake has led to the deaths of leading to the deaths of 8,856 people and 22,309 injured cases. The National Planning Commission estimated the earthquake caused physical damage worth Rs. 600 billion and projected that the reconstruction would require Rs. 666 billion (NPC/ NRA, 2015).

Nawalparasi, Chitwan, Sunsari, Saptari, Siraha, Makwanpur, Morang and Jhapa districts. According to the Nepal Census of 2011, 1.7 million (i.e. 1,737,470) people in Nepal have identified themselves as Tharu, roughly 6.7 percent of the total population (26.9 million) of the country, making them the second largest Adivasi-janajati group after the Magars (CBS, 2012).⁵ Despite this large sharing in population and regional coverage of the habitat, Tharu is a historically marginalized and excluded community. Most of the Tharu organizations advocate for the greater inclusion of the Tharus in the state organs which has also become a core issue of broader Tharu movement. For instance, Nepal Multidimensional Exclusion Index (MEI) reveals that the Tharus are an 'excluded group' levelling at the 0.303 though the national average of the index was 0.22 (Bennett & Parajuli, 2013).⁶

1.6.1 Issues of the movement

There is a heterogeneous setting of social-cultural structure and endogamous sub-groups within the Tharu community where generally there are differences in languages they speak (including Hindi, Awadhi, Bhojpuri, Tharu, and typical indigenous to the respective groups), marital practices they follow (including restrictions to marry from different Tharu sub-groups), and the traditional-customary practices (including festivals, labor systems and social controls)⁷. Though these differences and heterogeneity among the Tharu sub-groups were beyond the scope of this study, the researcher looked many of them whether they impart to the Tharu movement as a whole. Many authors and researchers claim that Tharu is one of the most ancient castes of Nepal who settled in the southern plains of the Himalayas (see Ashokkirti, 2008; Guneratne, 2002, 2006, 2011; McDonough, 1989). However, Müller-Böker argues that a compilation of the various historical and ethno-historical sources fails to produce a clear and unambiguous picture of the origin and history of the Tharus (Müller-Böker, 1999, p. 62). Tharu community of Nepal is found in different cultures and regional setting, and they cannot be studied from 'one-standardized' perspective.

⁵ It should be noted that most of Tharu organizations (including TWS) contest the recent census figures, claiming that the Tharu population has been consistently under-enumerated. The Tharus who speak non-Tharu languages, Bhojpuri and Maithali in particular, are not included in the Tharu caste. Empirically, the Tharus do not share a common Tharu language; probably because of differentiation of their original language over time to the other languages (and communities) in the region.

⁶ The MEI is an aggregate index of 4 dimensions – income exclusion, health exclusion, education exclusion and influence exclusion. The index level for all janajatis was 0.31, while it was 0.29 for the Tarai-janajatis.

⁷ *Rana* Tharu (far-western: Kailali, Kanchanpur); *Kathoriya* Tharu (kailali); *Sonha* Tharu (Surkhet), *Dangaura* Tharu (mid-western: Dang-Deukhuri, Banke, Bardiya); *Paschuhan* Tharu, *Rautar* Tharu and *Purbhaha* Tharu (Rupandehi, Kapilbastu, Nawalparasi); *Aarkutwaor Chitawania* Tharu (central Tarai: Sindhuli, Chitwan, Nawalparasi), *Kochila* Tharu (eastern Tarai: Saptari, Bara, Parsa, Rautahat, Sarlahi, Mahottari, Udayapur); *Danuwar* (eastern Tarai: Udayapur, Saptari, Morang); *Lamputchwa* Tharu (Morang).

This heterogeneity is also reflected within the Tharu movement itself. Ideological, linguistic and cultural differences also appear amongst the Tharus of different places of the country—which points to a heterogeneity in the Tharu movement. The Tharu movement is a kind of ‘movement of movements’, including its different dynamics in different regions and contexts, e.g. Tharuhat movement, Tharuwan movement, Kamaiya movement, Kamlahari movement, peasant’s movement, and so on. Therefore, the present study has emphasized a holistic study of the Tharu movement to understand its nature, agendas and impacts on rural development.

The Tharus can boast one of the earliest ethnic movements in Nepal in the Tharu Welfare Society (TWS) founded in 1949 which is today the representative body of the Tharu in the Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN). Some scholars convincingly argue that the Tharu movement historically was a movement of a minority of well-off Tharu landlords that aimed at improving Tharu status by adjusting their lifestyles (Krauskopff, 2008; McDonough, 1997). As far secondary literatures revealed (Guneratne, 2011; Mathema, 2011; Sheppard, 2009) the central question in the Tharu movement is not clear as to whether it is a political, cultural or economic movement, or a mixture of all these. The agenda of their cultural identity and their ethnic recognition do not seem to match with their livelihood issues, basic living standards, access to and control of the resources, education and health services, gender relations, income opportunities, poverty and inequality. The proper execution of ILO Convention 169 for which Nepal has been a first party in south Asia to adapt it in 2007 has been one of the contested issues raised by the ethnic groups, including the Tharus.

1.6.2 Major trends and key drivers of the movement

The Tharu movement seems to be one of the ancient social movements in Nepal. As a trend, the broader Tharu movement has become steadily more political and sporadically yet consistently more confrontational since its beginnings in the 1950s. Before 1950s there were some agitations for the land issues to be granted by the Rana rulers for the Tharu peasants of the western Tarai region, though they have ‘veiled slave trade’ among the poor Tharus (Robertson & Mishra, 1997, p. 1). Before the Panchayat era, there were some informal networks of social mobilizations. For example, a social-cultural reform movement was laid in the name of *bandej* which largely influenced the social life of the Tharu people in Bara, Parsa and Rautahat district. The Panchayat era marked a formal beginning of the Tharu mobilization along with cultural and social reform strategies of TWS. Due to restricted policies of the Panchayat system towards ethnic mobilization, the movement of the Tharu could not

become intense. Some of the leaders of the TWS also entered into the Panchayat system. The movements against *beth-begari* (land tax), movement against the landlords, movements for the tenancy and *batohiya*, and the campaign of land for the tillers (i.e. *jasko jot usko pot*) are some of the exemplary events that marked peasantry mobilization among the Tharus. The subsequent movements of Kamaiyas played an important mark to highlight the Tharu issues in the national as well as international context in the 1990s. The emergence of Backward Society Education (BASE), a local NGO in this period also marked the movement along with the campaigns of Kamaiyas and Kamlharis for their emancipation, and livelihood transformation through education, health and poverty reduction (Cox, 1994).

The Maoist's armed struggle had added political fabrics on the Tharu movement (Maycock, 2011). The Maoists also encouraged militancy and political activism among the Tharus in the name of *Tharuwan Mukti Morcha* in the western Tarai. They successfully mobilized Tharu participation during the internal armed conflict which framed the grievances of the Tharu people (e.g. landlessness, indebtedness, exclusion and cultural dislocation) and it predated the conflict further. After the People's Movement 2006, massive socio-political changes came in Nepal. The Tharu movement reframed with political agendas along with the debates of Constitution-writing and state-restructuring. Tharuhat Joint Struggle Committee and Tharuhat Autonomous State Council (TASC) became powerful actors of the Tharu movement in the subsequent years. Along with the identity-based claims and demands for the autonomous Tharuhat region, the Tharu movement further became contested with the emergence of the Madhes movement in 2007 which introduced the agenda of 'one Madhes, one state'. For example, one contestation emerged in 2009 February when the government of Nepal in has classified the Tharu community within the domain of Madhesi group including janajatis, Dalits and Muslims in the region. It rooted a kind confrontation between the Tharu movement and the Madhes movement, which further became rival in the debates of state-restructuring in the Tarai region (UNRCHO, 2013). Moreover, the movements of indigenous nationalities and their continuous support for the Tharu movement and subsequent campaigns of Kamaiyas and Kamlharis are two particular issues which have framed the Tharu movement in national context. Eventually the movement of the Tharus has become an emergent part of identity politics with its larger regional coverage, popular participation and changing dynamism.

Though the movement is largely a regional manifestation in Tarai region, it is tending to an unavoidable part of Nepali politics along with different drivers of the movement (including grievances, constitution-writing context, development aspirations of people, vacant local bodies, Maoist legacy and so on, as discussed in chapter 2). In turn, the Tharu movement has become prolonged which then went on massive demonstrations and subsequent strikes in Tarai region. Five agitators (including one non-Tharu) were killed by the state-force while eight people (including seven police official and a child) were also killed by the agitators during the period of 2010-2015 (Sarvahari & Chaudhary, 2016). Yet, the claims of the Tharu movement are contested whether and how they represent the issues of development, identity, autonomy and livelihood of the grassroots or not. All these issues were highly contested in the process of Constitution-writing, which seem to be very critical in the future course of implementing the constitution and the institutionalizing federalism in the country.

1.7 Statements of the Research Problems

From the above discussions as shed upon the conceptual, theoretical and methodological issues, the researcher would summarize the following key statements of the problem that he followed with his study:

- Less research works on understanding how the development issues emerged and contested with the mobilization of grassroots people
- Little attention has been paid to the dimension of ethnic movement in rural development of Nepal as compared to the other dimensions
- Activism and ethnic elitism being more powerful to set the development goals and agendas of the movement, which consequently, challenges and negates the importance of academic debates and intellectual insights
- Less documentation, scholarly engagements and critical research on the Tharu movement from a broader perspective of national political economy
- Questioning the Tharu movement (and other ethnic movements) whether as the cause or the consequence of the present-day development of Nepal
- More studies on the ethnography of the Tharus focusing on particular cultural or ecological construct; less engagements in theorizing of the broader political-economic construct of the Tharus in the post 2006 context. The question is how to methodologically link the local narratives with the Tharu movement and rural development?

1.8 Research Objectives and Questions

Against the background presented in earlier sections, the present study has attempted to answer some critical questions to reflect the broader historical-political context of Nepal. Theoretically, this was trans-disciplinary in nature involving a broader paradigm of social sciences. The general objective of this research was to analyze the contested rural development in Nepal through the viewpoint of Tharu movement. The specific objectives and subsequent research questions were thus:

1) *To understand the dimensions, causes and characteristics of social movements.*

- What are the major causes in the initiation of the Tharu movement as the non-state actor movement?
- How is the TM characterized?
- How are the causes and characteristics of the movement interlinked and manifested into the local/rural development?

2) *To analyze the agendas and issues of the Tharu movement regarding social, political and economic sphere of the rural life*

- What are the major claims of the movement in making Tharu people with the mainstreams of rural development?
- What kinds of strategies does the movement follow, particularly to the promotion of identity and reduction of poverty and inequality?
- How do the different issues and agendas of the movement matter in contemporary political affairs?

3) *To analyze the impact and effectiveness of the movement and the way people perceive it in meeting their well-being of rural development*

- How do the agendas and strategies of movement address political aspirations and well-being of people?
- How are the social, economic and policy consequences of the movement?
- In what way the movement has contributed, whether to negotiate or transform the local power politics of rural development?

1.9 Conceptual Framework

There are different models and theories about social movements, and they have their own strengths and weaknesses in linking the rural development. Because of the

different dynamics of power structures and changing relationships between the state and society, hardly a model can describe the holistic cause-effect continuum of ethnic movements and rural development. Contestation is of course a socioeconomic phenomenon for which no singular explanation or theory can be adequate. For this study, the researcher did not follow any particular model or theory from the 'above' to deduce or illustrate any theory. Following Mills, Bonner and Francis (2006) within the constructivist epistemological position, the inductive reasoning of key concepts and their linkages have been developed from grounded theory approach. The researcher critically observes some important elements of different models and theories and has proposed a conceptual framework of the present study [Figure 1.1]. Then, a creative dialogue and interaction between the findings and conceptual framework has mentioned in all the analytical chapters of the thesis; which later in Chapter 8 has been developed as a new model.

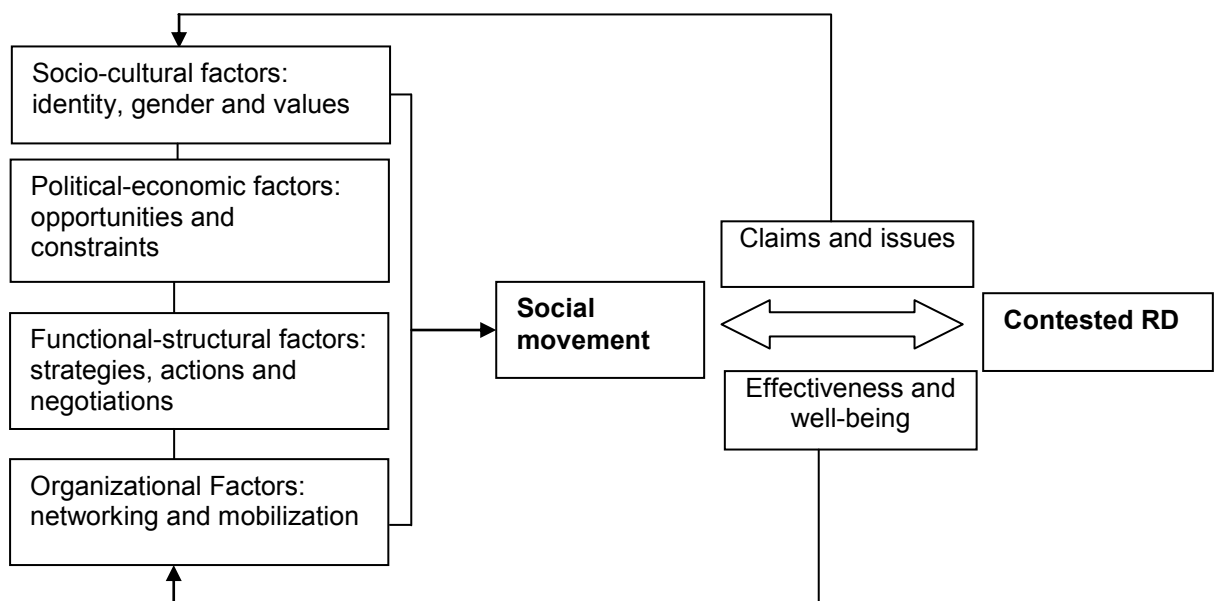


Figure 1.1: Conceptual framework relating social movement and contested rural development

There is a problematic and dependent relationship between or among the four factors, both at theoretical and empirical levels. Empirically, these are deeply rooted in the form of social contradictions within the society and therefore the study has reaffirmed their interrelations as a dynamic process of movement and mobilization (Chapter 8). Theoretically, those factors are embedded with different theories and approaches, including both the Marxist and non-Marxist as highlighted below:

First, different kinds of social and cultural issues do matter in the rural social problems (Singh, 2012) and on social/ethnic movements or agitations in the region (Johnston & Bebbington, 2011). According to Tarrow (2011), cultural factors (e.g. gender roles) play a crucial role in framing of contentious politics, collective identity, strategies, actions, behaviors, values and emotions. Second, rural people always analyze what they will gain (as opportunities) and what they will lose (as constraints) by participating (or even not participating) the social movements. On the basis of comparative advantages and rational choices, people perceive such movements and follow or don't follow the programs and agendas accordingly. Moreover, political-economic issues, including poverty, tenancy, employment and livelihood have been more discussed in rural studies, though only few studies on ethnic movements have analyzed their interrelationships. The present study used this notion as a broader spectrum of contestation assuming the political nature of the contestation.

Third, functional and structural factors are also important to shape rural social power relations — a larger reflection of competitive actions, strategies and negotiations. Changing nature of actions and strategies, consequently influence the power negotiation process. Then, there is interesting to see how the negotiation proceeds among the different parties (e.g. the Tharus, the Madhesis, the market, and the state) to contest the mainstreams of rural development (see also Blumer, 1969; Gramsci, 2009a). Fourth, as Giddens opines, the function and structure of any movement requires an organizational network (Giddens, 2009). The network analysis generally acknowledges that networks play a crucial role in mobilization and individual participation of social movements (Diani & Della Porta, 2006). Networks can be studied from horizontal, vertical or even cross level of social movement activities, where representativeness becomes one of the key indicators (Borras, 2010; Tarrow, 2011). There may be contesting claims and counterclaims of the state, market, civil societies and the movement itself to represent people for their genuine concerns and day-to-day problems. Though the present study does not include the intensive study of the ethnic parties and organizations (e.g. Tharu Welfare Society-TWS, Backward Society Education-BASE Program, and other local/national NGOs) related to the Tharus, it seeks their different roles and strategies to the broader manifestation of the Tharu movement as a single and holistic organization. It has been analyzed as a social structure. It seems quite relevant to reflect on what Hebert Blumer (1969) said, who perceives social movement as a collective behavior of people comprising the characteristics of society including organization, leadership and a culture.

Following this, as the researcher is talking about the discourse of development where the social change in terms of political, economic, socio-cultural and ideological aspects are assumed to be the unavoidable factors of contestation. The question of change, particularly change by way of movement politics, is a question about the structure and agencies of change and their characteristics as leadership and ideology (obj. 1), a question about the issue and agenda of the change (obj. 2), and a question about the distribution of power, well-being and effectiveness of the movements in society (obj. 3). With these factors, the TM has developed as a non-state actor and made the rural development more contested. The nexus between and among these categories were inductively assembled to saturate the research questions. It is, therefore, assumed that social movement and contested rural development are mutually inclusive, cause-effective and dynamic processes, and hence the cyclic relationship can be analyzed using this framework.

1.10 Rationality of the Study

The thesis employs insights from a broader terrain of contested rural development taking the context of rising social and ethnic movements in Nepal. There are three scientific rationalities of this study.

First, the thesis argues that rural development is a contested notion, where it includes some local and micro-narratives, such as people's mobilization and movement. However, rural development practices in Nepal largely focus on the grand narrative of growth and linear interventions, as if it is purely an absolute and a linear notion. A case study of the 'Tharu movement' can serve as a relevant analytical framework for making sense of that contestation, and enables an in-depth and comprehensive reading of contemporary political economy of Nepal.

Second, the thesis is a critique with a new shift in the theorization of Contested Rural Development from the perspective of social and ethnic movements. The inherited tradition in social and ethnic movement, however, seems to be more ideal and a relatively a stable. The movement theories largely neglect the issue of contestation in rural and local development. Based on the empirical insights gained so far in the field, the thesis attempts to map out a theoretical model (grounded theory) that moves towards more critical contemplation from established theories and their conventional abstraction. Indeed, it allows a comprehensive understanding of broader forms of contestation in rural development methods and practices.

Third, the study is quite rational in analyzing Nepal's contemporary political context of state-restructuring process and the process of writing and promulgation of the new Constitution. The study reflects Tarai-Madhes-based contests, accessing out the different claims, issues and consequences of the Tharu movement. As mentioned before, the study was conducted in the context of constitution writing. The context was characterized by the centralized and unitary governance system. Moreover, different kinds of movement actors were rapidly emerging to claim their representation. As the present constitution ensures federal restructuring of Nepal which also partly address the agendas of the movement actors, including the Tharus, the study thus could be rational in analyzing the Tharu movement and issues of rural development in the changing context of federalism.

1.11 Limitation of the Study

Despite a wider scope of the present study and its knowledge contribution, it includes the following limitations:

- Focus only on the rise of ethnic movements as the most significant dimension of contestation in the Nepal's rural development, though there are also other contesting issues that would contest the development process
- Focus only on the Tharu ethnic movement, though there are a number of ethnic movements and agitations in the country
- Study area only taking the Tarai region and the two districts and four village development committees; and not all the Tarai districts and many VDCs

1.12 Organization of the Thesis

The thesis includes altogether eight chapters as presented below:

- Chapter One sets introductory insights and background of the study, along with its study coverage, objectives, conceptual framework and limitations.
- Chapter Two presents theoretical and conceptual review in the light of rural development and ethnic movement both from global and national perspective.
- Third Chapter is about the setting of research, philosophical positions, methodology, and methods along with a detailed process of data collection and analysis as a grounded theory approach.
- Chapter Four situates the movement context in the study sites (Dang and Sunsari) along with comparative socioeconomic structures of the villages and

their development status. The chapters then contextualize the emergence of different actors and their well-being ranking and leadership pattern in the villages.

- In Chapter Five, the 1st objective of the study has been focused which is about the understanding and analysis of different dimensions, causes and characteristics of Tharu movement. The chapter argues that the causes and characteristics are structurally acclaimed with different political, social, cultural and developmental issues.
- Chapter Six covers the theme of the 2nd objective. The chapter concludes that the contestation in rural development is being framed with the multiplicity of the issues, agendas and strategies of Tharu movement.
- The 3rd objective of the study has been discussed in the Chapter Seven. The chapter sets out a critical analysis of how the Tharu movement has created different types of consequences in making the rural development, contested in terms of people's well-being, policy changes and political spaces.
- As a concluding chapter, Chapter Eight synthesizes the previous chapters by revisiting and reconnecting all the objectives and research questions. As a major knowledge contribution of the study, a 'Movement Mobilization Framework of Contested Rural Development' has been proposed and analyzed so far. The chapter ends with the policy and action implications of the study and future research prospects.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, key conceptual and introductory entry points have been discussed to contextualize the research problem, frame the objectives and develop a conceptual framework. The problem as outlined in the chapter indicates that state-led development and its very nature became failure to address the genuine issues of rural people and their day-to-day concerns. Consequently, it has fuelled dissatisfaction, frustration and non-state activism in terms of social movements and ethnic movements. With this, the researcher argues that the social construct of Nepal's Tharu movement has different issues which could have different implications to contest the rural development, as have been discussed and analyzed empirically in the subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER- TWO

DISCOURSES AND DEBATES

This chapter incorporates four major dimensions of literature reviews manifesting existing knowledge status in the wider discourse of contested rural development. The first dimension includes the reviews on rural development with the critical inceptions into its emerging issues and contestations. The second then deals with social movements and ethnic movements both in global and national context. The chapter then goes into the third dimension, i.e. historical review of the Tharu movement in Nepal. The chapter ends with the fourth dimension which presents a summary of research gaps as have been revealed in terms of practices, methodologies and discourses in Nepal and around.

2.1 Development as a ‘Contested Discourse’

The term ‘discourse’ explores a variety of topics and meanings in social science research. In a Foucauldian sense, it refers to systematic and organized knowledge or experience, which represses alternative through its dominance or hegemony (Foucault, 2001). Nietzsche (2015) seems more critical to link the discourse as a subject of interpretation. For him, all things are subject to interpretation; whichever interpretation prevails at a given time is a function of power and not truth. Orientalism, Said (1979) writes, is a ‘systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage - and even produce - the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period’ (p. 3). The concept of discourse has become popular not only in literature and theoretical and philosophical studies, but also became an unavoidable constituent in the development studies. In this study, the researcher has analyzed the notion of rural development as a ‘discourse’, which criticality searches conceptual, theoretical and normative arguments, and with this, it identifies contested issues. Theoretically, the roots of discourses are socially constructed and they are dynamic in nature. As the discourses constantly emerge, grow, and revised and replaced, they are eventually ‘contested’ and essentially ‘plural’. Critical theorists perceive that all the discourses are immune to different kinds of contestation upon which critiques are generated and the discourses become cognitive in nature. Though classical literatures do not include the

separate analytical units of discourses and contestation, these concepts are intermixed with the interpretation of reality, reason and rationality of worldly as well as aesthetic things or matter.

Development and discourses are inherently linked as both have the dual nature of ideological-cognitive dimension (subjective reality) and empirical-pragmatic dimension (objective reality). They cannot remain in isolation and are therefore crossed with the contestation. The contestation emerges whether in the genesis (of new idea/ practice) or in crisis (in development) or shifting of the paradigm (of the discourse). In the global literature of development, thus, the development discourse can be seen in many ways (Bernstein, 1995; Escobar, 1992, 2011). The claims of liberals, neo-liberals and modernists often relate to the functional ideology of the development, while the Marxists rely on conflict and dialectical structure of society. In between these two grand narratives, there are other theoretical developments, including post-structural, post-modern and post-developmental. The liberal ideology often sees the development as an essentially good idea and scrutinized with the actual implementation of development projects with the epistemological position of modernization. It tries to propose reforms to the workings of development institutions and functional strategies. The Marxist and neo-Marxists, on the other hand, critics view actual existing development institutions and practices as essentially promoting capitalist expansion and exploitation in the developing world. Ideologically they follow dialectical epistemology of political economy. Despite these contrasting political postures, as argued (Fujikura, 2013), both schools of thought have been operated within similar problematic, focusing on the gap what development was supposed to do and its actual performance. In consequence, radical critiques are still organized around the naïve political questions: what is development, what is it derived from and by whom is it operated so far?

In this setting, it is worthwhile to mention the prelude of the '*Anti-Politics Machine*', initially published in 1990 where James Ferguson composed of the centrality of "development" in our times (Ferguson, 1990). Ferguson tried to investigate how the "development discourse" functions, that is, the manner by which the language and practices utilized by development experts impact the courses in which development is conveyed, and the unintended results it encourages. The net impact of development, he contends, has been to "de-politicize" questions of asset allotment and to reinforce bureaucratic force. On the impact the anti-politics machine has had on resulting

critiques of development which is essentially contested and fluid in nature (Cornwall, 2007; Escobar, 2001).

Indeed, the question of 'development for whom' is more important rather than the questions of 'what the development is' and 'how has been it distributed so far'. An uneven distribution of development among poor rural people and disadvantaged sections of the society (Payne, 2005; Frank, 1978) has created an immediate crisis in the development. In the same context, Escobar seems (1992) to be apparent in viewing the development critically as a contested discourse. It seems a virtual shadow of the larger project of dominant 'western modernity'. Bernstein (2006, 2010) critically observes development as a competitive domain of discourses. The words and jargons used in such discourses can have powerful potentials of influence through their normative and strategic usage in social interactions. However, the issue and problems of rural areas have been largely overlooked by the domination of established structures like the state, market and non-governmental organizations including civil society groups. In consequence, the dilemma of development has become apparent in terms of its knowledge, experience and policy constraints.

2.2 Issues and Debates on the Discourse

2.2.1 Crisis and the thrust of alternative thinking

Development has been questioned in terms of its outcomes, ideologies, approaches and practices. In *'Encountering Development'*, one of the most widely read and debated literature, Escobar sought to provide a general view of the historical construction of development and the third world as a whole. He has critiqued modernization interventions of development as a blueprint exemplar to produce change without transforming the nature of the discourse as a whole. As Escobar (1995) argues, thinking about development in terms of discourse enables us to maintain a focus on power and domination, while at the same time exploring the discourse's conditions of possibility as well as its effects. Brought on by critical thinking, Escobar compared powerful social movements and the discourse of development to contribute the critiques of intellectual inquiry and political action for alternative futures. With reference to the question of 'alternatives', Escobar argues that we should no longer talk in terms of 'development alternatives' since to do so is to contribute to the continuing hegemony of development. Instead, he suggests, we

should talk about ‘alternatives to development, that is, the rejection of the entire paradigm altogether’ (1995, p. 215).

In Asian and Latin American studies, western civilization and modernity was confronted by the dark side of progress in the name of wake of the affluent society to be granted with ‘modernization’. The critics reflect that development interventions and social forces were manually constructed to foster growth or development just as a ‘shadow’ of Western modernity and historicity. It was development of underdevelopment that contributed to foster poverty, inequality and dependency in developing countries (Amin, 2010; Frank, 1973; O’neil, 2015; Wallerstein, 2004). In this regard, Sachs (2010) seems very critical and argues that the modern age of development is proclaimed over and done with ‘the idea of development stands like a ruin in the intellectual landscape’ (p. 1).

2.2.2 Freedom, participation and identity

In development discourse, Amartya Sen (2000 and 2011) has conceptualized different theoretical elements, including political freedom, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees, capability development, entitlement, protective security, identity and so on. He elsewhere argues that development can be seen as a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy. In the opening sentence of *Development as Freedom* (2000), he maintains that the goal of development is the “promotion and expansion of valuable capabilities.” Following this, freedom is central to the process of development for the assessment of the progress and the achievement of development. He finally concludes that ‘development is indeed a momentous engagement with freedom’s possibilities’ (p. 298).

In recent years, the development discourse has been gradually lifting towards the issues of identity, social justice and people’s participation. In this regard, Sen (2007) prefers multiple identities, which he perceives as a notion that an individual is made up of various characteristics and components that work in unison to create the whole being. Cautioning against those who may selectively emphasize an individual’s or people group’s particular characteristics over others for their personal or political gain, Sen says that we should remain aware of the ‘politics of partition’, which serves to divide and alienate minorities including the issues of refugees and Islamophobia. In light of this, he goes on to stress the importance of a better understanding of the multiplicity of identities, so as to foster improved social cohesion and inclusivity in the

long term. Again, moving on to a question about the role of growth and human development in making policy, Sen asserts that the distinction that is presently being made between growth and human development is a 'fake horse race'.⁸

2.2.3 Power, agency and structure

Pierre Bourdieu has done classic works in viewing the power relations in societies. His research pioneered such influential concepts as capital (which opposed to traditional economic forms of capital and proposes cultural, social and symbolic forms of capital), the habitus (shaped by past events/ structures and current practices/ structures) and the field or location (various social and institutional arenas). Bourdieu's work was primarily concerned with the dynamics of power in society, and especially the diverse and subtle ways in which power is transferred and social order maintained within and across generations (Bourdieu, 1980, 1986). He approaches power within the context of a comprehensive 'theory of society' which – like that of Foucault – we can't possibly do justice to here, or easily express in the form of applied methods (Navarro, 2006). While Foucault sees power as 'ubiquitous' and beyond agency or structure, Bourdieu sees power as culturally and symbolically created, and constantly re-legitimized through an interplay of agency and structure. He has proposed the power to be a 'Doxa', which is the combination of both orthodox and heterodox norms and beliefs – the unstated, taken-for-granted assumptions or 'common sense' behind the distinctions we make (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 471). As part of social science research and development studies, his theories and approaches of Bourdieu can be used to explain how people can resist power and domination in one [field] and express complicity in another.

The debates in structure and agency for the interplay or power are critically reflected by various scholars. The contribution of Anthony Giddens seems quite remarkable in this regard who is well known for his theory of structuration and his holistic view of modern societies. Giddens emphasizes the social constructs of power, modernity and institutions as the three core subject matter of contemporary sociology. He rejects traditional approaches of positivism in social science and notes that society only has form, and that form only has effects on people, insofar as structure is produced and reproduced in what people do (Giddens, 1971). He compares and contrasts

⁸ Based on a public conversation with Amartya Sen: Critical reflections on identity and development (See at: <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/southasia/2015/11/21/in-conversation-with-amartya-sen-critical-reflections-on-identity-and-development/>)

Durkheim's positivist sociological paradigm and Weber's functionalist paradigm to critically envision the agency and motives of individuals. He then rejects both of those approaches, stating that while society is not a collective reality, nor should the individual be treated as the central unit of analysis. Rather, he uses the logic of the hermeneutic tradition (from interpretative sociology) to argue for the importance of the agency in sociological theory, claiming that human social actors are always to some degree knowledgeable about what they are doing. Social order is therefore a result of some pre-planned social actions, not automatic evolutionary response (Giddens, 1984, 2009).

To reemphasize, development is crisis-driven where the critique remains open-folded, including various dimensions, such as growth and development; historicity, hegemony, and emancipation; and the emergence of new actors (movements, revolutions, identities, market, state). Therefore, as a discourse, contestation(s) in development is constantly emerging. The word 'contestation' denotes to every day politics that becomes an ensemble of practices, discourses and institutions that seek to establish a certain order and to organize social life in conditions that are always potentially subject to conflict (Geiser, 2014; Geiser & Rist, 2009). It seems to be quite 'contrasting' and 'contesting'. To reflect, Michel Foucault's forceful articulation of an intrinsic and irreversible relationship between power and knowledge is of immense value to the analysis of development and North-South relations. He mentioned that modern discourses are found in an appeal to truth and stated that "truth is not outside of power.... each society has its own regime of truth, its general politics of truth" (Foucault, 1980a, p. 131). He further opines that it allows us to 'stand detached from [developer], bracketing its familiarity, in order to analyze the theoretical and practical context with which it has been associated' (Foucault, 1986, p. 3).

Globally, therefore, development has been a contested notion as it is becoming tired of 'grand' solutions and theories on the basis of critique of previous practice. Yet, sufficiency of the development theories to overcome the development challenges can be doubted. Most of the critiques of development stop fail to offer a unique perspective on future possibilities and the shape of the things to come. The alternatives and worldviews for the solutions of development problems are also questionable because questions such as who designs them and for whom become pertinent. The 'alternatives of development' versus 'development alternatives' is another dilemma in this regard. The relationship of developmentalism and politics is further complicated. If a theory offers knowledge and discourse, then what does a development practice do in

turn? Why do the theories and practices, again, contradict with each other at the grassroots? Is development theory a matter of social science or of politics? Is it practical or the matter of ideology? How a theory of development, negotiates with development itself, and how with the class, culture, historical context and relations of power? What development is, or what it is not meant to be – this can be contested and even lead to violence. These questions are becoming pertinent in modern literatures of development.

2.3 Critique on Nepal's Development

Nepal emerged as a unified state over 250 years ago. Kathmandu has remained as a center of its rule, the regime, and development. The state, however formally entered into the modern discourse of development since 1950s after the dawn of democracy in the country. With the rise of political parties, exposure to the external world, revolution in China, Independence of India, Nepal's membership with the United Nations, the establishment of diplomatic relations with many countries and entry of foreign aid are some of the critical factors that triggered Nepal's development efforts since 1950s. In Nepal's critical discourse analysis of development, there are a number of works seemingly reflective. Though the critics say that Nepal's development is state-centric (state-led), most of its strategies were claimed to be guided by 'welfare approach' and targeted for the 'rural poor' (Baral, 2012; Pigg, 1993). Further, both the modernization and dependency perspectives, which were influential in the modern development thinking also embarked Nepal's development in terms its practice and research. In particular after the political change of 1990 a number of critiques started to come to surface from different perspectives, including rural development, local governance, social conflict and movements, NGOs, civil societies, market, remittance, women's empowerment, inclusive development, and so on.

'Fatalism and Development: Nepal's Struggle for Modernization (2008) is one of the critical reflections on Nepal's development. The book was written by Dor Bahadur Bista, one of the leading anthropologists of Nepal and was first published in 1991. It is a bold and incisive thesis upon Nepali society, and it attempts to attack Nepal's development in a multi-pronged tone. Bista has argued that the Hindu fatalistic ideology, disseminated by the high-castes, hindered Nepal's modernization, while the real Nepalis (had they not been influenced by the Hindu indoctrination) were hardworking and cooperative, a group-oriented people, fully capable of modernization.

However, many reviewers and scholars (e.g. Himal, 1994) have made a critique of Bista saying that fatalism is not a negative and unique characteristic of Nepali society. Rather, it is global allocation of human nature who always loves to nature, hope and life. This is also dominant in other societies beyond the Nepali ones. At large, the bulk of the author's argument in this book is that Nepal's strength has always been in the indigenous qualities of its various ethnic groups. But the attempts at development have met with mixed success largely due to the prevalent attitude and the predominant value systems of Nepali society at the elite level (p. 2).

In the Name of Development: A Reflection on Nepal (1997) and Nepal's Failed Development: Reflections and Maladies (1999) are two subsequent thought-provoking works that have marked alternative critical thinking in Nepal's development. The former was written by Devendra Raj Panday, a senior-bureaucrat-turned-a civil society leader, and the latter was by Nanda Raj Shrestha, a development ideologue. The question which Panday urges us to reflect upon is "how and why development came to represent our national aspirations and yet how it has become a mere 'word' not a 'true' world in practice" (Panday, 1999, p. xix). Undoubtedly, he agrees that there have been significant progress in isolated areas of economic and social life, including education, health and communications. But, Panday questions: "is its development if words are replaced by words, hope is replaced by despair, and accountability, responsibility and legitimacy of governance / rulers is questioned?" (p. x).

While for Panday, many of the ills in contemporary Nepal are due to the absence of real development, for Nanda Shrestha they are the direct products of the existing development process. In Shrestha's view, development has produced nothing but "a trail of victims" (Shrestha, 1997, p. xix). For him, everything, including poverty, corruption, prostitution, and the deepening disparity and antagonism between classes is a symptom of the cultural and spiritual deterioration of Nepali society brought forth by the development. Development initially presented itself as a "messianic" hope of "salvation" from poverty. But it left the peasants with the loss of their traditional subsistence bases and a deep sense of frustration (Shrestha, 1997, p. 96). For both Shrestha and Panday, it seems evident that Nepal constitutes an almost taken for granted referent of development, but it has contradicted with failed/ absent outcomes at the grassroots inviting an unavoidable crisis.

'The State and Society in Nepal: Historical Foundations and Contemporary Trends' (2006) is an innovative contribution in Nepal studies. Written by one of the leading historians, Prof. Prayag Raj Sharma, the arguments in the book seem illuminating and insightful. He argues for long-term continuities of culture and structure, but he is aware of the methodological pitfalls in doing so. He asserts that the Kathmandu valley, the far west and the Tarai are the three crucibles which have made modern Nepali culture. The discourses in the articles touch on such subjects as the historical development of Nepali culture and society, and the Nepali state; religion of Nepal in a historical and contemporary setting; village ethnography; crises facing the social and political values of democracy; the emerging trends of ethnicity among others. In his own word, Sharma mentioned his notion as 'an anthropological perspective of history', or reversely, 'a historical perspective of anthropology' (p. xi). However, Sharma does not link the historical development of Nepali society and culture with the broader political economy with its production systems and contradictions. The writings are less contributing theoretically though there is rigorous critique and analysis.

Critiques of development have recently undergone analytical components of constitutional debates, conflict management and movement actors in the country. In the book *'Contested Development in Nepal: Experiences and Reflections'* (2014), the authors (SR. Sharma, BR. Upreti, P. Manandhar and M. Sapkota) have highlighted the contestations in development from the viewpoints of actors and institution, strategies and approaches, and the role they played in manifesting conflict and post-conflict challenges. It provides the experience and perspective on contested development in Nepal that reflect, respectively the contributors works on development discourse, post-conflict reconstruction, social capital and rural change, ethnic movement and development aid. The book has contributed to conceptualize contested development in the particularity of Nepali context, though again it fails to engage with broader theoretical questions in global context, which Geiser calls 'a contestation amidst the grand narratives and nitty-gritty of the everyday' (p. 4).

Contribution of foreign scholars to Nepal's development studies is of wider importance enriching the discourses and practices nationally and globally. Their studies popularly arose in the 1970s and took a momentum since early 1990s. The liberal economic policies, emergence of different kinds of non-governmental organizations and aid agencies, expansion of universities and research institutes, social and cultural diversity of Nepali society, Maoist movement and rise of social movements (ethnic and regional in particular) are some of the key factors that become quite fertile for the Nepal studies

in the 2000s. Among others, the most remarkable works in this regard include: *Peasants and Workers in Nepal* (2002), *The Struggle for Basic Needs in Nepal* (2002) and *Nepal in Crisis: Growth and Stagnation at the Periphery* (first published in 1980 and revised editions came in 2001, 2005 and 2014) – contributed by Piers Blaikie, John Cameron and David Seddon; and '*Nepal: A State of Poverty*' (1987) contributed by David Seddon. All these have contributed in analyzing the nexus of poverty and dependency, core-periphery contradictions, changing social and class relations and the struggles of rural people in maintain their servitude of life. The scholars have globalized development issues of Nepal along with the south Asian context. Comparing the rituals of democracy and development of Nepal, India and Sri Lanka, Gellner (2015) critically observes the achievements of development of Nepal. He maintains that development in Nepal is largely a state–centric approach, along with granted imperatives of the elite (p. 1-9). To him, development is questionable as if: it is a building useless infrastructure? Development as education? Development peddled as empowerment? Development in health sector? Development in private sector? Development in pajero [riding a luxury vehicle] culture? Development in middle class culture (p. 1)?

From a Marxist interpretation of Nepali history and economy, accompanied by a wide-ranging survey of Marxist theory of development, the book 'The nature of underdevelopment and regional structure of Nepal' has positioned a significant contribution in Nepali discourse. An ideologue of Maoist's People's war who has recently left out the Maoist camp, Dr. Baburam Bhattarai often advocates for 'New Nepal' and calls for an eventual breakthrough of traditional forces of production. Bhattarai (2003) argues that Nepali society is still in its semi-colonial and semi-feudal phase, which is in fact not a new analysis in Marxist school of thought. The neo-Marxist version of thought has been deliberately incorporated in the analysis but how the class relations and production systems have been changed in Nepali society has been less focused upon. He concludes that "without the basic restructuring of society...the social and spatial problems of development/ underdevelopment are not likely to be solved" (2003, p. 503).

Meanwhile Chaitanay Mishra, one of the prominent figures of Nepali sociologist and development critics, has brought out an interesting publication entitled *Essays on the Sociology of Nepal* in 2007. It contains an array of analytical and perceptive essays on underdevelopment, growth of the social sciences, foreign aid, and the Maoist insurgency. He has argued that the Nepali society has entered into capitalistic mode of

production through massive changes in livelihood and economic structure of society. The economic base of Nepali society has changed Nepali society, and the change was not due to the political movements. A detailed analytical framework has been further presented in Mishra's another book '*Punjiwad ra Nepal*' (Capitalism and Nepal) which was published recently in 2013. He elsewhere argue that political movements including Maoist conflict and People's Movement 2006 were due to unavoidable contradictions of Nepali economy often coupled with a crisis of development in terms of livelihood diversification, foreign employment and remittance, youth and unemployment, poverty and dependency and so on. Along with the policy-level contradictions, he equally blames the intellectuals of Nepali society as if they are becoming party cadres and petty puppets of the leaders. In turn, it leads to underdevelopment of the state.

Tatsuro Fujikura (2013) has highlighted alternative critical perspective on Nepal's development in discourse of awareness: development, social movements and the practices of freedom in Nepal. She explores the ways in which projects of development and social transportation, through both their successes and failures have helped produce new forms of imagination and socio-political engagements in Nepal. Combining historical and ethnographic analyses, the book shows, among other things, how the self-conception of contemporary village leaders, the revolutionary visions of the Maoists, and the mobilization for the liberation of bonded labourers, all merge out of the history of a variety of projects for individual and societal transformation and improvement in Nepal since the 1950s. She has questioned the development practices of Nepal from an anthropological perspective. As a discourse, she puts: "I see real differences between ideas of development that prioritize individual achievements and those that prioritize substantive equality....I see unresolved [...] tensions at the heart of project development, as well as its edges" (Fujikura, 2003, p. 13).

'Nepal's Development Tragedy: Threats and Possibilities' (2013) is a recent critic on Nepal's development, as worked by Prof. Bishwombhar Pyakurel, one of the leading economists in Nepal. The book has a wider readership to find out which factors - capital, policy, governance or institution were constraints to Nepal's development. In the first chapter is about the reviewing of the development of Nepal, Payakurel (2013) mentions that development in Nepal is becoming a tragedy. Despite of having a rigorous content over it, what the tragedy means and why it is actually becoming so is less answered from a broader perspective of political economy. This seems further dichotomous with the Panday's critical remarks on foreign aid and failed development.

Panday (2011) maintains that one of the major dissenting issues of Nepal's political economy lies significantly in its misleading development. Regarding the legacy of failed development, he asserts that development challenges in Nepal are deeply engrained in the country's history, dominant political culture and the contradictions in the international aid system (p. 97).

Nepal-nation State in the Wilderness (2012), written by a renowned professor of political science of Nepal, Lok Raj Baral, takes a critical look at three important aspects of modern Nepal: viability of the Nepali state, prospects and challenges of its liberal democracy, and strategies for managing the emerging geopolitical trends. The question "is democracy viable in Nepal" provides a thematic outline to the book. Baral (2012) argues that though democratic values have triumphed in the recent past, democracy itself remains blurred in the absence of institutionalization. He argues that parameters of Nepali politics are complex and they need to redefine in the changing context. He then offers a proposition that theorizing Nepali politics is a 'daunting task' (p. 1).

2.4 Rural Development: Concept and Approaches

The concept of rural development (RD) is a historical perspective of development relating well-being of rural people and growth in the rural economy. It encompasses the development of agriculture and allied activities, rural infrastructures, village and cottage industries, community services, rural-urban linkages, socioeconomic relations and resources in the rural areas. It is not possible to construct any comprehensive and generally accepted definition of rural development because of changing contexts of development. For instance, it remained as a foundation of national economy, aggrandizer of agricultural development, poverty reduction strategy, critique of urban-biased development, movements for justice and governance, and modernization of rural societies. In this sense, RD is a comprehensive and multidimensional concept. Singh (2012) very beautifully narrates rural development as a broader spectrum of process, a phenomenon, a strategy and a discipline (p. 3).

Beyond the above-mentioned pragmatic orientation of RD, there is a continuous debate and an emerging contestation between the mainstream vs. alternative discourse of development. The contestation is becoming a universal phenomenon in questioning the traditional development discourse/ practices and establishing the new alternatives in place of them. The roles and duties of the states, non-state actors,

authorities, assumptions, research works and academia are becoming contested by the contrasting world-views of the development. Consequently, a kind of contestation has been emerged to synthesize 'contested rural development' (CRD). This remains thematic foci of the present research. However, CRD, as a discourse, has been less recognized in the development studies. The review suggests that theorization of CRD is significantly lacking in the development literatures, though it is not an easy task for the researchers to do so. Indeed, identification of dominant or mainstream discourse is less difficult than to challenge it and then to create an alternative discourse.

The RD has been a historical construct of a number of theories and practices in different time and spaces. In the context of developing countries, reducing poverty and inequality and promoting agrarian change posit the most significant agendas of RD. However, the relationship between these agendas and RD is highly contested (Ballard et al., 2005). A larger number of studies have revealed emerging contestation of RD with an array of different claims, practices and analytical frameworks. The Appendix-B presents an annotated chronology and commentaries with the changing thinking and approaches in rural development.

In recent years, development has been characterized by flux and fragmentation in its ideology and policy instrument. There have been significant achievements in improving the quality and standards of rural life, despite the fact that the rural social structure has also become a dependent niche. Often, the donors and national governments have been investing a huge amount of money in rural sectors, but these investments could not change the very nature of development in nature. Critics further argue that the rural development is elite-led coupled with the severity of consumerism and the capitalist mode of production (Manandhar, 2011). Despite the overarching focus of accomplishing the Millennium Development Goals (2000-2015) and then to attain Sustainable Development Goals (2015- 2030), a number of questions are becoming contested. This has been accompanied by increasing project level interventions rather than on the structural policy development processes. Yet, there remains a tension between more transdisciplinary thinking and the reassertion of sector wide development approaches. Issues of inclusive development remain important, but at the same time there has been critique of what passes for participation and the lack of meaningful access, representation and participation of the people, particularly the women, and small farmers and the rural poor. Phuhlisani and PLAAS (2009) notes that environmental issues, vulnerability reduction and disaster risk mitigation measures are

increasingly taking center stage as there is increasing recognition of the severity and speed of climate change and its impacts on the poor.

2.5 Contestations in Nepal's Rural Development

2.5.1 Critique of the 'planned regime'

As discussed in Chapter 1, the planned development in Nepal formally began in Nepal in mid-1950s with the creation of the Planning Commission in 1956. It has been an apex advisory body of the Government of Nepal for formulating a national vision, periodic plans and policies for development. Before its formation, however, there had been a number of planning initiatives and development strategies in the history of Nepal that have marked Nepali perspective of harmony, unity, civilization, art and culture in the Indian-subcontinent. The planning approaches and implementing instruments were, however, allocated according to the destiny and security of the respective political regimes, including the Kirat, the Lichhavi, the Shah and the Rana (Khanal, 2006; Regmi, 1978; Whelpton, 2005). While the orientation of the development strategies at the global level in the 1970s did shape Nepal's development policy and programs in favor of rural development, the concept of rural development is not a new thinking, nor is its importance a recent realization in the country.⁹

In the changing context of a political movement with a dawn of democracy in 1951 and subsequent movements in 1990 and 2006, there have been a number of five year development plans, three year interim plans, perspective plans and annual plans following different approaches and strategies to promote the national development in general and rural development in particular. For more analytical perspective, the subsequent development plan periods in Nepal can be broadly comprised of the following four-stages (see Appendix-D for the summarization of the subsequent plans):

Initial phase of Plan period:

The first systematic effort of rural development even before the beginning of planned period was the Tribhuvan Village Development Program (TVDP) in 1952, with assistance of India and USA. It was well-conceived multi-sectorial program embracing

⁹ The literatures documenting changes in rural south Asia since 1950s is vast. For Nepal, see for example, Adhikari (1996), Ahearan (2001), Fisher (1990), Macfalane (1989), Manandhar (2008); Mishra (2013), and Shrestha (1999).

all the important aspects of rural economy in subsequent levels of the nucleus (core), the remote (*dehat*) and village development. The first Five-Year-Plan (FYDP) (1956-60) accorded high priority to the TVDP. The country was divided into 150 development blocs which then led by bloc development officers (BDOs). The progress unsatisfactory in term of physical and financial output though the plan had good orientation

Second phase of Plan period (during Panchayat era):

The development plans in Panchayat regime (1960-1990) had focused to follow 'Panchayat' politics of development under the ideology of King Mahendra's 'partyless democracy'. Empirically, these initiatives contributed to institutionalize local bodies (Panchayats) and started to provide grants under sectorial and decentralized approach. The second Three-Year Interim Plan (TYIP) (1962-1965) did focus on agricultural development and village development programs. It took an initiation of Land Reform Act, 1964 which contributed to land management and governance. But the benefits of programs could not go to the rural poor and landless peasants. The third FYDP (1965-70) focused on decentralization and people's participation; Panchayat development program; mobilization of local resources; agricultural productivity on the basis of geographical regions (e.g. cereal and cash crops in Tarai, horticulture in hills and animal husbandry in the mountain). It did not however mention of rural development, but given high priority to agricultural development through the Panchayats. Empirically the programs were concentrated only in the Tarai and Kathmandu valley, which induced huge decline in agriculture production in the hilly region; and therefore, promoted hill-Tarai migration.

The early 1970s saw a remarkable change in the thinking on development whereby many developing countries adopted integrated rural development (IRD) approach along with the support of World Bank. Since those various objectives of rural development are related with many different and interrelated aspects of rural life, the IRD came as a new multipurpose thrust of rural planning. The fourth FYDP (1970-75) embodied the regional development approach to reduce the regional disparities in allocation of economy and resources; adopted District Administration Plan (DAP) in 1975. The Small Farmer Development Programs (SFDPs) and Production Credit for Rural Women (PCRW) were the two larger state-led programs in 1970s which possessed 'target group' approach of development.

Following this, the fifth FYDP (1975-1980) in Nepal (1975-80) was a turning point in the development process on Nepal because it was an attempt to spread growth beyond the narrow and privileged confines of the Kathmandu. The plan aimed to mobilize the rural people for local development schemes; initiated 'integrated rural development programs' (IRDPs); laid emphasis on output maximization and labor intensive technologies; conceived 'small area development program (SADP). With the adoption of IRD strategy in 1970s, various projects were initiated under the assistance of various donor agencies and countries. The IRDP approach was adopted as an attempt to fill a gap in the national approach to rural development. It had three essential components to promote rural development from the grassroots through agricultural production, social sector development and infrastructure development. It is worthwhile to mention here that a meeting of the local representatives of 'Nepal Aid Group' was convened by National Planning Commission and the Ministry of Finance in February 1978. Out of its deliberation came a 'strategy for rural development' in Nepal which concluded that the rural development programs should be resource realistic and should embrace the integrated approach. Nevertheless, when it came to the organizational structure of implementation, it was less than explicit and 'best with incongruities and contradictions' (Pradhan, 1982).

During the 1980s, there came a discourse of basic human needs as a primary objective of development, and it has been embedded in the national Plans and policies of the developing countries including Nepal.¹⁰ It was conceived as a new response to the failure of the past development policies and was particularly a reaction against the discredited theories of trickle down effects (Blaikie et al., 1980). Following this, the sixth FYDP (1980-1985) focused on many issues including satisfy and supply the 'basic needs' of people; local development by promoting people's participation; decentralization scheme (Act of 1982); agricultural development; continuation in IRD approach; formation of Ministry of Panchayat and Local Development (MPLD) in 1981. The plan specifically adopted district plans, local/community development programs (e.g. Praja Community Development Scheme, and Women's Development Program), remote area development program and IRDPs (e.g. Bhaktapur Development Project, Banepa and Dhulikhel Development Project) and extension of small farmer development projects (e.g. formation of training centers in five regions, extension of program in 240 VDCs of 31 districts). No doubt, the sixth Plan was a step in correcting the past mistakes (Pant, Allinson & Hayes, 1996).

¹⁰ As a national priority, the approach was adopted in different countries including Kenya (1979-83), the Phillipines (1978-82), India (1978-83) and Nepal (1980-85).

At large, however, it seldom practices redistribution of power with simultaneous building of local capabilities through basic needs and integrated development. The plan also could not actually produce the results to the attainment of the aspirations of the politicians, the planners and the people which groomed political confrontation within the Panchayat system. It has promoted development planning from the local Panchayats but failed to gain people's participation. Although the basic needs approach came as a bang, the critics say that it created consequences for the reduced foreign aid, increased intervention in domestic policies, denial of modernization and industrialization and not a transfer of capital resources among the poor (Streeten, 1984).

Meanwhile, the seventh FYDP (1985-90) emphasized on rural development assuming people's participation as a main strategy, and launched formally basic needs program as its main thrust. In 1985 the government of Nepal declared to uplift the living standard of people by 2000 as 'Asian Standard' providing the basic needs. The program was implemented in 1986 offering a package of food, clothing, shelter, health, security, and income and employment generation. However, it remained as a strategy providing for a temporary consumption transfer to the poor and not as a transfer of capital resources that would result in permanent improvement in their condition. The critics maintain that the Plans during Panchayat could not contribute for the structural change and democratic practices in rural areas (Seddon & Hussein, 2002). Despite this, some scholars give credit to those Plans for the initiation of the regional balanced development strategies and redistributive orientations which Whelpton (2005, p. 122) would call a 'quest of development'.

Third phase of Plans period (during multi-party democracy):

Despite a huge political and economic change that reinstated multi-party democracy in the country, rural development discourse could not become a mainstream version of the national development (Bennett, 2008; Leftwich, 1994). The eighth FYDP (1992-97) adopted the liberal policy with privatization and liberalization assuming the basic objective of poverty reduction. In the changing context of liberal economy and multi-party democracy, the plan promoted rural development programs under 'local development' section of the Plan; laid focus on raising living standard of poor communities; aimed at developing backward areas and infrastructures; offered employment opportunities and promoted 'self-reliance' approach. The plan formally

entered into the market economy under the ideology of 'slim state' which minimized many schemes of welfare strategies of the Panchayat plans including the subsidies for farmers. The plan has changed Panchayat development structures into Village and District committees and the strategies were merely confined to slogans rather than to effective implantation in the context of changing political system after 1990. The programs and policies adopted during the plan were largely suffered from anti-Panchayat politics. Despite this, Community Forestry Program 1993 (first initiated in 1978), Build Our Village Ourselves (1995), Village Development and Self-Help Program (1996) and Community Underground Irrigation Project (1995) are some of exemplary works in this plan period.

The ninth Plan (1997-2002) followed the same objective, but it also proposed agriculture as a leading sector. The plan focused on the implementation of Agricultural Perspective Plan (APP), decentralization and capacity building of local institutions, and targeted programs for backward and deprived caste/ethnic groups. Meanwhile, the Local Self-Governance Act (LSGA) 1999 was promulgated, which opened up a broader and inclusive platform for people's participation in local development affairs with their elected representatives. To mention, further, Special Area Development Program (1999), Rural Community Infrastructure Program (1999), and *Upekshit, Utpidit* and *Dalit* Community Program (1999) are some of the remarkable interventions during this plan period. The execution of this plan was however severely affected by Maoist's insurgency coupled the inability of political parties and frequent change of the governments.

Again, the tenth Plan (2002-2007) was developed as Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). Specifically, it outlined four folded strategies: promoting broad-based economic growth; reducing multiplicity of poverty (income, human, exclusion); enabling policies for local bodies; targeted programs and rural infrastructure development. Though the targets of the plans were conceptually broad, but not identify supportive institutions to promote rural development. The execution of the plan was largely affected by state-Maoist's conflicts, vacant local bodies and weak implementation of the programs. The plan was incepted with donor-driven mind set of poverty reduction and it groomed about fulfilling the MDGs (Devkota, 2007). Despite a few successes in reduction of poverty, the plan failed to resolve development dilemmas in rural areas.

Fourth phase of Plan period (after 2006)

After People's Movement 2006, as the country is unable to have a full five year plan due to the protracted political transition, the government has witnessed Three-Year Interim Plans (TYIPs) and now the fourth one is being implemented. The era has been largely witnessed by a myriad of jargons of ideologically plural terms including Marxism, socialism, neo-liberalism and post-modernism. Peace building, reconstruction, poverty reduction and inclusive development have remained the strategic themes for the Plans after 2006. The eleventh TYIP (2007/8-2009/10) attempted to address the context of political change with a metaphoric vision of 'modern, just and new' Nepal. It largely focused on conflict management strategies, e.g. relief, reconstruction and reintegration. Issues of inclusion and participation of the deprived sections/ groups of community got started. The plan however could not foster the aspirations of people in the changing context of politics which they expected from the People's Movement 2006 and after the end of the decade long violent conflict in the country (Neupane, 2011). Though focus was given on rural infrastructure and energy sector, it also could not make broader vision of rural development.

Following this, the objective of second TYIP (2010/11-2012/13) was to bring about a visible improvement in the lives of common people by triggering broad-based, employment-oriented, inclusive and equitable economic growth that would help alleviate poverty and establish a sustainable peace. Its strategies included creating development infrastructures, making governance and service delivery effective and mainstreaming trade and financial reforms in line with federal structure and regional balance. The average annual economic growth at constant prices during the Plan period was just 4.0 percent (against the target of 5.5%), with 3.6 and 4.2 percent growth in the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors respectively. While the target for reduction of poverty of the TYIP was 21% (to be reduced from 25.4%, as was in 2009/10), it remained at 23.8% in 2012/13.

It is worthwhile to mention that the Government of Nepal launched Local Governance and Community Development Program (First Phase 2008/09-2012/13) and Second Phase 2013/14-2016/17). The main goal of these programs was to contribute towards poverty reduction through better local governance and community development. The purpose of the program is to improve local governance for effective service delivery and citizen empowerment. This program has created community based two forum at grassroots level i.e. Ward Citizen Forums (WCFs) and Citizen Awareness Centers (CACs). While the WCF is an inclusive community based forum which comprises 25-27 members from different sphere of society, the CAC is focus for deprived and very

poor community within ward. As there has been vacant local bodies since 2002 in Nepal, these forums has helped to fill the political spaces in the rural areas by linking VDC administration and local services to the community level, though some field-level constraints and elite-domination has been also unavoidable issues as evident during the field study of this PhD.

Subsequently, the TYIP of (2013/14–2015/16) was implemented as the Thirteenth Plan. The long-term vision of the Plan was to attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other development commitments and to upgrade the status of the country from its current least-developed status to that of a developing nation by 2022 next decade. It has also incorporated the goals of eradicating economic poverty and human deprivation prevalent in the country and improving living standards. It attempted to romanticize Nepal's progress towards MDGs and could not analyze the nature of rural poverty. Despite its ambitious targets, the Plan has failed to meet its commitments. For example, average economic growth rate remained stagnant at 2.9 % (against the target 6.0%) and incidence of poverty could to decline to the target of 18.0% and just remained at 21.6%, employment generation limited to 2.9 % (against the target 3.2%). Moreover, access to different kinds of social and economic services to the people still remained poor, including access to drinking water services for 83.6 percent, access to sanitation for 81.0 percent and access to electricity for 74.0 percent for which the targets were set as to reach 95%, 90.5% and 87%, respectively (NPC, 2013; NPC, 2016).

Very recently in January 2017, the Government of Nepal has launched 14th three-year development plan to remain in effect from 2016/017-2018/019 (2073-74 to 2075-76 BS). It has set a target of attaining 7% economic growth rate. It has been prepared with the purpose of building socialism-oriented prosperous nation based on norms and values of democracy and social justice reaching to the levels of middle income countries and by stimulating the targets of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The main objective of the Plan has set to build independent and prosperous state ensuring basic social services and maintaining productive employment generation and high economic growth rate with distributive justice, reduction of poverty, and socio-economic transformation for building Nepal a welfare state. Following previous Plans, the TYIP has set a number of strategic targets to be achieved in 2016-2018. According to the NPC (2016, p. 1-2), they include: increase in economic growth rate (from 0.8 to 7.2%); increase in GDP PCI (from 79.4 to 116.5 in thousands); reduction of poverty incidence (from 21.6 to 17.0%); increase in HDI (from 0.54 to 0.57); increase in GEM

(from 0.56 to 0.58); improve in life expectancy (from 69 to 72 year); increase in access to drinking water (from 83.6 to 90.0% of the population); increase in electricity generation (851 MW to 2300 MW); and increase in the access to electricity (from 74 to 87%) and the population having internet access (from 46 to 65%). Despite these targets, the plan fails to introduce a visionary plan of rural development in changing (federal) context of state-restructuring and implementation of the constitution.

2.5.2 Existing setbacks in Nepal's rural development

2.5.2.1 Questioning on the key drivers and actors

In fact, rural Nepal has gone through radical changes during the last five decades. Political regimes and struggles are made and changed so far, and livelihood diversification has also been promoted. The concept of rural development, community development and sustainable development have all implemented so far. However, all these interventions were largely state-led and to some extent being NGO-led. This seems a bottom-up imaginary of the donors and the government of Nepal. Moreover, one can argue for cultural criticism of the development projects in Nepal coupling with the ideological problems and implementation hurdles. The researcher simply rejects the notion asserted by some scholars that the villagers of Nepal – in common with throughout the underdeveloped world– were not receptive to change, particularly due to the widespread fatalism often found in Hindu society and people's resistance that rest on the unchanging cycle of life sacrilegious' (Dammann, 1965, p. 108). Unfortunately, a kind of western imagination is credited in Nepali development critique which rejects flexibility of Nepali social structure, liberal within the Hinduism and adaptability of eastern social life. Conservatism is not unique and fatal causality of Nepal's underdevelopment, though there might have certain issues of the power structure in the villages based on land tenure and ownership systems. Indeed, if we see the historical changes in Nepali society we should appreciate the change process and the dedication of rural people in such changes. They have often struggled for modernization and mainstreaming, even sometimes claiming for alternative changes through social and political movements. The elite structure of the state has been largely neglected and donor-driven narratives have become more detrimental in the critiques.

2.5.2.2 Long history, but confused visions

Nine five-year and three three-year plans have already been implemented, each leading to significant strides in social and economic development. Despite the planned efforts made during the past decades to speed up the process of development and reduce the extent of poverty in the country, the actual outcome has been very disappointing. It is a fact that Nepal is ranked as one of the world's least developed countries with a large segment of its people living below the poverty line. The previous rural development programs were prepared from the center with the objective of achieving target growth in overall production. As the rural development programs were implemented without the participation of local people, the benefits did not percolate down to the intended section of local people. The excessive control of the center over local development programs led to ineffective implementation due mainly to the lack of local initiation and enthusiasm.

Although the policy of decentralization was advocated in implementing these programs, administrative and financial aspects could not be decentralized. Control of almost all the local development programs by the center made the local bodies virtually powerless. This centralized nature of administrative system together with its highly bureaucratic practice has alienated the general public to the status of ruler-ruled relationship instead of civil servants-citizens relationship. This tendency to centralize the authority of the bureaucratic system together with its dependence on political patronage and lack of commitment and service-motive towards the people made it difficult for the government to render timely services to the people. The lack of clear-cut policy guidelines, contradictory policies and the absence of public participation in financial management and programmer implementation not only raised the cost of implementation but also reduced the quality of its services. The lack of integration of local bodies, several popular programs and projects resulted either in the uncoordinated training activities or merely remained as propaganda for the political leaders.

2.5.2.3 Missing aspect: Where do the people live and struggle?

Indeed, there has been an uneven focus on the demand side of the development which largely neglected the supply side of the programs to address the structural problems in the rural areas (Mishra, 2011). The critics suggest that the earlier Plans of Panchayat regime in Nepal were highly centralized and elitist favoring the then political interests of the government. Again, in the changing context of People's Movement

1990, the subsequent Plans have been less focused on rural development strategies, particularly on the sustainable livelihood and service delivery in rural areas. Of late, all kinds of confusing and contrasting development paradigm approaches and populist agendas are rapidly emerging in Nepal. Though some officials claim otherwise, critics suggest that the benefits of rural development strategies have not gone to the rural poor, small farmers, and the landless people. According to them, they are less focused on providing sustainable livelihood and service delivery in the rural areas. Furthermore, the issues of power decentralization and building of local capabilities are largely neglected in these plans and strategies. The success in the poverty reduction plan among rural people is nominal, but there is a greater increase in inequality and widening income gap, which ironically belies the claim of the government and donor agencies (Panday, 2009; UNDP, 2009). The genesis of 'dependent development' in rural Nepal thus continued both ideologically and empirically.

2.5.2.4 Lack of institutionalization

Applying some of the welfare strategies in the context of national planning, Nepal do not necessarily fail to plan or plan to fail, but the supporting instruments have not been devised including institutional reforms and power delegation. Sadly, the government could neither continue the basic needs approach nor it adopted the full-fledge implementation of Local Self-Governance Act (LSGA). Frequent changes of government, lack of political leadership, NGO-centric orientation, ethnocentrism, political ego of the major political parties, a decade long Maoist's conflict are some of the important causes which have made the development more contested. The result of planned development has been sadly disillusioning for those who used to believe that planning is the only panacea for Nepal's development. The Plans only became the operational documents, without contributing any ideological worldview of development of Nepal. They could neither mobilize the local and rural resources in favor of the rural poor (at the periphery), nor coordinate the macro-economic policies (at the center). Paradoxically, the entry of the market and NGOs could not bring a structural change in the rural areas, though there have been some changes in the sector of micro-credit and co-operatives. The issue of sustainable use of remittances in building the rural economy has been largely neglected. Consequently, the 'urban palaces' are being constructed taking a huge labor and economic power of the 'rural huts'. The rural elites are the most advantageous from this kind of cosmetic changes and the formation of 'middle class' is becoming inevitable phenomena in contemporary rural life which could

also change the mode of class relations and non-state activism (see also Bongartz & Dahal, 1996; Dahal, 1996, 2004; Sapkota, 2013).

2.5.2.5 The politics of poverty

Despite there is a myriad of investment in the reduction of poverty in Nepal, it has been one of the major issues for Nepal's underdevelopment. It is interesting to note that about 83% (or 21.98 million people) of the total population (26.49 million) resided in rural areas in 2014 (CBS, 2014) while there is contradictory provision that comes in 2015 with the promulgation of a new constitution in the country which does not recognize a pure 'rural' region but adopts binary term 'rural municipality'. As reflected in human development report 2014, the HDI score for Nepal in 2011 is 0.458, with a large urban-rural gap, remaining at 19.7 percent based on the geometric mean compared to 11.2 percent using the arithmetic mean. This essentially reflects persistent discrepancies in income and education between urban and rural areas. The HPI value for Nepal in 2011 is 31.12. There are variations by rural and urban residence, and by ecological and development regions. Urban-rural differences are considerable, with rural poverty nearly 1.8 times higher than urban poverty (UNDP, 2015).¹¹ Politically, these desperations are aligned with the broader political - economy of Nepal. Moreover, the nexus of poverty and agrarian relations in rural Nepal often lies with the conditions of poor markets, traditional agriculture and rampant poverty in the region (Sunam & McCarthy, 2016).

As revealed in the Figure 2.1 on the basis of CBS/ NLSS, 2011, the rural poverty (27.43%) is almost two-times larger than the urban poverty (15.46%), and slightly higher than the national average (25.16%). Further, it is unevenly distributed, confining to the lower class and castes, female heads of households, landless people, *Dalits*, indigenous nationalities (*adivasi/ janajatis*) and small farmers (CBS/ NLSS, 2011). Interestingly, comparing all castes and ethnicities, the incidence of poverty is seen least in the Newar (10.25%), followed by Brahmin (10.34%), and is found high in the *Dalits* of the hills (43.63%). In this context, there are limited studies to analyze the controversies as whether the current reduction in poverty benefits from government policy interventions, or local/ rural development opportunities and or the due to the

¹¹ According to the World Economic Forum's Inclusive Growth and Development Report 2017, Nepal ranks 27th on the IDI in 2016, showing remarkable improvement over the last five years. Notably, its poverty rate has declined by 25 percentage points in this time, and its income inequality (net income Gini) by almost 8 points (WEF, 2017). Retrieved from http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Forum_IncGrwth_2017.pdf

remittances. Though considerable success is being claimed by the government and the donors in the reduction of poverty with increased people's participation in development, these facts are disputed, leading to growing dissatisfaction, despair and frustration among the people of the rural areas.

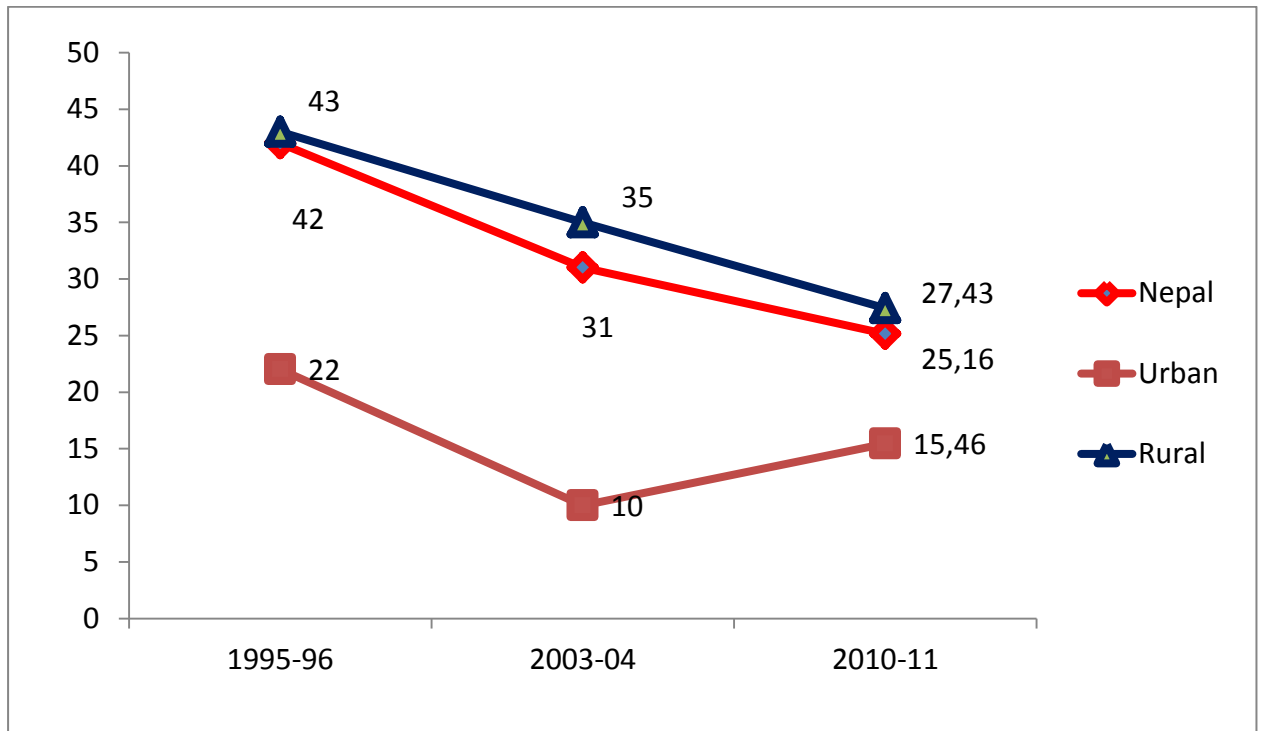


Figure 2.1: Incidence of poverty in Nepal; rural-urban comparisons of National Living Standard Survey in 1995-96, 2003-04 and 2010-11

2.5 Debates on Social Movement Studies and Practices

2.5.1 Resuming the concepts and definitions

Social movements are a type of group action or collective behavior. The term 'social movement' was introduced in 1850 by the German sociologist Lorenz von Stein in his book *History of the French Social Movement from 1789 to the Present (1850)*.¹² With the growing dynamics of social changes and modernization, the discourse of social movement is becoming popular, and perhaps a never avoidable disciple of social sciences. This is why the 'modern society' has become a 'social movement society'

¹²In this work he diffused an idea of Marx's class consciousness. However, there is no consensus within academics to trace out the history of SMs. For example, Scott and Marshall (2009, p. 704) presents "the term social movement was first used by Saint-Simon in France at the turn of the 18th century, to characterize the movements of social protest that emerged there and later elsewhere, and was applied to new political forces opposed to the status quo".

(Meywer & Tarrow, 1998). However, the notion of social movement is conceptually divergent and methodologically contested.

The majority of scholars suggests social movement to mean as an organized group of people involved in a conflict with clearly identified opponents, sharing a common identity, a unifying belief or a common program and act collectively to promote or resist the social change in their society. Mario Diani views the different understandings of social movements and tries a synthesis including all relevant aspects. He defines a social movement as “a network of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organizations, engaged in political or cultural conflict, on the basis of shared collective identity” (Diani, 2002, p. 165). This definition suggests collective identity as an important dimension of social movements, but recent publications start to contest this. Empirically, collective identity implies a degree of homogeneity and stability that is not appropriate anymore in a time when sociology uses new concepts such as networks, flows and complexity. Taking these discussions into account, Bebbington (2009) rightly proposes that:

A social movement is a form of collective action, but it is not itself an actor, rather it is a process, sustained by a set of actions and actors, in which what prevails is an action motivated by shared grievances and senses of injustice, and therefore by a vision - perhaps not specified - of the need to find another way of organizing society and thinking about development (p. 8).

Defining what a movement is, what constitutes it, what its qualities are, has been a major undertaking for social movement theorists, the blurred edges of where a movement ends – who is ‘in’ or ‘out’– mean that the definitions are fraught with problems. It has change-oriented goals or claims; performs some extra-legal or non-institutional collective action; has some degree of organization and a degree of temporal continuity (Karki, 2012). The leadership, ideology and networks other some of the other important dimensions of SMs. Of course, these are overlapping and to some extent, interdependent in one hand and contradictory on the other hand. All of these definitions have been extremely useful in enabling the researcher to ‘decode’ the Tharu movement through the grounded methodology into the broader discourse of rural development.

2.5.2 History of social movements

Social movements have been historically rooted in and crossed with different political regimes and mass campaigning. It is evident that the early growth of social movements was connected to broad economic and political changes in the European

countries including the notions of parliament, proletarian, market and capitalization. Empirically, the number and quality of studies of social movements in Latin America has grown steadily since the early 1980s, though urban popular movements have figured prominently among those studies. In this regard, Tilly (2004) takes the history of social movements as a series of contentious performances, displays and campaigns by which ordinary people made collective claims on others (p. 12). He argues that the movements are the major vehicle for people's participation in public politics; though he is less concerned with the modern elements of public politics and collective claims.

In recent years, increasing attention is being paid to women's and ethnic movements and grassroots movements of various kinds; on the other hand, few studies exist on the gay movement (Adam, Duyvendak & Krouwel, 2009) and ecology movements (Giugni, 2004). Human rights and defense of life issues, as well as youth forms of protest, have been important in a few countries. Civic movements of various kinds and regional movements complete the list of the most visible movements as they appear until today in Latin American scholars and political literature. It got popularized worldwide with the fall of colonialism, rise of socialist movements, end of cold war, and recently with the increase of development maladies around the world. However, less scholarly interest has been paid in analyzing the history of social movements in particular context of Asian and South Asian countries. The south Asian concerns have increased significantly in recent years and a number of academic discussions and debates are emerging. Some Indian scholars (e.g. Shaha, 2004, 2011; Kothari, 2002) and a few European scholars (e.g. Amin, 2007, Amin et al., 2009; Frank & Fuentes, 2011; SinghaRoy, 2010) have worked in this regard.

2.5.3 Theoretical approaches of social movements

Epistemologically, studies on social movements follow either a Marxist or a non-Marxist framework for analysis. The scholarly work of SMs was initiated with the work of Marx and his colleague Engels both in European and North American traditions (Crossley, 2009; Tarrow, 1998). Marxists scholars are primarily interested in bringing about revolutionary changes in society. According to them, causes of social movement are located in the economic structure of society. Antagonistic interests between the bourgeoisie and working classes are inherent in a class-based society which generates contradictions and the spaces for social movements (Barkar, 2013; Marx, 2000). Yet, the scholars stand upon multiple views in analyzing which class and what kind of consciousness in modern society could be the potential to be a vanguard to lead revolutionary social movements. Moreover, it seems deterministic in economic

terms. Being based on these two criticisms, new-Marxist scholars stand that the social movements in Marxist ideology should be reviewed in the changing power relations and class structure which could address the issues of gender, identity and autonomy of contemporary societies (Amin et al., 2009). Though this tradition became popular after the demise of Soviet Block the early 1990s, it is ideologically divided into different versions and variants.

In a similar context, some Indian critical theorists raised the issues of subaltern studies in the 1980s, which insisted on the rewriting of the history in the name of the historically avoided groups, i.e. the subalterns (Guha & Spivak, 1988; Ludden, 2002). The subaltern movement became a discourse of social movements, particularly in South Asian societies, though it remained only as academic discourse rather than being empirically campaigned (Majumdar, 2015). Some others also criticized that the study has been captured by the elites and well-offs, levelling it as a decline of subalterns in the subaltern studies (Sarkar, 2002). A few studies in Nepal are available with an argument that development is consciously a failed project for the subaltern masses in rural society (Leve, 2007).

Alternatively, the non-Marxist views upon the SMs are rooted in the structural-functional school of thought. Structural functionalists perceive society as a whole of system. They argue that societies, when function properly, seem to be self-regulating given that every part of society must have a function in relation to the regulation and maintenance of society as a whole (Giddens, 2009). The structural-functional approach of social movement is essentially a non-Marxist, and the group of theories under this domain can be categorized as the classical model of social movement which entail structural strains and deprivations as the 'function and structure' of the SMs. There is a great deal of variation amongst the non-Marxist scholars also, in their approach to analyzing social movements. The ideological positions regarding a need for social and/or political change, and the role of movements therein differ. Within this tradition Melucci (1996) portrays the theoretical differentiations between Europe and the United States and says that in reaction to the structural functionalist model in the USA, three major perspectives emerged: collective behavior (in its interactions version), resource mobilization and political process positing the question of 'how' collective action emerged and was carried out. Meanwhile, as a critique of Marxist theory, there developed the new social movements (NSM) theory in Europe.

2.5.4 Classical model of movements and collective behavior

The classical model of social movements refers to a set of theories with a common denominator: they all start from the notions of 'structural strain' or 'breakdown'. This kind of structural strain on society induces the breakdown of social order to promote disruptive psychological state that finally forms the background of 'social movement' (McAdam, 1982, p. 7). Earlier literatures of Durkheim (in terms of social differentiation and division of labor, 1964), Smelser (theory of collective behavior, 1962), Wallace (theory of revitalization, 1956), Turner and Killian (theory of mass society, 1987) and Gurr (theory of relative deprivation, 1993) all describe different notions of classical approaches of SMs. Following this, collective behavior theory became popular in the 1970s. From the structural functional school, the theory portrays the movement emergence as a reflex response to 'grievances', 'deprivations', 'anomie', 'structural strains', or other such forms of hardship.

Nevertheless, there are many flaws in these approaches. First, they do not take SMs as purposeful phenomena. Second, there is no detailed explanation devoting much attention to the structural origins of conflicts (Della Porta & Diani, 2015). Relative deprivation is increasing throughout most of the underdeveloped countries where there is a revolution on expectations, desires and hopes, but it does not match with the realization of development outcomes in people's daily life. The theory is largely engaged on the psychological motives rather than the ideological and socio-cultural sources. Oommen (1977) argues that the deprivation theorists view movements as 'temporary aberrations' rather than as 'ongoing processes of change'.

2.5.5 Resources mobilization model (RMM)

Resource Mobilization (RM) theory signaled a development in SM theory by a new generation of social scientists in the sixties. According to RM theory, social movements, like other organizations, collect, trade, utilize (and waste) resources in their activities (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). These resources may be members, money, votes, information, trust, jobs, guns, and image(s) (Goldberg, 1991, p. 7-8). RM theorists moved much of the attention of social movement investigators towards the rationality of social movement organizations who "weigh the rewards and sanctions, costs and benefits, which alternative courses of action represent for them" (Oberschall, 1973, p. 29). Recent contributions to the resource mobilization field have returned to an emphasis on individual social movement members who are theorized largely as rational actors who calculate the benefits and costs of social movement membership and activism.

However, given its stress on organizational rationality, resource mobilization perspectives are often criticized for concentrating on the form of social movements rather than on their content (Mueller, 1992), and for sometimes recasting movement participants as 'ultra-rationalistic actors devoid of feeling' (Hunt & Benford, 2004, p. 103). RM theory, say critics, has also treated protest as more organized than it actually is, though they could affect the success and failure of the movement (see Piven & Cloward, 1977, 1995). The critics also cite numerous examples of resources which have enabled activists to mobilize and sustain activist networks over time. The strength of the community, followed action, shared trust and maintained group responsibility were also resources incepted with the Tharu movement.

2.5.6 Political opportunity structures (POSSs)

In SM literature, political process or opportunity theory focuses on the political and institutional environment. In resisting a given political order, SMs interact with actors who enjoy a consolidated position in such an established order of the society. According to many scholars, the concept which has had the greatest successes in defining the properties of the external environment relevant to the development of SMs is that of political opportunity structures (Della Porta & Diani, 2006; Kriesi, 1995). In this context, Tarrow (2004) argues that "challengers who seize political opportunities in response to openings in the polity are the catalysts for social movements and cycles of contention" (p. 72). A common theme in much POS literature is the fact that such political opportunities can be both open and closed, and both these case scenarios can trigger mobilization.

Very pragmatically, the theory has seen SMs as extensions of institutionalized actions and have restricted their focus to movements of institutional change that attempt to alter 'elements of social structure and/or the reward distribution of society' (McCarthy & Zald, 1977, p. 1218).

2.5.7 'New' social movements (NSMs)

"New" social movements are generally viewed as evolving in the 60's and 70's within the foundation of the structural paradigm of the European scholars (Touraine, 2000 and Melucci, 1989 to mention in particular). It developed in response to the limitations of, or as a critique on resource mobilization and Marxist theories to explain collective action. According to Somerville (1997), the proponents of the NSM approach address the shifting character of Western capitalism into various dimensions and critique the conventional Marxist approach of economic determination. Accordingly, NSMs worked

outside formal institutional channels and emphasized lifestyle, ethics, or identity concerns. They were new in terms of strategies, networks; and new even in comparison to conventional liberalism with its assumption of fixed individual identities and interests (Scott, 1990). Perhaps the key point made by both Melucci and Touraine in the context of the NSM debate is that sites of power have become more plural in modern societies so that its multiplicity of sites is made visible.

However, some critical theorists (e.g. Jürgen Habermas and Louis Althusser) and neo-Marxist scholars (AG Frank and Samir Amin) heavily criticized the NSM in terms its deviation from class and economic structure of society. The first thesis among the nine theses of SMs as proposed by Frank and Fuentes (2011, p. 32) asserts that ‘the new social movements are not new, even if they have some new features, and the ‘classical’ ones are relatively new and perhaps temporary’. Further, there is a tendency to describe ‘new’ social movements as being focused on culture and identity rather than other aspects of political life and regime changes. As Seel et al. (2000) note “...since all movements develop their own identity, common values and culture, it seems unjustified to see older social movements as materialist and NSMs as concerned solely with identity...” (p. 11). Many of other theorists found this categorization problematic, and lamented how the ideology of new social movement has been distorted by the identity politics in recent years (Gusfield, 2009).

2.5.8 The framing of collective identity

The theorists involving in the collective identity discourse of SM are highly concerned with the causes of political action, on the internal drives which cause people act collectively – the cognitive aspects of mobilization. In many ways, Melucci’s concept of movement collective identity seems to exactly capture the fluidity, diversity and contradictions, and the simultaneous sense of “us”, “we believe in *this*”, inherent in the ethnic movement’s ideology. He argues that collective identity is always plural, ambivalent, and often contradictory (Melucci, 1996, p. 71-78). The construction of “we” is changeable and highly contested as activists seek to delineate who “we” are (and are not) (Whittier, 1995, p. 56). In many ways, action is the key to generating movement praxis and collective identity – whilst as Steinberg (1998) points out, it is through discourse that ideas are generated; it is often discourse about action. With regard to the last quote above, Melucci seems to be emphasizing something which the researcher’s field study also evidenced, that movements (and here specifically the Tharu movement) have a pragmatic approach to the generation of movement

knowledge, and that this is the way SMS develop. This approach has provided the researcher with a useful frame to decode the movement.

Table 2.1: Historical-theoretical perspectives of social movements

	Issues and debates	Methodology and methods
1960s	Collective behavior; Marxism	Country analysis; post-structural/positivist approach
1970s	Resource mobilization; theory of collective action	Macro-economic analysis and quantitative tools
1980s	Political process; theories of framing and micro-mobilization	Event analysis, trend analysis; framing and network analysis
1990s	New social movements; theories of space and place; theories of collective identity; fundamentalism and terrorism	Comparative-historical research; discourse and frame analysis; Participatory methods including PRA, FGDs and observations
2000s	New social movements; identity politics; gender and ethnicity, Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) movements	Qualitative (grounded theory; critical ethnography; critical discourses analysis); mixed methods (trend analysis); leadership and participants analysis

As a synthesis of previous discussions, a detailed outlook of the major theorists and scholars, their ideas and issues over social movement in the global context have been developed during the present study (see the Appendix-C for further illustrations). The Table 2.1 below presents a brief summary of the major historical-theoretical debates and dominant methodological trends with respect to them.

2.6 Debates and Contestations on Ethnic Movements

2.6.1 Conceptualization of ‘ethnicity’

The terms ‘ethnic community’ and ‘ethnicity’ are often used by western scholars and popular in Indian anthropological literature. The term ethnicity was coined in contradistinction to race, which is often seen as biological term. The abstract *ethnicity* had been used for "paganism" in the 18th century, but now came to be expressing the meaning of an "ethnic character". In the post-colonial context of liberalism, the most obligatory definition, however, was proposed by ILO in 1992. According to ILO Convention No. 169, indigenous people:

Are [those] regarded indigenous on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country or a geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonization or the establishment of present state boundaries,

and who irrespective of their legal status, retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions¹³ (ILO, 1989, part 1, Article 1 (b) p. 1).

Members of an ethnic group may be identified in terms of racial attributes, but they also share other cultural characteristics such as religion, occupation, language, or politics. They should also be distinguished from social classes, since membership generally crosscuts the socioeconomic stratification within society, encompassing common characteristics who share common characteristics that supersede class. So, ethnic groups are fluid in composition and subject to change in definition. New ethnic groups are constantly being formed, somewhere, even older are being deformed, as populations move between countries and settle. John Rex and David Mason's *Theories of race and ethnic relations* (1986) demonstrates the range and diversity of current approaches in the field. The largest ethnic groups in modern times can comprise hundreds of millions of individuals (e.g. Han Chinese, Arabs, Bengali people) and the smallest can be limited to a few thousand individuals (numerous indigenous peoples/ groups worldwide). However, the grouping of indigenous groups and their mobilization is proportionally affected by the demographic setting of particular regions, and can be hardly observed in societies with minority groups like Nepal. Thus, the mobilization of the populous indigenous groups, such as Magars (i.e. 18,77,733) and the Tharus (i.e. 17, 37,470) cannot be compared and generalized with the mobilization of the minority indigenous groups like Kusunda (i.e. 273), Nurang (i.e. 278) and Raute (i.e. 618) [CBS, 2012].

In Nepal, the terms '*adibasi*', '*janajati*', and '*bhumiputra*' are synonymously used to collectively denote the 'ethnic groups'.¹⁴ In most of the government documents and legal provisions, the janajatis (nationalities) are known as adivasis (indigenous people, autochthons and native people). Much scholarship has been involved in this topic already (e.g. Gellner & Karki, 2008) and some scholars (e.g. Onta, 2006) have discussed the 'definitional politics' around this term. Since the passing of the National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities (NFDIN) Act of 2002

¹³ In addition to these characteristics, the Convention maintains that self-identification as indigenous is also considered a fundamental criterion for determining the groups as indigenous people. (See also in http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/--ed_norm/--normes/documents/publication/wcms_100897.pdf)

¹⁴ Historically, Nepal remains as a home of cultural diversity and plurality. In terms of linguistic/social features of Nepal, at least three major racial trends are visible. They are: a) Indo-Aryans, who migrated to Nepal from the plains or from the hill areas of India several centuries ago in the wake of Muslim invasions of northern India; b) The people of Mongolian origin, who were the inhabitant of the higher hill areas in the east and west including Kirat tribal communities; and c) A number of tribal communities may be remnants of indigenous communities whose habitation of Nepal predates the advent of Indo-Aryan Mongolian elements. Among the three the third one had gradually been driven back into the more isolated sections of Tarai jungles and the humid, malarial river valleys in the hill areas during the course of the Indo-Aryan and Mongolian incursions.

(amended in 2009), there has been a legal definition of who is adivasi janajati in Nepal. The Act defines adivasi janajati as “a tribe or community as mentioned in the schedule [of the Act] having its own mother tongue and traditional rites and customs, distinct cultural identity, distinct social structure and written or unwritten history” (NFDIN, 2003, p. 32).

Table 2.2: List of Adivasi/ Janajati (indigenous nationalities) in Nepal

Region	Classification or categorization				
	Endangered	Highly marginalized	Marginalized	Disadvantaged	Advantaged
Mountain (18)		Siya, Shingsawa (Lhomi), Thudam	Bhote, Dolpo, Larke, Lhopa, Mugali, Topkegola, Walung	Bara Gaunle, Byanshi (Sauka), Chhaintan, Marphali-Thakali, Sherpa, Tangbe, Tingaule-Thakali	Thakali
Hill (24)	Bankariya, Hayu, Kushbadiya, Kusunda, Lepcha, Surel	Baramu, Thami, Chepang	Bhujel, Dura, Pahari, Phree, Sunuwar, Tamang	Chantyal, Gurung, Jirel, Limbu, Magar, Rai, Yakha, Hyolmo	Newar
Inner Tarai (7)	Raji, Raute	Bhote, Danuwar, Majhi	Darai, Kumal		
Tarai (10)	Kisan, Meche (Bodo)	Dhanuk (Rajbanshi), Jhangad, Santhal (Satar)	Dhimal, Gangai, Rajbanshi (Koch), Tajpuriya, Tharu		
Total	10	12	20	15	2

Source: NEFIN, 2004

Though incomplete, this definition illuminates certain clearly defined characteristics of Nepali indigenous people or nationalities. ¹⁵This definition is not problematic in the sense of theoretical-empirical tenets, but it virtually accepts many castes and ethnic groups to be ‘ethnic’ in nature who have a kind of social structure and history.

¹⁵ They included: a) own ethnic languages other than Nepali; b) have their own distinct traditional customs other than those of the ruling high castes; c) espouse a culture distinct from that of the Aryan/ Hindu culture of dominant groups; d) distinct social structures that do not fall under the hierarchical varna or caste system; e) a written or oral history that traces their line or descent back to the occupants of the territories before their annexation into the present frontiers of Nepal; and f) listing in the schedule of indigenous people/ nationalities published by the government of Nepal.

Consequently, this leads to misconception regarding the scientific attribute of those groups to be registered as adivasi and janajati groups. But there have been fewer studies differentiating the attributes of ethnicity. Moreover, the term is being highly contested as some non-ethnic upper castes (Khas-Brahman) have also staked a claim to be ethnic groups. Alternatively, some scholars also argue that that the new constitution and other legal statements should not grant 'adivasi' status to anyone, and if granted it should be offered to all the caste/ ethnic groups in Nepal (Saurav, 2010, 2017).

The schedule in the NFDIN Act lists 59 groups as indigenous nationalities 42 of whom are, historically speaking, the inhabitants of the mountainous and hilly regions and the remaining live in the Tarai, including inner Tarai of Nepal. The janajati groups are of very different size and have been internally divided into five categories according to their socioeconomic status: Endangered, Highly marginalized, Marginalized, Disadvantaged, and Advantaged (see Table 2.2). Despite these categories of IPs, the debates regarding their number, degree of exclusion and organizational structure of those groups have been critical issues in Nepal's ethnic studies. Politically, to mention a few observations:

First, NEFIN has been organized as a collective network of all the IPs and their movement activities. However, it only represents 56 groups as members of the NEFIN (excluding ethnic representation of Bankariya, Cherotan and Free). The NEFIN advocates for proportional representation of the IPs in all sectors of the governance based on the identity and population. Despite this claim, irony is that the internal organizational structure and the electoral system of NEFIN is also dominated by traditional elite structure, often imposed by political appointment or impositions/polarizations during the time of the conventions, which has been also evidenced in the recently held ninth Convention of NEFIN in December 2016). It does not follow a proportional electoral system, whether the groups are larger in population size or are minority. For example, both the Magar (having a population of 1.9 million) and Kusunda (having just 273 people throughout the country) have one member organization and one voting representative in the NEFIN. It has created a kind of leadership risk allowing politically powerful elites or individuals to capture the leadership, though they belong to small and minority groups.

Second, out of the total 59 groups enlisted, 12 groups could not be identified as having their own population (e.g. Tangwe of Mustang, Lorke and Siyar of Gorkha, Thudam of Sankhuwasabha, Free of eastern Nepal, Mugal of Mugu, and Cherotan of Mustang). In a few cases, the name of groups have been just given to the name of the place or territory, and not on the basis of their distinct identities (e.g. the Thakalis are classified in three separate groups (Thakali, Tingaule Thakali and Marfali Thakali) who belong to similar mother tongue, territory, culture and traditions) [NFDN, 2003].

Third, the Population and Household Census 2011 has enlisted 63 IPs in Nepal despite the fact of having 59 IPs as advocated by NEFIN and endorsed by NFDN. The Census has re-categorized Rai into 12 groups, classified Tharu and Khasas as separate groups, took

Rajbanshi and Koche in a single categorization of Rajbanshi-Koche, and Ghale is also re-grouped as distinct from the Gurung. Fourth, some caste/ ethnic groups have been categorized both as the IPs and the Dalits in Nepal. For example, the National Dalit Commission has identified Pattharkatta (Kusbadiya) and Dhanuk as Dalit caste groups which are also kept under the category of IPs in the Act (NFDN, 2003; CBS, 2012).

The janajatis as a whole face multiple exclusion and disparities in Nepali society, even though it is clear that the level of inequality suffered vary both across and within janajati groups. Some scholars (e.g. Gurung, 2002, Bhattachan, 2008) argue that it is often imposed by the orthodoxy political regime of Nepal based on ‘Hinduization and Nepalization’ of the country. The inequality faced by the janajatis as a whole has been discussed at length by several analysts using various types of methodological approaches (see Bennett, Sijapati & Thapa, 2013; Bennett & Parajuli, 2013; CDSA/ TU, 2014). It has been largely argued that exclusion in Nepali society exists in the main form economic and social spaces of deprivation for the Dalits and ethnic groups in comparison with the high caste groups. A dominant thought also prevails in Nepali politics that the Tarai-centric movements and agitations including Madhes movement and Tharu movement are outcomes of large-scale exclusion in Tarai society and its historical colonization imposed by the central state (Kathmandu) (Lal, 2012; Onta, 2011). In such context, some separatist and anti-nationalist groups also groom in the region who advocate for independence and Swaraj of the Tarai-Madhes (e.g. C. K. Raut, who has been aligned with ‘Independent Madhes Campaign’ in the region).

Table 2.3: Status of different caste and ethnic groups of Tarai-Madhes and their inclusion

Caste and ethnic group in Tarai-Madhes	Social Inclusion Index-SII	Economic Inclusion Index-EII	Political Inclusion Index-PII	Cultural Inclusion Index-CII	Gender Inclusion Index-GII	Social harmonization Index-SHI	Multi-Dimensional Inclusion Index-MII
Brahmin-Chhetri	0.6008	0.6313	0.7969	0.7694	0.4842	0.8790	0.6936
Other Castes	0.4350	0.5297	0.2694	0.8008	0.4046	0.8219	0.5434
Dalits	0.3330	0.2972	0.1373	0.7976	0.3506	0.4720	0.3979
Indigenous Group	0.4592	0.5183	0.2634	0.7475	0.4566	0.8550	0.5500
Muslim	0.3557	0.4871	0.3691	0.8181	0.4333	0.6941	0.5262

Source: Nepal Social Inclusion Survey (2012-13)/ CDSA (2014)

However, as reflected in Table 2.3, the Tarai-centric exclusion seems more alarming which indicates the issues of Tarai Dalits and the Muslims more critical as compared to the other middle caste groups in the region including middle class Madhesis and janajatis. The deprivations and exclusions are becoming the buzz words for many political elites and NGOs in recent years. The adivasi janajati movement in Nepal that has gained momentum since 1990, in the main, is a response to this complex set of discriminations and inequalities. This movement has tried to rectify the discriminations suffered by janajatis in all domains of social life. However, there are differences between the positions advocated by various participants within the janajati community, both in terms of the demands they claim and the modes of agitations they follow.

2.6.2 Ethnic movement and the theoretical debates

Ethnic movements (EMs), as a part of SMs, are goal directed collective actions sustained by a particular ethnic group for the recognition and possession of its 'ethnic identity' and/or 'ethnic right' by the state or governing authorities or by mainstream development actors. These marking of ethnic identity here typically include ancestry, language, a history of discrimination, conquest, or other shared experience. The discourse of EM can be as powerful as evidenced in the context of contemporary SMs in the world. It is not easy to get the mobilization of ethnic groups, but it can be very meaningful and empowering to challenge the state or state-led development. For simplicity, many researchers prefer the label ethnic mobilization as a part of underdevelopment (Sachariew, 2016). Ethnic mobilization includes activities that range from small scale, sporadic events to well-developed campaigns and/or civil war as a broader domain of EMs which could also convert into subsequent racial movements.

Globally, the nature of ethnic movements is seemingly analyzed and developed with the roots of racial and nationalist movements. As they voice strikingly similar claims of sovereignty rights and ethnic integrity, they also commonly called as E/R/N movements. The defining features of ethnic and racial social movements (E/R) are that claims are made based upon particular identity or boundary, defined by the presence of racial or ethnic markers (Barth 1969). The process of mobilization is central to the claims of those movements. It is perhaps surprising that theorizing on ethnic mobilization in social science literature cannot look back upon a long history (Vermeersch, 2006). Traditionally, social scientists did not attach much importance to the ethnic aspects of mobilization around the political sphere and social life. Not that ethnic identity was entirely discounted; but scholars often assumed that the politics of

ethnic identity would be disappearing with the ongoing development of modernization and the spread of liberal-democratic values (Kymlicka, 2000, p. 184). For others, mainly before the 1960s, ethnicity was a transitional phenomenon or a factor that did not, and would not, have any influence on the formal political system (Taylor, 1996, p. 886). In some cases this argument was inspired by the Marxist reasoning that class identity would prevail over other types of identity through the struggle against capitalism. Still others, especially in the 1980s, dismissed the subject, and even predicted the decline of ethnic attachments because of the advancement of liberal democracy. Glazer and Moynihan (1974) dubbed this as 'liberal expectancy' (p. 33), while Moynihan (1993) mentioned that ethnic identities are merely transitory and would vanish into the inevitably growing cosmopolitan ethnic melting pot (p. 27–28). Since the 1990s, political scientists have indeed written a considerable amount of literature on the phenomenon. In this broad literature, which has its roots in the 1960s, but grew considerably in the 1990s, one can now discern roughly four different theoretical perspectives on ethnic mobilization (Vermeersch, 2012). These strands take a different set of components to be basically functional to causing and molding ethnic mobilization and movement. They include:

- The 'culturalist' perspective and strong subjective bonding and values within ethnic groups;
- The 'reactive ethnicity' perspective, which uses an economic perspective in the coincidence of ethnic bonding and relative deprivation;
- The 'competition' perspective, which focuses on ethnic leaders making rational calculations for owning resources and power;
- The 'political process' perspective, which emphasizes the role of the macro-political context.

Several conceptual distinctions have facilitated the understanding of the emergence, growth, and decay of EMs in a different era. However, there are overlapping traditions of social movement and ethnic movement through the history. The Table 2.4 reflects a summary of dominant ideas and methodological preservatives in distinct time period. The theorists distinguish various forms of movements by their duration, target, tactics, violence, and audience. Studies of EMs traditionally analyze these forms separately (Horowitz, 2002; Banton, 1983). For example, the internal colonialism theory suggests that a combination of uneven industrialization and cultural differences among regions in core nations cause ethnic grievances to become the basis of enduring political

contention. In this view, the sources of ethnic solidarity include uneven regional development that reinforces or creates inequality, dependence on external or international investment, and an occupational structure that is highly segregated along ethnic lines (Hechter, 1975).

Table 2.4: Trends of ethnic movements

Period	Issues and debates	Methodology and methods
1960s	Neocolonialism and Orientalism	Primordialist approach; event analysis
1970s	Theory of ethno-nationalism; state and nation-building process	Mixed methods; comparative research design; case studies
1980s	Economic and instrumental approaches; competition theories of race and ethnic relations; rational choice and game theoretical approach	Instrumentalist approach; Quantitative methods; macro-economic analysis
1990s	Political institutional appraisals; weak states and fragile regimes; ethnicity and secessionist/ separatist movements	Primordial and Instrumentalist approach; qualitative/ ethnographic studies
2000s	Cultural and cognitive process (identity, human rights, sovereignty, self-determination); globalization of ethnic and nationalist movements	Constructivist approach; generic label of ethnicity; mixed methods; critical ethnography

Some counter evidence also suggests that the states experiencing a decline in ethnic inequality experience movements expressing claims for autonomy and political rights for minorities, while patterns of ethnic violence occurs in states that exclude ethnic minorities from the political process (Smith, 2008). Competition theories of race and ethnic relations offer an explanation for these findings. For them, declining inequality among regions (or groups) promotes competitive conflict among race and ethnic groups (see Bonacich, 1972; Nielsen, 1985; Nagel & Olzak, 1986; Olzak, 2004). Contesting this, rational choice theory emphasizes shifts in the calculus of the costs and benefits attached to ethnic mobilization. According to this view modern EMs occur with regularity because they have unique properties that allow them to form dense social networks, group solidarity is high, minimizing costs of mobilization. Simultaneously, ethnic groups can efficiently apply systems of monitoring behavior, insuring loyalty, and sanctioning members (Hechter, 1987). Building on rational choice models, Fearon and Laitin (2003) and Weingast (1998) have linked the strategic aspects of ethnic identity to violence, as elites build on existing ethnic loyalties.

Besides these choices, different kinds of political constraints and opportunity structures influence the trajectory of EMs and SMs. Horowitz (2001) examines the centrifugal force of ethnic political parties, which maintain ethnic loyalties through institutional

arrangements and patronage based on ethnic loyalties. Some social scientists argue that the decline of authoritarian regimes coincides with the resurgence of ethnic or nationalist movements because the retreat of strong, repressive authorities leaves a power vacuum (Gurr, 1993). As the former military and administrative structures recede, local level elites mobilize ethnic loyalties and take advantage of this vacuum. Along similar lines, McAdam (1982) provides evidence from the USA that suggests that shifts in political opportunities (either positive or negative) drove the rates of protest activity during peak periods of civil rights insurgency. State repression may subdue such movements, but the result is often temporary.

Indeed, all forms of EMs articulate demands that invoke one or more cultural theme of nationalism, rights of self-determination, expansion of human rights, and basic rights of sovereignty (Hechter, 1987; Smith, 1979); and it is also the case of Nepal's EMs. Sovereignty claims usually refer to shared experiences of a person, which can be real or imagined (Anderson & O'dowd, 1999). Moreover, the acceptance of the legitimacy of nationalism has parallels in the diffusion of a worldwide human rights movement, which acts as an orienting frame for states and EMs. Contesting this nationalist perspective, international relation theories (IRTs) are much discussed in the discourse of EM (Keohane & Nye, 2000; Weller & Wolff, 2006). Social movement tactics, organizations, and claims have diffused across national borders, creating a regional/international network of EMs that share common themes. Self-and-other definitions based on racial markers, linguistic, or historic patterns of subordination justify and legitimate these claims in virtually all of the world's states. For instance, Olzak and Tsutsui (1998) find that although integration into a world system of power and domination facilitates EMs, these effects vary considerably across countries. In addition, processes of diffusion have intensified the international scope of these movements, transforming them into highly contentious international issues and global dynamics often demanding the involvement of international communities and the UN agencies to mediate (Olzak, 2006).

There is general agreement among many scholars (Connor, 1994; Kaufman, 2001; Young, 1976) that there are three ideal types of theories of ethnicity: primordialism, instrumentalism and constructivism. First, the proponents of the primordialist approach of ethnicity argue that "ethnic groups and nationalities exist because there are historical traditions of belief and action towards primordial objects such as biological features and especially territorial location (Horowitz, 2002). Second, Smith (2004) notes that instrumentalist account came to prominence in the 1960s and 1970s in the

US relating the debate where white ethnic persistence was supposed to have been an effective melting pot. In this account, ethnicity and race are viewed as instrumental identities, organized as means to particular ends. Whether ethnicity is a fixed perception is not crucial in the instrumentalist accounts. Third, the constructivist account of ethnicity focuses on internalization (and transaction) of knowledge and perception. It could be generally attributed to American behaviorist Jean Piaget (1970, 2013) who articulated mechanisms by which knowledge is internalized by the learners through processes of accommodation and assimilation.¹⁶

2.7 Nature of the Nepali State and Development Paradox

The Nepali state is now under a huge debate about its actual status: whether it is failed, or failing, or transitional, or becoming a modern nation-state (Baral, 2012; Shneiderman, et al., 2016). Scholarship abounds in the study of the Nepali state from ethno-political perspectives in Nepal. The early works were dealing with the issues of formal politics, state-building, role of leadership, political parties and so on (Baral, 2008; Hachhethu, 2009; Hachhethu, Kumar & Subedi, 2008). Recently, more works have appeared on non-formal political activities and Nepal's contentious politics, particularly since 2000. They deal with the problems of political conflict, Maoist's movement, transition, post-conflict challenges and works of reconstruction (Baral, 2012; Bhattarai, 2003; Einsiedel et al., 2012; Lawoti & Pahari, 2010; Upreti, Sharma & Pyakurel, 2010). Surprisingly, other works on social movements in Nepal, besides the ethnic movements and Maoists conflict, are extremely rare. These studies point out the discrimination for some the caste/ethnic groups, as discussed from ethnic paradigms (Bhattachan, 2009, 2010; Cameron, 2010; Guneratne & Lawoti, 2010; Hangen, 2007a, 2010). A few writings also look at the relationship of ethnic movements with democratization, and between class and ethnic issues (Chaudhary, 2008; Fujikura, 2013; Gurung, 2004; Lawoti, 2007; Mishara, 2011; Pyakurel & Adhikari, 2014; Onta, 2011). However, these studies, in their scope, do not explicitly treat the issues behind the movement in a historical perspective and analyze the contested issues in the context of Nepal's rural development practice and discourse. On the basis of various literatures, the researcher broadly categorizes the nature of the Nepali state into the following characteristic features:

¹⁶ However, some other critical factors were also observed in the researcher's own empirical findings as parts of the ethnic mobilization, such as settlement patterns, socially constructed identities, charismatic leaders, psychological indivisibility, rational choices and the concerns of the different actors.

2.7.1 Brave historicism and the rhetoric of unity vs. repression:

One of the established schools of thought in analyzing Nepali state and its history is that by nature it is repressive and non-inclusive since its origin. Ever since the unification of Nepal in 1768, the rulers of Nepal—the Shah Kings (1768- 1845), the Ranas (1846-1950), the Panchas (1960-1990) and the party leaders (1951-1959 and 1990-2006) —have tried to forge Nepal into a homogeneous, monolithic and unitary state by sanctioning and promoting only one language (Nepali), one caste group (Hill Brahmin and Chhetri), and one religion (Hinduism). Though the contribution of other social groups, women and poor people was immense in the unification process, these groups were almost denied to write and mark the history of the Nepali state for themselves (Stiller, 1976; Whelpton, 2005; Wright, 1966). The state has never been colonized by any external forces, but this state-designed ‘Nepalization’ process, together with the attendant centralization of politics and administration, has served to assimilate different caste/ethnic groups (including *Janajati*, *Madheshi*, and Dalit) into the ruling *parbatiya* upper-class fold (Jha, 2017).

However, some Nepali historians and scholars (e.g. Bhandari, 2016; Devkota, 1970; Dahal, 1992; Shrestha, 1989; Yogi, 1955) reject this notion of misinterpretation of the Nepali history, calling it as a normal and natural process of state-building, unification and nationalization as compared to the world history which has been ever bloodshed and violent. This perspective further asserts that the Nepali state and its history-making process was revolutionary and inclusive in nature. Both the perspectives are less concentrated though in analyzing the nature and positions of political elites. This is the third perspective which the researcher proposes as the subaltern perspective of the Nepali state. The roots in this genesis have been represented by scholarly works of Mahesh Chandra Regmi (during 1970s in particular), along with some Marxist scholars (including Bhattarai, 2003; Mishra, 2007) who significantly contributed in analyzing the historical perspectives of the Nepali state. This perspective questions how and why had the positions of state elites been unchanged in different political regimes, along with the emergence of ethnic elites, orthodox Hindu elites and regional elites and created an exploitative mode of production in the Nepali history. This would recall the nexus of subalternity, repressive apparatuses and hegemony with a theoretical reassessment of Foucault and Gramsci, as has been opined by many scholars in global context (Sarker, 2014).

2.7.2 Political vs. developmental paradox:

After the unification of Nepal, it remained unitary in its political system- which was often defined by the rulers. The power and legitimacy of the state was mobilized by the palace and the rulers of the Kathmandu. However, the state became a part of global relations of production through modernization (*bikas*) since the 1950s and particularly after the political change of 1990 (Wagle, 2015). The state followed a highly centralized, unitary and authoritarian model of development within the broader propaganda of nation-building. The Nepali state relied not only on Nepali language and Hindu monarchy, but also on a pantheon of national heroes whose bravery kept Nepal independent (Onta, 2006). Rather, a kind of dualism was maintained in the economic policies and development programs of the state which further induced the political legitimacy of the donor-driven agendas and market interventions within the rhetoric of Nepal's welfare state (Mishra, 2011; Panday, 2009).

2.7.3 Dependent foreign aid and international relations:

Politically, Nepali state is quite adaptable to the vocabulary of the international development discourses (Pandey, 2011; Sharma, 2014). The Government of Nepal started to put development as a high priority issue and recognized the need to give high priority to the problems of poverty in the top list what was quite sparkled in the programs of poverty reduction and post-conflict reconstruction. Indeed, the donors have played a significant role in influencing the policies, although not through a direct political role, but through financing the development expenditure of the country. Foreign assistance through its centralized power created a dependency syndrome in Nepal (Chintan & Shrestha, 2007) which also did nothing to reduce widespread class and ethnic-based inequalities (Macours, 2011). The international development and external influences through its authoritative virtue continued to dominate Nepal and tried to manipulate its modernization project (Bhattarai, 2013). In turn, this helped reinforce the binaries between Kathmandu vs. other regions and urban vs. rural Nepal.

2.7.4 Emerging market and slimming of the state:

Nepal has adopted a liberal economic approach since 1990 and accordingly, the process of modernization and globalization took a momentum. The changing market relations and its impact upon the rural poor have been less prioritized issue so far (Mishra, 2007). Amidst of a rampant poverty and high unemployment rate, about 1500 youths per day are migrating from the country for the international labor market. Consequently the state is becoming increasingly remittance-dependent, which constitutes about 23 percent of the total GDP of the country (Koirala & Jeong, 2015).

Though the market has opened newer livelihood alternatives and income opportunities, the rural political economy is dominated by new market elites, big producers and brokers. Survival of rich and well-off people who possess additional income sources, even in the towns has been ensured, and contrarily, the survival of the poorest, the rural people has been threatened (Manandhar, 2011). Ideally, it is not the market, but the state that has to ensure non-exploitative social relations. But, the Nepali state and market have well represented the dilemma as what Escobar (2001) and Leve (2007) argue in global contexts this is part and parcel of the neo-liberal approach.

2.7 Historical Trends of Social and Ethnic Movements in Nepal On the basis of various literatures, the researcher broadly categorizes the history of Nepal's social and ethnic movement into the following seven categories:

I. Pre-unification period

Politically, Nepal's pre-unification period (before 1768) was characterized with a disintegrated political system (or dynasties) along with diverse regional and cultural municipals. The Kathmandu valley was a junction of political mobility for different ethnic and tribal groups as a ruler including the Naga tribes, Gopals (cow-herders), and Mahispals (buffalo-herders); which then replaced subsequently by the Kirats, Lichhavis, Mallas and the Shahs (see Onta, 1994; Shaha, 1978).

Modern day Nepal has been formed by the migration of diverse groups for over 2000 years. Ethnic groups, such as the Gurung, Limbu, and Sherpa, speaking Tibeto-Burman languages migrated at different times from regions across the Himalayas; the Newars, a Tibeto-Burman language speaking ethnic group, with adherents of both Hinduism and Buddhism, have lived in the Kathmandu valley from the west and south over several centuries. In the Tarai plains, groups such as the Tharu have lived there for over two millennia, whereas others, such as the Maithili speakers of the eastern Tarai, arrived later. These different groups, each with its own language, religion, and culture, settled in different parts of Nepal, establishing separate but fluid political nits, such as the Lichhavi, and later the Malla kingdoms based in Kathmandu valley, the Shah Kingdom in Gorkha, the Khas kingdom in the west, and the various confederations of ethnic groups such as the Magars and Gurungs in central, and the Limbus in eastern Nepal (Rose & Scholz, 1980).

Although there is not enough literature about the religious affiliations of the different caste and ethnic tribal groups, there are indications that they were practicing different religions like Buddhism and Shaivism, predominantly up to the 7th century A.D. (Chauhan, 1989). There is another point of view that Buddhism co-existed with Shaivism and Vaishnavism. However, King Jayasthiti Malla (1382-95) imposed the social code on the Newars of Kathmandu valley and divided them into 64 sub-groups and imposed the essential characteristics of *jatis* (castes). A kind of similar provision was imposed by Ram Shah (1606-33) on the non-Hindu tribal community of the Gorkha, though his imposition was endorsed with some reformist legal codes. The impact of the process was that lower caste or non-Hindu communities gradually adopted the rituals and ideologies of high-caste Hindus.

II. **Post-unification period till the initiation of Rana regime (1768-1846)**

Indeed, the credit of 'political' unification of modern Nepal goes to Prithivi Narayan Shah, who brought about the 'central Himalayas' into a single state. King PN Shah defined his new kingdom as 'a garden of four *varnas* and thirty-six *jats* to include all his subjects: Hindus, non-Hindus, and members of the various castes and ethnic groups. The Shah ruler used religion, relation, trade treaties, diplomacy, consensus, and militancy as weapons to unify other states (see Chauhan, 1989; Joshi & Rose, 1966; Dhungel, 1986). However, there is a debate as to whether PN Shah's policy of a united Nepal was unification or a conquest. Not only the rulers, but also the people of the defeated states faced lots of violence and brutality by Gorkha soldiers. This is why the process was termed 'based on the right of sword' (Hachhethu, 2003, p. 231). Contesting this, some scholars also argue that there are several evidences about the Gorkha state and its ruler's flexible, liberal and inclusive policies towards the ethnic and tribal communities (see Bista, 2008; Sharma, 1997; Gurung, 1997; Yogi, 1955). In doing so, he had also acknowledged the ethnic diversities, languages and values. For example, he granted rights to the Limbus of east Nepal to practice their traditional customs, gave them control over their communal land (*kipat*), and allowed internal rule by their traditional chiefs.

There was a kind of hierarchical plural society in Nepal after its unification. Over time, however, as the kingdom became more centralized both politically and administratively, the rulers started to impose a more homogenous hilly-people dominant (*parbatiya*) cultural matrix on the diverse social, cultural and religious groups. The state policies after unification seemed to be guided by the Hindu-orthodoxy where the elites of janajatis also started to assimilate for the possible benefit of the political

opportunities. Pyakurel (2013, p. 138-139) has termed this context as 'Gorkhalization' of the political system.

III. The Rana regime (1846-1951): An oligarch century

Politically, the Rana hereditary system came to power in 1846 as a result of internal contradiction within the elites of the Shah rulers and their associate Chautariya families. Rose and Scholz (1980) observed that the Rana political system was an undisguised military despotism of the ruling fraction within the Rana family over the king and the people of the country. From a historic massacre (the *kot parba*) along with the killing of several officials and elites of the state, Junga Bahadur came into power. The Rana system was not structurally different from the previous rulers, but it contributed to the acceleration of the orthodoxy values assimilated with typical Hindu religion, and Nepali culture along with the new initiatives of Rana-Shaha oligarchy. The regime, however, started to give raise the idea of 'nation' which allowed 'Nepal' to include not only the Kathmandu valley but also the rest of the territories and regional municipals. Some scholars have termed the process as Rana's pretext of the 'nationalist objectives' (Whelpton, 1997, p. 45).

Indeed, the Rana system had been more repressive towards the people. It did not move towards the inclusive and a democratic system of governance, for example by discouraging opening up of the education institutions and reform organizations, by imposing orthodox and discretionary social rules and by prohibiting travel to abroad and cultural exchanges. The Rana regime introduced the first Muluki Ain (Civil Code) in 1854. It was put as a nationwide legal framework which compelled all the 'subjects' to obey it. The code came a part of the ruler's strategic policy to continue their regime for a long time by imposing such religious code of conduct, which had already gained legitimacy as a tradition. The most important sections dealt with inter-caste and inter-community relations relating to commensality, sexual relations, and contact (Hofer, 1979). Virtually, it accepted the principle of Hindu *Varna* system which categorized the society into five broader hierarchical groups: *Brahmin* (priests and scholars), *Kshatriya* (ruler and warriors), *Vaishya* (merchant, trader and artisan), *Shudra* (peasants and laborers) and *Achuts* (untouchables, the Dalits).

The social movements during the last decades of the Rana regime were manifested as a collective behavior of weak society, and thus lacked conditional form of political and social participation (Dahal, 2004). These early movements were part of a political process initiated by a class of elites and educated people of urban areas of Nepal who

were deprived of participation in the political process and were influenced by freedom movements and reform campaigns in India. Movements for eradication of *daasa pratha* (slavery) and *sati pratha* (burning alive of wife in a funeral), movement of *Arya Samaji* (noble society), feminist-religious movement of Yogamaya and a number of student movements were some of the few historic public agitations against the Rana regime though these were weak in terms of leadership and strategies. The rulers abolished *sati pratha* and *daasa pratha* not because of the power of the movement, but in order to create a political propaganda that would sustain Rana regime. Not surprisingly, other social movements in different regions of the country which could not directly accessed to the central rulers (including movements of the Dalits, farmers and landless people) were highly repressed and dismissed.

IV. Shadow-democratic period (1951-60)

During this period, Nepal entered into a modernization period, and it could witness a few constitutional and social changes along with the people's movement in 1951. The researcher has used the term 'shadow' while examining the period of 1951-60 in the Nepal's history, primarily because of the fact that this period had occupied of both democracy and autocracy; and the argument resides that the democratic practices were always shadowed by the autocratic interests of the King, the palace and its obedient elites. The period had subsequence of different interim governments, king-nominated governments and a people's elected government.

Since the inception of democracy in the country, ethnic communities gradually became more organized in protests. A backward class organization (*Pichadieka-Barga Sangathan*) was established in 1956 in which different organizations were getting included, such as *Gurung Kalyan Sangh*, *Tharu Kalyankarini Sabha*, *Kirat League* and *Dalit Sangha* were established during this period. The establishments of the Tharu Welfare Society (1949), the Thakali Social Reform Organization (1954) and the Nepal Tamang Association (1956) were some of the prominent ethnic groups demanding cultural rights. These ethnic associations were generally founded by ex-Gurkha officers, the urban elites or the Tharu landlords in Tarai region. Likewise, Newar community after 1951 started language movement against state's nation building process. The movement was organized under a social network of Manka Khala. The Panchayat regime did not recognize the ethnic organizations openly, nor entertain their protest activities. Some of the ethnic leaders were accommodated within the system and the palace instead. The Tarai Congress, the first regional party of Nepal, was established during this period in 1951 (Whelpton, 1997).

At the initiative of elected Nepali Congress (NC) Government led by BP Koirala, *birta* system was abolished which had remained the traditional base of the Rana political system. The monopoly of the Ranas in the high position of the army was brought to an end by the government. Further, those positions were made accessible to other castes/ethnic communities. All government schools were directed to open the gates of their school for children of untouchable castes (Hoftun, Raeper & Whelpton, 1999; Shrestha, 2002). Further, the government tried to deconstruct the very notion of language policy by allowing the status of national language to other languages like Newari, Hindi and Maithili. However, these reformist programs of the Koirala government could not meet day-to-day needs and aspirations of people. Nor it laid a progressive vision for the nation-building. It was becoming uneasy for the ambitious King Mahendra, who ultimately, dismissed the newly elected democratic government in its infancy and imprisoned the leaders on December 15, 1960 which turned the course of Nepal's once again (Panday, 2009).

V. The Panchayat regime (1961-1990)

Politically, the orthodoxy face of Hinduism and nationalism on one hand, and the consecutive increase in the people's resistive sentiments on the other, was the basic paradox during the whole Panchayat regime (1960-1990). The new king started to rule the people in the name of 'Panchayat' – a political ideology claimed to be a democracy, a party-less system claimed to be suitable to the 'soil and climate' of Nepal. This meant that the institution of monarchy as the central source of political authority had to be accepted as a social fact, Hinduism was the state religion and the Nepali identity was woven around the medium of the Nepali language and the national history said to be created by the *bir* (brave) ancestors of Gorkhas (Onta, 2011). The Panchayati ethos – *ek bhasha ek bhesh, jaya desh jaya naresh* (one language, one costume; long-live the country, long-live the king) – was a perfect example for examining policies and programs. Ontologically, there was an ideological denial of the cultural diversity. The process of making pure 'Nepali and Hindu' identity (some also prefer to use the terms like Nepalization and Hinduization, though the researcher disagreed with these connotations) started vigorously with the state declaring a Hindu state and declaring the King constitutionally as the symbol of national unity and source of political authority in accordance with the Hindu tradition and custom (Baral, 2006).

Legally, there was a kind of non-hierarchical mono-cultural society during the period. At the start, the state abolished sanctioned hierarchy and discrimination based on

caste, ethnicity, religion, region and gender. The constitution of 1962 and the new Civil Code of 1963 mentioned that all the Nepali citizens, irrespective of their social identity, could claim equality before the law. However, legally sanctioned discrimination continued in terms of caste, ethnicity and gender.¹⁷ Interestingly enough, the ruling elite viewed cultural and linguistic diversity as an impediment not only to nation-building, but also to modernization and development of the country (see Pigg, 1993; Escobar, 1995).

Consequently, there was a concerted effort at the homogenization of cultural diversities into a single national standard of *parbatiya* culture and language (Pfaff-Czarnecka, 1997). Along with this polity, the Nepali state spent time trying to anticipate popular demands of the non-state actors, rebellious movements, risky collective action, and the spread of new organizations. Moreover, most of the developmental activities were concentrated in urban and easily accessible areas, which enabled groups living in the towns and along the national highways to benefit from development activities such as education, health, construction and trade. Therefore, nation-building, modernization, and development interventions exacerbated traditional disparities between the various ethnic groups and castes and regions.

Thus, the researcher's characterization of the public sphere of social movements in the Panchayat regime is that the then rulers were highly successful in controlling the public life of Nepali society around the state ideology. The system, however, created a large political space and a strong basis for the ethnic activism. Although some janajati organizations had come into existence before the end of the Panchayat system in 1990, they concerned themselves, in the main, with social and cultural reforms of their own groups (Gellenr & Karki, 2008). Seeking of fundamental political rights through an abolition of the partyless Panchayat system became the primary agenda of some ethnic activists during the 1980s. However, given the policing sensibilities of the Panchayat state, these activists embedded themselves within larger anti-Panchayat political formations (mostly the then banned political parties).

VI. Democratic system (1990-2006): A liberal economic era

The people's movement of 1990 put an end to the Panchayat system, tamed most of the powers of the absolute monarch and created favorable conditions for the birth of a

¹⁷ Panchayat policies towards other religion and ethnicity can be illustrated with some examples. The Panchayat officially declared Buddhism as a branch of Hinduism. Further, Limbu's traditional customary right over the land (*kipat* system) was abolished in 1964 when land reform campaign was launched by the Panchayat rulers.

new constitution, namely the constitution of Nepal 1990. Politically, it was the multi-party democratic era which encountered with the Maoist's insurgency (1996-2006) and the King's rule (2002-2005). In the wake of democratic upsurge, new political awakening including the ethnic, gender, lingual and regional issues was surfaced in the public sphere (Onta, 2006).

After the end of the Panchayat system, different groups started raising their own slogans and making demands on the state. During the constitution making process in 1990, the issues of language, religion, and caste/ethnicity invoked. Although the phrase 'Hindu kingdom' remained unchanged (Article 4.1), the constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal 1990 accepted the 'multi-ethnic and multi-lingual' characteristic of Nepali society. With respect to fundamental rights, Article 12 of the 1990 constitution guaranteed the freedom of thought and expression, the freedom to organize and the freedom to carry out any profession for the citizens of Nepal. This guarantee was fundamentally important for the actors and forces which expanded the critical public sphere and the realm of SMs in Nepal during the 1990s (Onta, 2002, 2006). However, it must be also noted that the 1990 constitution contained many elements that were discriminatory against janajatis (for details see in Bhattachan, 2008, 2009; Lawoti & Hangen, 2013, among others). By using the term janajati explicitly in Article 26(10), the constitution acknowledged their presence. Despite this, the constitution did not define the term janajati, nor there any listing of the ethnic groups within this level.

In 2002, the government identified 59 caste/ethnic groups and announced some affirmative programs for them. The government initiated strategic policies to provide education in the language of mother tongue till primary level. Although a lot was done by several democratically elected governments in Nepal from 1990-2002, the governments also showed some shortcomings, especially with regard to enforcing the spirit of the constitution, i.e. abolition of all kinds of gender, religion, region, caste and ethnicity related disparities and discriminations. The discourses in democratic participation stand in stark contrast to the disparities that exist in reality. However, when the rural economy was on the decline and people's expectations were rising, there was what Baral calls an 'erosion of authority' in institutions and among leaders (Baral, 2006). To promote people's participation and narrow the widening gap between the government and the governed the various Acts such as District Development Act, and Village Development Act of 1991 and Local Self-Governance Act of 1999 were introduced. The Acts relies on people's participation in the process of governing as envisaged by the constitution.

Despite these developments, political stability and rapid economic growth has eluded the country and the initial euphoria at the restoration of democracy of the people, especially people of rural areas quickly dissipated (Onta, 2011). The bureaucracy, judiciary, state media, and election commission remain centralized. The politicization of the state apparatus by the political parties for their partisan interested resulted in fragmentation of government structure and system, resulting degeneration of individual performance and declining public services, and deteriorating implementation of development activities. Consequently, with the formation of NEFIN in 1990, there was a rise in new forms of political claims by ethnic groups and disadvantaged castes. This social change created discrepancies in social life which produced new social orders in the forms of migration, remittances, unemployment, poverty, Maoist movement, and livelihood diversification. Coupled with this was the disorganization of the rural political economy and ethnic marginalization which further opened spaces for social/ethnic activism. In this context, some scholars (e.g. Bhandari, Shrestha & Dahal, 2009) question that the rise of nexus of marginalization and nationalism in Nepal could be better analyzed in different dimensions, including postmodernism, social change, democratic participation, and rise of elites.

The period of ‘People’s War’ (1996-2002): The paradox of fear and hope

In Nepal’s movement discourse, it seems quite relevant to discuss on how the Maoists and their struggle against the state became instrumental to challenge the status quo existing in the society and to some extent, to replace the polity of the Nepali state. They started ‘People’s War’¹⁸ in February 1 of 1996 with an aim to establish ‘people’s democracy’ in Nepal. Though the movement was a kind of political movement engaging in the structural issues, it seems that the Maoist’s party had a great realization from the past, and they had assumed potential power of the identity politics. To attract people from ethnic communities towards the people’s war, they rigorously popularized the agenda of ethnic autonomy and federalism and played successfully upon the lacunae of dominant political parties to address this very issue raised by the ethnic groups and other marginalized communities. They raised issues related to structural changes in caste/ethnicity, gender, region, religion and language (Upreti, 2006). They demanded ethnic autonomy, regional autonomy, inclusion of all marginalized groups, freedom for the promotion of own language and religion, and

¹⁸ The use of term ‘People’s War’ has been highly debated in the political discourse. The terms ‘Maoist insurgency’, ‘armed insurgency’, ‘armed struggle’, and ‘armed conflict’ are being synonymously used to indicate the Maoist’s movement during 1996-2006.

declaration of Nepal as a secular state.¹⁹ Needless to say, the Maoists applied the policy to tempt the support from marginalized groups, including the Dalits, ethnic groups, poor rural people and women.

Advocacy against social exclusion and discrimination and demands for rightful representation and inclusion marked 1990s, but the political parties and successive governments largely ignored the demands. The Maoist insurgency encouraged participation of suppressed and marginalized communities, both in their fighting forces and also as heads of “People’s governments” formed during the conflict (Gellner, 2007; de Sales, 2009). Political instability marked the mid-1990s, which was also conducive for the expansion of the social movement fuelled by the Maoists insurgency. This period also witnessed a transition in the monarchy after the royal massacre on June 1, 2001. The insurgency has spread across Nepal and in November 2001 the government mobilized the Nepal army to fight and disarm the Maoists.

Meanwhile, King Gyanendra unconstitutionally dismissed the elected government on October 4, 2002 and started to rule through his nominated cabinet. He became more ambiguous in the rule and did a bloodless coup the government in February 1, 2005. During the period, the political parties were sidelined, civil societies kept threatening, the leaders got underground, and the people’s rights provided in the constitution were made inoperative by the King (Sharma, 2013). On 26 November 2005, a Seven Party Alliance (SPA) of parliamentary parties and the Maoists reached a 12-Point Understanding to end the King’s rule and to restructure the Nepali state. The agreement added a new political space to the ethnic movements of Nepal for being the domain of political movement.

VII. Post-2006 context: An era of political transition

The SPA with the backing of the underground Maoists, called for a four-day strike as a protest against the king’s autocratic regime in April. The strike continued for 19 days and the King finally (in 24 April, 2006) agreed to reinstate the parliament, and to hand over the sovereignty to the people to their representatives. Meanwhile, a Comprehensive Peace Accord was held between the government and the Maoists in November 2006 which led formal termination of Maoist insurgency, and generated

¹⁹ Interestingly the influence of the Maoists got further expanded once it established ethnic department at the central committee level and formed 11 ethnic /regional fronts and a number of *district janasarkars* (people’s governments). Among 11 front organizations, only two (Madhes and Karnali) were based on region, and the rest were formed on the basis of the different nationalities, headed by the leaders of the same identity.

peace process along with the commitments for various socioeconomic transformations of Nepali state and society. The reinstated parliament got some immediate implications, including formation of interim government, a declaration of the secular state and curtailing of the royal power over democratic and parliamentary affairs. The government commenced an election for the Constituent Assembly (CA) to make a new constitution from the people's representatives first time in the constitutional history of Nepal. The first meeting of the newly elected CA declared Nepal a republic on 28 May 2008. The issues of social inclusion and proportional representation had now become central to the political transformation and state-building process to the post-2006 public discourse. The period also witnessed several identity-based movements, claims and voices for autonomy and self-determination. All these came with the debates of federalism, including the number, name and demarcation of the proposed provinces. For a long time, a 'single ethnic-identity-based' federal structure versus 'multiple identity-based' structure became a hot cake that polarized Nepali politics and movement actors, making a derailing in the constitution writing process. Despite of an unfortunate dismissal of the first CA in 2012 with the ethnic tag, the second CA which was elected in 2013 has installed a new constitution in the country in September 20, 2015. The constitution, as discussed in the Chapters 1, 6 and 7, has made significant commitments for the rights of ethnic communities and recognition of their identity and representation. The intensity and direction of social and ethnic movements now has been a little bit passive since its inception, the researcher would argue that the nature of upcoming movements and their alliances will depend upon the implementation of the constitution, formation of the policies and their pro-people implication to the grassroots.

2.8 Tharus in the Tarai and Debates about their Origin

Historical documents trace the early history of the Tharu to the eleventh century, when the Tharus were already located and identified within the Indian subcontinent. Sachau (1964) cites the works by the eleventh-century Muslim historian Alberuni, who referred to the Tharus on the Indian subcontinent. He maintains: "farther on the country to the right is called Tilwat, the inhabitants Tharu, people of very black color and flat-nose like the Turks" (p. 201). In the fifteen century, Sylvain Levi Thar-ru'i – brgyud ("the country of the Tharus") referred to the Khan dynasty of the Tharus who ruled from Kamtapur in what is today's Northern Bengal (Chatterjee & Kirat, 1951). In the sixteenth century, the Tibetan Buddhist historical Lama Taranath mentioned the Tharus who then

belonged to the kingdom of Camparna, as 'Tha-ru'i-brgvud'. Early nineteenth century British explorers believed the Tharus originated in the Tharu desert in Rajasthan, India. According to legend, the Muslim invaders captured Rajputana, the ruler, and killed male members of the Principalities. The royal women fled, taking servants as their new husband. According to another account, The Tharus of Naini Tal and Kheri district had claimed Chittor as their original home (Risley, 1891, p. 313). Then the Tharus were driven out of Chittor by Mughal ruler, Akbar in 1567, and later lost their caste by eating fowls and drinking alcohol (Srivastav, 1958, p. 14). Yet other believed the Tharus originated in the hills of Nepal (Nesfield, 1885; Srivastava, 1958).

Explorers and scholars have also speculated about the origin of the name Tharu. According to one account, one of the Kshatriya Rajas of the Plains who invaded the hill country was amazed at their drunken habitat and used the word Thar which mean "Liquor" and term Tharu, or "Liquor bibber" to describe them (Srivastava, 1958, p. 14). Crooke (1896) has also claimed that the name Tharus comes from 'wine bibber', though he does not provide any explanation of the term. The word '*Atharu*' might also have been corrupted to become Tharu, derived from the group's supposed familiarity with an incantation found in Atharva Vada (Majumdar, 1944; Srivastav, 1965). Another word, '*Athawaru*' (an eight day serf), refer to the need to provide one day of free labor to a 'lord' and so this word could also be the origin of Tharu, although this theory might be dismissed since the Tharus were not known for their ability to perform field labor (Srivastava, 1958). Others point out the fact that the offspring of the Rajput women and their low caste servants became known as Tharus. The word Tharu could be derived from the word 'Thar', the area in Rajasthan from which the ancestors supposedly came. Several scholars refer to this information, including Rajaure (1977) and Carnegy (1868). Some believe that the term Tharus simply means residents of the Tarai, and the word 'Thar' refers to "a man of the forest" (Srivastava, 1958, p. 14). Some refer to Tarhua, another derivation of the word Tharu, which describes the swampy setting in which the Tharu lived. Thartharana signifies the trembling or quaking during the Tharu's supposed trip from Hastinapur to the Tarai after a fierce battle between the Rajputs and the Muslims (Crooke, 1886, p. 13). In another context, Knowles (1889) traces the origin of the word Tharua, which in a hill dialect means 'paddler'. The reference here is to the romantic life of the Tharus and the custom of marriage by capture in a boat.

It seems clear that although the Tharu consider themselves an indigenous population of Nepal, they did not originate from the current state of Nepal. Early nineteenth-

century explorers and writers observed that the Tharu were continually migrating from the Gangetic plains of India into the Nepali Tarai (Gurung, 1999). There were several reasons for this migration. First, it appeared that the Tharu population required land for cultivation. As the plains population moved closer, the Tharus retreated to the forest, preferring to keep their migratory villages in or on the perimeter of the forest areas (Atkinson, 1882-84, 2002; Carnegie, 1868; Nesfield, 1885). The second reason for the Tharu's move northward was to avoid British conservancy laws (ibid). Other reasons may have been to escape indebtedness to money lenders and traders, to avoid interference with the right to make their own liquor and to elude falling under the control of landowners and becoming slaves (Atkinson, 1882-84; Nevill 1903; Risely, 1892; Turner, 1931).

Just as the word Tharu has varied origins, so too it is difficult to fix the locations of the Tharu's places of residence. Nepal, positioned south of Tibet and north of India, is home to numerous subgroups or clans of Tharu who generally reside in the Tarai region of southern Nepal and the Gangetic plains of northern India. The Tharus are broadly divided into several groups which are distinguished by their territories, cultural features, and languages. Scholars differ on the number of their names and surnames. McDonough (1984) recognizes the *Rana*, *Dangaura*, *Kochila/ Morangia*, *Chitwaniya*, and *Kathariya*. Bisht (1994) distinguishes seven groups: Rana, Bukhusas, Garhauraha, Dhannara, Khunka, Jugiya and Saunra. Others distinguish divisions within distinct regional locations, such as the Danguara in the Dang district and the Deoshaura in Bardiya.

Numerous works have been written about the Tharus of northern India and the outer and inner regions of Nepal's Tarai. These works, published from the late nineteenth century to the present time, not only illuminate Tharu culture, but also highlight the changes in research methodologies and perspective over time. In British colonial times, the survey approach used for the compilation of Gazetteers of India in the "tribes and castes" series was designed by British explorers to India (Buchanan, 1838; Carnegie, 1868; Crooke, 1896; Nesfield, 1885; Turner, 1931).

In the 1930s, ethnographic research techniques were developed, primarily by Indian scholars. These contributed a different methodological approach to studying the Tharus of India. Majumdar began to study the Rana Tharus in-depth since the early 1940s. An array of later ethnographic research followed: Kochar's work with the Tharu joint families (1963) and Mathur's study of Rana marriage customs (1967)

complemented Pradhan's series of articles (1937, 1938) on various aspects of Rana Tharu society, including the economy, birth, marriage, and death customs. In addition, CT Hu (1955, 1957) made a notable contribution to our understanding of demography and marriage rituals. SK Srivastav's study of the Tharus in south Asia (1958) signifies a turning point in the study of Tharu culture. Although discredited for its incomplete coverage of the traditional culture and its transformation within a Hindu social system, his work, supported by earlier research, examines the dynamics of cultural change. It examines sociological questions rather than relying solely on descriptive accounts. The mid-twentieth century witnessed continued expansion of anthropological literature, which included works on the Tharus of Nepal. It was Dor Bahadur Bista, the premier Nepali anthropologist, who published the first work on Nepal's Tharu community. Although Bista utilizes an ethnographic methodology, his works are general in its coverage and lack depth and details in the interpretation (1972, p. 18-27).

In this regard, a scholarly credit goes to a number of studies, including new ones, which have enriched the studies and discourses of the Tharu. With a full of richness, these works, among the many others, have largely contributed to the cultural dynamics and social organization of the Tharus rather than being focused on the political dynamics and agitations against the state. To cite representative examples:

- Chaudhary's initiation to recall the history of the Tharus (2008, 2014)
- Collective/ individual contributions of Gellner, Pfaff-Czarnecka, Hangen, Cameron and Whelpton in different issues of ethnicity and nationalism (1997, 2007, 2008);
- Gaige's regionalism and politics of Tarai (1978, 2009)
- Guneratne's classic contribution in linking identity, modernization and Tarai politics with the Tharus in Chitwan and beyond (1994, 1998; 2002, 2008, 2010, 2011);
- Krämer's study on Tharu's state-society dynamics (2008);
- Krauskopff's contribution on Tharu history and emerging actors (2000, 2008);
- Maslak's work to link the educational status among the daughters of the Tharus (2003);
- McDonough's research on land ownership and social organization in the Tharu community (1984, 1989, 1997);
- Müller-Böker's ethno-botanical and socio-demographic study on the Chitwan Tharus (1993a, 1993b, 1999);

- Pyakurel's (1982) work on linking rural development and ethnicity in the four selected Tharu villages;
- Rajaure's anthropological work on the Tharus particularly in Dangaura Tharu (1977, 1980, 1981);
- Sheppard's critic on the perspective of federalism for the Tharus (2009), and
- Skar's work on the Tharu and Tarai neighbors (1999).

2.9 The Trend of Tharu Movement in Nepal

In historical perspective, the Tharu movement can be seen a long and continuous prolongation of struggle, campaigning and negotiations (Table 2.5). Basically, political regimes and manipulation of elites and movement leaders have largely influenced the trend and direction of the movement. It started with informal and loose networks and has now become equipped with the strong networks and framings. It was manifested as cultural and social reform process which also coopted some peasantry issues in many times.

The Tharu movement is one of the oldest and largest ethnic and peasantry movements in Nepal. Eventually, the movement has become a political force and has widened its coverage from Tarai-region to the national and international context. During this course, it has crossed with multiple actors which consequently contradict the mainstream Tharu movement at the macro level with some alternative movements and campaigns at the micro-levels. The discussions below uncover the detailed history of the movement.

Table 2.5: Historical timeline of the Tharu movement

Period	Key trends and events
1940s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peasantry social mobilization and loose protests against Rana administration; • Social reform '<i>bandej campaign</i>' (Bara) and Gandhian reform approach; • Establishment of TWS in 1949 (Rautahat); • Boycotting <i>beth-begari</i> movement in Bardiya
1950s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural reform initiatives of TWS; 'Bandej campaign' continued; • <i>kherhanawa andolan</i>' (for tenancy and batohiya) and <i>Belawa-Banjari kanda</i> (against local landlord) in western Nepal; • <i>Jasko jot usko pot</i> (land for the tillers) campaign and alliance with communist groups • Malaria eradication and massive trend of Hill to Tarai migration
1960-1990	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panchayat policy and influence of leadership in TWS; • Movements for boycotting <i>beth-begar movement</i> and migration as <i>budhan</i> (Mid-western region); • Anti-land reform act (1964) initiatives and peasantry movements in central Tarai and mid-western Tarai
1990s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peasantry demonstrations against the land reform tenancy issues; Social-cultural issues and reform strategies (language and traditions); • Political, regional and ethnic awakening; • Mobilization of Kamaiya and Kamlahari in movement by different NGOs (e.g. BASE); • Engagement with NEFIN and with political parties
1996-2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maoist insurgency; ethnic wings (<i>Tharuwan Mukti Morcha</i>) contributed to form political base of the movement; • Extension of TWS to the village levels in Tarai; • Freed Kamaiya Declaration 2000; and Nepal Bonded Labour (Prohibition) Act, 2002; • Development initiatives and right-based issues of Kamaiya and Kamlahari
2006-2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity politics with new context of constitution-writing and state-restructuring • Claims for constitutional recognition and regional autonomy • Formation of Tharu movement actors (political)- TASC, TJSC, TTPN, Tharuhat Sena, Tharu Joint Struggle Committee, T/TJSC • Movement for rehabilitation of freed Kamaiyas • Declaration of freedom of Kamlahari (2013); and subsequent movements for the rehabilitation, reintegration, and child rights • Agitations against the government's policy of categorization caste/ethnic groups in Tarai region; Clashes with Madhesi movement and search for distinct Tharu identity through constitutional recognition and federalism (In whole Tarai region);
Post-2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-constitutional issues, including federal delineation as a distinct Tharuhat province • Alliance with Madhes-based political parties/ groups • Dismissal of older forms of movement actors of the Tharus, including TJSC • Representation in local politics/ elections • Making of new political parties or being merged into the other parties

2.9.1 The Tharu activism before 1950s

As a trend, the broader Tharu movement has become steadily more political and sporadically yet consistently more confrontational since its beginnings in the 1950s.

Until the 1950s, malaria was a serious issue in the Nepal Tarai (particularly in the West) and effectively prevented large scale settlement by other communities into the Tarai. However, there have been some Madhesi communities in parts of the central and central Tarai since the period of the Mahabharata, mainly along the southern border (Upreti, Poudel & Ghimire, 2013). As the Tharus were the only community that could live in the Tarai in large numbers,²⁰ their labor was invaluable to the state for extracting resources from the forests and jungles of the Tarai. Indeed, the spatial spread of the Tharus goes beyond the territorial divisions between the two nations of Nepal and India, and the two independent constituencies of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, within India (Hasan, 1979; Srinivasan & Ranjan, 2004). Therefore, Nepal's monarchy, trailed by the Rana administration, perceived the power of the Tharu elite, delegating them as *jamindars* and *chaudharies* and making them in charge of duty accumulation, dispute resolution and different undertakings—that is, making them a part of feudalistic state governance (see also Ranjan, 2008).

As most parts of the Tarai were predominantly covered with forests in the mid nineteenth century, there was restricted settlement by different groups. On the other hand, over the span of the nineteenth Century, the Nepali state permitted numerous Bhojpuri and Maithili speaking people to move into the Central and Eastern Tarai from India with an end goal to expand the populace and make the territory all the more economically beneficial (Gaige, 2009). As this advanced, persuasive Tharu elites were continuously superseded by these approaching 'Madhesis', some of whom had the capacity set up themselves as large-scale proprietors and landlords. As the significance of the Tharu elites decreased, they step by step added to a 'client-patron' association with these Madhesis and turned into their subordinates or functionaries. The significance of the Tharu group lessened further as they were no more expected to work in the forest nor were provided land adequately to support their livelihood. Likewise, taking after the fall of the Rana administration, the customary frameworks of administration that had profited Tharu elites were supplanted by more centralized state structures. These did not perceive the Tharu elite class, which was in this way left in a shaky circumstance. It, consequently, led to a 'veiled slave trade' among the poor Tharus (Robertson & Mishra, 1997, p. 1).

²⁰ Medical studies (including the recent cases of sickle cell malaria) prove that having lived in the Marshy Tarai area for centuries; the Tharus have developed resistance to malaria and which can be attributed to an unidentified genetic factor (Shrestha and Karki, 2013).

Despite of having a range of authoritarian restrictions, mobilization of peasants against the landlord and the Rana administration through loose and informal networks seems as the key feature of Tharu movement before the dawn of democracy in the country. In some places, the movements of tenants became powerful strategies to negotiate the landlord-peasant power relations and challenge the state-bureaucracy. For example, a group of small farmers and peasants conducted a *beth-begari* movement in 1943 (2000 BS) in Mainapokhar of Bardiya district. They demanded land for the tillers and boycotted begari, i.e. tax to the landlord. The movement prolonged to 1947 (2004 BS). Eventually, it succeeded to gain back a huge area of land (25000 *bigha* approximately) to the tillers. Moreover, there was a campaign of social reform which started with the slogan '*bandej abhiyan*' in the mid-Tarai of Nepal. It was led by Amar Bahadur Faujdar Tharu in Bara in 1980. This campaign initiated Gandhian reform strategies in Tharu community letting the people to follow non-violence, peace and prosperity and boycotting the socio-cultural malpractices. The campaign was formally named as Tharu Kalyankarini Sabha (Tharu Welfare Society-TWS) while there was a workshop of the educated elites in Rautahat under the chairmanship of Kewal Tharu (Kewal Babu) in 1949 (2005 BS).

2.9.2 The beginning of Tharu activism in Pachayat era (1951-1990)

Due to expanding isolation from the state, rivalry for livelihood assets with other groups (Madhesi and hilly migrants, for example) and a rising level of landlessness that the context around Tharu mobilization started in the early 1950s. Politically, it was hardly implied, to resist the then state, so the way was reformed and peaceful mobilization of the people. In 1949, it was started through the Tharu Welfare Society (TWS), which started its reform activities in the Central and Eastern Tarai districts. For a long period, the TWS was very much dominated by the wealthier and more educated Tharus of the Central and Eastern Tarai and was, until the 1980s, the only significant organization advocating on Tharu issues. It effectively came to function as a government recognized regulatory body for the Tharu community with the authority to impose fines for breach of caste rules and limited punishments for delinquencies well into the 1970s (Guneratne, 2011; Sarvahari & Jha, 2013). Although the TWS has representation across the whole of the Tarai, The organization was intended to be a non-political society advocating for Tharu issues encompassing all Tharu groups and working to address problems both within the Tharu community and between the community and the state.

The aims of the TWS were not particularly revolutionary and although the TWS did briefly discuss the idea of a 'Tharu state' at the time of its inception, it was swiftly abandoned. In the 1960s and 1970s, it made cultural issues as the immediate agendas, such as oppose blind superstition, reform marriage rules and reduce the unnecessary costs of celebrations—all of which were seen as obstacles for Tharus from achieving a respectable position in a predominantly Hindu Nepali society. Since the sixth convention of the society which held in 1956 (BS 2012), it had prioritized four dimensions of reform strategies—social, economic, educational and cultural. Critics within and outside the organization claim that the elite nature of the organization placed it too close to Nepal's establishment for it to reduce the exclusion of the ordinary members of the community from the state (Guneratne, 2002; Sarvahari & Chaudhary, 2016). This, though, was at a time when the state did not tolerate open ethno-political activism or discussions on federalism and any activity had to be restricted to social and cultural activities.

An uneven power relation between the landlords and peasants seems one of the key motivational factors for social mobilization of the Tharus in Panchayat era. The issues of tenancy were strongly popularized among the farmers for in all the caste/ethnic groups, and eventually to the Tharus of Tarai. The '*Kherhanawa Andolan*' which happened in Bhura Tappan of Bardiya in April 1951 (BS 2008) was exemplary for this. The movement was led by Radhakrishna Tharu. The Tharu people were demanding *tikkur-batohiya* (1/3 part of the produced crops) from the land of the landlords for whom they have worked since long time and were said to be paid with the cereals in terms of the wage. The local landlords were backed and empowered by the local administration, and they refused to pay the *batohiya*. The agitations became extensive and took a violent eruption. On 28 April (Baisakh 15), six Tharu peasants were killed (including Chapau Tharu, Laxmi Prasad Tharu, Patiram Tharu, Dibuwa Tharu, Pepawa Tharu and Koili Tharuni) and 17 got severe injuries when the landlord (Bidur Narsingh Rana) and his fellow police official (Khadak Bahadur Giri) opened fire at them. Even though the administration had adopted very repressive strategies against the people's mobilization, this movement later on succeeded to end the *beth-begari* in Bardiya (Sarvahari & Chaudhary, 2016).

Expansion of communist groups in the villages before and during the Panchayat era has played a crucial role to expand political consciousness among the people. Though these groups were divided into many sections, they favored people's mobilizations against the established system of the feudal-peasant's relations. The slogan of land for

the tillers (*jasko jot usko pot*) and the campaign of boycotting *beth-begari* were two inseparable components for these kind of mobilizations. Ideally, the demonstrations were led by poor and oppressed classes in various part of the western and eastern Tarai districts. *Belawa-Banjari kanda* of Dang is one of the examples where many poor and landless Tharu participated. The movement was started in July 1960 and the agitators eventually cut down the fingers of the landlord. Local administration mobilized police force against the movement actors and many people were arrested. Among them, Gumara Tharu was killed in prison in 21 July 1960 (BS 2016 Magh 17).²¹

Emergence of the rapid Hill to Tarai migration in Tarai region was another phenomenal process that significantly changed the demographic as well as socioeconomic conditions of the region (Gaige, 2009). As land opened up following the eradication of malaria, large numbers of so-called Pahadi migrants, including high castes and the Dalits, moved into the Tarai districts (Gartaula and Niehof, 2013).²² In many instances, the newcomers in the region altered loan contracts, falsified land deeds or simply threatened them, and many Tharus in the mid and far West ended up losing their land (Guneratne, 2010). Many were impoverished and some found themselves transformed into bonded laborers known as Kamaiya and Kamlahari. Several studies reported that foul play of the affluent non Tharus, the elites in alienating the Tharus from their land within 100 to 200 years (Krauskoff, 2000; McDonough, 1997). Rather than challenge the migrants with violence and seeing no possibility of assistance from the state, many Tharus from Dang simply migrated to Banke and Bardiya. Although there are no accurate statistics, there are reports of whole villages moving, while other sources estimated ten thousand people left Dang for Banke or Bardiya in the 1970s and 1980s (Gunaratne, 2009; Krauskopff, 2009). Recalling this event, the research participants from Dang termed it as '*budhan*' in which many of their relative displaced from their homeland to escape from the bondage, high land tax and landlessness.²³ Despite this, the perception that the Nepali state disregarded and did nothing to prevent this process of profound dislocation and exclusion provides the basis for Tharu

²¹ Based on the conversation of the researcher with Ashok Tharu, one of the participants in the movement (10 February 2013); see also Sarvahari & Chaudhary (2016).

²² The districts of Banke, Bardiya, Kailalai and Kanchanpur were seized by the British east India Company as per the name of Sugauli Treaty which was held in 2 December 1816. The region was granted back in 1860 to Nepal due to Rana regime provided military support which became helpful to suppress the anti-colonial rebellions in Lukhnaw (India). These four districts – then became known to as '*naya muluk*' (i.e. the new country).

²³ Indeed, the process of displacement and marginalization was not only applicable to the Tharus in the Tarai, but also to the poor households of different caste/ethnic groups in various regions. Many scholars (e.g. Ismail and Shah, 2015; Mishra, 2011) argue that this is basically a class problem related to access to land, employment and livelihood of poor people.

mobilization alongside other Adivasi janajati groups (Chaudhary, 2008; Guneratne, 2002; McDonough, 1997).

Decreasing land holding, diminishing agricultural productivity, low accessibility to the local administration and poor Nepali language know-how were some of the conditions that promoted the dependency and debt of the Tharu labors and peasants in the region. The state never attempted to land reform and agrarian change in favor of the poor people including the Tharus. Moreover, the Land Reform measures (including the Act of 1964) could not contribute to reform, but to legitimize the traditional land practices (Cox, 1990). On the other hand, due to language barrier and illiteracy, many Tharus did not fully understand the implications of local administrations and borrowing money, and thus being unable to understand legal provisions and contracts.²⁴ Many new migrants also shared caste or even family relations with the local administration, making the impression in favor of their social prestige and economic activities in the region.

In this context, a new form of Tharu mobilization emerged along with the rise of non-governmental actors/ organizations in the region. It was driven by small, local NGO – Backward Society Education (BASE) – run by young people from a lower-middle class background (Cox, 1994). Although this movement was largely driven by the BASE, by the early 2000's over 150 Tharu organizations came together to form the Tharu Indigenous NGO Federation (TINGOF). These two actors, in particular, contributed a lot to the genesis of movement as a non-governmental alternative in the issues of Kamaiya and Kamlahari. Along with these kind of initiations, modernization of the Tharu people in terms of social and cultural reforms, increase in the educational enterprises (and the value of education), cultural assimilations with new migrants (i.e. hilly people), search of different strategies of livelihood, exogamous mobility of the Tharu people and expansion of markets in the road networks of the Tarai region led to a fundamental change in the nature of Tharu mobilization in the 1990s.

2.9.3 Tharu movement during the Maoist conflict

The Maoist's armed struggle had a lasting influence on the Tharu movement (Maycock, 2011). A kind of Tharu leadership developed which exposed Tharu activists

²⁴ Historically, many of the moneylenders and local administrators were Nepali speaking upper caste groups. Until recently, Tharus speak languages very similar to maithali and Bhojpuri (as of Madhesis) in the central and eastern Tarai. However, the Tharus from Chitwan westward speak languages of which are very much distinct from Nepali, Maithali and Bhojpuri.

to new forms of organization. The Maoists also encouraged militancy and political activism among the Tharus, particularly in the western Tarai. They successfully mobilized Tharu participation during the internal armed conflict which framed the grievances of the Tharu people (e.g. landlessness, indebtedness, exclusion and cultural dislocation), and it predated the conflict further.

The discourse of 'Tharuwan' was politically incepted by the Maoists. Although the TWS briefly raised the issue of a Tharuhat state in the 1950s, it was not politically idealized. During the Panchayat regime and the early period of the multiparty democracy, this issue remained almost unheard neither in the form of agenda nor as the strategy. The idea had largely been abandoned by the movement actors and the political parties until the CPN (M-C) created various 'ethnic' regions in its war time, including a 'Tharuwan' province. The province was created under the banner of 'Tharuwan Rastriya Mukti Morcha' in 1998 which included five districts of the western and far-western Tarai region (namely; Dang, Banke, Bardiya, Kailali and Kanchanpur). However, this was an organizational unit of the party, rather than full-fledged 'ethnicity based federalism' as claimed today in the post-2006 context. The idea of a Tharuhat state was further developed by Tharus many of whom had been involved in the CPN (M-C) and eventually left to found their own organizations, in particular the Tharuhat Autonomous State Council (TASC), the Tharuhat Sena (Tharuhat Army) and, later, the Tharuhat Tarai Party Nepal. At times, however, the relationship between the CPN (M-C) and the broader Tharu movement has been uneasy and problematic too. The particular issue of why most of the Tharu activists during the war period left the Maoists after its entry into the peace process is however, less addressed by contemporary literatures. Some of the movement activists in Dang complained the researcher that the Maoists harassed them during the internal armed conflict as strong Tharu structures at the local level (e.g. *badhghar* system) were seen as an obstacle to establishing their *janasarkars* (People's Government) in rural areas.

What the Tharus got from the Maoists war is still unanswered though their loss in the conflict is quite saddening. The conflict inflicted a disproportionately large loss on the Tharu community as 833 Tharus had been killed, 241 disappeared and 44 severely injured with disabilities. The death incidents count around 5 percent of the total deaths during the insurgency. Many research participants felt that the conflict between Tharus and so-called upper caste migrants into the Tarai was continued in a different form

through the armed conflict. One of its forms was manifested as the individuals within the then Royal Nepal Army deliberately targeted Tharu youths for the cause of the Maoists and charged as terrorists. The narratives also recalled that a number of landlords including Tharu, particularly in the Dang and Deukhuri were displaced by CPN (M-C), often with the support of the Tharu tenants and peasants. However, to his utter surprise, the researcher observed that the previously displaced landlord ones were now resettled in the district headquarters (some of them in the villages too), and some of them even entered the Maoist party and become its leaders.

2.9.4 Tharu movement in the post-2006 context

After the People's Movement 2006, massive socio-political changes came in Nepal. Regarding the Tharu movement, these have four immediate consequences. First, the massive participation of the Tharus in 2006 movement had increased their political aspirations. They were waiting a kind of immediate change or magic of stick that would change the life of the Tharus. These aspirations were further aggravated with the entry of the Maoists into the peace process for which the Tharus had sacrificed a lot. Right from the beginning of the peace process, however, the Maoists could not keep the support/ and the leadership of the Tharus, particularly in the western Tarai. So, a dissenting mass of the Tharus and a few high profile Tharu leaders were searching new spaces in the political negotiation for their better assurance in the constitution-writing process. Second, the position of Tharu leaders in NEFIN was becoming strong and the whole organizational structure of NEFIN was highly influential through the TWS – because of Tharu's larger regional and demographic representation in the country. It led to a situation to breed ethnic politics. The politics gradually became an identity politics contradicting the rise of Madhes regionalism in the Tarai. Consequently, a number of actors emerged in the movement and it became more aggressive in the Tarai-centric politics (see also Chapter 4 and Chapter 5).

The issues of inclusion and representation became inalienable policy agendas of the government after the 2006 movement. On 3 February 2009 (BS 2065 Magh 21), the Government of Nepal decided to amend the social service ordinal. It was issued that all different 21 castes/ ethnic groups (Tharu, Bote, Danuwar, Kuaml, Majhi, Raji, Gangai, Dhanuk, Dhimal, Meche, Koche, Rajbansi, Kisan, Santhal, Uraw, Munda, Tajpuriya, Thami, Pattharkatta, Kushwadiya and Darai) and the Muslims residing in the Tarai region would be considered as 'Madhesi'. The rationale was that Tharus would

benefit from the proclamation of the policy and it could also get popular support from all sectors including the Tharus who remained in influential positions in various Madhesi parties. Despite this ideal, the decision prompted a forceful response and mass demonstrations immediately after its announcement, and a huge reaction was stated by the Tharu community, including TWS, Tharuwan Rashtriya Mukti Morcha, TJSC, NEFIN, and the Nepal Loktantrik Tharu Sangh. The demonstrations were initially coordinated by the TJSC and the TASC. They objected that Tharus are not Madhesi and they have their own distinct identity. The issue was also that Tharus would not be able to compete with Madhesi elites if they had to compete for the same quotas in the same provision. Another objection was to the Tarai being officially called 'Madhesi' and demanded that it be termed 'Tarai Tharuhat'. This response, mainly in the form of a hugely effective 13-day shutdown (*banda*) across the Tarai from 2-14 March 2009 (Fagun 19-Chaitra 1, 2065 BS), led to the death of four agitators and hundreds were injured.²⁵ On 14 March, the movement resulted in a 6-Point Agreement between the TJSC and the Government to reverse the decision on the quota issue and 'inclusion' of various excluded communities in accordance with Article 33 of the Interim Constitution of Nepal, 2007. The movement ended for a short while, but TJSC again launched the demonstration in May 2009 by a further 12-day strike prompted by frustration that the Government had not moved to implement its previous agreement (UN RCHCO, 2013). Indeed, Tharu demand for a federal 'Tharuhat' state began to grow in earnest from this point onwards.

The relationship between Madhesi and Tharu leadership soured after a series of demonstrations and agitations; though it was not thought to be so rivalry before the People's Movement 2006. Madhesi movement and Tharu movement seemed to be antagonistic, and in many places, it became physically violent, particularly in mid Tarai (Chaudhary & Jha, 2013). The relationship had been repaired by July 2011 to the extent that the TJSC, the TWS and the Madhesi Morcha came together to sign the 'Dhulikhel Declaration'. This agreement outlined a common understanding on the geographical boundaries of a future Tharuhat/ Madhes/ Tarai province without specifying its internal boundaries. They shared a vision of the rights and identities of the inhabitants of this province. Meanwhile, there was a joint assembly meeting of Tharuhat Joint Struggle Committee and Nepal Adivasi and Janajati Dalit Ganatantrik

²⁵ According to the official record of Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of Nepal, three Tharu protestors (Kamal Chaudhary in Sauraha of Chitwan, and Prakash Chaudhary and Ram Prasad Chaudhary in Sisahaniya of Dang-Deukhuri) a non-Tharu protestor (Bipin Khadka in Sauraha of Chitwan) got died during this movement period.

Morcha in Birgunj on June 13-14 June 2009 (i.e. BS 2066 Jestha 30-31). They concluded a six-point declaration in 15 June (1 Aashad), which is known as 'Birgunj Declaration'. The declaration concluded with the need of a new, extensive and strong national political force. There is another declaration of the movement actors which is popularly known as Bardiya Bhurigaun Declaration. It was held in Bardiya, Bhurigaun in 4 April 2011 (BS 2068 Baisakh 4). It was review meeting of the movement actors which were under the umbrella of Tharuhat Joint Struggle Committee. The declarations issued 4 decisions (including the formation of a new political party in the leadership of Tharu) and 7 demands (including a Tharuhat autonomous region in the whole Tarai region, proportional representation, and preferential rights of indigenous Tharus.

This was followed on 20 April 2012 (BS 2069 Baisakh 10) by a meeting in Chitwan between the broader Tharu political community, in which there was a general agreement that the Tharus should support a three state division in the Tarai, rejecting the 'One Madhesh, one state' demand of the Madhesi parties. This was known as Tharu National Round Table Convention (*Chitwan golmech sammelan*) which concluded a 14-Points declaration. The declaration raised the issue of three autonomous regions in Tarai region on the basis of ethnic identity, self-governance, right to self-determination and preferential political rights. The proposed provinces include: a) the Tharuhat autonomous region from Chitwan to Kanchanpur); b) mid-Tarai Simraunagadha autonomous region from Parsa to Dhanusha; and c) eastern Tharuhat/ Tharuwan autonomous state from Siraha to Jhapa. The declaration also defined the Tharuhat region as the territory that originated from Jhapa in east to Kanchanpur in the west, Surkhet valley in the north, Dang-Deukhuri, Chitwan, Kamalakhonch of Sindhuli and Chure hill including Triyuga valley of Udayapur, and the Indian border to the south.

Amidst these declarations and agreements so far, however, a contradiction arose among the member organizations of the TJSC, and the leaders started to polarize in party politics and some of them also involved in different NGOs and other movement activism. Among the others, the conflict between the leaderships of TJSC and TWS led to a deep setback among the movement actors. Meanwhile, the TJSC (which was under the ideological banner of TASC) went into dissolution and it then reformed in April 2012 as Tharu Joint Struggle Committee under the leadership of the Tharu Welfare Society (TWS). It launched a 21-days long strike in May 2012 and reached to a 10-Points agreement on 2 June 2012 (BS 2069 Jeshtha 10). Indeed, these days

were the peak hours of negotiations in Constitution-making process. Since the dissolution of the first CA in May 2012 and new electoral process for the second CA, the polarization among the movement actors became still apparent in the form of Tharu-ethnicity based political parties (e.g. TTPN, TASC). Both the CAs had quite representative structures in terms of caste/ ethnicity, involving 36 Tharus in the first CA and 41 Tharus in the second one. Most of them had also involved in the Janajati Caucus during the first CA and eventually contributed to draft different proposals including ethnicity-based 14 provinces as well as on other issues of indigenous groups.²⁶

Some renowned Tharuhat movement leaders entered into the Madhes-based political parties, which also continued even after the election of CA in 2013. Madhesi and Tharu parties were close to forming an alliance in 2014, which got formal structure when 'Federal coalition' among the Tarai-based political parties (including Madhesi Morcha, TTPN and TASC) and identity-based ethnic and regional parties. This was further goaded with the revitalization of the Tharu Joint Struggle Committee into the 'Tharuhat/ Tharuwan Joint Struggle Committee- T/ TJSC' in 10 August 2015 (i.e. BS 2072 Shrawan 25). The committee offered a 41-Points list of the demands which include different issues of ethnic recognition, autonomy and state-restructuring at the very moment of promulgation of the new constitution in the country. It led third-phase of Tharuhat movement with a wider network of Tharu groups, ethnic groups/ organizations and some political parties of Madhesi-Morcha since 12 August 2015 (i.e. BS 2072 Shawan 27). The demonstrations were confronted with the major political parties and anti-Tharuhat groups, including 'unified far-western campaigners'. However, it took a violent eruption in Tikapur of Kailali and got severe setback, both at moral and empirical grounds (Sarvahari & Chaudhary, 2016).²⁷

Though this is beyond the scope of this PhD research, it is worth-mentionable that the alliance among the Tharu and Madhesi got stronger when the new constitution was declared in the country in September 2015. It would be the first such alliance between the two largest communities of Tarai whose relations had soured due to Madhes-based parties' agenda for one province. Madhesi parties now support the demand for a separate Tharuhat/Tharuwan province, while Tharu have supported many demands

²⁶ Based on the personal conversation of the researcher with Hon. Ganga Tharu Satgauwa in 13 March 2014, Kathmandu.

²⁷ Some of the protests and agitations have become violent leading to a number of deaths, injuries and damages of physical property. In 25 August 2015 (BS 2072 Bhadra 7), a deadly clash was evident in Tikapur of Kailali district where 8 police personnel were killed using domestic weapons by the agitators. A one and half year old baby, sitting at his home, was found killed by bullet fired from the field.

of Madhes-based parties, including extension of province number two to further east. In the context of formation of the Constitution, Joint Democratic Madhesi Front alienated Sanghiya Samajbadi Forum Nepal, Tarai Madhesh Lokatantrik Party, Sadbhawana Party and Tarai Madhesh Party as well as 11 political parties affiliated to Sanghiya Samabeshi Front and Tharuwan/Tharuhat decided to intensify their protest regarding the issues such as state boundaries, proportional inclusive participation, the number of electors based on population and citizenship. Those fronts called for indefinite period long general strike and blockade from 17 July, 2015.

Thus, with these historical narratives, the researcher would argue that the Tharu movement has roots with historically given attributes of Nepali society and politics. The review of the literatures and the research findings both reveal that the issues, claims and manifestations of the movement have been constructed (and even shifted) with a number of negotiations and struggles with the central state (i.e. the government) and has been also mediated or influenced by the mainstream political parties and movement actors, including Tharuhat and Madhes-based political parties/ groups. In particular, the movement sentiment took its political landscape as have the numbers of Tharu actors and the grievances around which Tharu mobilizations have centered in the name of public welfare and development of the region.

2.10 Research Gaps and Unsettled Questions

To go into a flashback again from the previous sections in this Chapter, the researcher has observed some critical reflections regarding the concepts and theories of social/ethnic movements and rural development in Nepal and beyond. In the last few decades, studies on social movement on the one hand, and rural studies, on the other hand, have increased dramatically which eventually crossed the boundaries of existing disciplines and approaches. They have reflected different ideologies, practices and perspectives to enrich the global knowledge system of discourse and research. In this context, as a critical research methodologist, the researcher has highlighted the following knowledge gaps in contemporary researches:

2.10.1 The gaps at global level

- *Theorization gap*: Lack of conceptualization and theorization of 'contested rural development' (CRD) is globally acknowledged. The literatures largely talk about mainstream or dominant discourse of RD, though much not about alternative

discourses. The studies are also theoretically not clear to analyze whether the contestation remains in the form of a continuum or in a dichotomy.

- *Relational gap*: Social movement studies and development studies, in a comparative sense, are facing considerable difficulties in specifying their multidimensional relations. For example, the relationships between ethnic movements and people's representation have been discussed at length, but it has been less theorized in relation to the rural development in particular.
- *Lack of holistic approach*: Largely, the ethnic movements are ethnic-centric while the rural studies seem to be driven by economic perspectives. Despite a few studies address both perspectives; a holistic study is significantly lacking to analyze the causes and consequences of the contestation they induce. This trans-disciplinary notion of research would contribute in recognizing different dimensions of the social/ethnic movements and contestations of rural development in terms of ideology, historicity, organization, leadership, strategy, mobilization, power dynamics, effectiveness and future prospects.
- *Methodological gaps*: There is a domination of disciplinary research in analyzing the rural development issues on the one hand and the issues of ethnic movements on the other. While the rural studies are largely doomed in conventional frameworks of logical framework and/or project cycle, the ethnic studies are largely influenced by ethnographic approaches. Only rare studies deal about epistemological positions and world views, allowing thereby a weak triangulation and poor objective analysis. Therefore, there are emerging spaces for a kind of methodological pluralism, including different tools and techniques, such as leadership analysis, network analysis, policy dissemination analysis, caste-ethnic relational analysis, and self-narrative analysis.

2.10.2 The gaps at national level

- Viewing from the Nepali context of rural development, less theorization is possible to link it with the rise of ethnic movements. Discourse on ethnicity has been developing with conventional views on conceptual/definitional frameworks, and understanding and interpretation of cultural artifacts. But, they significantly lack political ideologies and alternatives to the state-led development and market-led liberalism in the changing contexts. It is quite reflective to the present-day social sciences in Nepal. Classical approaches (social unrest and deprivation theories) and intermediary theories (RMM

and PPP) or somehow problematic to relate the development issues such as livelihood, poverty and inequality in Nepal. Nor the research works are largely available from the perspective of new social movements. Though neo-Marxist approach and subaltern perspective are of wider scope, they have also been neglected due to ideological biases of the research.

- Many studies in Nepal, including political studies are state-centered, focusing on Kathmandu and the activities of dominant political actors. Most significantly, these studies overlook a crucial dimension of Nepali society that is relevant to the democratization at local and rural level, including numerous social movements of the Dalit, indigenous nationalities and women. In the post 2006 context, the ethnic nature of the movement has become largely political and to some extent, regional. The very inclusive nature of ethnic and regional movements to become political agitation and its development alternatives is a complex paradox. It recalls for in-depth studies to contribute in the state-restructuring process.

2.10.3 The gaps, particularly from Tharu movement perspective

- *Ethnographic orientation in the studies:* Studies on Tharus are largely available despite their agro-ecological, regional and ethnic orientations of social life. Yet, most of them lack critical ethnographic approaches in the research methodology. Some recent studies are merely an action research based on fund-driven or primordial in nature rather being theoretical and academic. These studies largely ignore the 'movement dimension' of the Tharus at grassroots level, often levelling them on the party politics among the Tharus and beyond them. Moreover, the development imperatives (like the visions of poverty and inequality) in analyzing the movement dimension are of crucial challenge for contemporary ethnic studies.
- *Lacking of ideological, political and economic perspectives:* There are multiple issues, including cultural identity, proportional representation, class structure, poverty reduction, women empowerment, land reform and the changing relations of the Tharus and non-Tharus. Most of the studies are, however historically set with the ethnic paradigms, which often see problems out of the Tharus; and not of the emerging elitism in the society with the state's domination. It requires incorporation of a number of political-economic issues to increase the wider scope of the research works which would further strengthen the theorization of CRD.

- *Descriptive in nature than analytical:* Majority of the available case studies on Tharu movement do not specifically focus on assessing their impact and effectiveness in improving well-being of people, but rather on describing their goals, tactics and short-term engagement with the state. Valid documentations are rarely found regarding the economic agendas of the movement, as they remain overly concerned only with the social and cultural agendas. Social ferments, networks and frames are also largely neglected issues in doing research on the Tharus.
- *Political dimension of the present crisis:* The shifting of Tharu movement from welfare approach to right-based approach and from ethnic to regional (e.g. Tharu movement into Tharuhat movement) is a quite phenomenal during the Maoist movement and after the people's movement 2006. Though this issue has been addressed by a few studies, they do need further updates. Much of the research works have described the linkage of Tharu movement and the Madhesi movement as to be antagonistic by nature. This perspective often rejects a historical dimension and political-economic perspectives of the movements. Further, the comparative and cross-sectional studies of the Tharu movement to other ethnic movements and the movements of Dalits and women are also crucially lacking in the understanding of contemporary development and politics.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has set out the core theoretical, conceptual and historical perspectives which, implicitly or explicitly, underpin the ethnography of the rest of this research. For this, the researcher would argue that some critical elements are rooted in the discourse of social movement and rural development in Nepal and beyond. The elements include conceptual and theoretical debates which identifies the gaps in linking social/ethnic movements and rural development in particular. Because of a number of theoretical approaches explained, the researcher, here, has approached the shape of the literature review historically, wishing simply to lay out the bare skeleton of the arguments, and leaving it to the other chapters to discuss the implications of these theories (and new theorization) in more detail. To re-emphasize, this chapter has laid out the historicity of Nepal's rural development and the Tharu movement indicating the huge research gap in linking them with the changing political economy of the Nepali state. It summarizes the key research gaps in the field of rural development and ethnic movement studies. The gaps – from global to the local – seem to be theoretical, contextual and methodological. In turn, it sets out the research objectives and questions.

CHAPTER- THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND STUDY DESIGN

This chapter presents a synthesis of research methodology and its empirical settings in the field. It deals with philosophical and methodological approaches and researcher's positions in the research. Then it offers a detailed research process, including methodological approaches, scientific methods and strategies of primary data collection and analysis. Finally the chapter presents insider perspectives and personal reflections of the researcher.

3.1 Philosophical Positions of the Study

Why a philosophy is important in research? How does it contribute to the research and generation of knowledge? Is it simply an exercise of human intelligence to know the existing reality of being or it's also a matter of transformation into a better future? These discussions lead us to the next area for consideration, which Blaikie (2009) describes as the 'research paradigm' and by others (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009) as the 'research philosophy'. Some of them also maintain it as 'worldview' (Cresswell, 2013). These philosophies are formed from basic ontological and (the related) epistemological positions, and have developed in both classical and contemporary forms to effectively classify different research approaches. Denzin and Lincoln (2013) describe a research paradigm as 'an interpretive framework' and in borrowing from Guba (1990), as a 'basic set of beliefs that guides action'. In a similar tone, Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) assert that research philosophy is an overarching term relating to the development of knowledge and the nature of that knowledge. For Babbie (2015) it is a comprehensive belief system, world view, or framework that guides research and practice in a field (p. 8). In the general classification, there are three key paradigms – those of positivist (classical), interpretivist/ constructivist (classical) and realist/ critical (contemporary). All the paradigms then engage with the fundamental questions of ontology (what is the nature of reality, being or existence?), epistemology (what is the acceptable knowledge in a field of study/ universe?), axiology (what are the values and meanings inserted?) and methodology (how we can approach with the reality and knowledge?).

The researcher, however, contrasts with the idea of paradigm. Metaphysically, all the paradigms are misleading towards absolute truth and noble reality (Robson & McCartan, 2016). They have further promoted methodological determinism as they wrongly suggest that the three paradigms are mutually exclusive and that they represent the totality of possible research approaches. Rather than accepting this paradigm definition of research, the present study has followed a paradigmic pluralism thereby saturating the knowledge from empirical finding to the theory generation. Going to the real 'world' and giving the concluding remarks with 'words' is indeed a challenging task. This is one of the emerging trends of social movement research, though has been less theorized. To reflect Della Porta (2013):

Indeed, methodological pluralism seems to dominate the field. While a narrative that is widespread in several subfields in the social sciences tends to present a Manichean picture, pitting positivist versus interpretivist (hermeneutics) views, social movement scholars tend to develop more nuanced views... suggesting that some of its main characteristics have favored the development of methodological pluralism, with a dialogue between different epistemological approaches and frequent triangulations of methods (p. 9).

Yet, there are some challenging issues in linking the search on development studies and movement studies. The methodological determinism or absolutism is the fundamental challenge in this regard. This is simply because no any kinds of social events (such as the movement, agitations and development interventions) could happen in isolation with the mode of homogenization that could be generalized everywhere and forever. Rather, they are a larger manifestation of collective behavior of people within the society. A research design for the study of contestation in rural development from an ethnic movement perspective, then, includes various interrelated elements that reflect its sequential nature. Methodologically, the present thesis is inclined with two perspectives. First, the researcher has (and should have) knowledge of the current issues and discourse. Second, the methodological implications would relate to the present study to those issues and discourses as evident in literature review and subsequent findings which could synthesize contested rural development in Nepal. Following this assumption, the researcher had followed a methodological pluralism to view the multi-real and multi-local research universe as would be evidenced in the Tharu movement and rural development in Nepal (Table 3.1). The following subsections are intended to show the understanding of the methodological implications of the choices the researcher has made and, in particular, that he had thought carefully about the links between his study's purpose and research questions and the research approach and research methods that he had selected.

Table 3.1: Summary of methodological positions and research design

	Approach	Rationale
Ontology	Social constructivism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social roots of the contestation; multi-locality of the research universe
Epistemology	Interpretivism and Criticalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subjective (non-material well-being, identity issues, aspirations) • Objectivity (material well-being, outcomes in development activities and local service delivery to Tharu people)
Methodological approach	Qualitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contestation, movement, development
Theoretical approach	Grounded Theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inductive approach to the contestation; construction of movement and development on the ground; need of theorization and conceptualization
Research design	Emergent design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on the nature of Grounded Theory
	Case study of the Tharu movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large socio-cultural and political coverage, and one of the powerful movement in Tarai

3.1.1 Epistemological position

Though the studies on social movement and rural development have grown enormously in recent years, there has been comparatively less engagement for methodological and philosophical debates, particularly in epistemological issues and paradigms. Globally, different methodological approaches sought to discern and analyze the social and cultural process through which meanings and identities are formed and deformed in in the given contexts of power relations. In recent years, the cultural turn in both movement practice and academia has unsettled the domains in all the major school of thoughts involving Marxist, post-, neo-, and non-Marxist studies in social movement and rural studies. This seems true in case of social movement and development studies in Nepal too. Therefore, the researcher positioned himself for the development of methodological pluralism, with a creative interaction with different epistemological approaches and triangulations of methods. This is, indeed, a journey with a passion and challenge what Escobar and Alvarez assert that identifying a social movement ‘involves a complex epistemological process’ (1992, p. 6).

The study began with ‘interpretive’ word view. Unlike the positivist ideas of natural sciences, it switches on subjective realities, as interpreted by the interaction between the researcher and research participants. Society is subjective in nature; it is experienced and structured as we behave and give meaning upon it. Meaning

therefore is constructed and (over time) constantly re-constructed through experience resulting in many differing interpretations. It is these multiple interpretations that create a social reality in which people act in multiple ways (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008a; Law, 2004; Service, 2009). Reviewing these conceptual insights, the researcher came to a question about the subjective nature of social events- the Tharu movement in particular. Further, the relation between researcher and the researched (people/ Tharu movement/ rural development) seems also important to view how the realities are constructed. The researcher's focus was on the understanding of meanings and interpretations of social actors or relationships that constructed the contestation in rural development with the rise of Tharu movement. This epistemology was highly contextual to view the subjective realities within the movement context and the non-material well-being of rural people.

However, some researchers (e.g. Bryman, 2012; Fay, 1993; Henn, Weinstein & Foard, 2009) critically observed that knowledge about the social world is a complex whole of the historical, social and political contexts beyond the simple interpretation of the social world. Society does live with the realism of truths, and the realism is conditioned by the objectivity. Does development follow this? If the development is a contested notion, development could have both subjective constructions as well as objective realities. Then the researcher followed criticalism in order to supplement interpretivist epistemology. The critical research approach is highly influenced by critical theoretical foundation for what Wills (2007) maintains that it tends to 'emphasize relationships that involve inequities and power, and a desirable aspect of critical research involves helping those without power to acquire it' (p. 82). For the researcher, it would rather contribute to creating a discourse, not being confined within the subjective interpretation of Tharu movement. Critique over the ideology of the movement and development has been another rationality of the selection of critical perspective on this research. In doing this, there was a risk of gradual shifting of his academic research persona into an activism like a political activist, probably nearer to a common criticism of critical research, as being supported a political agenda (Hammersley, 1995). Instead, the researcher was convinced with the argument that this is a necessary consequence because politics and inquiry are intertwined or inseparable and, by having an agenda of reform, all participants' lives can be transformed for the better world (Creswell, 2013).

The researcher, therefore, argues that the production of knowledge is not a linear process. Rather, it is dialectical in nature which could be synthesized from

interpretivism and criticalism. The nexus of both the subjective and objective realities is complex though, which makes the content of 'pure research' more problematic. Without the interpretivist investigation, it is impossible to penetrate the objective reality in depth to understand its essential nature and changing dynamics. It is therefore both types of realities are subject of investigation for the social science researcher. To put Engles: "The fact that our subjective thought and the objective world are subject to the same laws, and hence too, that in the final analysis they cannot contradict each other in their results, but must coincide, governs absolutely our whole theoretical thought" (Engels, 1883; as quoted by Woods & Grant, 2007, p. 349).

Methodologically, this dialectic has been justified in the Tharu movement study with the observation of subjective reality (interpretivism) and objective reality (criticalism). Further, the dialectics between subjective reality and objective reality was a kind of epistemological triangulation, which also contributed to increase the trustworthiness of the present study. This argument coincides with the researcher's conception of the Tharu movement, not purely as a pre-determined ethnic movement, rather as a political and economic movement with a larger public sphere and diverse well-being perceptions.

3.1.2 The continuum of ontology and methodology

There is a dynamic and informed relationship between epistemology, ontology, methodology and methods. Some interpretivist researchers methodologically oriented towards a social constructivist approach (constructivism) and focus on the collaborative process of bringing about meaning and knowledge (Black, 2006; Elliott & Lukes, 2008). The present study followed ontology of constructivism, which assumed contestation in rural development as a social phenomenon and its meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors and forces within the society. In other words, the basic idea to follow constructivism was that the rise of ethnic movements and contested development are 'social construction' being produced and developed through a dynamic interaction of different means, forces and relationships in the society. Under the constructive ontology the study proceeded with grounded approach, which was methodologically inductive, i.e. moving from specific ground (Tarai region as a site, and Tharu movement as a case study) to the universal knowledge (theory) system of the world of the contested rural development. The contestations are thus assumed to be collective realities shaped by the particular context of history, politics and economy.

As discussed in Chapter 1, the broader themes of this study include ‘Tharu movement’ and ‘rural development’, which is juxtaposed with a consecutive ‘contestation’. These attributes could be observed in the given context, though they are hardly measurable and quantifiable. The nature of the movement and aspirations of development is itself a qualitative manifestation along with considerable reflexivity, contextuality and fluidity. With this constructivism, the study followed a qualitative approach. Theoretically, it is useful when a phenomenon is observed thoroughly, but needs to be understood as to why the phenomenon is or how the phenomenon came to be. Qualitative methods commonly exist as five approaches including case studies, narratives (hermeneutics), phenomenologies, ethnographies and grounded theories (Berg, Lune & Lune, 2004; Charmaz, 2008; Creswell, 2013; Patton, 1990, 2005). As a particular attribute of qualitative approach, grounded theory is one strategy which follows multiple data sources to a same phenomenon by making a constant comparison, saturation and consequently, a theorization (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glaser, 2005; Glaser & Strauss, 2009; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). More recently,²⁸ grounded theory approach has been described with a constructivist approach, which is referred as “constructivist grounded theory” (Mills, Bonner & Francis, 2006; Charmaz, 2008). Thus, the present study has also followed this constructivist ontological position, which assumes that neither data nor theory are discovered, but are constructed within the given contexts of the phenomena and interaction. In such a setting, this study has made a particular focus in the 1990 to 2014²⁹– as its cutoff point. It was not simply to record changes in its appearance or phenomenal form, but to reveal the nature of the relationship between the movement and underlying contradictions.

3.2 Research Design

The term “research design” is less common in qualitative research due to the semi-structured, flexible and subjective nature of the studies. Punch (1998) very nicely states that it is the research design that situates the researcher in the empirical world,

²⁸ Earlier writings of Juliet Corbin and Anselm Strauss (1990) did not focus grounded theory as a methodological package; but their latest writing (e.g. in 2008) explained pragmatism and symbolic interactionism as the philosophies of grounded theory. Conversely to Strauss and Corbin, Glaser has refuted any kinds of philosophical position arguing that such positions can reduce the broader potential of grounded theory. However, Glaser can be generally cited as the critical realist within the post-positivist paradigm.

²⁹ This period has witnessed major political changes in Nepalese political economy including the People’s movements (1990 and 2006), Maoists conflict (1996-2006), first and second election for Constituent Assembly (2008 and 2013), vacant local bodies (since 2002), and rise of different issues and debates (including identity politics, federalism and state-restructuring) in the process of constitution writing.

and connects the research questions to data. Following Creswell (2012), Frankfort-Nachmias (1996) and Mills, Bonner & Francis (2006), the research design of this study was not linear, but rather a circular or cyclical which involving constantly emerging contexts and upheavals in the study universe. Many researchers (e.g. Babbie, 2007; Bryman, 2008; Flick, 2009) argue that qualitative research design is particularly applicable in in-depth studies based on interpretative epistemology and constructive ontology. Most of the movement researchers and scholars of rural studies also argue for the applicability of qualitative approach, because contestations within the human society or its problems are often conditioned by social relationships. Thus, the present study has followed a qualitative methodology that could encompass complexity of historical, political, social and economic issues.

Assuming the study problem as a social event, this study followed an in-depth case study of TM to analyze the rise of ethnic movements and contested rural development in Nepal. Yin (2009) defines the case study research design as “an inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context” (p. 79). For Ragin and Becker (1992), the aim of case study is the precise description or reconstruction of an event or issue. According to Mills, Durepos and Wiebe (2010), only a few texts deal directly with case studies as a central subject and no encyclopedic reference provides a thorough overview of the design and methods in case study research as a guidance for students, researchers, and professionals who are trying to incorporate case studies into a rigorous research project or program (p. xxxi). Contrarily, some scholars also maintain that the case studies are misunderstood as a type, as well as a method, of qualitative research (Gerring, 2004, p. 341). Because of its holistic nature of the study, some researchers argue that the case study research methodology is best suited to the study that takes critical and interpretive epistemology (Elliot & Lukes, 2008) – which also seems quite relevant in the present study context. Though there were other social and ethnic movements in the country, the TM was best assumed for answering the research questions of contested rural development because of its larger coverage, diverse setting and intensifying trend. The particular case would make the study more focused, typical and instructive to address the research problems. Thus, the case has been selected purposively, theoretically and holistically. However, the researcher did some cross-case studies (of institutions or information-rich participants) in the field, as he needed so in analyzing the movement and theorizing it.

3.3 Grounded Theory Approach

Within the above mentioned world views, the present study followed the grounded theory approach, which has been rooted with the ontology of constructivism. The grounded approach was originally developed by Glaser and Strauss as “a general methodology of analysis linked with data collection that uses a systematically applied set of methods to generate an inductive theory about a substantive area” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 63). Though grounded theory has been developed as an encompassing research strategy in the social sciences since 1970s, still it has been rarely regarded in social movement studies. Many scholars and researchers (Creswell, 2013; Mattoni, 2013) have argued that grounded theory is particularly applicable in analyzing grassroots contentious politics, social change and movement activism. Mattoni (2013) in particular suggests that the grounded theory contributes to enrich the empirical findings as well as shaping the theoretical issues in the cases where political actors are involved in social processes. To add:

Grounded theory is an encompassing research strategy that is widely used in the social sciences, but still disregarded in social movement studies where it received scarce if any attention...In particular, it shows that two foundational traits of grounded theory – the attention to meanings produced by social actors paired with systematic and comparative coding procedures – render this research strategy suitable for empirical investigations on perceptions, identities, emotions and, more in general, cultural dimensions of social movements (p. 3).

In contrast to theory-driven and linear model of the research process, the grounded theory gives priority to the data and the field under study over theoretical assumptions. As the researcher was not following or imposing any particular theory to the subject being studied, his attempt was to theorize empirical data to be found in it. It could be possible only by understanding the construction of meanings and realities from the point of local people and finally through discovering a theory implicit in the data. Empirically, it has focused on the contestation on rural development from the lens of the meanings, perceptions, identities, well-being and expectations from and of the Tharu movement.

The researcher believes that the grounded theory is essentially a constructive approach, and not an ‘empiricism’ of local realities. His field reflections also indicated that ground realities were diverse and could not be measured empirically. In doing so, it could not negate or disregard the traditional or existing theories. The researcher has some distinct observations regarding why and how he adopted this grounded methodology in particular, and not others. The first and basic point of departure in the present study was the lacks and gaps in the scientific and theoretical explanations of

Tharu movement and contested rural development. Instead, there were some questions resulted and unanswered from earlier research works. The third background for applying grounded theory was rapidly changing contexts of movements and the emergence of various issues. The change of rural development regime (paradigms and approaches) was also complex and less articulated to the state-society relations (see Chapter 2). Accordingly, the grounded approach was guided with constructivist ontology as proposed initially in positioning this research project. Finally, the researcher's personal motivation and interest also worked to go with the rural people, to be native and to make research questions explicitly oriented towards the theoretical world.

3.4 Researcher's positioning on the Empirical World

The position of researcher is a crucially important dimension of research to shape and manifest the epistemological and methodological issues. In this study, this is also true. The researcher's position in the present study has been guided by two issues: a) the researcher's perception of social science and reality (and thus TM); and b) reflections on the identities of researchers (non-Tharu) vs. researched (the Tharus).

The Tharu people are small in number compared to the total population of the country, but second largest indigenous population living in the Tarai region. The researcher has chosen an in-depth case study of the movement of the Tharu ethnic group, partly because he was born and grew up in this region in the neighborhood of the Tharus. The second and most important cause for selection of this movement was the researcher's academic interest in the gaps to address the relationship between social movements and rural development. The researcher was born in the rural Nepal in a middle class family. In childhood, he was socialized in such a way that Tharu people were agricultural labors and small farmers. He enjoyed a lot with his Tharu friends receiving their warm greetings, smiling faces, helpful hands and tasty fishes and breads. He learned the Tharu language from them, which now has been one of the research advantages in the field. Unfortunately, most of the friends dropped out the study during the mid-timing of schooling, and this added him a further anxiety. He continued to study, but why not they; the kids of the Tharus and other poor? He saw that even in the serious illness, they could not get health treatment because of poverty and illiteracy. Again the researcher was asking himself "why this was happening?", and he was told that this was because they were poor and they were poor because of their past life. Even the researcher's parents and school teachers socialized him in this way.

But there was another part of the story. Since the researcher's very childhood, some of his friends and elders from the Tharu community blamed the non-Tharus as being "*pagiya-dhahana*" and "*pahadiya*". At their eyes, the Hindu upper caste groups and hilly migrants in the Tarai region were imposing an unbearable exploitation upon them. Thus, they gradually lost their lands and properties being intermixed and cultured with the coming immigrants. Just like other seniors of non-Tharu community members, the researcher's father was often addressed as "*baje*" by the Tharu people. When they came into his home, usually they used to sit in the lower yards. More surprisingly, they also saw that there were some Tharu landlords in his village, who occupied more than half of the agricultural land, and whose children were sent to Kathmandu for study. But, when the researcher grew up and attained a larger exposure into the society, he felt that there must be some causes and explanations of these contradictions, poverty and backwardness. The college life and then the university life where the researcher did shift from pure science background to social sciences – became a place of good learning of society with a multiple eyes. With this, he started to be a regular reader and observer of socioeconomic conditions and contradictions existing political economy of the society.

Meanwhile, as stated earlier, the personal background of the researcher was a non-Tharu and non-ethnic, a member of the so-called upper caste '*Bahun*' (i.e. Brahmin) in the society. In recent years, this mattered to a great concern because Nepali society had been rapidly polarized in terms of the ethnicity and political ideology. The former coupled with different kinds of ethnic movements and the latter with political parties. The ideological schooling of ethnic movements was such that they were mobilizing against the non-ethnic groups, particularly the upper caste Hindus. The *Bahun* and *Chhetri* (BC group) who make about 26 percent of the total population were accused of being a ruler and an exploiter of the rest of the population in the country. Even more loudly the BC groups were blamed as being supporters of non-secularism, Hinduism and federalism. As a researcher belonging this group, and conducting research on the other group was quite challenging for this researcher. But, he had put himself neither as a *Bahun*, nor even as a Tharu, say itself semi-indigenous in nature. When the researcher used to give his introduction as an academic researcher, a member of the Kathmandu University, the research participants gave him a due respect and hospitality. Indeed, people had great respect to intellectuals rather than to a member of a political party, or worker/ researcher from NGO. Some people also asked the

researcher's professional engagement as if he would bring some development projects and funds to uplift their livelihood.

In the field, the researcher saw how people think, behave, perceive and interpret the development, state, politics and movement. During this period, he involved in their farm works and talked with farmers and laborers, and sometimes he talked with housewives and daughters being their guest in their homes. Moreover, he participated and enjoyed their ritual ceremonies and festivals, particularly the *Maghi*, the festival of emancipation. He lived in a home of local people in a paid basis, though they repeatedly denied taking any charge for his lodging and fooding. Some children even from the neighboring homes used to come and surround him, but they never beg money from him, and it was just chocolate that added never-ending smile on their innocent faces. To see rooted feelings and experiences of life in a diverse way, the researcher stayed subsequently in the houses of different groups of society in the field such as ex-Kamaiyas, squatters, movement activists, teachers, government jobholders, local leaders and small farmers. This gave him a great learning that there is a kind of poverty that does not need money at all! He really wondered in the simple, open and catchy lifestyle of the Tharu people who showed an immense love and sympathy, either as brother, son or as a friend. The researcher has tried to incorporate somehow his personal academic background, research experiences and gaps, valuable insights given by the supervisor, and at the core, the people themselves. He has tried a lot to keep his 'impartiality' in the issues, but 'neutrality' is still in favor of those people who are suffering from the existing power relations within the society. As the researcher was also a social product of this society, the research work itself is a part of this social world.

3.5 Detailed Research Process

3.5.1 Defining the study site and research participants

In the study, the researcher's primary goal was an understanding of social processes and contexts rather than obtaining a representative sample in statistical terms. Indeed, the study was intended for a knowledge generation and contribution to the 'study universe' at global level. The nature of knowledge is representative, reflexive and explorative with time, space and actors. Social science research is also a part of this reflexivity. Vedanta literatures of eastern philosophy maintain that knowledge (*Gyan/Vidhya*) is a supreme service to the science, which comprises of *Sat* (being), *Ananta*

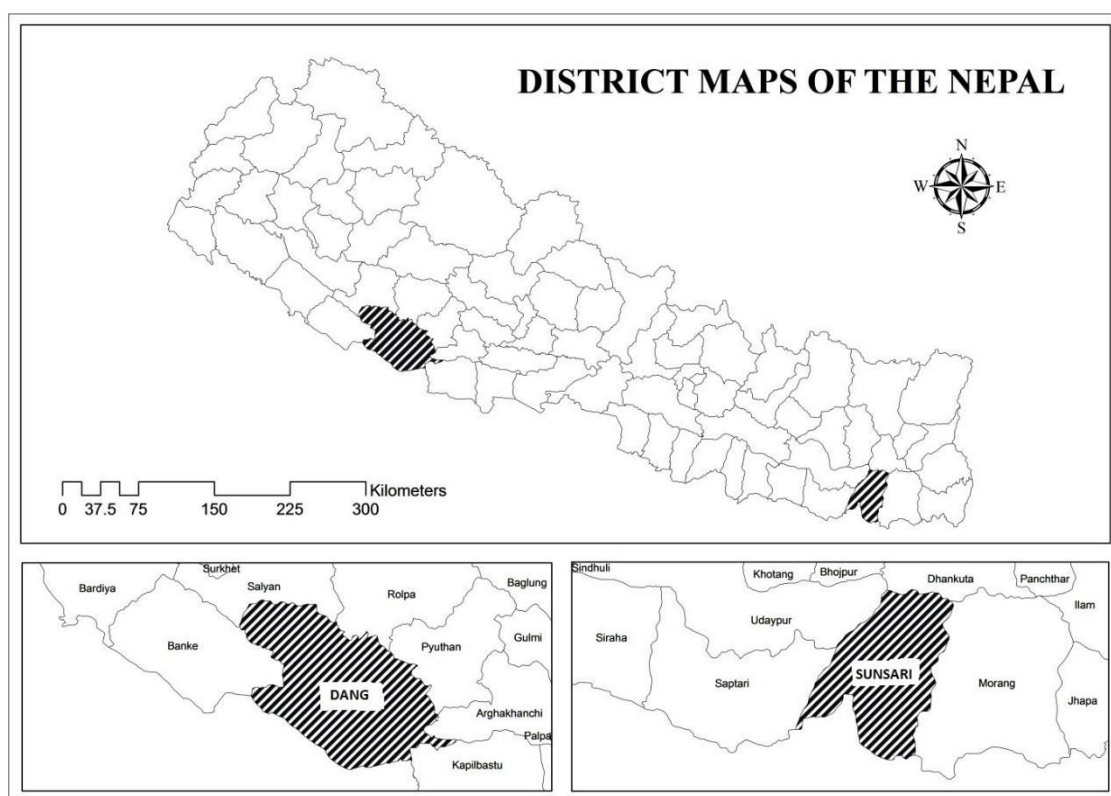
(eternal) and *Ananda* (blissful).³⁰ The question is how to make a part of that science and be representative of that knowledge. Therefore, the researcher followed theoretical sampling, one form of purposive sampling, what grounded theorists perceive as a 'defining property of grounded theory' (Charmaz 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 2008). Based on this ideology, the researcher then delineated conceptual criteria in the selection of study sites. These were: administrative and political setting (locality, site, the presence of government bodies and service delivery), socio-demographic structure (Tharu population and ethnic structure), the intensity of the Tharu movement (historical trends and present scenarios), and market and road linkages. These criteria are developed so as to be compatible with the conceptual framework of the study as the framework has incited political, economic, socio-cultural and organizational factors as crucible dynamics of the contestation.

As illustrated in subsequent discussions of this Chapter (and the Chapter 4 as well), the researcher has purposively selected two districts of the Tarai region of Nepal: Dang, being the representative of the western region and Rapti zone; and Sunsari, of the eastern region and Koshi zone.³¹ The rationality of selecting these two districts had a number of implications. First is the demographic dimension. Tharus are in clear majority and dominant minority respectively in Dang (29.5%) and Sunsari (11.9%). These two districts are among the three districts (including Bardiya another one) of Nepal, where the Tharus are in the majority of population composition. Second, there is a regional factor. Though these two districts lie in the same Tarai region, they are distantly representing the eastern and the mid-western Tarai-Nepal. In this way, the selection would allow the researcher to compare between and contrast the diverse issues and contestations of Tharu movement. Third is the political aspect. Historically, both districts have strong bases of Tharu movement since the establishment of *Tharu Welfare Society* in 1949. In different political regimes, it is evident that these two Tarai districts have showed different kinds of resistance against the central state and state-

³⁰ "That is infinity, this is infinity. The infinity proceeds from that infinity. On taking away this infinity from that infinity, it remains infinity" (Brihandaranyaka Upanishad, 5.1.1). See also Johnston (2014) for the wisdoms of Upanihads from western philosophical context.

³¹ The conventional structure of local levels have been replaced by 753 local units as the government has published the local level restructuring ordinance in Nepal Gazette on 10 March 2017, which is further revised on 11 August 2017. The District Development Committees (DDCs) have been upgraded to the provision of District Coordination Committee (DCO) while Village Development Committees (VDCs) are provisioned to be Rural Municipality. Now onwards, there exist 6 metropolises, 11 sub-metropolises, 276 municipalities and 460 rural municipalities across the country in place of 3,157 VDCs and 217 municipalities that came into existence after the reinstatement of democracy in 1990 and execution of Local Self Governance Act (LSGA) in 1999. See the detail report of restructuring of the local levels at: http://mofald.gov.np/sites/default/files/News_Notices/Final%20District%201-75%20Corrected%20Last%20for%20RAJPATRA.pdf

led development programs (see Maslak et al., 2002; McDonough, 1984, 1989; Regmi, 1976, 2011; and Guneratne, 1998, 2002, 2010). In the changing context of politics after 2006, both the districts have reflected different motives and aspirations for the concern of regional autonomy and ethnic identity. To some extent, the researcher's visits to the region before the drafting of his PhD proposal also revealed such evidences of rising ethnic activism and Tharu movement activities.³²



Map 3.1: The study districts (Dang and Sunsari)

In the preliminary stages of the present research, he visited the most obvious incidents and events in the districts and went to some Village Development Committees (VDCs)³³. He stayed and discussed with local people and representatives of different organizations related to rural development and Tharu movement. Being based on the secondary literatures and information collected from the early field visits, then, the researcher selected two VDCs from each of the districts and made longitudinal field

³² The subsequent maps (3.1 and 3.2) present the location of the study sites indicate the political-administrative landscape of these study sites along with the particular districts (in spotted legends), VDCs and wards (in open legends). These maps are developed by using the GIS method as according to the points and scale as provided by the Department of Survey, Government of Nepal.

³³ In Nepal, VDC is the smallest administrative-political unit, though all of them have been adjusted in the newly formed rural municipalities or in the municipalities. .

studies in 2013 and 2014. The study was conducted in Chailahi and Saudiyar of Dang, and Aurawani and Bhadgaun Sinuwari (Bhasi) of Sunsari. Among the four VDCs, two VDCs – one from each district – (i.e. Chailahi and Bhasi) were more developed, populated and accessible in comparison to the other two VDCs (i.e. Saudiyar and Aurawani). It has made the research implications more interesting to link the issues to local/rural development. Interestingly, on December 3, 2014, while the researcher had already completed his main field visits, the Government of Nepal declared Chailahi VDC as Lamahi Municipality and Bhasi VDC as Ramdhuni Municipality. Both the municipalities have been further extended recently in March 2017. Moreover, Saudiyar VDC has been incorporated into the coverage of Ghorahi sub-metropolitan city and Aurawani VDC has been included into the Gadhi rural municipality as according to the new provision of local levels.



Map 3.2: The study VDCs and their wards of the respective districts

Indeed, the theoretical sampling works by selecting subsequent participants based on the information which emerges from the data already coded (Sarantakos, 2005, p.166). Following this, the researcher initially did PRAs and well-being ranking in all the wards of selected VDCs. Then, the collected data was coded systematically and selectively, which informed to choose next research participants for focused group

discussions and for interviews. The research participants constituted from a broader three groups (satisfying each specific objective) and within the each group; there were again three categorical groups, i.e. questions for poor people, state-actors and non-state actors (see Appendix- A). With this, the coding process continued to make concepts, categories and core categories. Although sampling during the beginning of the study was rather unfocused, it became more focused and saturated as the study progresses. However, as concepts were identified and the theory was started to develop, the researcher needed further data to incorporate and strengthen the emerging findings. In such a condition, he moved to neighbouring VDCs, even revising and reformulating the conceptual framework and questionnaire structure in some cases. All these strategies led to a kind of theoretical saturation, and the sampling process ended when the core categories got repetition.

3.5.2 Tools and techniques of data collection

Social science studies in recent years are taking a growing concern for the use of the participatory approach (Chambers, 2006; Silver, 2008). Though the critics say that all the participatory methods would not necessarily promote the empowerment of local people (DeLyser & Sui, 2013; Pratt, 2002), the present study has followed the approach in a very critical and constructive world view. Right from the beginning, the researcher was impressed with Walsh, Tobin and Graue's (1993, p. 465) ironical lamentation that *"as researchers, we have measured people, but we have not listened to them"*. So, being a grounded methodologist, the researcher promoted the research participants to make voice, engage in debates and discussions, and finally contribute the researcher's theory building process. While doing this, the grounded methodology was supplemented with the following scientific tools of primary data collection:

3.5.2.1 Participatory rural appraisal (PRA) and well-being ranking

Globally, a number of research scholars have outlined different kinds of methodological processes in PRA (e.g. Chambers, 2008; Cornwall and Pratt, 2003; Narayanasamy, 2009). Chambers (1997) describes PRA as a *"new approach and method in which rural people themselves do much of the investigation, presentation, analysis, planning and dissemination than has been normal in the past"* (p. 150). This definition has acknowledged the significance of methods, attitudes and behaviour, and sharing as the three pillars of PRA. The researcher followed this notion further as the holistic approach of methods that enabled and empowered the local people and promoted their sharing and analysis in a participatory way. It would foster the local

contexts and meaning of well-being from the view point of people, who were claimed to be 'represented' by the Tharu movement and 'incepted' by the rural development. This was really a challenging task under the conventional methods because of diverse rural setting, multiplicity of livelihood strategies, widening of poverty or wealth indicators, and highly polarized social structure in terms of caste/ethnicity and the then context of constitution writing in the country.

Before going into the depth of the discussion, therefore, the researcher invited many people in the respective wards/ villages, involving both the Tharus and non-Tharus and were asked to reflect and map out the major socio-economic and natural resources as located in their community. The locally-enumerated research assistants had helped to gather the people and facilitate the discussion. The terms and concepts of resources were conceptualized as their means of living, local infrastructures, services, public goods and services, and so on. The local people in turn seemed quite participatory and used to draw the sketch of such resources on their own. In some villages, however, they facilitated the researcher to sketch out. The sketching and mapping of the resources did not take much time as compared to the time it took for gathering of the people in nearby public places, e.g. school ground, VDC ground, front of temple, any kind of open spaces, home of badhghar, and or accessible public land. The researcher was quite ethical to maintain the discussion at most of the leisure time of the local people (off-farm time) or the time of public gathering (e.g. in around the days of *maghi* festival). Moreover, the participation of the people in some cases was of elite dominating which has twisted the issue to be politically sensitive. In that condition, for example in the cases of divisions of the opinions (e.g. in Saudiyar 5, Chailhai-5, Aurawani-7 and Bhasi-7), the researcher postponed the mapping and it was performed by visiting the ward and assessing the resources by himself own.

In few cases, it was also observed that the mapping of the resources and following discussions were highly affected by the mutual presence of the different kinds of people with different caste/ ethnic backgrounds and class interests. The presence of landlord and tenants in Aurawani-7 and presence of Kamaiya and their masters in Chailhai-5 were some of the reflective examples. The presence of recently freed Kamlaharis and their owner was also more conflicting in many villages of Chailahi and Saudidyar of Dang. The public water resources which were set in Dalit tole of Aurawani was not counted as 'public resource' by many Mushars and Doms as they were denied to use the water of these sources, including wells.

A brief review of literatures reveal that well-being ranking is particularly important in accessing different dimensions of well-being, such as capturing local perspectives, analysing social factors and shaping people's experiences of poverty and determine their priorities (Cornwall & Brock, 2005). On the other hand, World Bank (1999) has focused on the qualitative and human categories of the well-being, including happy, doing well, pulling along, facing difficult times, and miserable life. However, the researcher perceived the well-being concept as more relative, fluid and dynamic process. He used this approach in a broader and more inclusive or extended version of wealth ranking. It was concerned not only with the economic security and physical health but also, and most importantly with the subjective status of mind and social-power relationships – which could value in the construction of social and ethnic movements in the region.

For well-being ranking, the study concerned both the distribution of well-being across the whole population (Tharu and non-Tharu) and the extent of wellbeing enjoyed by a particular individual, or community (i.e. the Tharu). It has led the researcher towards an important aspect that had been previously overlooked. It was about the question of *how* people experience well-being—the analysis was not just an objective or material components of wellbeing, but also the subjective, socially and culturally constructed experience of well-being as a whole. For this, the researcher has followed participatory methods and performed three levels of observation. The first was what people had or didn't have (material and human resources and access to social relationships or institutions). The second was what – why people did or didn't or could not do with these resources and institutions (e.g. collective action, mobilization and participation in the movement). The third was how people judged, assessed, and felt about these things; how they made or could not make sense of what happened (i.e. meaning and interpretation). After this kind of ranking and mapping, the researcher's team³⁴ also mapped the existing organizations (termed as 'actors') in the villages and went through a Venn diagram. It helped the researcher for institutional and leadership analysis of Tharu movement from a point of rural development.

There are two prominent methods of well-being ranking in social science research: a) ranking by card sorting; and b) criteria-based card sorting, ranking and mapping method (Narayanasamy, 2009). Purposively, the study followed the second one,

³⁴ The team included the researcher himself and two local research assistants from the Tharu community - one being male and one female - locally hired and paid nominally. Their role was to introduce the local context and to assist the research process accordingly.

though avoided the card sorting process. It gave the researcher overall mapping and ranking of the local rural setting of life and resources. It also helped in conducting semi-structured interviews and identifying the focused group(s) of different social strata. Furthermore, it contributed to the much wider recognition of contextual, subjective and non-material dimensions of poverty and well-being, movement and development contestation.

3.5.2.2 Venn diagramming

Venn diagram, also called as “chapatti diagram” in Indian social research tradition has been used in the study to supplement the well-being ranking (Narayanasamy, 2009). It is a kind of visual depiction of key institutions, organizations, leaders and their relationship with the local community or other groups. In Dang and Sunsari, there were wide networks of different organizations established to serve or represent the social, economic, political, cultural, and other interests of the people. During PRA and well-being ranking people were also asked to map out the different kinds of organizations in terms of their size, distance and relationship.

The tool has been used for the context of institutional and leadership analysis. For this, the researcher had some analytical questions to map out the organizations, which include: What are the various types of organizations functioning in the rural areas? What are their roles and responsibilities? Do they really represent the local people? What the people perceive about them and their importance and effectiveness? To answer these questions, the following steps have been followed:

- a) *Accessing the types of organizations*: the organizations were broadly categorized into two forms: i) State actors (the GOs) and ii) non-state actors (I/NGOs, CBOs, SHGs, MOs).
- b) *Accessing the roles and responsibilities of the organizations*: in particular, how they formulate and implement the development projects and service delivery; how they network with protest activities and linked to the Tharu movement
- c) *Accessing the relationship among the organizations*: the relationship between NSAs and SAs; the relationship between NSAs and between MOs

- d) *Assessing the perceptions of people regarding the effectiveness of organization*: People's representation and participation in the Tharu movement and their well-being through the movement
- e) *Assessing the effectiveness of the leaders (Accountability)*: distance of leaders' households (far, near) and locality of the leaders (rural, urban or both)

While carrying out these analytical steps, the researcher has aligned with the complexity of local contexts and political settings of the participation. In the diagram, the political organizations and actors (e.g. political parties) reported as the most powerful agency for movement which also played decisive role in the local development. Though a few Tharus from well-off ranking had direct access to the leadership of political parties, it was almost denied for the marginalized and poor people. Most of the local political parties were run by the district offices which are located in the headquarters. This might cause delay in decision making but few people in the village would decide on behalf of party. Social welfare groups and saving groups have been also mushrooming that that provided wider opportunities for the Tharus to be a part of social network. However, these organizations were less influential for the local power sharing. In a broader perspective, the researchers have categorized these organizations/ actors, which were then labelled as state actors and non-state actors. The researcher felt that to identify different actors of movement and their contestations in the rural development was really a political game because of the different interests of the actors. This is exactly a sensitization of participatory method as a political and institutional affair as what some scholars (e.g. Adler, Adler & Rochford 1986; Cooke & Kothari, 2001; De Laine, 2000) argue in the context of field research.

3.5.2.3 Focus group discussions (FGDs)

Focus groups are discussions within a small group, moderated by a researcher, and oriented to obtain information on specific issues. The participation of people and their engagement in discussion is the technical part of the FGDs while the use of local pedagogy, politics and power relations are most striking issues to be considered for the critical researchers (Barbour, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). The use of FGD does not seem new to the rural studies though it is recently taking broader audience of social movement researchers. In the present context too, as the Tharu movement is a group activity networked with different groups and organizations, the FGD seems theoretically as well as empirically suitable method for in-depth case study.

After conducting PRA and making well-being ranking and Venn diagrams, the researcher got well-informed about local setting of life in the villages. There were many local groups and organizations, for example, the mothers' groups, youth clubs, co-operatives, saving groups, labour groups, welfare groups, and non-governmental organizations. These groups/organizations have been an inevitable part of local power relationship and provided substantial amount of networks for the Tharu movement. The movement was backed up by a number of activists, leaders, cadres, people, supporters as well as opponents. These groups and people were information-rich research participants for the purpose of this study, and thus contributed as the 'focus groups' both theoretically and methodologically.

In the discussions, the researcher (and his team) requested the research participants (the focus groups) to discuss and share their ideas collectively on the themes related to the research questions of this study. The main themes were about the agenda, network, leadership, representation and well-being that were finally interpreted from the point of contested rural development. These themes were informed by the people themselves during the process of PRA. The researcher's team facilitated the discussion by presenting the queries about the local issues of development and movement, and then initiated the interaction trying to involve all the participants and to cover some main topics. They made skilful moderation to clarify the problems, categorize/phrase/sequence the questions, probe answers, and convincing ending. It allowed the researcher not only to observe the construction of individual opinions, but also their collective vision and experience about the local politics and Tharu movement. Most of the FGDs contributed to assess how the collective identities were formed, deformed and transformed among the groups of people, including women, farmers, Kamaiyas, Kamlaharis, state actors, movement leaders and followers.

In turn, the FGDs have contributed for the contextualization of local problems and a perspective of contestation, what Chambers (2006) rightly calls "reversal of the learning". To have such reversal, the researcher has followed a number of basic considerations in maintaining the group discussion in the field. They included mutual trust, open and purposive learning, debriefing and assimilation, participatory discussion, spot analysis, cross-checking, probing, validating the data gathered, and so on. However, as discussed elsewhere in the thesis, the sensitivity of the movement and its political nature, the researcher felt some methodological challenges when using discussion and interviews with the movement activist, looking at major issues of discussion (e.g. debated issues of constitution and different positions) and selection of

participants. The terms like '*pahadiya shasak*' (the ruler from the hill), '*bahun*' (the upper caste Hindu), '*sarkarko manchhe*' (fellow from of the government), '*thula partiko manchhe*' (fellow of the major political parties), '*Tharu ra janjati birodhi*' (anti-Tharu and anti-indigenous nationalities), and '*dalarbadi*' (worker for the foreigners for money) were occasionally used in some forums and discussions, though not at the very grassroots levels of people.

3.5.2.4 Semi-structured interviews (SSIs)

Doing interview in the qualitative inquiries is highly acknowledged in global literatures (Hopf, 2004a). This tool has been increasingly used in the grounded methodological approaches (Charmaz, 2003b; Charmaz & Belgrave, 2012). They are of different types; used frequently according to the nature of study. Semi-structured interview (SSI) is extensively used in qualitative studies, where most of the questions and topics are not pre-determined and close-ended, allowing the research participations freedom of expression. In social movement studies, relative scarcity of systematic collections of documents or reliable databases gives in-depth interviews even more importance for the study of motives, belief, attitudes, identities and emotions of movement activists and participants (Blee & Taylor, 2002). Even in the study of rural villages and rural life, there is a crucial gap in linking the SSIs to the anthropological perspectives of rural development and livelihood.

In the beginning, the researcher was not pre-determined about the number of interviews and group discussions. Instead, a semi-structured format was developed and used that allowed the research participants flexibility to expand their views (see Appendix-A). These questions were categorized and structured with the research objectives and questions. The research participants for interview were theoretically informed and selected upon previous group discussions and well-being ranking. Interviews were conducted in each village at the appropriate location; in a private room, in a farm and even in a work place. The researcher conducted most of the activist's interviews in formal office settings. One disadvantage with formal settings was constant phone calls and visitors' frequent interruptions. He took notes of physical actions by the participants, such as pauses, hand gestures, laughing, sweetening and silence. Interviews were audio-taped, which latter were translated and transcribed. Initial coding was performed accordingly.

Though the transcribing was a long and discursive process, it made the researcher closer to the depth of data. From the beginning of data entry and coding decisions, all the coded data was reviewed with the research assistants to ensure that the foci of each participant's response were accurately reflected. This led to form categories, which were conversing into core categories. With this, the researcher identified further interviewees, possibly the information-rich participants, including teacher, movement activists or leaders, participants and opponents, journalists, civil society leaders, poor or vulnerable people, and so on. For instance, while the researcher was in Bargaun village of Chailahi, a category of religious intervention was emerged during the data collection, and dragging with the category he followed the Swargadhvari Guthi administration, which was in Pyuthan district.

The length of the interviews ranged from approximately 30 to 45 minutes. The interviews were supplemented and triangulated with the other methods, such as well-being ranking, focus group discussion, memo-writing, observation and coding. While doing so, the researcher was going into the depth and opened all the doors and windows of interpretation. This was what Glaser termed as listening "with a big ear" (Glaser, 2001, p.175). These questions were comprised to elicit all the information, opinion, bias, emotions, and experiences the participant has had regarding the issue. Open question, for example, "do you think that the Tharu movement has represented your voices?" was a key to focus on the perceptions of the research participant's regarding their well-being from the movement. The question further led to other questions, such as "how are development issues manifested in the agendas of movement? What is the role of state in the cause of movement?" This supported the grounded theory approach of obtaining data relevant to both the core phenomena and uncovering causal conditions within the constant comparative analysis process.

When the researcher interviewed activists, there were a few incidents or exchanges that revealed how ethnicity and identity were woven into the very fabric of Nepali society. Some activists would directly point to his Brahmin caste and class and his current education in Kathmandu to make their points on the Tharu's historical exclusion, oppression, and their present-day movement. Using the abstract terms such as human dignity, equality and identity, they would often question on his identity of caste and class.

During such times the researcher acknowledged the kind support of research participants thereby introducing himself as a post-graduate student who is working

only for an academic research. He convinced them that he was also inherently a rural, who studied in a governmental school in the Nepali medium. He born and grew up in the society of western Tarai where many caste/ethnic groups were residing together and Tharu community was in the majority of them. He had many friends and intimate social groups who belonged to this community and thus he had a strong association with Tharuhood. Indeed, it was not very easy at times as the researcher struggled with many questions. Every evening, he maintained a field note in detail and developed memos, sometimes till the midnight, even in candlelight to maintain an open and honest listening with himself. At times he had many questions and experienced ambiguities, emotions and frustrations. But, he was balanced with personal accountability, making everything as a valuable source of data.

3.5.2.5 Direct observation

In the recent years, observation is taken in a broader sense, including not only 'seeing' and 'hearing', but also 'perceiving' the context (Krishnaswami, 2009). Through participation observation in social movement studies, researchers attempt to gain insights into mobilization processes as they take place, and understand activism from within (Balsinger & Lambelt, 2013; McCurdy & Uldam, 2014). In particular, direct observation method has been also described as a part of participant observation (Denzin, 1989). Denscombe (2013) argues that direct observation method is useful when the thing we observe is collective and observable. However, as Angrosino and Mays de Pérez (2000) argue, rethinking in observation is becoming crucial in contemporary research which would link the methods of observation to its context.

The issue of rethinking observation is not exceptional to the study of ethnic movements. In case of the Tharu movement, it was case sensitive in terms of political, ethnic and regional orientations. Due to different kinds of agitations and strategies, there were some methodological challenges to participate with people or events for observation. On the other hand, Tharu movement itself had some emotional issues including ethnicity, and there was a kind of polarization and fragmentation in the society. Being a member of so-called upper caste Brahminic hegemony (locally perceived as *Bahaunbad*), the researcher's participation in the activities of Tharu indigenous ethnic group was not so easy. He was well-familiar to Tharu language and ritual practices; therefore he followed the direct observation method – to observe the activities of people in their own context. In this process, he gained access to the field and activities at first. Then he made the observation process more concentrated and

concrete on the aspects of his research questions. His accesses to the field sites, familiarity with the local culture of the Tharus and climatic conditions of Tarai, long stay and rapport building in the field have facilitated the process of observation.

The researcher observed and sensed the activities of different groups or organizations, strikes, mobilization of people, meeting, artefacts, slogans, posters and pamphlets, space or location, conferences and public gathering or demonstration, time and feeling and expressions of people about the movement. The observation grasped the natural social context in which these significant events occurred, and in turn, which were affecting local development. However, the researcher felt some methodological challenges about how to get access to movement activities, what to observe, what roles to play, how to interact with activists, how to learn from observation and note taking, and how to generalize the insights gained so far. Going into the real life and being native like Tharu people was, really a difficult. Some activists of the movements did not like the researcher's participation in the movement affairs because he was not of Tarai-origin; rather he was an outsider and a man of state privileges. A bitter experience to lament here was that once while he was observing *Dang banda* in Lamahi bazaar, some Tharu guys came towards him and asked his personal identification (ID card), blaming him to be a man of security forces in civil dress. They seized his diaries and mobiles. After a while, when the researcher requested and convinced their leaders, they released him.

3.5.2.6 Cases

The cases have been very common fashion in contemporary social sciences research. However, the case study method has certain issues as research design (Gomm, Hammersley & Foster, 2000; Yin, 2009). In a broader perspective, the study remains in an in-depth case study of the Tharu movement (see also in Chapter 3). Within the broader case study of the Tharu movement, the researcher found a number of particular cases for its theoretical saturation. Charmaz (2006) suggested that including discrepant cases in the final analysis could increase the thematic representation. These thematic representations can be well-manifested into the case studies to enrich the epistemological dignity of the research (Elliott, and Lukes, 2008). Therefore, the researcher took some cases from each ward or villages, which were particularly informative and constructive. The cases were followed after the conduction of PRA, FGD and SSIs- as informed by them. Cases from movement organizations, development programs, local social control systems and information-rich participants

were studied. The researcher was highly inspired by the cases of some of Kamaiyas and Kamalaries, the bonded men and women, who told this researcher that they did not occupy any space in the mainstream Tharu movement nor were they included in the mainstream development. During the study of such cases, the researcher earned many brothers and sisters in his life. He felt that everything in this world is not rational, and social science researchers are too part of this world. The researcher should go to interpret the dichotomy of 'rational-real' and 'rational-moral'. One of them was the case of an ex-Kamlahari from Chailahi Dang, who told:

My life was a part of slavery and part of victory: equal, equal...but I wanted to destroy it brother...I denied the rule of the God who punished me like a slave. What was my sin and curse? So, I want to take birth again, and not being a Kamlahari!! [Based on personal conversation, 13 July, 2014]

3.6 Organization of the Field Work and Data Collection

Field work is fundamental for much social science researches, and this remains not exceptional to the social movement studies (Malthaner, 2013). However, some researchers alert that the field work is a larger reflection of researcher's identity, knowledge and power (Adams, 1999). Simultaneously, this becomes a more critical and sensitive task for development researchers and practitioners. In this particular study, there were many choices and dilemma too, but the field setting was difficult. There was a kind of "hostile" environment for the social science researchers from non-ethnic background because of highly polarized society and frequent violent agitations. As mentioned earlier in Chapter 3, the researcher visited the fields many times and conducted the study during which he encountered different kinds of interpretations about him and his works. The local people were not very positive to the Kathmandu-based researcher like him. Some people also asked him as if he was a cadre of a political party which remained against the Tharu movement. In some places, people provoked him as if he was doing a dollar-centric work for generating income through I/NGOs. On the other hand, his identity as Brahmin with Nepali as a mother tongue was not so much favored by the Tharu movement activists. To make a rapport, he stayed among the Tharu people, worked with them, played with their kids and shared their language.

Table 3.2: Conduction of primary data tools and explanation

Tools	Number of performance			Explanation and remarks
	Dang	Sunsari	Total	
PRAs	18	18	36	In each ward of the VDCs; collected general background of the villages, livelihood, settlements, resources and institutions
FGDs	18	18	36	In each ward 2-FGDs, as what the information of PRA informed (including general people, state actors and non-state actors)
SSIs	24	23	47	In each ward 1-2 SSIs, as theoretically informed by the FGDs (some of them beyond the wards/ VDCs)
Cases	7	6	13	1 case in each ward; theoretically important
Observation			Many	Occasional to the demonstrations, meetings of local groups or clubs
Memos/notes			Many	In each day/method, particularly in the evening
Maps			Many	During PRA; also use of secondary maps
Photos			Many	During the collection of data and observation

With the rise of Madhesi movement in 2007, Tharu movement became strong and active. There were other ethnic movements in the country which were fighting for the ethnic rights and identity. The movement of Nepal federation of indigenous nationalities (NEFIN) was becoming collective for such ethnic movements including the Tharu one. As a result, political polarization increased and it led to the gradual breakdown of previously established social relationships. Particular in the visit of Sunsari district, there was an open threat of non-state armed groups, and there was a kind of hostility between Madhesi movement and Tharu movement. Everything was changing rapidly. Because of insecurity and unpredictability in violence-ridden contexts, the researcher faced different problems in negotiating access, difficult field relations, and threats to the security of their respondents and themselves. The Table 3.2 describes a summary of the adoption of primary tools with a brief justification.

In grounded theory approach, the study of society becomes both omnivorous and insider at times in terms of methods and perspectives. Everything becomes data which then constructs and informs multiple social realities in the given context. Following this, the researcher had set an epistemological domain of the research participants in particular context their caste/ethnic background, sex, involvement in different networks and so on. As reflected in Table 3.3, there were total 36 FGDs in both the districts, 18 in each, which involved 134 participants from Dang (73 male and 61 female) and 127 from Sunsari (68 male and 59 female). In case of the SSIs, it was also reflective that majority of the respondents were male as compared to the female ones. The

researcher conducted 47 SSIs in total where he followed 21 females and 26 males. In total sampling structure of the FGDs and SIs, there was participation of 141 female and 167 male. The participation of male in movement was comparatively intensive and eventually it needed more sampling units for the saturation in both the districts.

Table 3.3: Representation of the research participants

Tools	Total cases (units)	Female	Male	Representative from the state actors	Representative from the non-state actors	Ethnic groups	Non-ethnic groups	Total participants
Dang district								
FGD	18	61	73	44	90	85	49	134
SSI	24	11	13	7	17	16	8	24
Sunsari district								
FGD	18	59	68	36	91	74	53	127
SSI	23	10	13	7	16	16	7	23
Total (Dang and Sunsari)		141	167	94	214	191	117	308

Accordingly, participants from the state-actors (including local authorities/ bureaucrats) were less as compared to the participation of non-state actors (including the movement actors/ leaders/ participants or non-participants). It was equally applicable for the FGDs (44 from state actors and 90 from non-state actors in case of Dang, while 36 and 91, respectively in Sunsari) and SSIs (7 from state actors and 13 from non-state actors in case of Dang, while 7 and 16, respectively in Sunsari). In case of the SSIs, it was also reflective that majority of the respondents were male as compared to the female ones. In total sampling structure, there were 94 participants who were affiliated to the state-actors and 214 who were affiliated to any kinds of non-state actors, or were the members of civil society groups. In terms of caste/ ethnic background, the theoretical sampling was saturated along with the higher number of research participants from ethnic groups including the Tharus (191) as compared to the non-ethnic groups including the Dalits, Madhesis and other caste groups (117). It is followed in both the FGDs and SSIs in both districts. It was due the active participation of Tharu people in the movement and other ethnic affiliations of the people.

3.7 Strategies and Quality Measures

The qualitative approach is itself a science of in-depth investigation upon a given context of social sciences. If this is further adapted with grounded theory, then it becomes more case-sensitive and challenging to make the researcher more insider for an intensive study. This study therefore follows Tracy (2010)'s model which aims to build quality in qualitative research. The eight key markers of such quality standards include: (a) worthy topic, (b) rich rigor, (c) sincerity, (d) credibility, (e) resonance, (f) significant contribution, (g) ethics, and (h) meaningful coherence. This eight-point conceptualization offers a useful pedagogical strategy which goes beyond a rhetoric of empiricism upon the feelings of the Tharu and other non-Tharu people in the villages. Moreover, the researcher rejects the linearity of these attributes and critically observes the essentialism. Rather, he would argue that the tools of study of Tharu movement and rural development become mutually inclusive, representative, trustworthy and reliable.

3.7.1 Triangulation

In social science, triangulation has been simply defined as the mixing of data or methods so that diverse viewpoints or standpoints investigate research question(s) in order to enhance confidence and the trustworthiness in the findings. However, different scholars (e.g. Denzin 1989, 2012; Flick, 2004a, 2004b, 2009) have perceived triangulation from different explanation. Denzin, for example, identified four basic types of triangulation, i.e. data, investigator, theory, and methodological (Denzin, 1989). In this researcher's point of view, however, triangulation does not exist in isolation just as a research strategy to improve research quality and consistency. Rather, it is related and guided by the epistemology. Since this study followed interpretive-critical epistemology with constructivist ontology, its reflection could be seen in the triangulation process as well.

Thus, there had been an assumption that the realities rooted with the Tharu movement and contested rural development were multiple, and therefore, socially constructed. That is, the contestation had enduring elements that would have been emerged from persistent patterns of social relations. Indeed, there were different issues and research questions to be theorized with grounded theory approach. The triangulation allowed the researcher to integrate a variety of qualitative approaches and devices into a more general (and emerging) research design during the study. Though the study did not

follow any established model or typology of triangulation, Table 3.4 presents a brief outline of the triangulation strategy adopted therein.

Table 3.4: Triangulation types in the study

SN	The Dimensions	The Strategies
1	Epistemological and ontological	Interpretive and constructive; inductive and dialectical
2	Methodological, and methods	Primary and secondary data triangulation; triangulation within primary data tools: PRA, FGDs, SSIs, Cases, Observation
3	Time	Every year of PhD field visits, i.e. 2012, 2013, 2014
4	Spatial	Wards, toles, VDCs, western-eastern, remote and non-remote localities, compare and contrast
5	Contextual	Filed visit in the different hours of the movement; peak or passive

The use of several methods as triangulation created some methodological confusion regarding the way of conversing and complementing the results. The results were even contradictory at first. In such case, the researcher was not so much worried about the conformabilities of the results; rather he searched for possible theoretical categories and explanations where these interpretations (including differences) came from. Moreover, use of several methods also raised some ethical issues. It was because of the some of the repetitions of research participants (in PRA, FGDs, SSIs, and observation). When the researcher approached the participants with questions and interventions again and again, individually or publicly, this was becoming a confrontation for them and there was a risk of burdening the research. In the meantime, another problem was about addressing too heterogeneous aspects of the Tharu movement. Involvement of Tharus, non-Tharus, state-actors and non-state actors as a research participants increased a credible trustworthiness of the research. The study sites of Dang and Sunsari, being a distant and comparative one, has been also a kind of site triangulation. As a part of theoretical analysis, this would add a depth and generalization of the study.

As stated earlier, several methods were used to ensure the trustworthiness of this study, supplementing and complementing each other. This study included continuous interactions with the research participants until the data was saturated. In his repeated visits, the researcher tried to return to the participant's villages to verify that the emerging findings (categories) reflect their world view. Using field notes and memos,

he continuously constructed his thoughts, feelings, approaches to the study and personal observations what was occurring in the data collection process and what factors might have caused inconsistencies in the interpretation. Memo writing helped a lot to conceptualize the data in narrative form, where he integrated different types of notes reflecting observation, methods, theory and personal feelings. The below is a simple case of a Tharu movement leader in one of the study sites of the researcher. The leader had multiple viewpoints even in the same issue, for which the researcher followed regularly and observed with his curious eyes. Through triangulating these perspectives into different contexts (places, dates, and political changes), the researcher critically analyzed the relative importance of these realities.

The Tharu movement has nothing to fight against the local caste/ethnic groups and the Madhesi. They are our friends and brothers. We have direct and final confrontation against the state. We could share different federal states in the Tarai region for these brothers. No problem! [21 March, 2014 in a FGD, Lamahi, Dang]-----Voice 1

Different caste/ethnic groups and Madhesi are strategically mobilized against the Tharu movement. So, we have to fight against the local enemies at first and then the enemy at the center [Kathmandu]. We are the first settlers of the Tarai region of Nepal; the others are the newly migrants. They should live here [in the region] as our guests. [29 May, 2014 in a public speech among the movement participants, Ghorahi, Dang]--- --Voice 2

We should participate in the elections of Constituent Assembly to promote the political representation of the Tharu. [19 July 2013, in an interview with the researcher, Chailahi, Dang]-----Voice 3

All the Tharu leaders should boycott the Constituent Assembly; this is a reactionary platform which defeated most of the Tharu leaders. [2 December 2013, addressing a press meet, Kathmandu]-----Voice 4

Let us unite all the Tharus for our common goal of emancipation. Let us fight against our own corrupted Tharu leaders who sold Tharu identity with the Madhesi. [7 June 2014, addressing a meeting in TWS, Lamahi, Dang]-----Voice 5

We are in protective position of the movement. To save the movement aspirations and to encourage the people's mobilization, now our minimum program should be of making an alliance for the collective movement including all the ethnic groups and Madhesi caste groups. It will ensure our rights and identities in the upcoming Constitution. [3 July 2014, in a journalistic paper, Kathmandu]-----Voice 6

3.7.2 Ethical considerations

Ethics is a branch of philosophy concerned with the principles, methods and perspectives of behavior or morality in terms of right and wrong. In recent years, research ethics has become more crucial for qualitative studies. However, this does not seem to be a big issue for most of the grounded theory scholars (e.g. Charmaz, 2006; Hopf, 2004b). As a grounded theorist, the researcher perceived ethics as a

social product of learning and social schooling of acting. It led him to learn and practice ethics within the research process. He was determined in his professional competence, objectivity, honesty, sincerity, beneficence and responsibility.

From the very beginning, there was a theoretical question regarding the researcher's personal attitude often speaking about himself, which would impose his research work far from, and irrelevant to, the very objective of the study. Some researchers argue that this kind of speaking consequently creates an artificial divide between the practice of social change and the study of such efforts (Croteau et al., 2005, p. xii-xiii; as quoted in Della Porta, 2014). To address this issue, the researcher was ethically balanced with the potential tensions between the research contents (social groups, organizations and participants of the villages) and the contexts (existing contestations, movements and conflict) under study. This strategy was adopted for maintaining a harmony between the researcher and the research participants/ universe. Further, the present study also included ethical issues of no biasness, theoretical sampling, and the validity of results obtained. Regarding these ethical issues, the researcher was well instructed by his supervisor (and the team) too. They offered some practical recommendations for conducting research, tracing out possible opportunities and obstacles, and dealing with moral issues and security in the conflict-prone field sites coupled with his personal identity beyond the research world (i.e. non-Tharu and Brahmin).

The researcher was provided with the University's letter of request and thus he got permissions for the field study from the local bodies (VDCs). There he followed the legal and local standards with fully informed consent of the participants disclosing the research procedures. He neither overstated about his research nor understated in terms of process and outcomes. He exposed with the movement activists, participants, opponents and representatives of different actors. But, he was ethically dedicated to maintain their rights of privacy and confidentiality of secret information and personal sentiments. Principally, he paid due respect to the 'rights to privacy' and 'protection of anonymity'. But, as a critical researcher, he had revealed their power perceptions and political negotiations in an original texture and feelings. The researcher had a strong belief that all kinds of knowledge generations, including the PhD thesis are a historical documentation of the particular social life, so the people should be acknowledged in their history to foresee their future too. Paulo (1968) would call such exercises a credulous act to stimulate the pedagogy of the oppressed.

Despite this, it led him to be far from any kinds of emotional participation and misrepresentation in movement affairs. Neither the study followed any plagiarism (cheating or copying) nor did it deny Intellectual Property Rights. Though the researcher belonged to a non-Tharu background, he committed to respect local culture, language, traditions, unity, belief systems, ethnic unity, norms and values. He avoided any kinds of harming individuals and groups. He did not take any position in movement affairs and development works, but he participated in some of cultural celebrations, public meetings and hearings. In mapping the contestation, different issues and concepts were followed rather than any kinds of events or persons. Empirically they were, however, political issues. Then, the researcher felt that in political affairs, maintaining ethics was quite difficult. Rather, the ethics – what the researcher ideally set earlier – itself used to become politics in some context as Punch (1998) highlights its political sensitivity. In this way the researcher rejects the notion of outsider in research making claims that a qualitative researcher would go to the field to the depth, engage with the social life of people therein and analyzes the insights gained so far. Then, who is an outsider and how does s/he become as such? Following with this methodological criticism, the researcher has become an insider and inductive in the present study.

There is an abundant scholarship regarding the ethical dilemmas in qualitative research (e.g. Adler, 2002; De Laine, 2000), though a few of them reveal about its applicability in the social movement research (e.g. Milan, 2013).³⁵ Keeping this fact in mind, the researcher was quite eager to see whether there was any relationship between the research ethics and responsibility of the researcher himself. Adler et al. (1986) argue that it is the ethical responsibility of the researcher to “tak[ing] those [the findings] back to the field” (p. 371). This ethical consideration led the researcher to address the methodological concerns with tracking the findings with the local people again. Probably it was not only due to the ‘subject matter of Tharu movement and rural development’ but also due to the attracting power of local people, who loved the researcher very much and taught him many things about the life and society they lived. In being so and doing that, the researcher never played a role of activist or emancipator, though his research was theoretically oriented towards emancipatory

³⁵For Milan (2014), engaging with ethics in social movement research implies ‘interrogating our role as researchers, by addressing the divide between research, action, and policy making, as well as the differences between the organizational cultures of academia and activism, respectively’ (p. 447).

approach as he followed interpretive-critical research design. In future days, there will be regular follow up of post-study relations and experiences.

3.8 The Process of Data Analysis

In qualitative studies, data analysis is really a struggling task (Flick, 2009; Huberman & Miles, 1998). Corbin and Strauss (2014) described data analysis as a process of breaking down, organizing, and reassembling data to develop a different understanding of phenomena. Though the theory building is not a linear process, it, indeed has a systematic tools and argumentations. As reflected in Figure 3.1, the detailed research process includes six stages in a cyclic manner, which is adapted from Charmaz (2006) and Glaser (2005). The sub-sequent steps simply illustrate the process of data generation, analysis and theory building. First, following theoretical sampling and coding in a constant way the researcher visited the proposed districts, selected VDCs and each of the wards. The logical flow of causes and consequences of the contestation was shaped by the constantly emerging concepts, categories and core-categories. The concepts were condensed to categories and the categories further condensed into core-categories. Finally the core-categories were saturated and it gave rise to a new theoretical model as explained in the Chapter 8. In between all the stages, coding was constantly done and maintained constant comparison in the emerging issues and their trends.

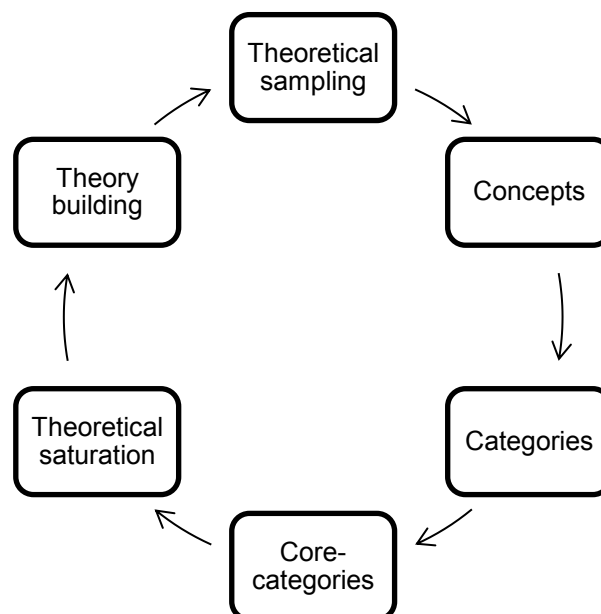


Figure 3.1: Process of data collection and analysis

3.8.1 Coding and saturation

Coding process remains at the core of grounded theory analysis (Moghaddam, 2006). Coding can be defined as the analytic process through which data are fractured, conceptualized and integrated to form theory. It consists of naming and categorizing data which aims to recognize, develop and relate the concepts that are the building blocks of theory. However, it is not surprising that the controversies about the right way of doing grounded theory research focused on the way of developing codes, concepts and categories. Historically, this procedure was introduced by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and further elaborated by Glaser (1978, 1992, 1997), Strauss (1987), Strauss and Corbin (1990) and Charmaz (2006). Accordingly, there have been different versions and variants in analyzing grounded data. For example, Glaser (1992) criticizes Strauss and Corbin (1990) for forcing their categories materially and for obstructing the process of emergence rather than supporting it by their way of coding. However, Charmaz (2006) sees the whole process including the step of coding as a way of constructing grounded theories rather than discovering them. The process includes different subsequent steps or ways, named differently as initial coding, open coding, intermediate coding, advanced coding, selective coding, axial coding, focused coding, theoretical coding and so on.

In the present study, it was difficult to the researcher for selecting any of particular Glaserian or Straussian or Charmazian version of grounded theory methodology. Initially, the researcher had tried the coding from software of qualitative data analysis; he went to roaming around MAXQDA, XIVIVO7, ATLAS.ti, MaC OS X, AQUAD7, Nvivo, and so on. But, being doomed with a number of methodological sensitivity and technical problems, he left this and attempted manual coding. Despite its lengthy and hasty process, it was creative and less irritating. He had tape-recording of all the interviews, FGDs and photos/videos of the observations. So, by selecting the major ones (according to the research questions), he then transcribed them with the technical supports from experts in some cases. Some of the field notes and case studies were also transcribed manually. After transcribing, he developed major concepts, the concepts gave categories; the categories formed core-categories after their repetition in the coding. The core-categories informed the researcher to flow into a new theoretical world. Since the study followed constructivist approach, he went through coding and analyzing the data using the two sequential levels of coding –

open coding and focused coding (see the Figure 3.2, as adapted with Charmaz, 2008; and Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

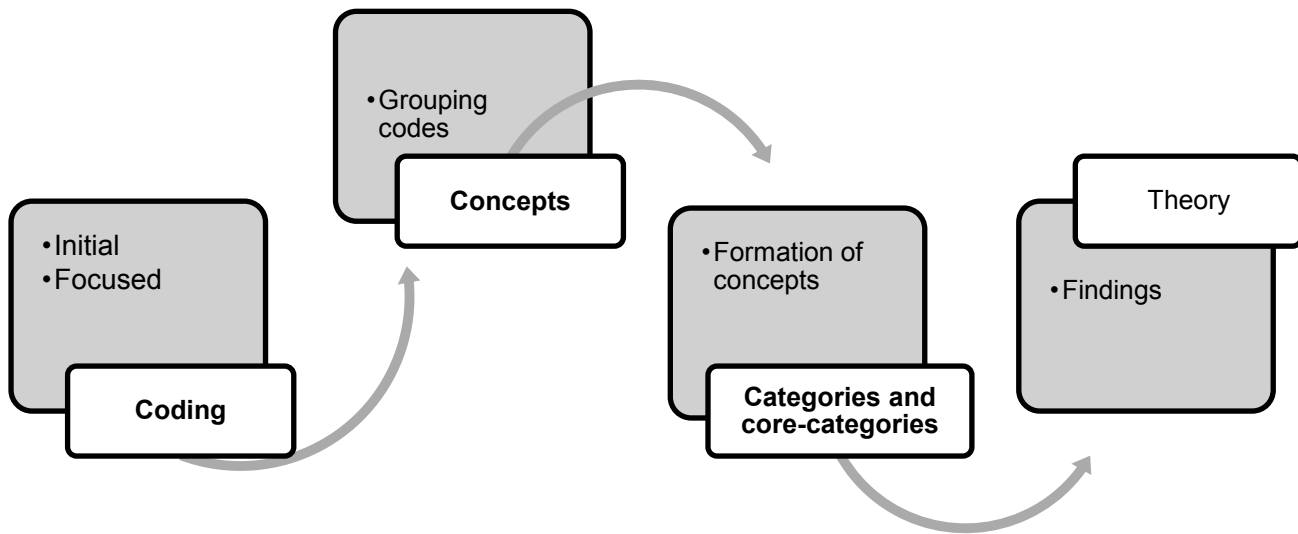


Figure 3.2: A process of data analysis

1. Open coding

At first, open coding was employed. Also termed as initial coding, open coding is a process of breaking down the data into separate units of meaning (Goulding, 1999), which gradually steps towards making sense of data. At this stage, the researcher conceptualized and labelled the raw data and coded the data line-by-line by categorizing incidents or segments. Separately categorized concepts were then clustered or collated around a related theme (or similar phenomena) to structure more abstract categories. This followed systematic reading and considering every comment made by each research participant to find similarities between concepts expressed in FGDs, SSIs and observations. As the categories started to fill, they became condensed. Such categories are termed as 'core categories' and the process as 'densification' (Glaser, 2005). Through this process, the core categories become the core focus of theoretical mapping as a social process. While doing open coding, the researcher also adopted different methodological strategies.

At first, the study followed a process of constant comparison, defined as a simultaneous and concurrent process of coding and analysis (Charmaz, 2008). It was

employed until literature was integrated at the stage of theoretical development. The researcher compared data within interviews and between interviews– what was said about the same issue by different research participants in different contexts. It helped to review of data to each other to gauge their similarity or dissimilarity, and then to compare them to existing categories. Second, memo writing was followed as what Glaser (2005) calls it as the “bedrock of theory generation” in the grounded theory approach (Glaser, 2005). In every evening of the data collection, the researcher noted the memos with the movement events, experience of research participants, key concepts and emerging issues. These writings on each day reflected so many indicative insights and thus eased the data collection going into depth and depth. The memos have been further reviewed in the coding process, thereby generating concepts, categories and core categories. With this, the researcher reflected writing on the data but not on just the data. He noted, everything as data in their narratives. Third, an on-going process of sampling was followed, known as theoretical sampling. There was a systematic selection of research participants (informed by coding) which guided the researcher to select further samples. Initially, there were less differences of sharing of participants and gradually it turned into maximizing the differences.

2. Focused coding:

It is more structured and advanced form of coding (Charmaz, 2006, 2009). Following this, the researcher re-coded the transcripts emerged with specific categories or themes. The data was sorted, synthesized, integrated and organized, and then, compared with the data from different methods. This helped in identifying the recurrent patterns and multiple layers of meaning regarding the well-being and contestation in development.

The researcher selected and coded the data which were increasingly relevant to the emerging concepts and categories. During the process, the core category was integrated into other categories validating their relationships. In turn, the semi-structured interview questions were continuously revised to include emerging issues and making them as focused study. Further, this led the researcher to revise the pre-set of conceptual framework as well, when he moved from one VDC to the other and from one district to the other. Different kinds of variations and interconnections were also observed in terms of categories and sub-categories. In doing so, he followed Glaser’s (2005) notion of theoretical coding.

Following this, several questions were asked to the Tharus, non-Tharus and representatives of different actors to fully understand the issues and contestations about the Tharu movement and rural development in Nepal. They reflected a number of codes. As there were many codes that were repeated across individual sub-phrases, the researcher reviewed the answers to each question and probe and combined the codes where equal or similar in meaning leading the study to have the more theoretically informed sampling. The coding process identified numerous categories and core-categories about all the research questions. Eventually, after a period of data collection in some VDCs, a point was reached where no new data or categories resulted from additional data collection. The researcher started this type of coding when core categories become saturated. He kept on collecting data until he received only already known concepts or categories. In fact, this was the point of saturation, the beauty and peculiarity of grounded methodology. Different kinds of concepts, categories and core-categories were constantly grounded in the field, where there was a theoretical sensitization along with comparative analysis and interpretations. This is how is concisely summarized in the Table 3.5.

Table 3.5: Concepts, categories, core-categories and theoretical implications

Concepts	Categories	Core-categories	Theoretical implication
Social movements; Ethnic movements	Social structure; ethnicity; power relation; ethnic identity	Social; political-economic; non-state role of the movement	Multi-dimensional issues in the movement; not purely the ethnicity
Causes of movement	Deprivation; poverty; inequality; exclusion; elite's game	Relational (structural); emergence of leaders and elites in the society	TM as a process; historical and relational; rational benefits/causes
Characteristics	Leadership; representation; participation; ideology	Degenerated leadership; participation/representation vs. expectation	Multiple characters; featured with some of new and some old social movement
Issues and agendas	Ethnic identity; rights for access to or control over; state-restructuring and inclusion of Tharus	Identity politics; state vs. non-state; mainstream agendas vs. peripheral agendas	Contested and multi-dimensional identity; progressive and emancipatory agendas; elite-driven agendas
Strategies and approaches	Welfare and service delivery; reformist vs. revolutionary, peaceful vs. violent, short-term vs. long-term	Loss of welfare approaches; movement propaganda driven by elites; short-term approaches	Changing strategies and approaches; not consistent; less developed in grassroots level
Well-being from the movement	Impact and effectiveness; representation and participation	Rootedness of movement; contradiction of well-being	Rural development contestation; multi-dimensional well-being emergence of elites

3.5.2 Categorization and theorization

Indeed, the process of data analysis became an integral part of data collection, and it started right from the selection of study sites and research participants. Inductively, the local issues and narratives were studied to dialogue, respectively with the regional, national and global discourses. The inductive reasoning, consequently, has become a basic part of theorization – based on local and ground realities in a ‘multiple’ world views and social worlds. This type of inductive reasoning is structured and saturated in a theoretical model of the contested rural development. Deductively, the study followed a broad context of global discourse of social movement and rural development to the national (Nepal), regional (Tarai) and local (villages) context.

3.9 Methodological Reflections of the Researcher

Research methodology is an interactive part of research process and analysis. It is hard to make dichotomy of its nature (subjective and objective), orientation (personal and collective), epistemology (reality and rationality) and the worldviews (empirical and theoretical). The following section will reflect how the methodological approach of the present study has been incepted into this broader domain of research and analysis.

3.9.1 Theoretical issues and reflections

Critical self-reflections are part of methodological discourse in modern social science research. In the context of present study, it is further relevant as the study followed a critique of development that contest with movement ideologies and perceptions. Methodological criticism for development studies has been widely available though it has less evidenced in movement research. For most of the researchers, methodological criticism is a critique of scientific practice in the light of methodological principles, and critical methodology as the study of proper methods of criticism (see Boland, 2003; Finocchiaro, 1979; Shipman, 2014). There is a debate also emerging how to define the interaction between scientific methods which give methodological criticism its methodological character and the critical methods which give it its character of criticism. Moreover, the criticism and self-reflection in methodological pluralism, what the preset study has followed, is also emerging notion of methodological discourse.

Epistemological and ontological positions of the research as outlined in Chapter 3 and the methodological approach and tools as outlined in the previous sections of this Chapter, are a set of broader research design. The positions have been taken as a means of facilitating or obscuring the understanding of particular research problem of contestation that would demand a magical espousal of favored methodological approach. The researcher adopted both interpretive and critical approach to analyze and theorize 'contested rural development'. The term 'contested' as discussed in introductory chapters, is also etymologically dialectical in nature. Contestation in isolation and with singular reality is simply impossible. Therefore, a pluralism perspective followed with interpretive and criticalism. But, being interpretivist there was a fear of being too much ideal, good and harmonized. Adoption of critical perspective would then pose a fear of being more negative, biased and ultra-realist. Amidst the two, the researcher was aware of how to be analytical being 'reflective' and 'thoughtful' and 'realist' at the same time.

The now familiar critique of mainstream research in ethnic movements and Tharu movement goes as to be more linear, cultural and ethnic in nature often guided by right-based approaches. Similarly, the critique of rural development as highlighted in the thesis goes like this: expert-oriented, westernized, supply-driven, colonial, and influenced by donor dilemma. Further, the question of power structure has been less accessed in the development practices. The backlash against this model of developmental decision-making advocated for the alternative of participatory approaches to development. These methods vociferously opposed to the existing "top-down" approach. Following the critique the present study had followed participatory approach of methodological tools, including PRAs, well-being ranking and FGDs. The participation was however elite domination in nature (see examples from above discussions). Who is being a part of the research process, for whom he is being participated and in what way he or she did participate was a crucial question to reflect the both the empirical as well as ideological dimension of the methodology. The participatory approach in data collection is not all-embracing. Critically the nature of participation was observed: Who were they and how did they speak? How did their identities manifest? Did they come from upper class or which class did they represent? Tharus or non-Tharus, or which caste/ ethnic group? Educated, literate or illiterate? Poor or rich? Landless or landlord? Farmer or others? Small farmers or big ones? Male or female? Leaders or followers? State-actors or non-state actors? All these mattered in the research process though the researcher did not take the participatory ways as just imposed and mere a technical. Rather it was innovative in nature, for

example being the discussion in the place of people's choice, use of local facilitators, adoption of triangulation, the method of discussion as defined by the research participants.

Initially, the researcher was thinking of a grand reality that could exist in as cause and consequence incepted in the rural development and Tharu movement. To him, a broader political economy of rural society and national politics was juxtaposed dialectically. Methodological reflections in this regard were however came as illuminating bulb of micro narratives of people, often contested with their own leadership and also with the state bureaucracy. There he encountered a number of realities that would shape the social relations. How was society going on? There was no singular perspective and no single reality was sufficient to address the question. In a way, Tharu movement seemed to be a cause of underdevelopment of society, particularly of rural regions. Development also assumed and perceived differently and relatively among the participants. The researcher witnessed diverse pictures of poverty, inequality and misery of people. Aligned with this development related eye-lens, a counter perspective was also marked a contested relationship between the Tharu movement and rural/ local development. Will the Tharu movement end if society would develop? If the pace of development will speed up in an inclusive way, what will happen to the existing demands of the movement: will they continue, disappear, become victorious or get suppressed? This contradiction led the researcher to dig out the nature of the development and nature of the state. The nature of social change was also unavoidable part to deal with the methodological investigation. All these issues then reflected in personification of the researcher himself (see next sub-heading) and also doomed in the whole process of research and theorization (see analytical chapters to come).

3.9.2 Empirical Issues and Reflections

The political situation in Nepal during the period of fieldwork played a key role in the final outcome of this dissertation. Various ethnic groups, movement organizations, political parties were emerging rapidly and were coming into the road with their multiple 'faces'. There were rigorous debates, claims and counterclaims among different actors and factors of contestation, manifesting their voices to cast down in the proposed constitution and state-restructuring system of the country. Tharu and Madhesi movements were at the apex in the Tarai, and other ethnic and regional movements also had strong influence in the different parts of the country. Though the events and their trends were not institutionalized, the situation was rapidly changing,

and everything appeared to be uncertain and contradictory. This became critical in order to gain a better understating of how contestations were emerged, grown, contradicted and transformed along the political environment, locally and nationally.

Issues about rights and identity were becoming popular among different kinds of non-state actors, particularly after the CA election in 2008. The unprecedented political changes (e.g. emergence of social and ethic movements, contradictions among major political parties, delayed peace process, role of donor agencies and international communities, and dissolution of CA) created unexpected problems in the field. The researcher realized that localization and politicization of national issues were more complex, which, perhaps, the Kathmandu would not know as such. Eventually, his field work was sometimes delayed and interrupted due to the breakdown of law and order and turning of peaceful movements into the violent one. Every day there were protests, demonstrations, strikes and various forms of social mobilizations. The researcher woke up each day not knowing whether the day would turn to be favorable for going into the field. As a qualitative researcher this made him rethinking of his research strategies, broadening his perspectives and embracing flexibility.

The extreme climatic conditions, rainy season, dry season, vegetation hours and harvesting period all have forced the researcher to set the strategic field plans. He could not forget the hot days of Dang and Sunsari – the Tarai where the Sun fiercely and very quickly rushes into its floor. He accepted food and water whenever he was offered. There was no need of Coco Cola or any cold drinks. Gaining trust and establishing rapport progressed slowly, but was encouraged by ever smiling faces of the people. Their smile was juxtaposed on their beautiful eyes. While the researcher was researching the people and their activities, they were also researching and testing him. They wanted to see the researcher, just like them or to be them. In the rural villages of Saudiyar in Dang, for example, they made him engage in different Tharu cultural programs, where there was no distinction between Tharu and non-Tharu and between the researcher and the research participants. The distance between them was becoming closer and closer.

But, it was not very easy times as this researcher struggled with many contextual problems and dilemmas. It was empirically difficult to be on a stand-by mode and go the field. Anyway, the researcher decided to visit the field whenever there were periods of relatively safe mobility, normalcy and calm. During periods that were not conducive to field visits due to security challenges, he was busy typing field notes and memos,

reading, transcribing and thinking about next samples. Strikes were so common that the statement “*aja Nepal banda ho*” (It’s a nationwide strike/shutdown today) became a habitual. There were countless *bandas* in Dang and Sunsari. The researcher had faced a 13 day long shut down in Dang in September-October 2013 while he also became a witness of the 5-day shutdown in Sunsari in January 2014. In the villages, the researcher continued to work and observe the things even during the strikes. Many people did not have any concerns with such strikes or slogans. There were times when he embarked upon such events where peaceful demonstrations turned into violent ones, public properties smashed and security forces came into the charge against the protestors. In Lamahi of Chailahi VDC, Dang, when the researcher was observing a demonstration of Tharu farmer’s in June 2013, all of sudden it became massive and violent. The farmers came to protest with a public appeal of TWS to support the movement. The group marched towards the highway and started to halt the public transportation system including public and vehicles. A few of them also tried to enter into the restricted area of government offices. In consequence, security force charged sticks upon them and immediately the crowd became dispersed. Nine people along with the researcher got minor injuries. Indeed, nobody knew when demonstrations would be initiated and when vehicles would be stopped. These experiences made him wonder how he could complete fieldwork. Despite the sense of impasse, he also realized that these situations would provide opportunities, particularly working of researcher in a stressed environment. Moreover, his supervisors’ advice, support, guidance and phone and email correspondence were encouraged to go with. They repeatedly advised him to take safety measures and neutral strategies while working with such environment. Accordingly, the researcher followed two ethical principles now and then, which include ‘do no harm others’ and ‘do not be harmed by others’.

The researcher was also a part of the social life of the study area. The complexity of his identity – being a Brahmin, non-Tharu, educated, and from Kathmandu – affected the research in various ways. The study of ethnic movement in a highly fragile condition, sometimes violent in nature, was itself a challenge and opportunity. While he was attempting to understand Tharu identities and resistance, he also had to understand the shifting nature of his own identity in different context throughout the research process, as he moved between everyday space of Tharu community and their movement. The activists, participants, representatives of the state actors and grassroots people had their own viewpoints regarding the Tharu movement and rural development. They, together, however, constantly involved in the dialogues and

interactions. This is what Adams (1999) claims: “the researcher-informant relationship brings into play dynamics of race, gender, class, nation, and age” (p. 323).

Chapter Summary

The chapter offers philosophical, methodological and empirical approaches to contextualize the research process of the present study. Philosophically, a mix of interpretive and critical epistemological positions of the research has been further followed with the social constructivist ontology. These world views of the researcher have been argued to grab the subjective as well as objective realities of contestation. Adoption of qualitative research design, the case study of the Tharu movement and grounded methodology seemed to be integral constituents of the study approach of the present research. The chapter includes the researcher’s explanation of ‘what, how and why’ he has followed particular methodology and methods involving the qualitative research design which emergently went on during the data collection and analysis. The chapter offers the context and commitment of the researcher in terms of his methodological pluralism, inductive reasoning and cognitive reflexivity, which is consistently argued in maintaining the triangulation and trustworthiness of the research. This kind of research setting has been empirically analyzed in the analytical chapters of the thesis.

CHAPTER- FOUR

THE MOVEMENT CONTEXT AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DYNAMICS

This chapter contextualizes the Tharu movement with specific methodological and empirical setting of the research process into the study sites: the Tarai, Dang and Sunsari districts and subsequent VDCs. The chapter provides a detailed description of the study sites, while changing well-being statuses and emerging actors will be dealt in the subsequent headings. Finally, it presents a leadership pattern of the villages.

4.1 Setting the Field into a Broader Research Context

4.1.1 Situating the Tarai and the Tharus

The question of how to go deep into the study universe seems crucial in social science studies (Flick, 2009), though going deep with critical views is more challenging in this regard (Henn et al., 2009). The knowledge is generated constantly within those universes which then undergo with maturation, contestation and decay in the given contexts. As opined by Conway (2007), all social movements and their knowledge are embedded in historically and geographically specific social contexts (p. 10). On this premise, the present study adopts the study context of the Tarai region, one of the three ecological regions (the other two being the Mountain and the Hill) of Nepal. This region was historically a land of movement and agitations while it has become an unavoidable political fact in the contemporary discourse of social movements, state-restructuring and rural development.

The Tarai denotes the lowland geographic region of Nepal stretching from west to east across the border of India; from Mahendranagar (Mahakali River) in west to Kakarbita in the east (Mechi River). The region is located between the lower part of the Himalayas in the north and the Gangetic plains to the south, which has remained as one of the resourceful zones in the history of Nepal and around the region (Turker, 1998). Tarai region is a place where a diverse setting of caste and ethnic groups, and they have a wider social, regional and economic diversity. Tharus make up the largest demographic presence in the region. Though there is no consensus on the etymology of the term 'Tharu', it is possible that the term was originally applied to the native people of the Tarai. It is very much possible that people called Tharu have been living

in the Tarai for at least a millennium. According to Krauskopff (2000), “the term Tharu...seems to refer more to an area of habitat and the idea one had of its inhabitants than to a specific tribe” (p. 33).

Historically, there was a well-established ethnic category in the Tarai called ‘Tharu’; the group which never had settled outside this region. However, some ethnic or caste groups (Darai, and Mushar, for example) who share most of the customs and traditions of the Tharus including the language have not been included in the ‘Tharu group’ because of their different historical origin. In the last census reports of 2001 and 2011, the Tharus appear as one of the most numerous ethnic groups of Nepal and dominant minority group in the Tarai region scattered over most of the Tarai and inner Tarai districts and valleys. Gaige (2009) points out that the Tarai region of Nepal is historically a land of ‘conflict and resistance’ due to the existence of multiple factors such as economics and geopolitics of Tarai, Nepal-India border problems, hill-Tarai migration, politics of citizenship, politics of culture, oppositional politics and the problem of national integration. The Unification of Nepal in the eighteenth century changed the situation in the Tarai, a change that was further enforced under the Rana administration, e.g. due to the Kathmandu-based Tarai polity, unequal land distribution, excessive taxation, and denial of local communities or ethnic group in the state affairs (Gaige, 2009; Regmi, 2008). In this regard, Michael (2011) very beautifully summarizes the history of Tarai as:

The Nepali Tarai took nearly a hundred years (1760-1860) to crystallize in its present form. It emerged out of a process of territorial consolidation as the Gorkhali state expanded from the mid-eighteenth century, conquering hill kingdoms and laying claim to their possessions in the plains. By 1820 Gorkha’s possessions stretched to their maximum extent ever – from Bhutan in the East to Kangana in the West. Later, the 1814 war with the British resulted in a dramatic reduction in Gorkha’s territorial extent. However, some of the Tarai lands lying between the Mahakali and Karnali rivers (also called the *Naya Muluk*) were restored to Gorkha following the military assistance provided to the British to suppress the revolt of 1857 (p. 4).

Amid these historical frontiers, the distribution of Tharu population in Tarai region, probably significant during the last two or three centuries, was also the result of a number of social and cultural changes, including the changes in local production relations and thereby a search of alternative livelihood strategies (see Mishra, 2007). Migrations or displacements of populations have shaped and reshaped group affiliations over centuries. The Panchayat years have nevertheless accelerated this process: there have been major changes in political and agrarian conditions, and also in relations between the Tharus and their neighbors from the middle hills who have

settled permanently in Tarai (Krauskopff, 2008; Krauskopff & Meyer, 2000). In contrast, as Guneratne (1998, p. 758) argues, Tarai is, culturally, an extension of northern India; the dominant symbols that organize the identity of most of the people there (caste, language, religious rituals, styles of dressing, eating, living) are those of the plains. The descendants of the Indian immigrants who settled the Tarai (particularly in the central Tarai) brought a new kind of activism in the regional politics, even leading to contradiction with the Tharu movement.

However, simple articulation is not enough (and is beyond the researcher's capacity) to establish a core analysis of the political economy of the Tarai from Tharu's perspective. Though the researcher doesn't agree with the very outsider perspective of history that are likely to explain Nepali history (for example the use of terms such as 'colonial', and 'expansion'), he would rather focus on the internal contradictions of territorial regimes and rulers at that time. There are two obvious factors of the political economy of Tarai which had contributed to its making of history. First, it had a modest agricultural fertility and forest resources which could better serve the ruling elites by generating adequate revenue for Kathmandu. Second, political connectivity of the region to the British-Indian administration that would support the ruling establishments in Nepal was another important cause to make this territory politically important.

In terms of ethnogenesis of migration and intermixing of groups of different origins under different ecological and political contexts, the political structure of Tarai has been changed rapidly for the past thousand years. Within the last decade and particularly since the great political change of 2006, it seems that the previous tendency to overemphasize the differences between ethnic groups and cultural framing of identity is not sufficient. It would call more comprehensive and in-depth studies. The political nature of Tharu movement and Madhesh movement and the regional setting of Tarai being an open border to India, emerging issues of nationalism and federalism, poor development achievements in the region, in effect, pose a new shedding on the studies of this region. The selection of Tarai region and the Tharu movement seems rational to observe the contestation in rural development how it has been constructed with different networks and strategies. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to quote Guneratne (2011) who critically maintains that:

The Tarai is the least studied major region of Nepal. This is striking when one considers its importance in the affairs of Nepal, and the ease of access it enjoys in comparison with almost every other region of the country outside the Kathmandu Valley. The Tarai deserves better; it is the most important part of Nepal outside the

Valley, and the politics of modern Nepal cannot be understood without understanding the political of this region and the complex cultural and social forms that shape the politics (p. vii).

Further, it is not the researcher's intention to make definite statements on the diversity of the Tharus and their livelihood in the region. For that purpose, we need more ethnographic knowledge, and the main goal of the present PhD is precisely to contribute knowledge in the rise of Tharu movement to contest the rural development. But the researcher should like to emphasize a few points. Whatever the future of the Tharu pan-ethnic movement and the building of a new Tharu identity which will support this revival in Nepal, published and unpublished studies show a striking diversity from one group to another, in social organization, rituals and religious practices, village and domestic organization, mythology and festivals. The overall political and economic conditions and the cultural assimilation process (including modernization) has created and recreated Tharu movement's contestation with the rural development. Among others, the significant differences in terms of hierarchical relations, economic and agrarian conditions and changing strategies of the livelihood, could have a gross impact in creating such contestation (see this theorization in Chapter 8).

4.1.2 Situating the study sites and their rationality

As revealed in the Chapter 3, the study empirically focused on two districts (Dang and Sunsari) and two VDCs on each of them. The VDCs are purposively selected based on the purposive criteria of the selection: administrative/ political position, demographic structure, movement intensity and road and market networks (see Chapter 3, section 3.6). The broader socioeconomic and movement context has been described in the subsequent headings.

4.1.2.1 Dang district

Dang is a Tarai district, some 280 km west of Kathmandu, which belongs to the territory of Province 5, Rapti zone and midwestern region of Nepal. The second largest district of the Tarai, Dang district (2955 sq.km) consists of two valleys: Dang and Deukhuri for what the district is commonly referred as "Dang-Deukhuri". The census 2011 has recorded the district population as to be 552,583, where three major dominant castes/ethnic groups include Tharu (29.5%), Chhetri (25%) and Magar (13.7%), and literacy rate remained at 70.3 percent. The district lies in between the Chauria (Siwalik in India) range to the south and the Mahabharata range to the north in the inner Tarai region. There were altogether 39 VDCs and two municipalities in the

district and Ghorahi was the district headquarters. These local levels have been recently upgraded to 10 local levels (sub-metropolitan cities-2, municipality-1 and rural municipality-7) under the District Coordination Committee of Dang. Rapti and Babai are the two main rivers of Dang district. The national highway follows Deukhuri Valley of Dang in its 77 km southern boundary from Dhankhola to Shivakhola. The district has different link roads, including Arjun Khola road (Ghorahi to Lamahi, 23km) and Ghorahi-Tulsipur road (24km). Along with these, there is also a wide networking of graveled roads (282km) and fair-weathered roads (4148 km). Dang valley of the district has two municipal towns (Ghorahi and Tulsipur) with upper hill linkages. Deukhuri region also has three main markets as emerging municipalities, which include Koilabas, Bhaluwang and Lamahi. The district locates various pilgrims, historical monuments and tourist destinations.

The recorded history of the Dang district goes back about two thousand years. History of Dang reflects that the southern part of the region (i.e. Deukhuri) was remained under the control of Tharu Kings, including Ratananth and Dangisharan while the northern part had remained under the different principalities of Hill origin, including Jumla, Salyan and Bajhang. The extent and boundaries of the Tharuhath kingdom which was based on the Dekhuri region varied greatly with the regimes of its different kings. Nevertheless, the core of the empire was historically extended by King Dangisharan, a powerful king having a popular regime up to the foothills of midwestern Nepal to the bank of Rapti River including the northern part of India (Chaudhary, 2013). This dynasty fell into different regional regimes, initially to Jumla and then Salyan. When the unification process of modern Nepal started in the 1760s, most of the regional and feudal principalities came under the Shaha dynasty. After the unification the region came into under the administrative jurisdiction of Salyan Gauda in the north western part of the district. Later in Rana regime (1846-1951) it became a part of Taulihawa Goshwara in 1882 (BS 1938), which drew into Bhairahawa Goshwara in 1940 (BS 1996) and then moved into Nepalgunj Goshwara in 1947 (BS 2003). There were *bada hakims* to collect the tax and revenues, for which *chaudharies* and landlords were virtually nominated by the hakims (McDonaugh, 1997; Regmi, 1978). Dang was recognized legally as a separate district first in 13 June 1951 (BS 2008 Jeshtha 23) and then it was again reformed as District Panchayat in 1974 (BS 2030) with the addition of some territories from northern part of the Salyan district (DDC Dang, 2011-2012).

The ancient archaeological remains and manuscripts reveal the aboriginal settlement of the Tharu people in this region (Krauskopff & Meyer, 2000; Rajaure, 1981; Skar, 1999). What is much evident though is that the district was historically a place of the Tharus, they had to be exploited severely in terms of land denial, high land tax, and imposed migration to the neighboring countries and the maintenance of feudalism with the Kamlahari and Kamaiya system. Though there was a casualty and sacrifice of the poor groups and Tharu community in different kinds of political/social movements, the poverty and dependency were reproduced with the continuation of mainstream state. Politically, the Dang district remained a historic leader of different movements, but remained poor in the development indicators. In the elections, the district was often represented by the majority of democrats-liberals (Nepali Congress) though the region was ever remained a fertile land for the communist movements, including the Maoists. In the post-2006 context, voices of ethnic identity, regional autonomy and self-determination were strong in the district. These issues were largely manifested in the Tharu movement activism. Though there was less presence of Madhesi groups (and thus Madhesi movement), different kinds of movement groups within the Tharu movement were very active, such as ex-Kamaiyas movement, Kamlahari movement and the movement of landless people.

4.1.2.1.1 Chailahi VDC

Chailahi VDC lies at at the middle of the National East-West highway crossed into the Dang. This VDC has been upgraded to Lamahi municipality in 2015, and the municipality has been again extended by incorporating Satbariya VDC into its coverage in March 2017. This region falls in the southern part of the Dang district, also called Deukhuri region. The VDC is adjacent to Rapti River in the south-west and East-West National Highway at the northern part. The Lamahi bazaar is the most popular market center of the VDC, which was also growing as an epicenter of Tharu movement in the district. There are no internal bus or jeep services for the inner villages of this VDC, though it is linked to the national highway and a way to Ghorahi (district headquarter). The VDC is at 40 km apart from Ghorahi, which takes about 1 hour bus drive. With a strategic location, the VDC has a strong incoming migration trend from the neighboring hilly districts, particularly from the Pyuthan and Arghakhanchi. The migration started with the eradication of malaria in the Tarai and the construction of the national highway crossing the Deukhuri region (in 1960s), and it got a momentum after the political change and liberal economic policy of the government of Nepal (since 1990). The migration trends, flow of the internal market

and road networks could have given the VDC for its wider social and cultural changes and exposure to external world. The researcher's own review of the census data upon the population of Chailahi VDC and the increase in political and economic activities in the region revealed this fact: the region was becoming increasingly fluid in its social-political structure. So, Tharu movement activism was one of the obvious social phenomena in the region, which could have a number of implications of the local, rural development issues.

Within an area of 46.1 sq. km, there are 33 settlements (toles or villages) and 9 wards in the VDC. According to the census 2001, the population of the VDC was 15,966, which reached to 20,696 along with 4,291 households in 2011 (CBS, 2012). There were 9,874 males and 10,822 females in the VDC. The census 2011 shows that the VDC has a satisfactory level of literacy rate as being 74%. The major caste/ethnic groups residing in the VDC, include Tharu (56%), Chhetri (11.9%) and Brahmin-Hill (11.7%). It reveals that 13 percent hilly people were added during 2001-2011, and thus the correspondence majority of the Tharus has been decreasing gradually. It may be due to rapid migration of hilly people into the region and growing urbanization trend. During PRA, the researcher counted the total households of the VDC as to be 3807, which also indicates a larger increase in the population (Field visit, 2014).

4.1.2.1.2 Saudiyar VDC

Saudiyar VDC lies in the middle part of the Dang district, and southern part of the Dang valley and Ghorahi municipality. Geographically, it seems like a slipper in the map. As per the new constitutional provision, the VDC has recently been merged into the ward 6 and 7 of Ghorahi municipality in March 2017. The VDC is adjacent to Babai River and Dharna VDC in the south, Narayanpur VDC and *Sewarkhola* in north-west, Dhikpur in the west, Laxmipur VDC and *Katuwakhola* in the east and the Tribhuvan municipality (Ghorahi) in the northeast. There are a few graveled roads in the VDC that link with the Ghorahi-Tulsipur Highway at its northern side. However, there are a few bus services for internal transportation in the VDC. Even going to the VDC headquarter Fachhakpur is almost difficult and there is bus service twice a day. The Saudiyar bazaar in this VDC is a popular market center, which could deserve direct attachment of the movement activities and demonstrations happening in the district. The inner and remote VDCs of the southern part of Dang valley could be accessed from Ghorahi only through the foothills of Saudiyar VDC.

With this strategic location, the VDC had a strong historical leadership and partnership during the Tharu movements led by peasants and tenants. Though there was a slow incoming migration trend and difficult transportation system from the neighboring hilly districts, the number of population was increasing due to pleasant topography and better irrigation facilities as compared to municipality and other VDCs. This contextual setting has given the VDC its social and cultural changes and exposure to external world. The VDC has a 27.65 sq. km area of coverage, which includes 30 settlements (toles or villages) within the 9 wards. The population of the VDC in 2001 was 10,920, while it has increased to 12,101 in 2011 including 5,547 males and 6,554 females along with 2453 Households (CBS, 2012). The survey of VDC shows similar statistics, i.e. 12,457 population in 2011 (VDC profile, Saudiyar, Dang, 2011-2012). During this 10 year interval, the sharing of Tharu population was recorded as being 56% (in 2001) and 51% (in 2011) respectively. When this researcher conducted PRA, the total households of the VDC were found to be 2489, which indicates only a nominal increase in the population. The literacy rate has been 73.82 percent in the VDC. The VDC has characterized with a diverse social groups, including Tharu (53.1%), Chettri (21.1%) and Brahmin-Hill (10.1%).

4.1.2.1.3 Socio-cultural setting of the villages

The physical structure of the village reflected different indications of social structure. The distribution of population and settlement was not randomly set, but created with a more or less conscious plan. People who were close to each other in the social system (in terms of well-being, and caste/ethnicity) were living side-by-side; people whose social positions were widely different lived apart. The naming of the settlement in the villages of the both VDC was after the historical caste/ethnic and geographic terms, and were almost all derived from the Tharu language. Some of the newly developed settlements had their names either in terms of their locality or the dominant caste/ethnic group. Other things being equal, physical distance was the most fundamental base of this kind of settlement name and structure. The value of land in the villages was also allocated with this distance and access.

Today, with the differentiation and distribution of power, the social system of villages has become more complex. There was a paradoxical existence of both the traditional structure as well as contemporary life of the village. The relations between a single VDC or its villages and the wider socioeconomic system were complex. It seemed true in the case of the villages of these VDCs where many forms of social relationships

existed between the landlords and tenants, leaders and people and among Tharus, Pahadiyas and Madhesi. These relations were governed by social norms and values which have a certain generality, which can be verified by making causal comparisons in adjacent villages or within the VDC, or different VDCs of the study site. The researcher was thoroughly aware and interested in understating how these social relationships are emerged as contradictions to make different claims and movements. He found that social relationship was itself a power game in the society, though not working identically in each particular instance. It was differently principled and practiced by different privileges of caste, gender, region, class, and so on. As the social relations were heterogeneous, it can be further argued for the heterogeneity of the cause and characteristics of the contestation in the Tharu movement and rural development.

Indeed, these observations were reflecting different patterns and dynamics of the villages. For example, ties of kinship and affinity in the village linked the members for agglomeration. The main market centers of the VDCs were covered by hill migrants with some few Madhesi and Tharu upper class. Lamahi bazaar of Chailahi VDC and Saudiyar bazaar of Saudiyar VDC had evident observation regarding this. In case of other villages, Tharus were found living very dense in the inner parts. The Pahariyas had their own new settlements, based on their origin of migration (e.g. *Dangali, Pyuthani and Arghakanchi*). The indigenous groups (*adibasi/ janajatis*), particularly the Tharus, were in the simple majority, followed by the BCN group (Brahmin, Chettri and Newars, who are conventionally treated as ruling class) and Dalits (including *Damai, Kami, Sarki and Koiri*) and other castes (including Madhesi). The Dalits, ex-Kamaiyas and newly settled landless people were found at the lower ebbs of the settlement. The service delivery system, resource accessibility and dialogue with the state/government were trickling down as according to the such settlement structure from the market residents Pahadiyas (BCN) and Tharu elites to the rural Pahadiyas (BCN) / Tharus and big farmers and finally to the Dalits (including Badis), Kamaiyas and poor farmers.

4.1.2.2 Sunsari district

Sunsari district is one of the six districts of the Koshi zone in eastern Nepal. Geographically, the district contains some foothills (including midland of Bhawar) in the northern part, though most of the region is plain and lies in the southern region. As a boundary, there lies Morang district in the east, Udaypur and Saptari (i.e. Koshi River) in the west, Dhankuta (Bhedetar) in the north and Indian boarder (Bihar) in the south.

The district was named after the Sunsari River. The district headquarters is in Inaruwa. In spite of having a smaller area of 1257 sq. km, the total population of Sunsari district is 763,487 in 2011 (CBS, 2012). Ethnically, there is an abundance of Tharu community (11.8%) followed by Muslim (11.6%) and Chettri (9.3%). The literacy rate has remained to be 68.5 percent. It is also interesting that the demography of Sunsari district includes some endangered and disadvantaged groups too, such as Jhagad, Teli, Halwai, Majhi, Raute, Bote, Darai and Jirel. The main languages spoken in the district include Nepali, Tharu, Maithali and Hindi. Sunsari has 38 VDCs and three municipalities. There are altogether 38 VDCs and three municipalities in the district and Inaruwa is the district headquarters. These local levels have been recently upgraded to 12 local levels (sub-metropolitan cities-2, municipalities-4 and rural municipalities-6) under the District Coordination Committee of Sunsari. The district has been linked with different road networks, such as East-West National Highway, Dharan road, Dhankuta road and Duhabi road. Among with these, there is also a wide networking of graveled roads (399.3km) and cart-tracks (675.5km). There are some big market centers, which are emerging as economic regions and strategic locations for rural-urban linkages and Hill to Tarai migration. They include Dharan, Itahari, Inaruwa, Duhabi, Khanar, Jhumka, Mahendranagar, Chatara and Harinagara.

Historically, the plain regions east of the Koshi River were part of a larger cultural region with alluvial lands and abundant natural resources. There is an evidence that much of the Tarai was settled and then depopulated and reforested in waves with the rise and fall of different Gangetic state formations that would expand into the sub-Himalayan lowlands (Gaige, 2009). It is also argued that during the Mughal period, this region was on the frontiers of state influence, and was home predominantly to indigenous nationalities, including the Rajbanshi, Tharu, Dhimal and Gangai who carried out shifting cultivation on the forested lowlands (Whelpton, 2005). It was historically part of the Koch kingdom based in Vijayapur (now, Dharan) before falling to a branch of the Sen Kings of Makwanpur in the mid-16th century. Both kingdoms were ruled with the patronage of Limbu chieftains in the hills (Caplan, 2013; Panjiyar, 2000).

An annexation of the far-eastern Tarai was maintained by the Gorkhali army in 1774 which included this eastern region into the modern state of Nepal. The role of Sunsari district has been much historic in present day political dynamics of the country as the region boosted a number of influential leaders and ministers of the major political parties and movement groups (including Limbuwan, Madhesi and Tharu). However, the political and social ferment of the region was highly igniting to contest the local

polity in the post-2006 Nepal. Tharu movement also became very proactive in the issues of ethnic identity, regional autonomy and self-determination. The researcher observed (even before selecting the district) aggressive and protest sentiments among people. It could have been catalyzed by the various factors, such as abundant Tharu population, east-west highway network, geographical gateway to the hill and Tarai region, wider strategic locations and transactions in the region, Tarai border and increasing mobility, counter movement of Madhesi, Chure Bhawar and Limbuwan, and growing awareness and dissatisfaction of people.

4.1.2.2.1 Bhadgaun Sinuwari (Bhasi) VDC

The local name of Bhadgaun Sinuwari VDC is the Bhasi, though the former deserves political-administrative status. This VDC has been upgraded to a Ramdhuni municipality in 2015, and the municipality has been again extended by incorporating Dumraha VDC (wards 1 and 3-6 only) and Baklauri VDC into its coverage in March 2017. The VDC lies in the middle part of the Sunsari district. It is in the equal distance, i.e. 6 km apart from Inaruwa (district headquarter in the west) and Itahari (the eastern gateway). The VDC has been crossed from East-West National Highway. The Jhumka bazaar at this VDC is a growing a popular market center as well as the epicenter of Tharu movement in the district. With a strategic location, the VDC has a strong incoming migration trend from the neighboring hilly districts, like Bhojpur, Dhankuta and Udayapur. The migration trends, flow of the internal market and road networks could have contributed to the wider socio-cultural and economic exposure of the VDC.

The name of the VDC deserves an explanation. The *purano bhadgaun* and *sinwari* were separate villages of the VDC, which belonged to the ward 2 and 6. In between these two villages there was *Gaun Panchayat* in the Panchayat regime (1961-1990), and that was commonly called "*bhadgaun sinwari*". The same name continued after the restoration of democracy in 1990, which replaced '*Gaun Panchayat*' with '*Gaun Bikas Samiti*' (i.e. VDC). In recent years, the VDC was also called "Jhumka". Jhumka was an emerging town and a big market center. According to the legends, the name Jhumka simply denotes jewelers worn by women on the ears. In the market, at the time of highway construction in the 1970s, there were frequent celebrations of dancing and singing programs as offered by Indian artists. People used to enjoy a popular Hindi song, '*barelike bajarme Jhumkagira re*'. And, in turn, the name of the place started to be known as 'Jhumka'.

The VDC has an area of 16.0 sq. kms. Within its nine wards, there were 54 settlements (locally called tole development committees, TDCs). According to the census 2001, the population of the VDC was 15,966, while it has simply increased to 17,268 in census 2011 having 8,069 males and 9,199 females in 3,837 households, (CBS, 2012). During this 10 year interval, the sharing of Tharu population was decreased by 6 percentage points, i.e. from 39 percent to 33 percent. It might be due to rapid migration of hilly people into the region and growing urbanization trend. During PRA, the total households of the VDC were found to be 3,936, which also indicate a larger increase in the population (Field visit, 2013). The literacy rate of the VDC has remained 72.6 percent. The dominant caste/ethnic groups in the VDC, include Tharu (32.7%), Brahmin-Hill (17.3%) and Chettri (12.7%).

4.1.2.2.2 Aurawani VDC

The Aurawani VDC lies in the southwestern part of the Sunsari. As per the new constitutional provision, the VDC has recently been merged into the ward 6 of the Gandhi rural municipality in March 2017 which covers the territories of 4 VDCs (Madheli, Aurawani, Chitaha and Saterjhoda). The VDC was named after the popular timber plants (Aura) as there used to be in the past. The VDC borders different VDCs like Chadbela, Madheli, Simariya, Chitaha, and Satter Bhora. It is in the equi - distance (6 km) from Inaruwa (the district headquarter, in the north) and Duhabi (a big industrial region in the southeast). There were a few graveled roads and a black topped road in the VDC that linked with the Inaruwa-Duhabi road. There are a few vehicles (bus and tempo) and rickshaw services on this road through which this VDC can be easily accessed. However, there is no internal transportation system to access the different villages and wards of the VDC.

The VDC has a 17.5 km² of coverage, which includes 9 wards with 30 settlements (toles or villages). According to the census 2001, the population of the VDC was 7304, while it has increased to 7938 in census 2011. Out of them male and female is nearly equal; 3,869 and 4,069 respectively. The average household size was 4.62 while there were 1,719 households in total and 62.9 percent literacy rate in the VDC. On the other hand, the VDC survey conducted in 2011 recorded the total population as to be 7,680. During the decade, the sharing of Tharu population was recorded as being the same, i.e. 50 percent of the total population. During PRA, the total households of the VDC were found to be 1735, which indicates a larger increase in the population (Field visit, 2012/2013). The major caste/ethnic groups in the VDC, include Tharu (44.7%), Musalman (12%) and Yadav (11%). As sketched in the Figure 4.1, the resource map

during the PRA of Aurawani (ward 8) shows that the VDC is endowed with a number of social, cultural, physical and natural potentials.

The Aurawani bazaar is the main common market center. Most of the government offices and public services are located in the bazaar. The demonstration and protest activities of the Tharus in Aurawani were accompanied by the local people of the Aurawani bazaar and other villages too. In some cases, they led their rallies to Duhabi and Inaruwa, and there formed a joint center of movement. Though there was a slow incoming migration trend, the number of population in the VDC was increasing due to pleasant topography, fertile land and better irrigation system.

The study of Sunsari and the Tharu societies for the researcher was itself a long and unique because of its location in the far-eastern development region. He belongs to western region (*pachhimeli*) while the Sunsari was at the eastern (*purbeli*). So, the regional interaction was maintained through eastern-western interaction. Social structure and physical setting of the villages reflected different and interesting pictures of rural life of the people. As in the villages of Dang, the distribution of population and settlement in the villages of Sunsari was purposively allocated and positioned in terms of caste and class. The naming of the settlement in terms of economic class (e.g. Sukumbasi tole, and jamindar tole) and in terms of social class (caste/ethnic; e.g. Dalit tole, Tharutole, and Bahuntole) was a historical given context of political economy. However, the researcher got wondered when he visited Bhasi VDC where most of the names of settlement had been converted into new ones. It was more trendy due to the new development interventions from the different development agencies in the VDC which were also a part of administrative reforms of the local government.

4.1.2.2.3 Socio-cultural setting of the villages

Indeed, the geophysical structure of the villages seems to be a crucial player in the distribution of power among the rural people. Such correspondence can be analyzed in two ways. First, people who were close to each other in terms of their economic status (i.e. class) and socio-cultural classification (i.e. caste/ethnicity) were living in an agglomerated form; and people whose social positions were widely different used to live in a scattered mode of settlement. Second, people having an upper ranking of well-being and referred as upper castes were settled nearby on the road with a closer market and transport node. On the other hand, poorer and low caste/ethnic groups were comparatively far from the road and market access. In particular, the Dalits, poor

people and newly settled landless people were found at the lower ebbs of the settlement.

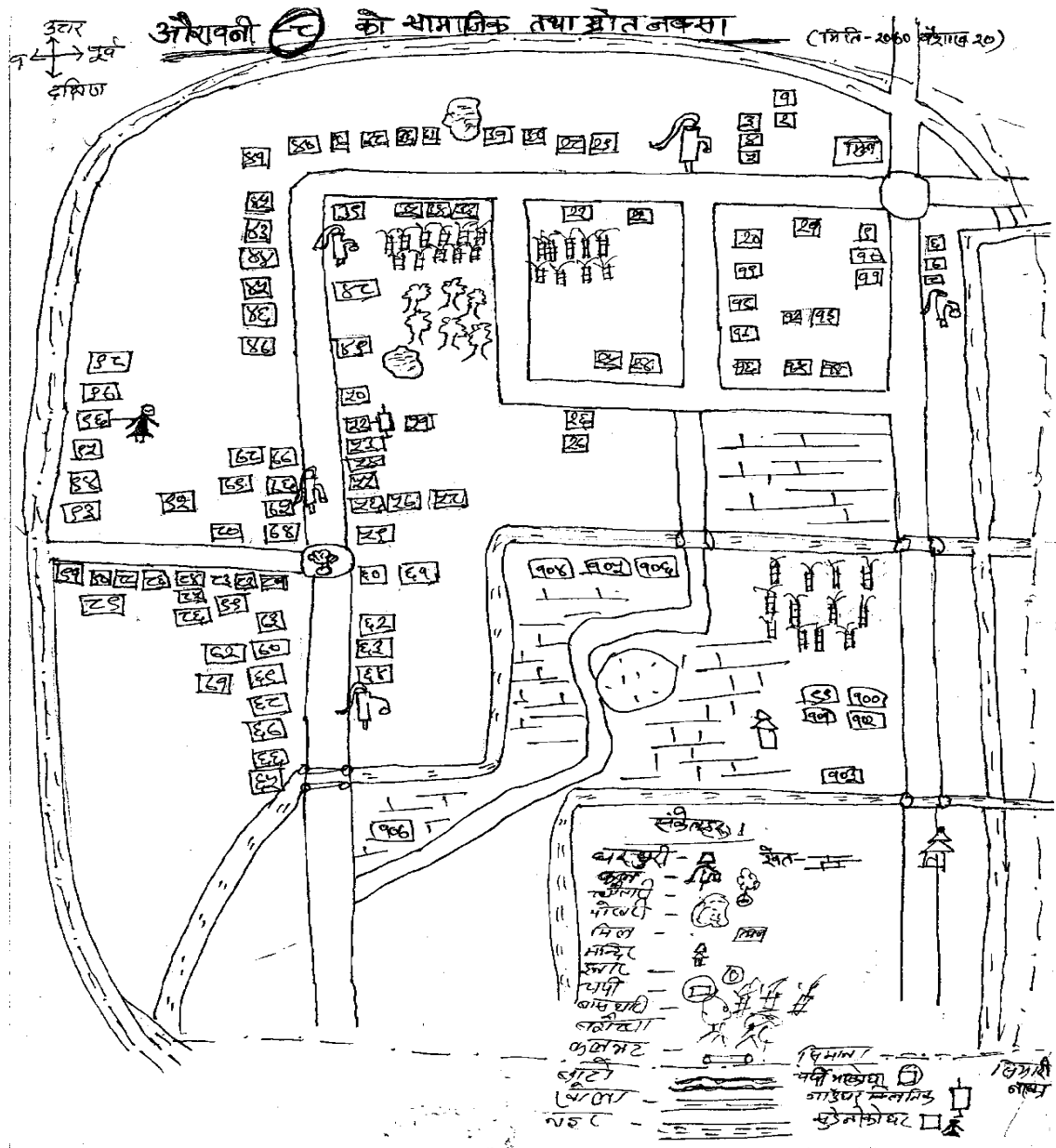


Figure 4.1: A sketch of PRA mapping in Aurawani-8, Sunsari district

The socioeconomic system of the VDC and its villages was complex. There existed many forms of social relationships between the landlords and tenants, leaders and people and among Tharus, Pahadiyas, Madhesi and Dalits. These relations are governed by a kind of power structure of the society in terms of class and caste/ethnicity. The main market centers of the VDCs were covered by hill migrants with some few Madeshi, Pahadiya and Tharu upper class. Jhumka bazaar of Bhasi

VDC and Aurawani bazaar of Aurawani VDC had evident observation regarding this. In case of other villages, Tharus were found living very dense in the inner parts. The Pahariyas had their own new settlements. Unlike in the western Dang district, the pahadiya settlements of Sunsari were not based on their origin of migration (e.g. Bhojpur, Dhankuta, and Udayapur). The name of settlement or *tole* in each ward of Bhasi VDC was functioned with the system of *the Tole Bikas Samiti* (i.e. Tole Development Committees, TDCs). The TDCs were named after the name of the particular place, temple, dominant caste/ethnic group or something new, e.g. *Parichaya, Dakin Than, and Gas Line*. However, in Aurawani, there was not an established system like TDCs. Rather, there were toles categorized in terms of the caste and ethnic groups, like Tharu, Mushari and Bishokarma. The service delivery system, resource accessibility and dialogue with the state/government were trickling down as according to such settlement structure, from larger to smaller, from upper caste to a lower caste, from rich to poor and from the road network to remote areas.

In Bhasi VDC, the indigenous groups (*adibasi/ janajatis*), particularly the Tharus, were in the simple majority, followed by the Dalits (Hill and Tarai Dalits, particularly Sardar and Bishokarma). The BCN group (Brahmin, Chhetri and Newars, who are conventionally treated as ruling class) and Madhesi groups (including Shah, Kushwah, Mishra, Jha, and Yadav.) were in the third and fourth ranking respectively. In case of Aurawani VDC, the distribution of population was somehow different, the indigenous groups were in larger sharing, and then followed by the Dalits (including Mushar, Harijan and Bishokarma), BCN group and Madhesis respectively. As reflected by the VDC profiles of respective VDCs, there were the majority of Hindu dominant groups, though some Muslims also existed as a religious minority.

4.2 Changing Well-being Statuses and Emerging Actors

4.2.1 The changing dynamics of wellbeing in the villages

The nexus of well-being and social movement has been a fundamental entity in development studies. Most of the grievances of people, as will be discussed in Chapter 5 in detail, can influence the movement emotions and development aspirations. Human well-being, however, is an ambiguous and comprehensive concept. It lacks a universally accepted definition and has numerous, and often competing interpretations (Clarke & Islam, 2004; McGillivray & Clarke, 2006). The findings also suggest that the perceptions of well-being among the people are diverse,

though they cannot be directly observed or measured. During PRA in the wards, most of the research participants repeatedly used the terms like quality of life, welfare, well living, living standards, utility, life satisfaction, prosperity, needs fulfillment, development, empowerment, capability expansion, poverty, human poverty, land, and happiness. They had used the terms interchangeably with well-being, but there was less clarity and explicit discussion as to their distinctiveness.

The researcher remained always embedded with the meaning and practice of 'well-being' as evident in the field. Its fluidity, relativity and flexibility made him always confused, but gradually he became confident with the people. People knew better than anybody else. Before entering into the field, theoretical linkages of people's well-being with the Tharu movement in particular and with the rural development in general were also not clear. First and foremost, therefore, the researcher perceived the wellbeing as premised on the recognition of hierarchical relations of the different social classes. When the researcher was in the field and observed the rural life, he found a number of changes in the perceptions and dimensions of well-being. This was what the researcher allowed themselves to define their well-being in the PRA conducted in each ward or villages (see also chapter 3 and later sections of this chapter). When people were requested to recall their past memories and value of the progress in social life, most of the responses clearly indicated that their ideologies and practices regarding well-being was being changed, from material to non-material one.

Though the researcher did not assess the information about the actual assets and livelihood of people, the PRA and well-being ranking, followed by the FGDs and interviews in each village concludes this argument that the relationship between material well-being and non-material well-being was not linear and straightforward, though they were interdependent. This had three-folded implications.

4.2.1.1 Increasing aspirations vs. material well-being

Regarding the material dimensions of well-being most of the research participants linked it with the contemporary social life they had and was to be. In the emerging context of the Tharu movement, the most of the research participants perceived that it had been manifested on the issues of traditional type of leadership and organization, physical and monetary support to Kamaiya and Kamlahari, and subsidy to the poor Tharu farmers. However, some people claimed that the movement still failed to raise the agendas of agricultural modernization, land ownership and elimination of the root

causes of poverty and inequality. To quote a woman, 34, from Purano Lamahai gaun of Chailahi:

We have many problems and miseries in our life. We learned to give importance of money and land because we are poor. But everything came with the movement, with the leaders, and with the bikas [change]. The movement leaders told us that everything will be solved with when we get the rights and Tharuhat region. I don't know what is happening there in Nepal [in Kathmandu]. But our poverty remains the same, which suffers us too much. No one now talks about the agriculture, land and wage. [Based on the researcher's personal conversation, 21 February, 2014].

This worldview largely reflects the emerging frustrations and dissatisfactions of people, which often related to the material implications in the local development. This was manifested in terms of growth-oriented dimension, monetary treatment of poverty and inequality, focus on physical and visible ownership of the assets and resources, and short-term poverty reduction strategies of rural development. Most of the representatives of the state actors in the villages maintained the claim that the government's policies and programs often focused on the material progress and well-being of people. For them, without reflecting the changes in daily income and purchasing power of people, overall progress was simply impossible.

4.2.1.2 Open-ended perceptions on the non-material well-being

The perceptions regarding the non-material factors seemed to be rapidly emerging though the people could not categorize them as they did for material well-being in the ranking. Regarding Tharu movement, it has been manifested in terms of focus on an inclusive and modern form of leadership and organizational structures, identity and nationalism, social justice and equity in resources distribution, self-esteem, empowerment and dignity of the Tharus. This was rooted in the broader perspective of rural development, including its development oriented dimension. Most of the movement leaders and activists also expressed their views for the meaningful inclusion and empowerment of the Tharus in the long-term process of the development. For example, one of the influential leaders of the movement in Kathmandu claimed that:

It is not possible to establish Tharu identity in this region without any subjective change in the society. This is why we are demanding for the change in the perception of state towards us [the Tharus] and the Tharuhat [the Tarai]. For that, inclusive state with meaningful identity of the Tharus is the bottom line agenda of the movement. [Based on a personal conversation, 12 August 2014]

Some poor people and a few intellectuals in the field, however, contested this worldview of the leaders. The life 'free from poverty and underdevelopment' was simply a good life for the rural poor, while the most of the leaders reflected that the life with 'ethnic recognition and self-esteem' of the Tharus was the good life. For them, there was nothing important more than their basic needs, and they had to struggle day-to-night for the problems of poverty, unemployment and debt. The centuries long bonded labor system was one of the foremost examples for this.

4.2.1.3 Implications on ranking positions

Most of the interviews and FGDs in the villages further informed that there were two types of implications of the well-being. First, there was a regional implication. The linkages of market, roads, and education and health services were the crucial part of this implication. The material dimension of well-being was dominant in the villages of Saudiyar and Aurawani VDCs which were less accessible and less developed as compared to the Chailhai and Bhasi. Interestingly, even in the same ward and settlement of the same VDC, for example, in inner Lamahi and Lamahi village of the ward-2 of Chailahi VDC, there was a difference in valuing the well-being assets among the people. Second, there was class implication. In all the villages, most of the uppermost ranked people preferred to have non-material well-being while the lower ranked people, the poor and women in particular, intended for the material type of well-being, including the issues in their day-to-day life. These issues were a larger reflection of the grievances of local/ rural people (see also Chapter 5). This indicates an existence of complex social relation and power structure in the rural areas which closely linked with the local development. When the researcher asked the same question to a rickshaw driver in Jhumka, he replied:

We need food, land, education, health...enough... [Keeping silence for a while]...for the government, we are not the citizens of Nepal. And, for the leaders, even to the Tharu leaders, we are just voters. There is no value of our life. Did you know why I am driving the rickshaw in this hot mid-day? The [Tharu] leaders always begged for the blood for the emancipation, but what could it give to us? Noting to answer: I am hopeless, really hopeless! [Based on a personal conversation 23 July, 2014]

Theoretically, it can be labeled as an emerging contestation between basic human needs approach and the human rights approach of development. The findings of the study suggest that in between, this nexus there were a number of spaces around the issues of rights, identity and wellbeing of historically disadvantaged groups, including

the Thaus. The basic needs approach was popular in the 1980s, while the Human rights approach has taken considerable observations since 1990s and particularly after 2006, the era from which the constitution-wriving and peace process began. To revisit the contrasting excerpts from a FGD (held on 17 July 2014 in Saudiyar):

A movement leader: In the changing context [2006 and so on], we [the Tharus] should revisit our previous agendas. We have to search long-term visions for the overall well-being of this community. I claim that the Tharuhat can do it.

A local teacher: I don't know my destiny. I have participated in the people's movement in 1990 and in 2006. My hopes did not work at all. You know...this is the country where the farmer does not get fertilizer and seed in time and where we cannot get any cetamol [a medicine of fever/ headache] in the remote villages. Thus, I personally don't believe in the very claims of well-being and emancipation of the people.

The researcher conducted PRAs and well-being ranking in each ward and VDC he visited. There were slight differences in the ranking and perceptions of people in different wards and VDCs. In particular, the more accessible VDCs of the both the districts had a more similar perception and the other two remote VDCs also resembled each other in defining the well-being and giving the values. For example, the people of Chailahi and Bhasi had greater value for trade, business, off-farm wage labor and the diminishing role of traditional agriculture as compared to the other VDCs. This also reflects the urban – rural orientations in the well-being and changing livelihood strategies of the people. However, the rankings of the people were assimilated with the indicators in more general way, because most of the themes of categorizations were almost the same. People categorized them mainly in the four groups: the upper-most, the upper, the poor and the ultra-poor. The terms were given by the people in their own way, though it was facilitated by the researcher and his team. The 'upper-most' rank was equivalent to mean 'upper class' or 'upper rich', while the term the 'upper' also indicated the 'rich' class. Even, the 'ultra-poor' class was termed as the 'labour class' or 'lowest class'. The popular term was the 'middle class', but people could not define and conceptualize it in more generalized and well-accepted way. In this regard, the Table 4.1 points out the major indicators of well-being classes of the rural people in Dang and Sunsari. This is not an asset-based ranking though. Rather, the Table reflects how the well-being was perceived among the rural people of the study villages. Most of the criteria included the material aspects of well-being, including the day-to-day assets, and a few were reflected as non-material dimensions including social prestige, dignity, identity and recognition.

Table 4.1: Well-being rankings and their major characteristics in Dang and Sunsari

Rankings	Major characteristics
Upper-most	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) People having more than 4 bigha land (in rural) and 3 bigha land (in market centres); somewhere found as absentee landlords b) Rod Concrete Cement-made homes, alternative living in nearby town c) Households having additional income source like professional agriculture, trade and business, and high profile/ skilled services. d) Surplus food production, food security throughout the year e) HHs with children in private schools (preferably in district headquarters) and colleges (district hq or outside the districts) f) Preferring private health check-ups and clinics g) Having leadership in most of the local as well as district-level power institutions (e.g. political parties, civil society and co-operatives) h) Having dignified and powerful social prestige in the community
Upper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) People having more than 2 bigha up to 4 bigha land (in rural) or more than 1 bigha land up to 3 bigha (in market centers) b) RCC home, living in joint family with additional homes c) Most of the households having additional income source like agriculture, business, and semi-skilled services. d) Surplus food production, food security throughout the year e) HHs with children in private schools and colleges f) Preferring private health check-ups and clinics; use of alternatives in local health posts g) Having leadership in most of the local, VDC-level (and few district level) power institutions, e.g. political parties, civil society and co-operatives h) Recognized as socially dignified status
Poor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) People having more than 1 bigha up to 2 bigha land (in rural) or more than 0.5 bigha land up to 1 bigha (in market centers) b) Muddy or wooden housing condition (in rural); simple and small RCC (in market) c) Most of the households having solely dependent on income source like agriculture (own in most of the case, and occasional tenancy) or on small business or low profile services/wages in the village or district. d) Rare surplus food production, food security throughout the year, sometimes up to nine months e) HHs with children in government schools or colleges f) Preferring local health posts in most of the cases g) Having leadership in most of the local, ward-level (and VDC level) saving institutions or social groups; and a poor recognition in the society; less network to survive and take opportunities
Ultra-poor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) People having less than 0.5 bigha land (in rural) or less than 5 kattha land (in market centers); or landless HHs in general, who either own <i>ailani</i> (non-registered) land or engage in share-cropping b) Muddy and wooden, weak housing conditions c) Most of the households having solely dependent on income source like tenancy agriculture, wage labor in farm and off-farm sector, petty trades or unskilled jobs d) No surplus food production; food insecurity throughout the year, sometimes from three months e) HHs with children in government schools or colleges; even some cases dropping out or not attending for marriage, wage labor, and family conflicts. f) Preferring local health posts in all the cases g) Having leadership in the few of the local, ward-level saving institutions or social groups, e.g. mother groups, youth clubs, saving groups, and cultural groups. h) Ethnically marginalized as most of the <i>Dalits</i>, <i>badis</i>, small farmers, and poor Tharus; and very miserable, often exploitative social recognition and cultural/social identity in the community

However, it is evident in the categorization that the level of both the material and non-material well-being of people were proportionate to the level of ranking. For most of the research participants, this was not clear that which one was material and which was not. Following this complexity of the methodology the researcher lets the people to define their ranking in their own perception. When the researcher went through the micro-level field observations in the villages, he found that the well-being ranking was not evenly distributed among the people. For example, in Dang, the upper-most, upper, poor and ultra-poor groups were ranked by 10, 24, 46 and 20 percentage of the households, respectively. As reflected in the Table 4.2, the distribution for the lower strata of the well-being was slightly greater in Saudiyar than Chailahi. The same situation was also figured out in Sunsari. The distributions of the households for the above-mentioned well-being ranks were 9, 21, 39 and 31 percentages, respectively. There was a slightly a high number of poor and ultra-poor well-ranked groups because of the squatters and slums, living on the bank of Koshi River, and the nearby the Jhumka bazaar of the district. The categorization of the ranking during well-being ranking and most of the responses of people in the interviews/ FGDs revealed that there was non-linear, and to some extent, an overlapping in the material and non-material dimension of the well-being. To quote a Dalit guy from Aurawani:

I am at the lowest level in the category as I have nothing to own. Nor I have any educational certificate. I do need land. I also need a good respect in society. But I know that without a lot of land and property, no one will count me. This is why I am poor and I should respect the rich people. I should show a due respect ['Namaste and hajur'] many times in a day to those people for whom I work as a wage laborer. [Based on the researcher's personal communication, 25 June 2014]

Table 4.2: Well-being ranking and distribution of households at VDC levels

Well-being ranking	HHs	% distribution	HHs	% distribution	HHs	% distribution
	Chailahi VDC		Saudiyar VDC		Dang	
Upper most	418	11	418	8	626	10
Upper	953	25	586	24	1539	24
Poor	1713	45	1176	47	2889	46
Ultra-poor	723	19	519	21	1242	20
Total	3807	100	2489	100	6296	100
	Bhasi VDC		Aurawani		Sunsari	
Upper most	377	10	112	6	489	9
Upper	901	23	301	17	1202	21
Poor	1593	40	742	43	2335	41
Ultra-poor	1065	27	580	34	1645	29
Total	3936	100	1735	100	5671	100

Both the Tables are simply indicating how the well-being is distributed among the villagers. Of course, poverty and lower well-being status remained as a fact of the rural life, where poor and ultra-poor group constituted 68 percent average in both the districts (66 percent in Dang and 70 percent in Sunsari). It should be noted that this figure is nearly three times larger than the national average of poverty incidence in the country which is 25.4 percent in 2011 (CBS, 2012). It further exceeds the level of poverty as found by the researcher by recalling method of interviews during data collection (see also in Chapter 5). It has three implications: First, there were different interests of different well-being groups in the society, and were often contradictory. The rich and well-off people did not perceive the development as their basic needs, even they could romanticize and lead the Tharu movement to 'eliminate poverty' from the society. The lower ranked groups, perceived development as their immediate need. They participated in the rural development activities, particularly in implementing phases, but they always had been denied from decision making instances (e.g. in APM, meetings of the village councils and nominating leadership in the movement) and benefit sharing opportunities (e.g. community forest user groups, bidding process and subsidy distribution).

Following this, the well-being felt needs and perceptions of people stimulated a shift towards an alternative paradigm of development. It is a seismic shift in neo-classical economic development philosophy dominated by growth-approaches of material well-being. It has been introduced to Nepal as 'modernization project' of western modernity after 1990 in particular. Though this shift remains a crucial feature of social changes in the villages, it is very interesting to note that most of the research participants of all the well-being categories showed their constantly diminishing faith over the existing leadership (of political parties and the Tharu movement) and the development activities (including planning and budgeting) in the region. The loss of self-esteem, faith and dignity among the people could remain as a long term contestation in the rural development. The Tharus and non-Tharus and well-offs and poor all were non-divided in this larger world view of the development. This kind of loss of confidence and frustration with the existing system could have certain consequences likely to occur in the near future. To quote a Tharu young man in Ghorahi:

I am a son of big businessman in this bazaar [Ghorahi]. We have two homes, a large landholding in the village and many more properties. I am also doing well in the college. But, I want to show my recognition in my own name, not of the father's property or prestige. I don't see any career in this country. Many of my friends come

from village in the towns like Ghorahi. They then move to Kathmandu. Finally, they want to go abroad for income and settlement. I am also planning to go abroad. What I will get remaining in this country is really uncertain. The leaders and their politics always remain the same, nothing new! I hate everything! [Based on an FGD conducted among youths, 19 May 2014]

Above-mentioned evidences and discussions clearly reveal that the perception of human well-being was not analogous with income and consumption levels. Much of this shift reflects Sen's (1985, 1987a, 1987b) works on capabilities and functioning, and other work such as Nussbaum's (1988, 1992, 2000) central human capabilities, Doyal and Gough's (1991) intermediate human needs and Narayan et al.'s (2000) axiological needs, among many others (see also McGillivray & Clarke, 2006). Subsequently, approaches to measuring human well-being have widened to incorporate the noneconomic aspects - the movement's aspirations in particular. Issues such as gender and sustainability, identity of non-ethnic groups have also become increasingly integrated within human well-being analysis.

4.2.1.4 Implications on the emerging 'middle class' status

The study of class within a social movement research has been the popular methodological approach (Florida, 2014; Lyman, 2016). Class analysis of movement actors/ participants and other attributes of class struggle are not the objective domains of this study. However, the findings clearly indicate that there was an unavoidable presence of middle class in the Tharu movement which was also a part of local development activities. In Weberian socioeconomic terms, the middle class is the broad group of people in contemporary society who fall socio-economically between the working class and upper class. Theoretically, the middle class is placed between labor and capital who remain in the middle of a social hierarchy.

The well-being ranking in the study clearly indicates that there is a dominance of the middle class group which characteristic features (as evident in Table 4.1) are more likely comprised as what revealed with the characteristics of poor ranking and the upper ranks of people in the villages. The Table 4.2 further illustrates that these middle class groups shares a significant number of people (i.e. 70 percent in Dang and 62 percent in Sunsari) who was ranked by themselves. Contrarily, the sharing of class strata of ultra-poor and upper most is less, though, being just 30 percent in Dang and 38 percent in Sunsari. Interestingly, the people from the strata of poor and upper ranking found to be more engaged with movement activities who were aspired with middle class aspirations and expectations. In terms of ranking of the occupations, the middle class comprised of mainly of the farmers having their own home and land,

school teachers, shopkeepers, salesmen, brokers, wholesalers of vegetables and other agricultural products, owners of small-scale industries, and junior officers (both governmental and non-governmental) constitute the middle class. Most of these occupations did not require a high skill job training and highest degree of formal education. The middle class is primarily a product of rural social structure, it is being heavily influenced and shaped by the capitalist development and the expansion of the functions of the state, including emerging market, foreign employment, flow of remittances, changing values of education, the role of land and other fixed assets and transformation of the agricultural sector in recent years. Following Bourdieu's notions of economic, political, and cultural capital (see also Fuchs, 2003), this study argues that these capitals are well-manifested in the class division among the people. The results show that cultural and economic capital are important factors in mobilizing the protests activates.

The findings further goes to indicate that these traditional groups of middle class are more inclined to opportunities, short-term gains and other immediate benefits. To grab the opportunities, a few intellectual and educated group of people joined the group which the researcher would claim as an elitist orientation of the movement. This group advanced the issue of identity and human rights to mobilize the people. Thus, the researcher very critically moves towards the Gramscian approach of hegemony where the intellectuals and state apparatus are unavoidable parts. To some extent, he theoretically agrees with Cleveland (2003) who rejects the conventional wisdom that today's movements are led by a section of the new middle class' and accuses it being an old functionalist theory of (post) modernizing elites that denies class analysis. Rather, he proposes the 'young adult nucleus' thesis is proposed as an alternative theory. The leading social forces in movements in affluent countries are intellectual radicals and 'advanced elements' from groups that experience some form of exploitation, oppression or collective hurt. They are Gramscian intellectuals as opposed to professional intellectuals. They are people who took the 'opportunity during socialization' when young adults to choose what often became a lifelong 'activist career' for social justice (p. 163-65).

4.3 Movement Organizations, Emerging Actors and Activism

In social movement studies, the concepts like networking and framing are increasingly used, though the debates regarding the roles of actors and agencies in such networks and frames are not yet solved. Most of the scholars argue that the social movement is

cumulative indemnity of the commonalities of the movement actors (Diani & Della Porta, 2006). Before becoming a network, there should be a niche of social movement organizations. A social movement organization (SMO) is a complex, or formal, organization which identifies its goals with the preferences of a social movement or a countermovement and attempts to implement those goals. Some scholars (e.g. McCarthy & Zald, 1978; Oberschall, 1973) have also used the term social movement industry (SMI). All SMOs that have as their goal the attainment of the broadest preferences of social movement constitute a social movement industry (SMI) – the organizational analogue of a social movement. While these organizations could influence upon the coverage and intensity of the movement (Zald, Morrill & Rao, 2005), political participation through them also matter significantly to make the voices of development more collective and apparent (Uvila & Hossain, 2002).

As the study has perceived Tharu movement in a holistic way, there was not a sole authority-ship or leadership ever-defined or claimed so far by any institutions or organizations. In turn, it has been developed and perceived as a cumulative function or product of different institutions or organizations. Over a period of time, a network of different organizations has been established in the villages to interlink and serve a number of social, economic, political, religious, cultural and other activities of the villagers. These networks have been strongly rooted in the villages of Sunsari and Dang, which can be broadly categorized further into three categories: a) loose networks; b) intermediary networks; and c) strong networks.

4.3.1 The loose networks

Most of the SMOs had emerged as loose networks, which include the social actors such as saving groups, mother groups, and youth clubs. Initially, they were developed as social welfare groups and thus used as public forums to engage in community development initiatives through collective behavior and actions.

The Venn diagramming conducted during the PRA in each ward revealed that there were diverse kinds of institutions: political, economic and social-cultural, and developmental. They had a wide coverage, including service delivery organizations, financial and credit organizations, agricultural groups and self-help groups and clubs. They can be categorized into two broader terms: a) State actors (SAs); b) non-State actors (NSAs). The researcher had set the semi-structured interviews to analyze the issues from both of these actors. The former were the organizations that perform services directly under the rules and regulations of the government. In other words,

they function as a state-bureaucracy. While the non-state actors were not directly related to the state or government affairs, they functioned as a non-governmental, civil, or self-help subset of the society. More importantly, in terms of the Tharu movement, the NSAs are the developing as possible alternative of state actors.

As per the local administration system of Nepal, there was a kind of given structure of certain organs and institutions created by the state legislation whose principle of operation were based on service delivery in nature. They have been networked within the districts, VDCs and wards-levels. In every village, the researcher observed and went through them with Venn diagramming and leadership analysis (as discussed in headings 4.5). Table 4.3 portrays different types and numbers of state actors and their relative roles and responsibilities as a part of local governance.

Table 4.3: Presence of state actors and their issues in Dang and Sunsari

SN	Actors or organizations	Dang	Sunsari	Issues and responsibilities
1.	Village Development Committee (VDCs)	2	2	Administrative and service-delivery issues to the rural people
2.	Community forests	3	1	Access to local natural resource, livelihood issues, wood, fuel-wood, tourism, grazing, and fodders
3.	Health posts	2	3	Health issue; and basic health care services to the rural people in cheap prices
4.	Police stations	2	3	Maintaining peace and security under the office of CDO/ DAO
5.	Army camps	-	1	Maintain peace and security on the special order of the GoN
6.	Branch of Agricultural Equipment Company Limited	1	2	Distribution of fertilizers and seeds to the farmers
7.	Branch of District Veterinary Office	1	2	Veterinary services to livestock
8.	Branch of Irrigation Project	1	2	Irrigation to the whole region
9.	Community schools (including child centres)	6	8	Educational issues, and schooling of the children
10.	Post office/ service	2	2	Diminishing use patterns of posting and mailing service
11.	Community colleges/campus	2	3	Educational issues, and development of high-skill human resources
12.	Agricultural development bank	1	1	Credit to the farmers and rural entrepreneurs with collateral
13.	Rural development bank	1	-	Credit to the farmers and small entrepreneurs with and without collateral
Total		24	30	

There were 13 types of state actors in both the study districts and VDCs influencing the local service delivery and governance. There were altogether 24 state actors (with some repetitive types) active in Dang; 13 in Chailahii VDC and 11 in Saudiyar VDC. While they were 30 NSAs in the Sunsari district, Aurawani and Bhasi had 14 and 16 NSAs respectively. The most important thing to note here is that despite this presence of different kinds of SAs in the VDCs, their functions were almost channeled with the vertical system of governance, i.e. downward by district level actors. This consequently broadened the difficulties to the rural people even in taking the minor judiciary services.

Among the others, VDC office, health post and community schools were the most common type of state-actors found in the all the VDCs. Comparatively, the accessible VDCs (i.e. Chailahi of Dang and Bhasi of Sunsari) had better (even quick and modern) public service system than that of the remote or less accessible VDCs/villages (i.e. Saudiyar VDC of Dang and Aurawani VDC of Sunsari). Indeed, each and every village was linked through the system of “village development committee (VDC)”, which was working as a local body of the state for local development, budgeting and administration. The VDC has been classified as the bottom level of local bodies constituted by the people’s representatives. Though the local bodies were not fully decentralized and devolved to the bottom, unfortunate is that they were vacant since 2002 due to political transition in the country. This has created a great space for weak service delivery in rural areas, making the people-state relationship complex and controversial. This context is also pictured out in case of the district headquarters and the municipalities of Dang and Sunsari. In spite of repeated requests and attempts, the researcher could not get any registration copy of working organizations/ institutions in the VDCs and DDCs; nor there could the officials provide any dataset with updated information (even of the Census 2011).

On the other hand, as reflected in Table 4.4, NSAs in the VDCs were comparatively high as compared to the state actors, i.e. 54 versus 427 in total. This statistic reveals the rapid emergence of non-state actors, as a compensation of state actors, more or less in inversely proportional ratio. Though there were 17 types of NSAs found in all the study VDCs, a bit large numbers of NSAs were operating in the accessible VDCs like Chailahi and Bhasi. The movement activities as reported by people were also active these VDCs as compared to Saudiyar and Aurawani. Both these factors could have correlative association. Health institutions (private clinics, health care service),

educational institutions (particularly in higher education) and media sector (FMs, newspapers) were lacking in the less accessible VDCs.

Table 4.4: Presence of non-state actors and their issues in Dang and Sunsari

SN	Actors or organizations	Dang	Sunsari	Issues and responsibilities
1.	All party mechanism (APM)	2	2	Representing political parties to dialogue with the local state actors
2.	Political parties representing APM	17	14	All acting parties in the VDC, which claim to represent all the people, including the Tharus
3.	Tharu-based ethnic/regional parties (TTPN and TASC)	4	4	Struggling to enter into APM, making confusion in true representative of TM
4.	Tharu Joint Struggle Committee (TJSC)	2	2	Umbrella organization of representing all the TM actors
5.	Tharu Welfare Society (TWS); area committees	3	2	A rooted Tharu socio-cultural organization working for conservation of Tharu culture, language and traditions
6.	Non-governmental organizations-NGOs	21	17	Related to bio-gas plantation in the big farmer's households
7.	Youth Clubs	39	45	Related to youth initiatives, capacity building and cultural promotion
8.	FM Radios	2	1	Broadcasting movement news, activities and demonstrations
9.	News-paper (daily/weekly)	2	1	Exposing movement news, activities and demonstrations
10.	Mother groups	30	24	SHGs for women rights, actions against domestic violence, capacity building and cultural promotion
11.	Saving groups	45	34	Saving scheme and micro-credit for women, particularly of poor HHs
12.	Rural co-operatives	9	6	Saving scheme, micro-credit and capacity building of people
13.	Agricultural groups	20	23	Pre-groups for co-operatives, though induced by NGOs, involving in farmers' small groups
14.	Cultural groups	14	7	Related to cultural celebrations and ceremonies, e.g. <i>maghi</i> , <i>tyohar</i> and <i>jitiya</i>
15.	Private schools	10	13	Educational issues, schooling of the children in expensive English-medium
16.	Private college/campus	2	3	Educational issues, expensive English-medium
17.	Private hospital/health care	3	4	Health issue; difficult and unaffordable critical health care services to the people
Total		225	202	

Among these different kinds of NSAs, there were different dynamics attached to the Tharu movement and rural/regional development. First, there were some NSAs directly linked and networked with TM and often practiced as immediate network, e.g. TJSC, TWS, and Tharu-based ethnic/regional parties. Second, some of them were indirectly

linked with TM to moderate practice as the intermediate network. But, these types of NSAs had direct influences in the local development affairs; e.g. APM and political parties. Third, a few NSAs were potentially workable networks (e.g. civil society groups and Chamber of Commerce) in the movement which were strategically practiced, particularly in the accessible VDCs (Chailahi and Bhasi) and big market centers (e.g. Lamahi and Jhumka). Most of them were induced by the local NGOs to implement their development projects, e.g. mother groups, peasants' groups, youth clubs, and poor people of other caste/regions. Fourth, some of them had less, passive and indirect connotation with TM and were diplomatically and occasionally practiced as loose networks, e.g. development agencies, donors and NGOs.

Further, more importantly, this requires further analysis in linking these actors and networks with the rural development. The emergence of NSAs had increased the bargaining power of the people and coverage of the development works. But, there was also a negative side of the case. The NSAs had prolonged the decision making process of the local government and SAs, even influenced them in many ways. Even the map of the VDC could not be developed without the involvement of NSAs. The NSAs had very beautifully manipulated the movement slogans and propagandas as it was for the emancipation of Tharu community and the poor people. In turn, the Tharus got an immense help and support from those NSAs. The physical as well financial support was also reported to happen. Some of the members of the NSAs had been officially involved in the movement activities under the banner of 'Tharuhat movement'. Though the village development planning, local administration and development projects were the jurisdiction of different SAs including the government and VDCs, all had a kind of requirement/involvement (somewhere collaboration) with the NSAs. The NSAs and their networks worked as watchdogs of the state affairs and decisions. In many cases, the researcher had observed them to be more powerful than the SAs. For example, one of the representatives of a leading NGO (i.e. BASE) in an FGD recalled in Saudiyar that:

When we [NGOs] go into the different VDCs [offices], they [the VDC staffs] demand us many things including this and that for the project and funding. It is good. But when I ask them about their internal budget in the development sector, I wondered, seeing that this is often less than the amount which we usually spent on the salary our staffs in Dang. [Based on a personal conversation with the researcher, Baburam Chudhary, 17 March 2014]

4.3.2 The intermediary networks

These types of networks play a crucial movement's role to be mediated as a continuum of loose networks and strong networks. In the villages, it was quite evident that some of the loose networks were becoming negotiating actors. These networks seemed politically less organized, but socially strategic organizations to mobilize Tharus in the movement. The key actors within these networks include:

Backward Education Society (BASE)

In 1985 it was established as Charpate Club, and was registered in the name of an NGO (BASE) in 1990 (Cox, 1994). BASE has two working domains with non-violence conflict movement for right based approach, building human rights and service delivery through development projects in rural and marginalized communities. BASE is not just an NGO but one of the largest membership based social movements in South Asia. It has a membership of over 300,000 people, of which about 29,000 are actively engaged in voluntary community work with BASE.³⁶ It is also one of the member organizations of TJSC, so becoming both as political-social actor. The leadership of BASE is politically exposed in favor and against the major political parties not only at local levels but also at the national level. Though this actor had engaged in the promotion of social and human capital, including the issues of Kamaiya and Kamlahari movement in the mid-and far-western region, critics also blamed it for the *gair-sarkarikiran* (i.e. NGO-ization) of the movement and manipulation of donor-driven agendas.

Youth clubs

The youth clubs were strategic networks, which had played an important role in exposing the movement praxis and consciousness among the youths. The youth clubs which were either led or dominated by the Tharu young people, mediated the movement leadership and civil society's perceptions by mobilizing the movement emotions of young people. The movement leadership had strategically utilized grievances of young Tharu generation in terms of their education, employment and proportional representation. They played a dual role both as 'self-help' and 'pressure group'. As the researcher's Venn Diagramming revealed (see Tables discussed above), there were 39 youth clubs in Dang (Chailhai and Saudiyar) and 45 in Sunsari (Bhasi and Aurawani). In every village and ward levels, these networks were not 'ethnically developed' but the Tharu members and leaderships had been mobilized to

³⁶<http://nepalbase.org/history-of-base/>

convey the messages and strategies of the movement. Therefore, these actors served as the power house of the Tharu movement.

Freed Kamlahari Development Forum (FKDF)

This forum was induced by some NGOs working in the field of Kamlahari movement in the Dang in 2007 (and registered as an NGO in 2010), and now extended the networks and branch offices in all the mid- and far-western Tarai districts involving some 12000 members in total and 2650 only in the Dang. With the facilitation of some INGOs (e.g. Plan Nepal, Friends of Needy Nepal) and NGOs (Nepal Youth Foundation, Social Welfare Association of Nepal, and BASE), this forum worked extensively in the sectors of advocacy, rescue and rehabilitation of the Kamlahari girls along with a variety of projects in its home community. The FKDF had also played a leading role in the Kamlahari Freedom Movement during the 2010-2013 (see details of this initiative in Chapter 5). During the researcher's observation the FKDF was found with highly networked structures, national and international exposures, officially established setting and economically self-reliant.

Mukta Kamaiya Samaj (MKS)

The Samaj (also called freed Kamaiya Society) was established by some freed Kamaiyas in Kailali in 2007 and extended its organizational network to Dang, Kanchanpur, Bardiya and Banke in 2008. It is interesting to note that before the Kamaiyas were freed in 2002 (BS 2057 Shrawan 2), different groups of Kamaiyas had been mobilized since 1990 including *Kamaiya Mukti Manch* and *Kamaiya Jagaran Samiti*. Later on, these groups were further revitalized in the post-2006 context where rehabilitation of the freed Kamaiyas was becoming prominent issue. Though data regarding the membership of this society are debated it might be around 8000 in total and 2100 in Dang alone. The MKS did not have membership with the TJSC, though a few members were now being nominated in the TWS. Therefore, the political implication of the society was largely discarded with the mainstreams of Tharu movement. However, MKS had been engaged with the alliance of Land Rights Forums in Dang and around. It had been demonstrated a number of agitations to pressurize the government for the sustainable rehabilitation of freed Kamaiyas. Though MKS had highly networked structures in many districts, the researcher could not see any official establishments for its sustainability, nor was it granted with any external funds or grants.

4.3.3 The strong networks of the movement

As was also revealed in Chapter 2, the Tharu movement got political landscape in the post-2006 context. A number of political issues and agendas came to the surface which made broader cultural frame of Tharu movement (as having the public sphere of Tharu Welfare Society) into a specific frame of Tharuhat and/ or Tharuwan. The term 'Tharuhat' implies the political construct of federalism and autonomy for the Tharus in the Tarai region while 'Tharuwan' connotes the Maoist version of emancipation of the Tharus involving both class and ethnic issues in the region. Along with these framings, the following actors had been developed as political networks to mobilize the Tharus in collective agitations against the state.

Tharu Welfare Society (TWS):

Established in 1949 by some Tharu elites of the middle - Tarai region, TWS (in Nepali and Tharu: *Tharu Kalyankarini Sabha*) was very first government-recognized ethnic/caste organization in Nepal. It has political legacies with the respective rulers involving its leadership networks with the ruling elites, as was evident the access of Kewal Chaudhary (Rana legacy), Ramananda Prasad Chaudhary and Parashu Narayan Chaudhary (Panchayat and bureaucratic legacy) [Gellner, 2008; Guneratne, 2002]. The association today represents the Tharus in the NEFIN – the umbrella network for all the indigenous nationalities in Nepal. The district committees of TWS are now active in all the 23 Tarai-districts and in the Kathmandu district too (Sarvahari & Chaudhary, 2016). The TWS represents an oldest legacy of the Tharu movement which often manifested in the reform movements in the Panchayat era involving cultural issues in particular. Since its establishment, it had followed '*bandej abhiyan*' (i.e. disallowed to perform) that was initiated with Gandhian reform strategies in terms of non-violence and coexistence of caste and society. The objectives of the *bandej* campaign in Tharu community were to ban the child marriage and polygamy; reduce unnecessary expenditures in feasts and festivals; promote girls' education; and conserve language and tradition of the Tharus. The organizational policies of TWS clearly outline four dimensions of reform: social, economic, educational and cultural. Though TWS had a series of independent movements in 2007 and 2008, it became a member of TJSC in 2010 and since then it involved in the joint movement along with this network. Tharu joint struggle committee (2012) and Tharuhat/ Tharuwan Joint Struggle Committee (2014) (see also Chaudhary, 2017).

The Tharuhat Autonomous State Council (TASC):

In 2006, while the Maoists insurgency was formally ended and they entered into the mainstream politics, the leaders (along with combatant commanders) were divided in terms by the ideology of caste/ ethnic emancipation and regional development. Accordingly, a group of the Tharu leaders rebelled the Maoists in the leadership of Laxman Tharu (Roshan) in 27 June 2006 (i.e. BS 2063 Ashadh 13), and one year after, he formed 'Joint Tharu National Alliance' (*Samyukta Rashtriya Morcha Nepal*) which was constituted in 2007. The alliance demanded 16-points demands to the government of Nepal that inherently cautioned for the establishment of a 'Tharuhat state' in the Tarai region (Sarvahari & Jha, 2013). The alliance conducted a one-year campaign in all the Tarai districts regarding rights and recognition of the Tharu. The first convention of alliance was held on 9 June 2008 (i.e. BS 2065 Jestha 27) in Bangaun (Dang). It renamed the alliance as 'Tharuhat Autonomous State Council (TASC)'. Laxman Tharu was elected as president, Yogendra Chaudhary as vice-president and Chandra Narayan Chaudhary as a general secretary. Eventually, TASC became an affiliate member of the Federal Democratic National Front (along with Limbu, Tamang and Khambu groups), a national political party which gained 4 seats in the first CA, included a Tharu elected (Rukmini Chaudhary) from Dang. The TASC, alongside the Tharuhat Joint Struggle Committee, played a key role in the Tharu movements of 2009 and 2012; and which had participated in the elections of CA in both the times in the name of 'Federal Democratic National Front (Tharuhat)', i.e. Sanghiya Loktantrik Rashtriya Manch (Tharuhat). In the beginning, the Manch was powerful in Dang and Kaillai (not in the case of eastern Nepal though). The founding leaders of the council have now left the party and joined different parties, which has weakened the party in national politics.³⁷

The Tharuhat Joint Struggle Committee (TJSC):

TJSC was formally formed on 8 July 2008 (i.e. BS 2065 Ashadh 24) with a slogan of 'common agendas, the joint struggle' under the facilitation and coordination of TASC. In early times of establishment, it took demonstrations against the Madhesi demands for 'One Madhesh, one Pradesh' – the slogan which contradicted with the Tharu

³⁷While Laxman Tharu went for formation of another party (Tharuhat Tarai Party Nepal), its vice-president (Yogendra Chaudhary) remained as senior leader of the Manch. But, both the leaders again went to join the Gachhadar-led Madhesi Janaadhikar Forum (Loktrantik) in 4 October 2012 (i.e. BS 2069 Ashoj 18) in a public program which was held in Lamahi, Dang. It had become a hot-cake among the movement actors.

demands for a Tharuhat state. Initially, it comprised with ten groups and political wings of the Tharus including TASC, Nepal Loktantrik Samajwadi Dal, Tharu Indigenous NGO Federation, BASE, Tharu Intellectual and National Research Centre (TINRC) Nepal, Tharu Women Society, Tharu Student Society, Tharu Community Development Forum (TCDF) Bardiya, Tharu Artist Society and Tharu Youth Front. Later on, it was extended with a wider and powerful network of the Tharu Welfare Society, Tharuhat Tarai Party Nepal and Tharu Loktantrik Manch. The organizational network within the TJSC comprised of a central struggle committee at the center (i.e. at Kathmandu), regional struggle committees (at different geographical regions of Tarai), district struggle committee (in all the Tarai districts), area (i.e. *ilaka*) struggle committee within the districts, VDC struggle committee at the local levels and village struggle committees at the villages (i.e. toles). The researcher's field study reflected that there were 23 such committees in Dang while it counted only 14 in Sunsari in the period of 2012-2014. However, there were number of ideological differences and leadership clashes within the members and committees of TJSC.

Undoubtedly, it has played a leading role in the peak hours of the agitations and at times for dialogue with the government and other movement actors. The 13-days strike in 2009 and 12-days strike in 2010, which held under the leadership of TJSC, were two exemplary events that have expanded the coverage of the Tharu movement in national and international context. In Dang and Susnari, the researcher has collected various instances how the movement was mobilized with these very networks of TJSC.

Tharu Joint Struggle Committee

Tharuhat Joint Struggle Committee was reframed to the Tharu Joint Struggle Committee by an extensive meeting of Tharu movement actors and groups which held in Kathmandu on April 2012 (i.e. Baisakh 2069 BS). The committee was formed under the leadership of TWS, represented by the then president Chandra Narayan Chaudhary. It led a movement 21-days long strike in April-May onwards and a continuous series of shutdown program went on through the Tarai region. One protestor was killed during the demonstration of Danda bazaar of Nawalparasi and many people got injured in different regions. Eventually, the strike led to a 10-point agreement on 23 May 2012 (i.e. BS 2069 Jestha 10) between the government of Nepal and the Tharu Joint Struggle Committee. The agreement committed to addressing the issues of the Tharu people in terms of their ethnic recognition, regional autonomy and preferential rights.

Tharuhat Tarai Party Nepal (TTPN)

Declaration of Tharuhat Tarai Party Nepal was held in Nepalgunj (Banke) on 12 August 2011 (i.e. BS 2068 Shrawan 27). The founding leaders include Laxman Tharu, Gopal Dahit, Bhanuram Chaudhary, Yogendra Chaudhary, Ganga Chaudhary (Satgauwa) and Min Raj Chaudhary. The party was registered in the Nepal Election Commission just after one and half years of the declaration (i.e. in 4 October 2012). Before this formal registration of the party, the founding President Laxman Tharu and Vice-president Yogendra Chaudhary left it and entered into a Madhes-based political party, Nepal Janaadhikar Forum (Loktantrik). The Tharuhat Tarai Party participated in the election of second CA which held on 2013 November. It succeeded to elect 2 representatives in the CA from the PR system. On 25 December 2016, the Tharuhat Tarai Party Nepal has expelled the party's vice-chairperson and lawmaker Ganga Satgauwa Chaudhary from the party charging her of acting against the party's statute. Lawmaker Chaudhary reframed the split as Tharuhat Tarai Party Loktrantik (TTP-L). Her party again merged into the Dr. Baburam Bhattarai-led Naya Shakti Nepal party on February 14, 2017.

The Tharuhat Sena (TS) and Tharuhat Youth Force³⁸

The TS was founded in Dang District (in Rajpur VDC-7) in 24 August 2009 (i.e. BS 2066 Bhadra 8). As a wing of the TASC, its main aim was to 'making the revolt of the indigenous people successful' (Maycock, 2011). It became popular in the western Tarai districts involving 1800 youths in the region among which 500 were participated from Dang alone. It was not organizationally extended to the eastern region where the researcher consulted with the movement stakeholders in Sunsari. The strategic ideas and interventions of the Sena have a number of declarations. They include: establishment of Tharuhat base-areas, conduction of parallel local government, distribution of Tharuhat nationality (citizenship card) to the citizens, formation of a general staff of the army in the leadership of chair of the central committee of TASC, and formation of one battalion force in each Tharuhat district-government. Tharuhat Sena initiated Tharuhat resistance campaign in 2010 in five western Tarai districts – Kanchanpur, Kailali, Bardiya, Banke and Dang. Although the TS has remained largely

³⁸ There is no formal and legal document for these initiatives of the Tharu movement; so the information cited here rely on the media coverage and on the researcher's personal conversation with founder brigade commander of the Sena and the then chair of central coordination committee of the youth force in November 2014.

inactive, it did illustrate the level of frustration many Tharus felt and indicates that there is, at times, a militant strand in Tharu activism.

The leadership of the TASC could not play a leading role in mobilizing the cadres of Tharuhat Sena for a long-run movement and it could not extend to the eastern districts. In this context Tharuhat Tarai Party Nepal took an initiative to take the role and it formed Tharuhat youth force in 2013 in Rajapur of Bardiya district. The first convention offered a Rajapur declaration and it formed a Tharuhat youth force central co-ordination committee under the chair of Ram Prasad Chaudhary. In subsequent years, the force has been now weak and passive, and it could not organize regular meetings and conventions.

Tharuhat/ Tharuwan Joint Struggle Committee

The Tharuhat Joint Struggle Committee was revitalized to the name of 'Tharuhat/ Tharuwan Joint Struggle Committee' in 10 August 2015 (i.e. BS 2072 Shrawan 25). The committee constituted with 19 members in total and was chaired by Dhaniram Chaudhary, the then president of TWS (Chaudhary, 2017). It included the representatives of TWS (6), Tharuhat Joint Struggle Committee (6) and Tharu Sabhasad Sangharsa Samiti (7). In the context of constitution writing, the committee started a continuous demonstration and strikes since 12 August 2015. It made an alliance with other movement actors and the Madhesi Morcha in Tarai. However, the committee became gradually passive after the promulgation of new constitution in September 2015. It was basically due to their division regarding the perspective towards the Constitution, whether it is progressive of the Tharus or not. Besides, violent eruptions of the movement in some parts of the country have also made some Tharu leaders underground and they get departed with the mainstream movement.³⁹ Very recently on 10 September 2017 (BS 2074 Bhadra 25) the movement activists who were remained inactive after the Tikapur incident have made a national-level joint meeting in Kailali. The two-days meeting ended with formation of 'Tharu Joint National Alliance' (i.e. *Samyukta Tharu Rashtriya Morcha*) and concluded to heighten the Tharuhat movement in the changing context of federal set-up in the Tarai region. It has formed a 21-membered coordination committee in the leadership of Shrawan Chaudhary. It has also decided to actively boycott the upcoming elections which will be held for the parliament and provincial councils.

³⁹ Based on the researcher's personal conversation with one of the senior members of the committee in 13 December 2015.

Unification and alliance of the political parties and movement actors

Nepali politics has taken a new turn with the recent electoral alliance and subsequent unity between the two biggest communist parties – the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist Leninist) and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist Center) which held on 3 October 2017.⁴⁰ The alliance has given rise to a great deal of enthusiasm and hope but also many doubts. The 7-point agreement that dealt with the process of alliance has announced that they would follow the principles of peace, stability, rule of law, sovereignty, reform, distributive justice and prosperity. At its heart, it is a strategic alliance aimed at jointly contesting upcoming federal and provincial election slated for November 26 and December 7 this year, with the ultimate goal of building a powerful socialist center for political stability, peace and prosperity in Nepal. Indeed, it is an unprecedented political event that could polarize Nepali politics with the confrontation of left forces/ parties and democratic forces/ parties. Further, it is expected the alliance can catch a popular left sentiments in Nepal though its national, international and intra-party dynamics of the alliance are yet to be opened visibly.

The unification of (and alliance with) Tharu-based political parties and Madhes-centric political parties has become a recent trend in the movement discourse of Nepal. They previously treated each other as enemies. Madhesi Janaadhikar Forum Nepal (Democratic), led by Bijaya Kumar Gachhadar, and Tharuhat Tarai Party Nepal, led by Bhanuram Tharu, had announced their unification on 20 April 2017. This new party has also dropped “Madhes” or “Tharuhat” from the party’s name and renamed as ‘Nepal Loktrantik Forum’. The party now has 18 lawmakers in Parliament. A 27-point agreement has been issued during the unification of both the parties.⁴¹ Earlier in 5 April 2017, Shiva Lal Thapa-led Rastriya Janamukti Party-Democratic and Yashoda Kumari Lama-led Dalit Janajati Party had unified the Gachhadar-led party with an understanding to name the new party Nepal Lokatantrik Forum (Nepal Democratic Forum). The Forum has 18 lawmakers in the Parliament, including 14 from Gachhadar’s side, two from Thapa’s party, one of the Lama’s party and one from Bhanuram-led Tharuhat Tarai.⁴²

Very surprisingly, however, Bijay Kumar Gachhadar returned to his mother party when his party Nepal Democratic Forum (NDF) merged with the Nepali Congress (NC) on 16 October 2017. In the joint merger announcement program, party leaders of NC and

⁴⁰ <http://www.myrepublica.com/news/28731/?categoryId=81>

⁴¹ Based on the researcher’s personal observation of the program of unification, 20 April 2017, Kathmandu.

⁴² Based on the information of Secretariat of the Parliament, Kathmandu, Nepal.

NDF urged for making of a strong democratic force in the country to counter the left alliance. Gachhadar had a long history in NC though he had left NC and joined the Madhesi movement a decade ago. Most of the party leaders who joined the NDF six months ago (including the leaders of the Rashtriya Janamukti Party and Tharuhat Tarai Party) have been remained against the unification with NC. Yet, this unification is questionable about the ways how it will champion the voices of Madhesis, Tharus and oppressed groups, who have been constantly expressing their desire for change through protests and movements in the Tarai region.⁴³ Following this merging process, however, Laxman Tharu, one of the proponents of the Tharu movement who had already been in NDF since 2012 left the party and joined the Rashtriya Janata Party (RJP) on 18 October 2017.⁴⁴ This entry of a Tharuhat leader into a Madhes-based political party seems theoretically contested as both the groups, according to their own claims, largely represent different groups and different territory. This event further makes a fluidity in the Tharu movement, making its destiny more unpredictable in the contemporary politics.

Badhghar Mahasang and Mahatara Sangh:

Another more recent form of mobilization amongst Tharus in the western Tarai has been around the revitalization of the Badhghar system, an annually elected traditional form of governance at the village levels where the Badhghar (also known as *bhalmansa*, *aguwa* and *mahatawa* in different localities) was granted with some political, administrative and semi-judiciary rights and responsibilities. Since 2010, some of the movement organizations started to demand to revitalize, organize and gain recognition of the system from the Government as it was their right of self-governance. The Badhghar Mahasangh was established in 2010 which then followed with the establishment of similar type district-level organizations; the Mahatawa Sangh in Dang, for an example. The researcher got many evidences that the public appealing of the Badhghars for the local people to participate in the movement activities was very effective in the Dang. Despite the fact, transformation of the Badhghar system into a non-ethnic political entity for collective welfare and governance was also interesting finding, as has been discussed in Chapters- 5 and 6.

The impact and relationship of these actors with TM in particular and with the RD in general were much more complex. In most of the cases, all the four above-mentioned networks had not practiced simultaneously. They facilitated the framing and institutionalization process of the TM. From a theoretical perspective, the use and

⁴³ <https://thehimalayantimes.com/nepal/nepal-democratic-forum-merges-nepali-congress/>

⁴⁴ <http://www.tharuwan.com/2017/10/120725/>

practice of networks depend upon the nature and coverage of the movement itself (Bebbington, 2011; Crossley, 2003).

4.4 Leadership Analysis of the Major Actors

Leadership is one of the important dynamics of SM studies (Giddens, 2009; Tarrow, 2007; Tilly, 2004). However, a number of scholars have realized that leadership in social movements has still to be theorized and contextualized (Morris, 1999; Aminzade et al., 2001; Barker et al., 2001). In the context of Tharu movement, the role of leadership, structure of the leadership pattern, number of leaders and their well-being rankings were largely evident in directing the movement motives and emotions. In this sub-heading he would explain how and why the leadership pattern was more elitist in its structure as guided by upper quartile people in the society (see further analysis in Chapter 5, heading 5.7). The analysis is based on the Venn diagramming and well-being ranking of people, which was done during PRA by identifying and defining the well-being categories by the local people themselves (e.g. as sketched in Figure 4.2 for the sample representations).

The elite structure of the villages simply represents the basic values and the process of creating these values in favor of established patterns of ruling and ruled. There was a concrete expression in the power structure affecting the decision making process in communities (Tharu and non-Tharu) and organization (SAs and NSAs including movement organizations- MOs). Though an increasing power consciousness was observed, poor people were less accessible to leadership, esp. power institutions like political parties and pressure groups. Politics, political network and dialogue had seen as common thrusts of people for engaging in social and political affairs. Evidently, most of the people in leadership of SAs or NSAs were from the upper castes, non-Tharus and males. Kinship and caste along with class (well-being) of people were playing an important role in shaping and making the leadership.

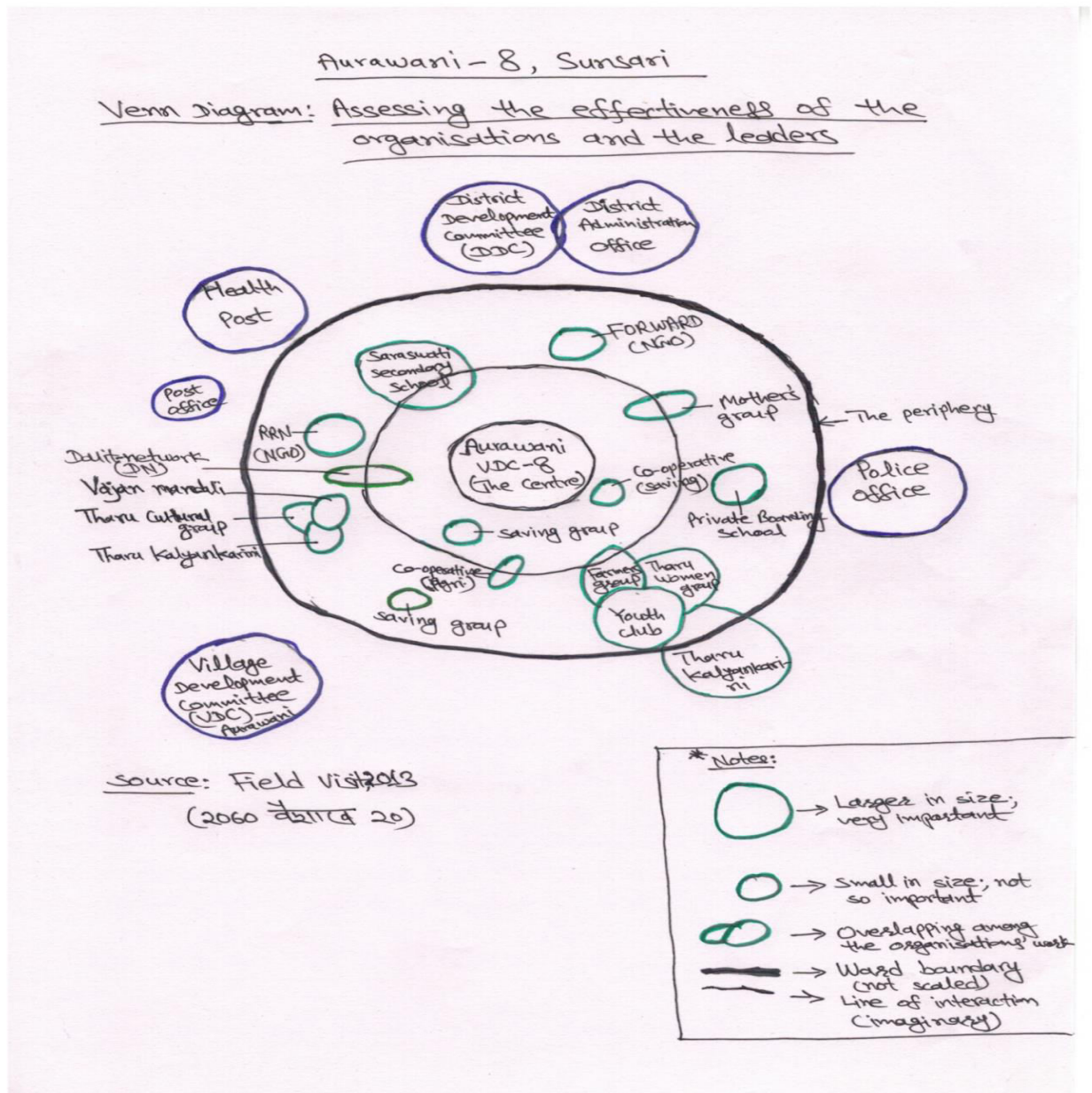


Figure 4.2: A sketch for Leadership analysis through Venn Diagramming in Aurawani-8

The Tables 4.5 and 4.6 speak about the general pattern of leadership in different kinds of SAs and NSAs. In spite of having low representation of the Tharu people in the decision making positions (i.e. management and executive committees), a few positions accessed by them were from the upper quartiles of well-being. In addition, there are certain issues and implications regarding the Tharu movement and rural development. This critical assessment of the leadership has basically the following indicative findings:

Table 4.5: Leadership and implication of state actors in the VDCs of Dang and Sunsari

SN	Key actors and organizations	Leadership positions ⁴⁵	Positions led by Tharu	WB ranking of Tharu leader(s)	The issues in development
1.	Village Development Committee (VDC)	4	2	Upper most-2	VDC struggling for poor's voice; complicated service delivery system due to lack of elected bodies
2.	Community forest management committees	6	2	Upper-1, poor-1	Less representation of Tharus in Forest resource management, the leadership still grabbed by upper class
3.	Health posts	8	2	Upper-2	Few Tharus; dominance of non-Tharus in the leadership
4.	Police stations	1	-	-	Non- Tharu leadership
5.	Army camps	1	-	-	Non- Tharu leadership
6.	Agricultural Equipment Company	2	-	-	Non-Tharus in leadership
7.	Veterinary offices	2	-	-	Non-Tharus in leadership
8.	Irrigation projects	2	-	-	Non-Tharus in leadership
9.	School management committees	21	6	Upper most-3, upper-2, poor-1	Only few Tharus in school management, weak educational status
10.	College management committees	6	-	-	Non-Tharus in leadership
11.	Post office service	4	-	-	Non-Tharus in leadership
12.	Agricultural development bank	4	-	-	Non-Tharus in leadership
13.	Rural development bank	2	-	-	Non-Tharus in leadership
Total		63	10		

- a) Among 63 leadership positions of SAs in the villages, only 10 (i.e. 6.3%) positions were led by the Tharu leaders. Indeed, this holding in the leadership seems proportional to the total population of the Tharu community in the country (i.e. 6.7%). Within these 10 positions, only one position was reported in the name of a Tharu woman. Contrary to this, 173 Tharu leaders were in the leadership of NSAs out of a total 349 positions which was almost half of the total leadership key position, i.e. about 50 percent. There was also a clear gender variation: 45 women vs. 128 out of total 173

⁴⁵ The leadership positions had been perceived as the number of presents and general secretaries in the executive committee or management committee of the respective actor/organization.

positions. In overall, this statistic indicates that comparatively there was a better representation of the Tharu people in the NSAs' leadership. This presence of Tharus in NSAs could have a correlative impact of Tharu movement activities, while the limited inclusion in the SAs implies the exclusionary nature of the state itself. The SAs, in most of the cases, are organized and structured by the state and it takes a certain rules and regulations (including the defined educational status) to be recruited with them. The NSAs are locally induced or manipulated, where there is not such rigidity in terms of the economic and social status of people. The disappointment and dissatisfaction with the state and SAs had led an emergence and importance of NSAs in the villages. Further, with the vacant local bodies and poor governance in the region, this kind of non-state activism could have promoted movement activities in the rural areas.

- b) Well-being and leadership positions have direct connotations. The same case was found in the villages of Dang and Sunsari. The researcher would agree that where there are weak and less leadership position for the lower quartiles, there may be a challenge of representing those groups in power sharing. Most of the actors, particularly the power-based organizations were led by upper quartiles. Even the heads of Tharu movement leading institutions (TJSC and TWS, for example) were from the upper class elites, who had better positions in society with large landholdings, additional income sources and larger political network. This could make further exclusion of lower quartiles in the process of setting of the movement's agendas and strategies. In this way, the existing leadership and well-off people could not be accountable and responsible as such they used to claim so far. Rather, there were loopholes in representing the interests and day-to-day problems of poor people.

- c) The leadership where there were the Tharus, but from the lower quartiles were not active in the Tharu movement, e.g. Kamaiya and Kamlahari. Either, they had their own societies and struggle committees. Despite this, what was the main problem in integrating these NSAs into the mainstream Tharu movement has been less answered. Empirically, it was due to different interests and class positions and caste/ethnic backgrounds among the representatives of those non-state actors?

Table 4.6: Leadership and issues of non-state actors in the VDCs of Dang and Sunsari

S.N.	Actors and organizations	Leadership positions	Positions led by Tharu	WB ranking of Tharu leader(s)	Issues and implications
1.	All party mechanism (APM)	8	2	Upper most-2	Negotiation with VDC was struggling for poor's voice to access public services
2.	Political parties representing APM	30	11	Upper most-4, upper-4, poor-3	Less presence in leadership of the major political parties, though grabbed by the upper elites
3.	Tharu-based ethnic/regional parties	6	5	Upper most-3, upper-2	Emerging political parties with success of movement, though undefined boundaries between SM and political parties; no poor people in the leadership
4.	Tharu Joint Struggle Committee (TJSC)	4	8	Upper most-3, upper-5	No poor people in the leadership and ownership of the movement organization; no poor, no landless people
5.	Tharu Welfare Society (TWS)	4	8	Upper most-3, Upper-2, poor-3	Rooted in society, with more socio-cultural issues, a mixed type of people in terms of class
6.	Youth Clubs	49	25	Upper most-3, upper-7, poor-9, ultra-poor-6	Most of youths from lower quartiles of well-being;
7.	FM Radios	6	1	Upper most-1	Very weak, but elite leadership
8.	News-paper (daily/weekly)	3	1	Poor-1	Less representation of poor people's voices and leadership criticism or development
9.	Mother groups	60	32	Upper most-4, upper-11, poor-11, ultra-poor-6	Less engagement of the top-most and bottom-most quartile, because of their different interests; problem in integrating such groups for common feminist movement, or as a part of Tharu movement
10.	Saving groups	79	36	Upper most-2, upper-9, poor-15, ultra-poor-10	High representation of poor people, because there was low saving scheme (Rs 100 monthly), they need micro-credit and who did not have any account in the big banks
11.	Rural co-operatives	11	4	Upper most-2, upper-2	No engagement of poor people, because there was high saving scheme, and still lacking pro-poor financing
12.	Agricultural groups	38	22	Upper-10, poor-12	Leadership by middle-level quartiles, due to their farming activities; ultra-poor and tenants lacking the position
13.	Cultural groups	22	11	Upper most-1, upper-3, poor-3, ultra-poor-4	Less powerful and temporary in nature, high involvement of poor people
14.	Private schools	16	5	Upper most-3, upper-2	No access of lower quartiles, because of poverty; developing as a business for upper quartiles

15.	Private college/campus	6	1	Upper-1	Few Tharus in leadership; weak status in education
16.	Private hospital/health care	3	1	Upper-most-1	Weak status and leadership in the health sector
Total		349	173		

This kind of activism and leadership structure could have certain implications in rural development, particularly in terms of their inclusive policies and empowering strategies. It was largely evidenced in the field that in the nexus of grievances and expectations of people, there has been always a space for agitation and contestations, which could challenge the dominant world view of the state. Despite this, the well-off sections of societies, including the Tharu elites/ leaders were at the front line in the contestations. The elitism, therefore, was emerging as a basic organizational characteristic of the Tharu movement.

Chapter Summary

The society is itself a laboratory for a social science researcher. Accordingly, the chapter draws an important insight that the everyday of local realities and contexts ultimately shape the grand narratives of the research universe – Tharu movement. The chapter re-emphasizes that the contestation has to be inductively informed from the grassroots putting the research into them. It has offered a brief context, how the present study has been localized – in Dang and Sunsari – the two distant geographies with the great diversity even in the VDC levels - and what the reflections were made upon these areas in manifesting the rural development contestation through the Tharu movement at large. The findings also suggest that the TM was loosely organized with the rapidly emerging and dominating non-state actors as alternatives to the state actors at the local level. The failure of state-actors and inadequacy of governmental services has politically contextualized the emergence of non-state actors and their agitations. This was further complicated with the emerging gaps and contradictions, including uneven power distribution in the leadership and heterogeneity in the movement organizations. Elites gradually emerged, and tended to shaping their positions along with these networks either manifested in NSAs or as SAs. The shifting of well-being dimension was a crucial one which indicates the subjective orientation in the rural development discourse and social movement practices. The Tharu movement was then a social process that gave rise to the meanings and values of non-material well-being that otherwise remains unheard.

CHAPTER – FIVE

CAUSES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CONTESTATION

This chapter aims to satisfy the first objective of the present study. It deals with the two analytical dimensions. First, different causes and grievances will be discussed, including the issues of political, economic, socio-cultural and governance. Second, the chapter then will focus on the characteristic features of the Tharu movement, which has been manifested as ideology, leadership and organization.

5.1 The Paradox of Causes and Grievances

5.1.1 Bonded labor systems and slavery of the Tharus

Slavery in Nepal roots back to the cultural practice of keeping bonded laborers for working in the farms and for household chores of the rich and elite class people. The laborers were usually people who did not own land of their own, and therefore, had little or no source of income, thus needed to work as laborers for long hours to be able to fulfill their fundamental needs. While the traditional customs of slavery affected particular tribes and ethnic groups, modern forms affect people from rural areas. Though outlawed in recent years,⁴⁶ there were mainly four types of bonded slavery system in Nepal which include: Kamaiya, Kamlahari, Haliya and Badi. The former particularly belong to the Tharus while the latter two belong to the occupational caste groups (i.e. Dalits). The historicity and contemporary issues of Kamaiya and Kamlahari movement have shaped Tharu movement in the broader context of social movements. Although the present study does not focus on the particular study of Kamaiya and Kamlahari, the researcher in the following discussions would argue that contemporary Tharu movement has deep connotations with the Kamaiya movement and Kamlahari movement with their wider regional, national and international exposures.

⁴⁶ It should not be assumed that the bonded labour system was abolished first time in the name of Kamaiya, Kamlahari or so on in recent decades. Back to the history, the bonded labour (das pratha and kamara-kamari pratha) was banned in 1925 to little effect during the Rana Regime, which was particularly intended for the middle-class citizens, and in turn, facilitated servitude for the political elites and rulers.

5.1.1.1 The Kamaiyas

Kamaiya is the oldest living traditional system of bonded labor, principally found in the Tharu community of five districts in mid- and far-western swathes of Nepal: Kailali, Kanchanpur, Banke, Bardiya and Dang (Chhetri, 2005; Fujikura, 2001; Maycock, 2015). The people who work as agricultural laborers under this system are also called Kamaiyas. This system was similar to most of the bondsman systems in the 17th century, where people without land or work could take land in loan (*saunki*) from landowners, giving them a source of income to sustain minimum livelihood in exchange for working and living in the landowner's land as slaves by the time the loan was cleared, which took generations. The exorbitant debts charged made them bonded to their lenders and were forced to sell labor to repay the loan taken (see Cox, 1994; Krauskopff, 2002; Maycock, 2012; Rankin, 1999).

Historically, as the malaria was eradicated in 1950s and a new survey was commenced in the early 1960s in the Tarai region, the hill-to-Tarai migration soared dramatically. The marginalized Tharu tribe, although traditionally owned the land, did not have any records of their land ownership (Guneratne, 2006). The settlers registered lands in their names and got the Tharus to work as farm laborers. The practice of getting the people from the tribe to help in the family business was gradually transformed into a forced labor system. Despite this historicity, the Kamaiya system has been developed within the Tharu elites who were working for the political regimes before 1950s (Karki, 2001; Cheria, 2005). There are many connotations of the term Kamaiya and these have changed history as a consequence of changing realities and research practices. While Bales (2007, p. 97) sees the Kamaiyas as 'medieval serfs', some others focus on its political and economic dimensions. As put by Karki (2001), Kamaiyas are "rural laborers forced to work by an existing socioeconomic and political relationship in demeaning conditions, and used as virtually unpaid labor for the cultivation of land and other domestic activities" (p. 70).

5.1.1.2 The Kamlaharis

Complementary to the Kamaiya system, Kamlahari is a domestic servant, which was developed as one of the worst of bonded girl child labor systems embedded with an unequal social structure. Historically, this was common practice among the poor Tharu community in the Tarai belt of mid and far-west region in Nepal (Maslak, 2003; Upadhyaya, 2004). The poor Tharu parents used to send their daughters or sisters

below the age of 18 years to work with landlords and other rich family of their own community or beyond it for assisting household and field work with a minimum of either the wage (*majduri*) or the kind (food grains including rice and wheat). The term 'Kamlahari' is derived from Tharu word "Kam+Lahari", which connotes work assisting labor. In local Tharu language, a bonded girl child is also called "Kamlahari". Generally, parent and employer had an agreement (though oral contract in most of the cases) for one year oral contract to work as a Kamlahari. But the employee bound to work for many years without any formal payment and considerable wages. For decades, Kamlahari brokers came to Western Nepal during the Maghe Sankranti festival in January to buy girls to be sent away to work. The girls were supposed to be returned after a year, but few were ever voluntarily released by their landlords. Contrary to the promises, Kamlaharis were rarely allowed to attend school. The only advantage to the family was that it relieved them of the burden of support. Even though the system of Kamlahari operated in plain sight in the villages of Western Nepal, it remained clandestine and most Nepalis were unaware of the practice until recent years (Awasthi, 2014).

The Kamlahari practice system has multiple facets in Nepali society, not restricting within the communal and regional domain of the Tharus and vulnerability context of women and girls of this particular community. While politically it is feudal practice, it remained as a socio-cultural aspect of the poor Tharus and the rest of the society as a modern form of the traditional Kamaiya system in a gendered context. Economically, it was a system accommodated with poverty, inequality, dependency and livelihood insecurity of the people. As a political discourse, the Kamlahari practice could not become a prime agenda for government policies, despite the fact that the government of Nepal had enacted a number of child rights endorsements and international commitments. Some scholars (e.g. Dahit, 2008; Chaudhary, 2013) also argue that it is a social-cultural problem imposed by non-Tharus with a political and economic stratification upon the Tharus. Critical Marxists (e.g. Mishra, 2011), however, maintain that Kamlahari is a class-based issue often characterized by the elite structure of society based on the power structure. Despite these contradictory views, Kamlahari practice has been widely perceived as bonded labor system and violation of child rights. Although the system of Kamlahari operated in the villages of Western Nepal and among the Tharu elites, it remained largely hidden away in different towns and city areas until the recent years.

5.1.2 The movement towards freedom

5.1.2.1 Historical awakening

The Kamaiya system was first noticed by anthropologists in the 1960s (Robertson and Mishra, 1997), but it came to wider public attention only after the change of polity in 1990 in major part of the work in a few non-government organizations. The 1990s can be credited as the decade of the freedom movement of *Kamaiyas*. Full-scale involvement of NGOs, national as well as local, with some level of support by some political parties, in launching education classes for Kamaiyas and organizing them into their groups culminated in a kind of national movement in 2000. Before the 1990s, however, there were a number of grassroots movements and agitations that demanded the liberty for Kamaiyas and struggled against local landlords and their landlordism. For example, those movements in Bardiya include Srikainda Movement (1980) in Machad village of Dhodari VDC; Dalla Movement (1985) in Suryapatuawa VDC; Majhara Movement (1993) in Majhara village of Khairichandanpur VDC; Damauli Movement (1998) in Motipur VDC; Manau Movement (1988) in Manau; Kanara Movement in 1990. In Dang, the Kamaiya movements were manifested in association with peasant movements which include Belawa-Banjari kand (1961), agitations against Land Reform Act 1964 (during 1960s/1970s) and Karjai kand (1980) (see Guneratne, 2002; Maycock, 2011; WOAT, 2006).

At various stages in Nepal's history, bonded labor has been made illegal. Efforts to end the Kamaiya system changed after the People's movement 1990 when they coalesced into a highly visible movement leading up to July 2000, lead particularly by the NGO BASE. According to Guneratne (2002, p. 104), the movement towards freedom crystallized in May 2000 with the protest of nineteen Kamaiya from Geta VDC of Kailali, who demanded both their freedom and payment for their work. Karki (2001) illuminates how the movement gained momentum during this period, and some of its shortcomings. The INGOs and NGOs involved with the Kamaiya freedom movement, including BASE, Anti-slavery international, MS-Nepal, INSEC and ActionAid-Nepal, highlighted kamaiya issues in various national and international contexts.

5.1.2.2 The day for the Kamaiyas

On 17 July 2000, Government of Nepal banned all forms of bonded labor with specific reference to the Kamaiya in the west and far-western Tarai. The government announced an official ban on the system, and ordered all Kamaiyas (18,291 households) to be freed and their debt be cancelled, though the number of freed

Kamaiyas and the amount of debt cancellation was not clear as manifested in poor data management system of the government (see also Cheria, 2005, p. 66). There were three obvious reasons in this declaration. First, there was a constant pressure of movement activists, donor agencies and Kamaiya themselves. The movement was becoming important to secure the vote bank of the Tharus and Kamaiyas. For the state, in response to considerable pressure from certain NGOs and INGOs, freedom meant the end of the protests and disruption caused by the Kamaiya. Second, the announcement can be also labeled as the reformist agenda of the government, which was led by the Nepali Congress, who used to claim as the follower of democratic socialism. Third, there was partly a fear that many Kamaiyas would join the Maoist movement if nothing was done to improve their situation. The subtext of Maoist insurgency was of critical importance as the state at the time was fighting against the Maoists and the prospect of large numbers of disaffected Kamaiya joining the Maoists was an important influence. Despite these implications, the day is significant for the Kamaiya because freedom means not being restricted in so many ways and greater opportunity for young generations. While some Kamaiya remain enslaved and remain in situations of bonded labor, this ramification is likely to be more prevalent in remote areas. For the majority of Kamaiya, many problems remain even for those who have been freed such as lack of land, which the researcher expressed in preceding discussions.

In taking this action, the government implied that all bonded labor could be accounted for under the umbrella of the Kamaiya. Meanwhile, the government failed to declare the freeing of other forms of bonded labor systems, including Kamlahahri system, Haliya, Haruwa-Charuwa and Badi.⁴⁷ With a two-year's span without any concrete action plan and interventions, the Kamaiya Labor (Prohibition) Act was adopted in 2002 in the name of 'Bonded Labor (Prohibition) Act, 2058 (2002)'⁴⁸ which prohibited bonded labor among Kamaiyas, declared all loans taken as null and void, and declared all persons working as Kamaiya laborers free. The Act established freed Kamaiya Rehabilitation and Monitoring Committees. It also established fines for

⁴⁷The Haliya, or 'tiller' system is an agricultural labor system practiced in the hilly region of far-western Nepal. Haruwa/ charuwa ('tiller and cattle herder') evolved in Northern Indian territories and was practiced among Madhesi people in Nepal's Eastern and Central Tarai districts. Badi is a traditionally untouchable Hindu caste.

⁴⁸ The Act prohibits labour or services provided by a person to his creditor without any wages or at low rates of wages to repay loans (Kamaiya labour). All persons working as Kamaiya labourers at the time of the commencement of the Act are ipso facto freed from that labour (art. 3). Loans do not have to be repaid (art. 5). The Act establishes Freed Kamaiya Rehabilitation and Monitoring Committee in districts prescribed by the government and sets out their functions. In addition, Welfare Officers are to be designated to assist freed Kamaiya labourers (arts. 10-11). See: <http://www.lawcommission.gov.np/en/documents/2015/08/bonded-labour-prohibition-act-2058-2002.pdf>

anyone in violation of the law, ranging from between NPR 15,000 (US\$198) to NPR 25,000 (US\$330), alongside fines for any failure to return mortgaged property. The 2002 Act also provided that, upon completion of housing construction, the government would hand over an additional grant of NPR 2,000 (approximately US\$27) for income generating activities, which included chicken, goat or pig farming.

5.1.2.3 The day for the Kamlaharis

The system of Kamlahari in theory should have been abolished with the Kamaiya system as was endorsed in Bonded Labor (Prohibition) Act, 2002. However, the Act did not recognize it as slavery. With a given context of right-based agitations popularly arose with the rise of non-state actors after 1990, social movement groups started to raise the issues of Kamlahaari and it became quite common right-based issue which further catalyzed with a Maoist agenda during the 1990s. In 2006, Kamlahari-led organizations won a Supreme Court decision that affirmed the ban on slavery. Even after the political uprisings of 2006, the government was slow in enforcing the anti-Kamlahari laws and providing compensation for the victims. Throughout the campaign, an effective alliance was developed among the movement actors, not excluding some sympathetic government officials and elected representatives. In effect, the efforts helped prompt the government to allocate scholarship funds to educate former Kamlahari girls. On March 2013, hundreds of freed Kamlaharis took the streets of Kathmandu in protest that stirred public outrage and led the government declaration in June 2013 of an end to Kamlahari system.⁴⁹ With the declaration, however, many issues were unaddressed, which would further potentially hinder the abolition practice in the name of rescue, legal treatment, resettlement and rehabilitation of the Kamlahari girls.

5.2 Slavery of Kamaiya and Kamlahari: Issues Left Ahead

5.2.1 Limited provisions and disputed numbers

While the freedom granted in 2000 was a limited state response, a system of state-sanctioned identification of the Kamaiyas was established and four categories were

⁴⁹There was 10-Points agreement between Government of Nepal and joint struggle committee for Kamlahari system abolition on 28 May 2013. Among the agreed points, the statements under 6th, 7th and 8th number are historically important though others are specifically related to the local issues of the system. The agreement is focused mostly on the issue of education which further lacks specific programming to implement. The government does not have specific economic enhancement interventions, such as provision of land, skills development or market linkages, for the Tharu community in general or free Kamlahari families in particular. Critics of Kamlahari movement maintain that the movement has ever remained a donor-driven agenda, which was further coupled with the poor governance of Nepali state and elite-centric political activities (see Basnet, 2016).

maintained on the basis of land ownership status (and size), which include: class A (red category, having no land and home), class B (Blue category, having informal land only with a house), class C (Yellow category, with having less than 2 kattha land and a house), and Class D (White category, the household having more than 2 kattha land and own house). The Kamaiya Prohibition Act provisioned to provide monetary support of Rs. 10,000 and 75 cu. ft. of timber for each of the freed Kamaiya as rehabilitation support to build own house in the camp in financial support of the ILO. But aphorism is that most of the families, neither got the money nor the timber. Those who received it, was up to Rs. 8,000 and 35 cu. ft. of timber. The area of use of the received support was either to buy a rickshaw or a bullock, and some for household expenses (Ban, 2002) even selling the timber thus received. All households in Dang received Rs. 8,000 as monetary support, whereas 34 per cent each in Banke and Bardiya and 68 and 73 respectively in Kailali and Kanchanpur received Rs. 10,000. A longitudinal survey conducted by BASE (in 2002 and updated in 2011), it has been identified a total of 32,500 (of all categories) Kamaiya families in five affected districts under four categories. The survey maintains that the number of Kamaiya households in Dang alone was 1825 in 1995, 1166 in 2000 and 1426 in 2002.⁵⁰ Out of 1426, the number of Kamaiya families who fell in Red category, Blue category, Red and Blue category and Yellow and White category were 302, 403, 705 and 721 respectively. While the researcher triangulated these figures with the data of Ministry of Land Reform and Management in 2013, only 507 Kamaiya families (including all categories) could receive the land, and 919 have been unable to get the land yet due to complexities of data and other administrative hurdles.

Though there is no clear figure about the number of Kamlaharis, official record of the Freed Kamlahari Development Forum (FKDF) claims that about 3000 Kamlaharis have been freed in Dang out of total 12500 Kamlaharis from all the affected districts of mid- and far-western districts. According to their claim, 324 are even rest to be freed. It is difficult to rescue them due to wrong name and address and they are not identified properly. Some Kamlaharis were hardly identified and rescued as they were sent to India and also in the cities of Nepal (including Kathmandu and Nepalgunj in particular). Among the rescued ones, the number of successfully rehabilitated Kamlaharis has not been updated, and even the data available seems contradictory. It might be due to making a broader data coverage where the number of CSOs and NGOs are now being engaged in their own modalities.

⁵⁰<http://nepalbase.org/rehabilitation-status/>

5.2.2 The actors and miseries hand in hand

In Dang there were a number of ex-Kamaiyas and ex-Kamlaharis (and their networks) who were struggling for their new livelihood after their freeing from the home of the owners. For example, *Kamaiya Mukti Samaj* (Kamaiya Mukti society) and *Mukta Kamlahari Bikas Manch* (freed Kamalari Development Forum-FKDF) were officially established in Lamahi bazaar of Chailahi VDC in 2002 and 2004 respectively. However, the researcher could not find any organizational and/or official setting of Kamaiyas in Saudiyar VDC. The Sunsari district (and the eastern region as a whole) lacked this kind of slavery. Though the Kamaiyas were freed in 2002, the Kamlaharis were still in the movement when the researcher was conducting his preliminary field visits. They were gradually getting freed with the enforced attempt of the local NGOs and District Child Welfare Committee under the support of the Chief District Officer of Dang. After their freeing in 2013 the main field visit was conducted and critical observations were collected. It was surprising to the researcher to see that the emancipation of Kamaiya and Kamlahari could not become the main agenda of the Tharu movement (see the Chapter 6 in detail). But, there were a number of organizations often registered as NGOs (e.g. the support of BASE for Kamaiya and the works of FKDF and FNC for Kamalari movement) and some local-level state officials/actors (e.g. CDO, and DAO) played a leading role in freeing them. Even today, many of these organizations were working with the rehabilitation and livelihood issues of Kamaiya and Kamlahari. For example, there were nine NGOs registered to work in the Kamaiya issues in Chailahi which were six in Saudiyar VDC. Similarly, Kamlahari issues were becoming the project focus of many I/NGOs (e.g. Plan International Nepal) in both the VDCs and some of them focused on the issues of both the groups. They have been focusing on the issues of awareness raising and child rights, rescue and rehabilitation, education and livelihood.

5.2.3 The romanticized significance

Of course, the significance of the declaration day is difficult to understate in Kamaiyas and Kamlaharis. During the field study, the researcher got the opportunity to participate in such annual events (in 2013 and 2014) where the celebrations were made in the name of freedom and emancipation. What impact those programs had, and what had been happening regarding the rehabilitation of the rescued/ freed ones, were the things less discussed though. Many of the programs and celebrations were sponsored by the donors and the involvement of government officials was also ensured with some financial incentives. Worth mentioning is that these programs were

never organized by the mainstreams of Tharu movement (to be claimed as TJSC) nor the TWS involved in such celebration. In saying that, the researcher is not negating the wider scope of the Tharu movement. He is just referring the mainstream Tharu movement – a collective form of movement which the state recognized and dialogued – initially led by the Tharu Welfare Society (TWS) and now by the Tharu Joint Struggle Committee (TJSC). The movements of Kamaiya, Kamlahari and landless Tharu people were also a part of the broader Tharu movement but could not reach and influence the mainstream movement, and remained as alternative or residual. This argumentation does have the following three reflections of the newly freed Kamaiyas and Kamlaharis:

5.2.4 The pain of bondage still aches severely

When the researcher sat with some Kamaiyas, he became shocked from their sacrifice they did previously in the homes of their lords. They spent all the life in the service of lord just to have been granted a small hut to live and small amount of paddy to feed their whole family. This was a cyclic bondage. After the death of the father, the son went to continue the service and the cycle of slavery repeated regularly. Most of the lords historically belonged to the state bureaucrats, landlords and upper caste rich people in the region. Some of the lords were even from the Tharu community who got *birtas* (granted land as a reward) from the Ranas and nominated as *Chaudhary* (local tax collectors) to collect the *kuta* or *tiro* (land revenue) and send to Kathmandu (see also Khanal, 2006; Regmi, 2011; Stiller, 1976). This historicity had been also expressed in the reflection of an ex-Kamaiyas in Dang as: “While I was 6 years old, I was asked to support my father in the home of our landlord. After I attained 9 or 10 years old, I came to know that people could be sold and bonded like animals”. [Based on a personal conversation with an ex-Kamaiya in Saudiyar, 9 July 2014]

The issues of Kamaiya and Kamlahari have now changed in form, but in essence, a number of political spaces have been created in the broader Tharu movement to include the emancipatory strategies and slogans for the oppressed groups within the Tharu community. The most striking was that the historicity of this bondage system kept the Tharus as a slave class, and some of the Tharu landlords also became the supporter and practitioner of this system. Theoretically, it could be labeled as a discourse of subaltern what Spivak recalled in south Asian context (Spivak, 1984). But as the subaltern a contested question still remained answered whether they can speak for themselves, or some elite groups will have to speak as their representatives. The case presented in 5.1 empirically narrates a life-history of two Kamaiyas who, according to them, were never asked before to recall their history.

Case 5.1: Kamaiya: A life and struggle of domestic slavery

Sarad Kumar Chaudhary (50) and Bhimlal Chaudhary (45) live in the Khairi village of Chailahi VDC, Dang district. They had served as Kamaiyas in the two landlords Siva Prasad Chaudhary and Chetram Chaudhary respectively, and released in 2003. These two landlords were the two brothers, and they belonged to the Tharu ethnic group. The most wondering things were there that Chetram Chaudhary was ex-chairman of the Tharu welfare society (2006-2010) of Deukhuri region, who was also servicing as a government school teacher. Both the Kamaiyas were bonded from their early childhood due to their poverty and landlessness. Initially they reared goats, cows and buffaloes and then served for farming activities. During the service, each of them got 6-7 kattha land for cultivating and feeding up their family. Additionally, they got 36 kg lentils per year. But, no money or salary was paid for them during their whole course of bonded life.

The work was onerous; sometimes wives or daughters/sons and sisters/brothers had also to go and work in the landlord's home. The service by Kamaiya's wife was called biglahadi system; forming a kind of double-bondage system. It was also without paying, but the food was given in the work time. Different kinds of threats about family and foods or adhiya (share-cropping) farming were imposed upon them when they (Kamaiyas) begged some extra services and opposed the exploitation by any means. At the freedom from such bondage, neither the landlords pledged them anything to take with nor did the government support. Expressing their afflictions, they said: "... Nothing we got from the government, though the training of a few days we got and received Rs. 100 per day. We purchased biscuits and potatoes from that; and no money could we save! What could we do? No registration, no identity card, no home, no land..." [Based on a personal conversation and group discussion, 28-29 January 2014]

5.2.5 Issue of settlement and rehabilitation

The problems associated with the issues of settlement and rehabilitation of the Kamaiya and Kamlahari was becoming a room of grievances. Despite the relief packages and rehabilitation schemes provided during emancipation and thereafter, the settlement was so miserable that it could not satisfy growing needs of the family. There was no option of livelihood for Kamaiya except doing menial wage labor. There was a problem of low wage; somewhere, even the cases of unequal wages were reported. The wage relation, which the researcher would call 'chain of labor', was even flourished not only in the Tarai region but also in the Indian states. The researcher met up with some Tharu boys and girls from the Deukhuri region of Dang who were doing wage labor in the housing companies in Kathmandu. Some Tharus wage workers, including the ex-Kamaiyas of Dang were also found in Itahari and Duhabi of Sunsari. Going abroad was difficult for most of the Tharus as conditioned by their poor access to the human resource recruiters in Kathmandu, limitation of age and literacy background and lack of money.

According to official data as discussed earlier, 919 HHs of the freed Kamaiyas (out of 1426) were still waiting for land and rehabilitation. Similarly, 263 Kamlahari girls had been disappeared and yet to be rescued. Some of the rescued girls were still in the process of returning to the Kamlahari life due to poverty and social hatred, while a few were supposed to have been the victims of girls trafficking for different purposes in the cities of Nepal and Indian markets too. Many Kamaiya families who have not been allocated land, such as those in Lamahi basti of Dang, were illegally occupying state land, the area of which is estimated to amount to about 19 hector in Dang alone. This illegal occupation of land is often in marginal and difficult locations with the constant threat of being forcibly moved on. Interestingly, there were some conflicting situations between the Kamaiyas and local people regarding the establishment of settlements for the Kamaiyas. Their rehabilitation is problematic partly due to the lack of suitable sites on which the Kamaiya can be settled. In an interview with the government official responsible for the rehabilitation of landless Kamaiya in Dang, the researcher was told that communities often strongly resisted having an official Kamaiya basti established near their houses and land, as this could reduce the value of these assets. In 2014, FKS reported that over 1800 freed Kamaiyas were yet to be provided with identity cards in Dang alone, which means that they could not even begin to apply to the state for land.

The resettlement of the Kamaiyas has some political implications too. Many political parties, including Nepali Congress (NC), Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML), Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist Centre) (CPN M-C) and some Tarai-based parties had kept the agendas of Kamaiya and Kamlaharis in their election manifestos of the elections of CA in 2008 and 2012. The local level party leaders had joined the movement campaigns at larger extent, despite their activism seemed more apparent either in the peak hours of movement or at the time of election. With the signing of the CPA in 2006 and the establishment of the CA in 2008, a parliamentary sub-committee was formed to explore the Kamaiya situation and found that due to lack of livelihood alternatives many Kamaiyas remained bonded or are in marginal and temporary work. The sub-committee identified a number of issues, not least local community resistance to the establishment of a Kamaiya basti close to their village. However, Article 51 (j) of the constitution of Nepal (2015) adopts the policies of social justice and inclusion, which includes (sub-clause 6) the issue of rehabilitation of marginalized groups as, "...to identify the freed bonded laborers, Kamlari, Harawa, Charawa, tillers, landless, squatters and rehabilitate them by providing housing,

housing plot for residence and cultivable land or employment for their livelihoods” (p. 40-41).

5.2.6 Risk of returning into the Kamlahari life again

There is an emergent issue of risk of returning back to the Kamlahari life even after their freeing. In a focus group discussion with Badhghars of different villages, they reported that some rescued Kamlahari did not like to go to school even if they were of school going age. Those girls who did not go school got married early even at the age of 13 or 14. Similarly, the rescued Kamlaharis did not prefer to stay with parents whose home environment was not favorable for sleeping and fooding and the parents had disabilities due to disease or old-age complexities. Those rescued Kamlaharis returned back to Kamlahari life again. Rampant poverty and recurrent food insecurity, given the lack of income generating skills some parents wanted to send their daughters as Kamlahari just for mere survival. A few of research respondents during the field study expressed their anxiety that they would not get any support either from outside or from the government and any other non-governmental agencies and therefore they seemed more convinced to send their girls back to Kamlahari life again. Some reported as now instead of sending children as Kamlahari, parents used to send them to menial work with construction contractor even though the child's age was below 15 years. To reflect a direct quote from a household head during an interview in Gurgaun, Dang district:

I have learned a lot from my life. I got freedom from my Kamaiya life. Then, my daughter became free from Kamlahari life due to the help of many people and organizations. But what is happening now? [silence...] My wife is caught by a cancer of the uterus. Then, who will assist me? My wage is not sufficient to afford the treatment. I have no additional property, even to draw the loans. This is how I am thinking about extra sources of income, so my daughter [freed Kamlahari who used to go to school] is one who can contribute and earn money to settle this family. [Based on a personal conversation with an ex-Kamlahari in Dang, 21 July 2014

5.2.6 Lack of identity cards

A registration card and nominal land (5 kathha) was legally promised to pledge to each household of the ex-Kamaiya. However, the government could provide identity cards only to the 700 Kamaiya among which only 290 households were granted the land out of the total 1000 households in the Chailahi VDC (VDC Profile, 2011). This was even worse in the context of Saudiyar VDC. Due to lack of identity cards, many of the Kamlahari girls did not get support from the state, including the scholarships and

facility to reside in the hostel during the schooling. The issue of identity distribution for the Kamlaharis was also contested. On one hand, the government officers (as interacted in district levels; DDC and DAO) wanted to allocate the identity card with different categories (A, B, C and D) depending upon the years of bondage and physical condition at the rescue time. According to their claim, it would benefit all the vulnerable ones. They also blamed that the NGOs and local elites were playing a game to distribute the identity cards. On the other hand, the activists of Kamlahari movement and local partner NGOs have focused on the broad-based distribution of the identity cards without any categorization of the Kamlaharis irrespective of their status and service period was.

5.2.7 Dependent psychology

Due to excessive increment in the rescue events, a kind of psychology, however, was developed among the partners as if they were the sole authority to define, rescue and rehabilitate the Kamlaharis in the region. It is important to note here that some bonded girls were already rescued by some social groups (e.g. FKDF) before their formal emancipation proclamations from the government in 2013. But, most of them were unhappy with the government services, particularly in terms of their education and rehabilitation in the society. One of the other experiences the researcher saw was that even the girls freed themselves or by their owners and the Kamlaharis rescued by other non-governmental organizations were 'not' treated equally as the Kamlaharis who were rescued by non-governmental actors. The state actors were quite reluctant in this issue which largely shadowed the problems of Kamlaharis who were out of exposure. The hostels residing freed Kamlaharis were facing such dilemmas further. For example, the Lawajuni hostel at Narti of Chailahi Dang, where 230 students were residing in 2014. The expenses of the hostel management were not audited and decisions were not documented properly. In a public consultation with the researcher, it was complained that the activities conducted in the hostel were transparent neither for the school management committee (SMC) nor to the public community. The same person was the head of school and president of an NGO (SWAN Nepal) —which was working in the Kamlahari sector—who was blamed to have unethical control of the resources and students of the hostel. In being so, the donor, Plan International and its partners, have sidelined the role of SMC and DEO.

Even though some educational programs were targeted by the government for the Kamlahari girls (e.g. in terms of scholarships), the program was seriously marred by the funding leakages and shortages. Ministry of Education had formulated Education

Support Guideline for the freed Kamlaharis (*Mukta-Kamlahari Sikchaya Nirdeshika, 2068*). The guideline had endorsed scholarship provisioning for the freed Kamlaharis making their specific definition as bonded labor and the status of being freed as at 2010 April 13. In the rule 6.3 there is provision of scholarship to be delivered by the respective schools for dress, stationary and hostel facilitation from primary to higher level (6.3.1)⁵¹. As per the official record of the DEO of Dang, out of total 3000 school going ex-Kamlaharis status, 2500 had received the scholarship in Dang in 2013-2015, while 500 were missing out due to their incomplete documents. Moreover, some of the research participants during KII and FGD also complained that every year, there used to be a larger allocation of financial and technical supports for the socioeconomic development and capacity development of the freed Kamlaharis (e.g. in DEO, DDC and DCWB). Due to lack of proper co-ordination among the governmental agencies and NGOs, a significant amount of budget remained unutilized and became frozen.

5.3 Spaces of Tharu movement in Kamaiyas and Kamlaharis

5.3.1 The space within the Tharu movement

In spite of being a fragmented and isolated community, there are various accounts of resistances and contestations to the practices of Kamaiya and Kamlahari, which could be labeled as unavoidable narratives of broader Tharu movement. This indicates that these systems were far from harmonious social construct that were largely within the Tharu community. For example, these problems are currently reflected in the difficulties for some Kamaiya engaging in the Tharu elite's efforts to create a pan-Tharu identity, and political manifestations of the Tharu identity as the Tharuhat. There is resistance to such efforts from the majority of Kamaiya that the researcher met during his fieldwork, due in part to the exploitation they experienced under Tharu landowners previously. Why would Kamaiya support political parties such as Tharuhat and other non-state actors/ organizations, which are largely run by the sons of the landlords to whom they were previously bonded? It virtually breaks the isolation of Tharuhood to the Pahadi identity. This articulation of the researcher somehow

⁵¹ There are two types of scholarship supports: (a) Scholarship for the freed Kamlaharies going to schools/colleges from their own home (i.e. non-residential): Rs150 per month for 10 months (total 1500) for 1-8 grades; Rs180 per month for 10 months (total 1800) for 9-10 grade; Rs 500 per month for 10 months (total 5000) for 11-12 grade; and Rs 1000 per month for 10 months (total 10000) for higher studies; and (b) Scholarship for the freed Kamlaharies residing at hostel and enrolling at the schools/colleges (i.e. residential): Rs 3000 per month for 10 months (Rs 2500 for the hostel charge of lodging and fooding (in total Rs 25,000); and Rs 500 per month (in total Rs 5,000) for maintenance of personal needs and hygiene of the Kamlaharies.

resembles Guneratne (2002), Maycock (2011) and Rankin (1999). Despite noting the difference in the treatment of Kamaiya by Tharu (i.e. Tarai) and non-Tharu (i.e. Hilly or pahadi) landlords, Rankin (1999) also remarks that: "...with respect to Kamaiyas, the class convergence of Pahari and Tharu jamindars (landlords) is more significant than the shared ethnic identity of Tharu Kamaiya and Jamindars" (p. 44, note 22).

This reflects a simple rejection to the mainstream view that the Kamaiya and Kamlahari system correspond to anti-Pahari sentiment and resembles the 'ethnic territory' of the Tharu communities. While it is true of the Kamaiya with whom the researcher discussed their experiences of the Kamaiya system, it was not simple as this: for example, the researcher was told that there were both good and bad Tharu and Pahari landlords. There were also reflections that Kamaiya and Kamlahari movement should not have been considered the mainstream tharuhat movement as the existing leadership of Tharuhat movement did not consider the agenda of Kamaiyas and Kamlaharis integral to the agendas of Tharuhat. These conversations implied that no easy generalizations can be made here. One's position in the system as Kamaiya (and landless) was more formative than ethnic associations might have had with a Tharu landlord. This raises the question of whether class identities have more influence on Kamaiya masculinities than ethnic identities. Does the social construction of Kamaiyas have more in common with other landless group's social construction or with the Tharu elites? These questions necessitate close consideration of the links between ethnicity and class in relation to the Kamaiya system and its contemporary legacy.

5.3.2 Freedom and emancipation: Where did the state lie?

While the Kamaiyas were freed in 2000 and the Kamlaharis declared free in 2013, there was no policy devised nor was the rehabilitation program to be adhered by the state/ government. Different kinds of I/NGOs and CSOs were taking place in the name of support for the freed ones, though there was a duplication and over-stratification in the project designing by these actors. Lack of support and planning consistently emerged from the researcher's interviews with Kamaiya and NGO workers who worked with them. Some were simply forced off the land where they had been bonded laborers. In 2007, about 40,000 – two thirds of freed Kamaiyas- had received no support from the state and one third of the total was still living in refugee camps (Bales, 2007, p. 106). During the field visit in 2014 the camps established for the freed Kamaiyas in Dang were yet in conduction, and there were some non-Kamaiya poor

Tharu HHs were also residing. While they were very anomalous situations, the Nepali state seemed to have freed the Kamaiya begrudgingly and accordingly had not planned for what might happen afterwards.

Linked to this issue of settlement was the issue of livelihood and capability enhancement. The newly freed Kamaiyas neither started agricultural engagement in their own farmland (as they had no land or insufficient land for this), nor could work on the farms of the others (due to threat of tenancy rights to be claimed). Regarding the Kamlaharis, they were either being settled with their parents, or doing independent vocational shops after getting training from the local NGOs. Most of them were struggling to find sustained income sources in the competitive market. The cases of sexually exploited Kamlahari were either dismissed without any decision or got delayed in the customary legal process. Despite this, social service system and security was very weak and mediocre because of the inadequate policy supports, the feudal structure of the local bureaucracy and inaccessibility of the poor to the authorities.

5.3.3 Emergent spaces in the class movement

Despite some positive changes in terms of building of awareness, ending of bonded slavery and the emergence of wider political-social and economic opportunities, the changes after the freeing of Kamaiyas in 2000 and Kamlaharis in 2013 were not apparent at the researcher's fieldwork sites in Dang. So, a simple question always pushed the researcher regarding the nature of the emancipation they got in the broad spectrum of social life. Political and economic issues of liberation were further surpassed. The post-emancipation discourse has empirically failed to address the structural issues of exploitation related to the Kamaiya and Kamlahari systems in Dang, enabling it to evolve and continue in alternative forms. This finding is quite affirmative to the argument of Karki (2001, p. 125) who put 'grassroots movements as a structural issue' in the context of Kamaiyas struggle towards freedom. This relates more broadly to the consistent lack of engagement with issues of land, debt, rehabilitation, and the nexus of ethnic identity and class structure in rural Nepal. The researcher therefore could not fully stand with the argument of Cheria (2005) who considers the success of the Kamaiya liberation movement to be associated with ex-Kamaiya becoming Tharu once more. This is an interesting proposition in relation to identity and class hierarchies in the Tharu community, but does not accord with the

researcher's findings, where the divisions between various Tharu sub-groups remained considerable in the heterogeneous setting of the society and the elite structure of the community. To quote one of the ex-Kamlaharis who narrates the structural question of 'why', as:

I had a question about how I became Kamlahari. Why I was kept, and not the daughters/ sisters of other Tharu people and other non-Tharu community? Why I could not go to school like my other friends? What is this? To whom should I blame: the God or the family or the society? Either my fate was responsible! How did people come to buy me and my parents had to sell me during the Maghis?' [Based on a personal conversation with an ex-Kamlahari in Ghorahi, 3 August 2014]

5.4 Gender discrimination and Tharu women

Though many scholars (e.g. Bebbington, 2011; Fraser, 1991; Giddens, 2009; Kuumba, 2001) have considered gender as a crucial dimension of social movement, conventional sex/gender dichotomy found in much of the literature on gender has several problems in the empirical sense. Having theoretically situated this thesis in terms of contested rural development, the researcher now considers what the women's positions have to do with the gender identities. The findings, most fundamentally, preclude the gender identity with ethnic identity, which further implies with the overlapping of power and gender continuum. All the major theorists of gender studies have engaged with this question, with Jessika (2013) stating:

Integrating gender perspectives is not just about 'including' women or 'thinking about' men and gender minorities, but, rather, considering what a gendered politics provides in terms of alternative ways of being, seeing and doing that in themselves serve to transform patriarchal power relations... However, while women's rights and gender justice are 'on the agenda' in many arenas, activists still encounter strong resistance to changing gendered politics and practices within movements and allied organizations. When it comes to making an impact on transforming gender power relations, social movements matter. [p. 1]

Though the social structure is patriarchal, the role and position of women in the Tharu community is comparatively higher than in other communities. A number of authors point out that Tharu women enjoy a higher social status than their husbands manifest in their behavior and their being household-heads (Guneratne, 2002; Maslak, 2003). When the researcher visited the Tharu villages and discussed the matter with them, the female members of the households often came with smiling and happy face. They eagerly participated in PRAs and FGDs. For them, there were different perspectives about the causes of Tharu movement and their manifestations in rural development. Analytically, it could have followed three dimensions:

5.4.1 Tharu men vs. Tharu women contestation within the household level

In their own interpretation as well as revealed in the secondary sources of information, the Tharu women had limited access to property right and control of the productive resources. Only a few women or widows had land in their own name though the local government subsidized the land registration tax in favor of women up to 20 percent. This is because the economic and political decision making power (e.g. the land) at the household level has been often a privilege of the husbands or males.

Women's land ownership is only 8 percent (against men's 92 percent) while their contribution (i.e. active-age involvement) to agriculture is 60.5 percent (against men's 39.5 percent) (MOAC, 2008). This national average even crossed in the study sites, though there were some differences in different VDCs. For example, the researcher found that Tharu women's land ownership in most of the villages ranged from 4 to 9 percent, and women's land ownership was almost nil in some villages of the Aurawani VDC of Sunsari and Saudiyar VDC of Dang. This was further coupled with the other violations and injustices in terms of domestic service allocations or distributions. For example, many Tharu women reported the cases where they had been discriminated in their own homes in terms of education and health, and in the access of major decision making events. Despite this, the struggle of women against the male counterparts in family further led to their weaker position in the movement affairs and its leadership. However, it has gradually eroded in recent years with the inception of women-led organizations, women's involvement in Tharu movement and growing political awareness among them (see Chapter 7 for the consequences).

5.4.2 Contestations of Tharu women to the women of other caste/ethnic groups

These types of contestations were reflected in different connotations. For example, there were a number of co-operatives and saving groups only led by the Tharu women where the women of other groups were not granted membership. There were three co-operatives of Tharu women (*milijuli*, *hariyali*, *samjhauta*) in the Chailahi VDC of Dang, though not observed in Saudiyar of the Dang and Bhasi and Aurawani of the Sunsari. In those co-operatives all the members were Tharu women, and they also took the key positions including president, secretary and treasurer. Most of the Tharu women were virtually avoided in the local decision-making systems, including the meeting of village councils (of VDCs) and user groups (of community forests). It was due to the low rate of membership of the Tharu women into those organizations. They were less prioritized, as compared to the women of other caste/ethnic groups in the leadership of

women societies or groups in the name of their poor literacy and weak social exposure. Following this, most of the local organizations of political parties also used to give priority to the women of the higher castes in the villages where there were Tharu women in the minority, for example in the cases of Lamahi of Dang and Jhumka of Sunsari. But, it was less evident in the villages where the Tharu women were in majority as compared to the women of other communities, as in case of all the villages of Saudiyar VDC of Dang.

However, in recent years, due to the electoral importance of caste/ethnic groups and increasing voices of the Tharu movement, the pattern is being gradually changed. Politically the representation of Tharu women was becoming representative at least in number to secure the ethnic vote banks, which could have a powerful role in the local party politics. Despite this, there were two critical reflections in the villages. First, the representation of well-off Tharu women was quite evident largely ignoring the women who belonged to poor and landless households. This had class-based implications. Second, the representation of janajati women was empirically counted as the representation of the Tharu women for which the Tharu women's representation was somehow superseded by the women of other groups. This had caste/ethnic implications.

5.4.3 Confrontation of Tharu women vs. the state as a whole

The exclusionary nature of the state institutions was quite leading to this contestation – for which Tharu people remained a part of the history. Among the women, the women from lower castes (including the Dalits) and janajati groups were particularly dissented with the state and the government in all the study VDCs (VDC profiles). The government of Nepal has launched a number of programs in the name of women empowerment since 1990s and of inclusion in the post-2006 context. The gender mainstreaming was the thematic focus of the number of rural development programs, including production credit for rural women, rural development banking and women's income generating programs. The rural development bank of Chailahi (Dang) reported that around 65 females in the VDC were members of the Bank. They could take micro credits in the minimum interests on the basis of conditional collateral provided by them. The poor and landless Tharu women, therefore, were denied to get the privilege of this banking system. This is what most of the research participants did not acknowledge the programs in changing their living standard and gender relations. Some women in Saudiyar VDC also complained that the credit taken by them was largely spent on the basic household needs, rather than investing in farming or in any productive sector.

Recently introduced inclusionary schemes (e.g. in electoral constituencies and civil services) had granted a few opportunities to the local women though it was not sufficient to include the rural poor and illiterate women. For example, there were two female representatives in the CA from Dang which belonged to the Tharu community, including an ex-Kamlahari, though not from the study VDCs. Despite this, most of the opportunities generated by the state were the elite-generated itself, where men and educated women could have given special privileges because the positions did require a high educational profile (e.g. in civil service) or the direct access to the political parties (e.g. in political appointment/ representation). One very saddening example, the researcher found in Sunsari district was that the political parties did not send any Tharu women to the CA through proportional representation system of election.

It does not sound ridiculous to say that the Nepali society is still struggling with and suffered from the traditional practices and social evils against the women, such as domestic violence, witches, forced prostitution, dowry, inter-caste marriage, and birth of the female baby. Though legally such systems have been outlawed, their empirical executions at the rural and remote areas, particularly among the poor communities are still alarmingly challenging. The Tharus in both the districts were not exceptions to this being the women more vulnerable. For example, when the researcher was in Aurawani VDC, there were some cases of the poor Tharu women being accused of witchcraft – though the witchcraft historically was blamed only for the Dalit women. It was not the Tharu ethnicity, but their poverty to be the fountainhead of such violence against the women. It gradually lifted the dimension of caste and gender discrimination to the class. The research participants shared that they were safe to be accused of any crimes if they belonged to the well-off family status. This truly ringed within the Tharu community itself. It is interesting to consider how they have been feminized in various contexts in response to locally-defined social and cultural constructs. Bennett complements this position with her research on gender ideologies amongst high-caste Bahun and Chettri communities in Nepal. She reports a certain strain of Hinduism that focuses on the importance of purity and asceticism for men, which is integral to the gender ideologies within these communities (Bennett, 2002, p. 126).

To critically reflect, the researcher found that the Tharu women were less convinced in the Tharu movement's gender issue or worldview – which was often guided by the particularistic view of Tharu ethnicity. As most of the participants expressed, the

problem of poverty, illiteracy, weak access to local bureaucracy and poor bargaining capacity of women were some of the structural causes to fuel the any kinds of feminist activism. These issues were, indeed, beyond the scope of the Tharu ethnicity. So, most of the women were in favor of a common type of feminist movement in the very context of constitution writing and securing their rights and opportunities for the long-term future. Rooted with this, there was a feudalistic structure of the state which maintained a kind of feminization in deprivation and exclusion. In the researcher's observation, patrilineal social system in most of the Nepal's caste/ethnic groups, including the Tharus was one of the important reasons which made women weaker and they could not raise their voices against the discrimination, violence and marginalization.

Theoretically, it indicates a shifting of ethnic identity of Tharu women into the class identity of the poor women. It can be contextualized with the radical feminist position what Harding (1986) mentioned as 'feminist epistemologies to affect the history and philosophy of science' (p. 9). In social movement discourse, it has been leveled as 'gender-just social movement'. But, the ways and processes of how a movement becomes just in gender terms are debated both at conceptual and empirical levels. To quote Jessika (2013):

While social movements vary in their outlook and methods across contexts, there are similarities in how movements respond to the question of gender and the emergence of challenges to patriarchal power both within movements and in the external environment that they are situated in [p. 5].

5.5 Political and Economic Dimensions

5.5.1 Persistence of poverty and inequality

In the previous chapters the researcher has highlighted the issue of rampant poverty in rural Nepal. One thing he would insist here will be the fact that there has been a significant decline in the national poverty level (though he could not believe in the validity of such statistics) – and, it was a kind of myth of rural poor people simply because of their poverty. This is how Wills (2005) refers:

To my innocent mind, poverty looked natural, something that nobody could do anything about. I accepted poverty as a matter of fate... I had no idea that poverty was largely a social creation, not a bad comic product. Despite all this, it never seemed threatening or dehumanizing. So, poor and hungry, I certainly was. But underdeveloped? I never thought-nor did anybody else-that being poor meant being 'underdeveloped' and lacking human dignity. True, there is no perfect and glory in poverty, but the whole concept of development (or underdevelopment) was totally alien to me" (Shrestha, 1995, as cited in Willis, 2005).

The narratives: What poverty is?

When the researcher analyzed the poverty level in his study sites, the aggregate figure showed that there was almost similar kind of poverty level among the Tharu since last 20 years, though the available data are questionable in the changing context of income levels and food entitlement. However, the people did have their own interpretations regarding the poverty, inequality and well-being, which seemed slightly different from the official connotations of the government. Some of the Tharu people, including women did not know what poverty and inequality was for them (see next chapters to see the detail). For this, the research participants comparatively of older age (during FGDs and interviews) were asked to recall their well-being level and poverty status. Comparatively, those experiences further triangulated with the voices of youth and adults. To present some representative narrations:

Narrative I: Unlike other children, my older sister and I, Fulmaya, always wanted to go to school when we were younger. But we never had the chance. Every day, our brothers and some daughters of rich neighbors went to the non-registered school [they could not explain what this meant!] in Bangaun, a 30- minute walk from our house. Once upon a day, probably it was 45 years ago, the brothers along with their friends left out the village and were said that they went to India for work. They never returned back nor did they contact with the family members. Then after, the tragedy continued: our father committed suicide and the year after our mother left us and got remarried. Meanwhile, my younger sister was sold as Kamlahari and she also became contactless. I got married to a local non-Tharu guy for which we struggled a lot as it was an inter-caste marriage. The family of my husband accepted me as a bride, but his relatives could not. We left Dang and went to Bardiya. We began a new life there, but nothing changed about the destiny of life...Nothing! [Based on a personal conversation with the researcher in 4 July 2014]

Narrative II: Due to poverty and illiteracy, our parents did not encourage us for education, and always wanted to send for wage labor in farm and construction sites. I could not pass the lower secondary level of education. I went to Qatar and worked there for a couple of years. When my father was killed by the Nepal Army during the Maoist insurgency I came back to Nepal. Since then I joined the Maoist movement, but I left it after 2008 as many youths like me got frustrated. My hand was injured during the war time, and I cannot do any hard work now. I have an abysmal future ahead. My family has been broken out, and there is nothing to see in the future. What should I get from the politics, and what from the God? What a fate upon me! ...[silence]...[weeping with tears in the eyes]..... [Based on a personal conversation with the researcher on 18 May 2014]

Aforementioned subsequent experiences present a versatile nature of poverty. In Nepali society, poverty is linked to the multiple dimensions. It is such a Pandora, which posits a dual role of cause and consequences. In the folklores, there are more than hundreds of proverbs to reflect the nexus of poverty with human life. The first type of experience which was shared by an old woman in Chailahi village is hardly found among the present-day young girls. However, her destiny went through the historicity of tragedy reflecting a series of alienations: deprivation of education, brother's abandonment, father's suicide, sister's bonded life of Kamlahhari and her inter-caste

marriage and the struggle for social assimilation. Were these events false consciousness, as if subaltern could not have any honored history rather than being a servitude to the ruling elites? The youth in the second expression seems another observer of Nepali society in the present context. He could not see any optimism in life as he had come across most dismal challenges of life as he could do: deprivation from educational attainment, moving abroad for employment, killing of the father, joining the Maoist movement, critical injuries in the hand and disability, and now unemployment. He also lamented for the rule of the God and politicians. These connotations are therefore linked to the negation of time, history and the God. This is how a younger generation with rampant poverty being converted into the residual forces of society. Poverty seems always trapped to be the determinants of these tragedies, and these are also questionable for the policy makers who have ever romanticized the reduction of rural poverty in Nepal.

Tragedy of the reduction strategies:

Most of the poverty reduction strategies in Nepal are basically guided by the material welfare of the people (Khanal, 2015). Methodologically, it is an income-based and/or basic food need-based approach (Bhusal, 2012; Thapa et al., 2014). Various jargons have been used throughout the planning and politics of poverty, as it would be the panacea of Nepal's development. Ironically, it seems a poverty of plans and strategies rather than being the plans and strategies for poverty reduction. To reflect some ironies, the Interim Plan (the Thirteenth Plan) of FY 2013/14 – 2015/16) sets out poverty reduction strategies as consisting of: (a) Develop productive employment opportunities; (b) Emphasize capacity-building, increases in productivity, the judicious distribution of resources, and equitable development; (c) Foster coordination among the poverty alleviation programs run by different agencies and organizations, and (d) Implement demand-based, targeted programs. In the same setting, the Plan asserts a contradictory lamentation:

Poverty alleviation measures are fragmented and uncoordinated; and policies and programs have yet to be made result-oriented and effective. Poverty alleviation is a formidable challenge, especially among women, Dalits, minorities, Madhesis, inhabitants of remote and backward regions, including Karnali, persons with disabilities, and persons residing in hazard-prone urban areas, and in areas where all populations exhibit disproportionately high rates of poverty (NPC, 2013, p. 116).

This state-led approach has been also replicated in the villages of Dang and Sunsari. According to the district sources, it was evident that since 1990 all the DDCs have been allocated more than 20 percent of their total budget in their poverty alleviation strategies- which further backed by the national budgets and Five Year Plans.

Following this, many targeted programs in the districts were responded through the material intervention on behalf of the poor people and disadvantaged groups which strategically focused on the promotion of social awareness among those people and distribution of credits/ incentives (in vocational training and agricultural seeds) to them. Most of the NGOs also followed the same mainstream ideology of the state, although the researcher could not get their budget allocation.

Poverty as being the unavoidable rural fact:

Many of the research participants recalled that the poverty was a basic problem of their life. This was indeed a grassroots approach, while more than this was that the state had popularized the terms of development, including empowerment, participation, poverty reduction, inclusion, rather than taking a non-material approach to well-being; often (see explanation previously in Chapter 5 and further in Chapter 7). Some official claims of the state departments (e.g. DDC and VDCs) in the study regions remarked that the Small farmers' development projects, micro-credit schemes and women empowerment projects of the government had brought some opportunities to the local people including the Tharus. But, most of the interviews and FGDs concluded that on a larger scale those programs were not extended to the ultra-poor Tharu who were at the bottom of the well-being ranking. So, the grievances of people became more vulnerable. Their voices were trodden deeper and they could not speak against the established construction of social reality that trained them for dependency and poverty. The case 5.2 illustrates a suicidal case of a poor and landless husband who wrote a short letter to his wife explaining his situation and reason behind the suicide. This was a case taken from Dalit tole of Aurawani, Sunsari. The accident happened in June 2011. The narration below is portrayed on the basis of the researcher's conversation with the family members which held on 6 August 2014.

Case 5.2: A note of suicide

Dear Lalita,

Since last week our daughter [Sonmati] had been asking me for her new pencils and copies to take into the school. She wept and cried many times. I, as father, could not stop her and fulfil those small demands only because of my poverty and illness. Our debt to pay for RajaniTharu [local money-lender] had exceeded to more than Rs. 10,000. So, I am now under high stress and shock which I am unable to tolerate. The metacid [a pesticide] came to my mouth and entered into the throat. [...]Though I don't want to leave you, it is due to the niyati [forced circumstances]. I could not provide comfort and pleasure to you during my whole life. In next birth I am praying to be your husband again, but being rich and educated. Though I took birth as a man, I passed my life as a dog. Even the dog is luckier and more capable than me. Please take care of my small children and old mother. I cannot even supply food to them. So, let me go...where I want!

Nexus of poverty, conflict and local planning:

Following this, the conflict-prone dilemma continued in the villages with the emergence of political elites. From the FGDs with the various stakeholders it is quite evident that the political leaders, representatives of state actors (including VDC and DDC officials) and representatives of the non-state actors (including the civil societies and NGOs) in the region maintained a kind of elitist ideology of development and politics. Empirically, it was maintained through the All Party Mechanism and Citizens Ward Forum at the VDC level and the District Administration Office at the district level. The poor and marginalized groups, including the Tharus were largely neglected for these structures though. As a consequence, it had many implications. For instance, most of the Tharus who belonged to poor well-being ranking in the villages had very limited access to the local development planning and budgeting. Most of the research participants mentioned that the VDC councils used to work as a puppet of local political parties to ensure the interests of rich, well-off and upper-caste elites. However, the local party leaders contest this very perspective of the Tharus.

The non-state actors-biased development:

The work of local NGOs and INGOs largely seemed to be supportive to the local livelihood, awareness generation and empowerment of women. But, the review of their progress report and the people's perception of them reflected that they were focusing on the safer, easier and more superficial tasks, rather than dealing with the underlying causes and human right perspective of the rural poverty. Even the FGD among the INGO officials conducted in Bhasi VDC clearly concluded that they did not want to perceive the poverty beyond the state approaches on this very issue, nor could they launch programs against the policies of the state and code of conducts agreed upon both the parties, i.e. the state and the INGOs or donors. Theoretically, it could be labeled as a syndrome of 'bias' in terms of the preferences based on region, gender and project (Chamber, 2014; Lipton, 2005). A similar notion has been offered by some Nepali scholars who critically observe the vested nexuses of development actors (Karki & Comfort, 2016). The researcher would call it 'mainstream-bias' approach, which eventually led to the emergence of a few elites and marginalization of the many rural poors in the name of development. Simultaneously, it has opened a space for alternative practices and visions in the villages to breed collective agitations in any forms. For example, the researcher found a number of NGOs working in the Bhasi VDC, but no one was working on the issues of squatters – the prominent problem of Tharus and Dalits. In the similar context, some research participants in Saudiyar VDC

of Dang reported that there were no any NGOs and INGOs working in the promotion of Tharu Model Village, which needed a huge amount of resources to build a number of infrastructures and destinations in the region.

Emergence of cosmetic culture:

In the villages, the use of remittances received from abroad to support the sustainability of rural economy and development was rarely observed. Among the Tharus, there was an increasing trend of going abroad and engaging in income generation.⁵²In some villages, for example, the Saudiyar village of Saudiyar VDC there were no any Tharu households from where at least one member had not gone to foreign lands, as concluded in the PRA conducted in the ward. But what was happening in the villages – was not a pleasant picture. People were increasingly motivated towards luxurious consumption, including electronic and cosmetic items. When the researcher visited the homes of poor Tharu, he wondered, seeing there a number of DVDs, CDs, mobiles, cosmetic soaps and creams, noodles and so on. In spite of having a very small tract of land, some of them were starting to build huge RCC (rod, cement and concrete) homes in the village. But, interestingly enough, when the researcher asked questions about the education and health issues, they had almost a ready-made answer that they were poor and they could not invest in these sectors. Thus, it was creating a root of dependency and consumerism in a long-term world view of the rural development.

The missing aspects of economic transformation and inclusiveness:

The problem of unemployment, low wage, inflation, debt and labor migration were other associated causes in the economic frontier of the Tharu movement. The FGDs and interviews conducted among the members of youth clubs revealed that most of the youths were unemployed and they were searching for sources of income generation. One of the youths in Jhumka bazaar, for example, expressed his dilemmas that the youths were less motivated for continuation of traditional agricultural works, but neither there were job opportunities in the industrial sector, nor was the opportunity sufficient for civil services of the government. Consequently, it created a space that was uncertain for the emerging youths, who were largely unemployed and less educated. Some Tharus of working ages had gone either abroad or Kathmandu or in nearby towns of the district. But such kind of labor migration was not institutionalized because of the unstable labor market and the wage system in the towns.

⁵² Though historically outmigration among the Tharus was less evident as compared to other caste and ethnic groups in Nepal (Gaige, 2009; Regmi 2008)

To cite an example, the researcher wondered to see the Indian workers in nearby industries of the Bhasi and Aurawani VDC, Sunsari. It was Duhabi, an industrial region nearby those VDCs where most of the workers were not the Nepali locals (including the Tharus), but from the Indian borders. It was because the Indian used to work in a very cheap wage rate as compared to Nepali workers and there was no tension of labor strike from such non-national workers. The same case this researcher observed in the Sona Cement factory of Dang (which lies in Laxmipur, equidistant from Chailahi and Saudiyar), where only 230 workers were the Tharus (among 350 Nepali people in total), but there were 650 Indians workers (almost double of the Nepali workers).

5.5.2 Vacant local bodies and emerging complications

5.5.2.1 The tragedy of the presence of the government

In Nepal, last local elections were held in May 1997⁵³. After the completion of its tenure in 2002, the local bodies (VDCs, DDCs and municipalities) were lying vacant with no elected representatives in them. The field visits and data collection reflected that the villages had a striking gap in making the quick service delivery system for the rural poor. The service delivery system⁵⁴ in the rural life and remote areas was totally ignored, that increased the difficulties of rural life in getting the basic services from the government. The government had provided a full authority to the VDC secretaries in maintaining administrative works and political decisions of the VDC. In most of the day when the researcher visited to the VDC offices, he could hardly meet the secretaries, who often went to the district headquarters (i.e. DDC) rather than in the VDC office. The research participants also blamed for this irresponsible system which did not promote a good governance system in the villages. The all party mechanism (APM) was created to support the VDC administration and to coordinate with the secretary and to advise him/her accordingly.⁵⁵

⁵³After the tenure of local bodies ended, the then Deuba-led government had failed to conduct fresh elections, apparently owing to the Maoist threat and his political ambitions. Deuba's recommendation to postpone the parliamentary elections in the end of 2002 led King Gyanendra to dismiss him from the helm of government on charge of incompetence. Local elections held in 2005 by the King Gyanendra during his direct rule were widely boycotted by the major political parties to make them ineffective.

⁵⁴The local service delivery system includes registration and/or documentation of vital events (e.g. birth, migration, marriage, death, and divorce), collection of taxes (e.g. of land, home, and from public properties) and allowances for different targeted groups (e.g. for elderly age, and widows). Interesting to note is that without the birth certificate issued by the VDC office, the district administration office is not allowed to provide citizenship card for any people of rural Nepal.

⁵⁵Since the mid-2013 when the main field visit of this study was going to saturate, the provision of APM became dysfunctional. Instead, there endorsed a provision of citizens ward forum (*nagarik oda manch*) in each wards, which had been claimed not to be political entity but a 25-27 members' inclusive forum. Empirically, the local leaders who formerly possessed the APM now had started to go in the manch.

In the study areas, these APMs were often found to be a space of political bargaining and to satisfy the competing interests of the local political parties/leaders. The major interests of the political parties remained the economic commissions from local bids, political/administrative appointments (even in the schools) and development works only in their respective pocket areas or communities. In case of Saudiyar VDC, for example, the meeting of village development council had been postponed many times because of the division among the local political leaders and their misunderstanding with the VDC secretary. More than this, the researcher got an information from an anonymous source that in 2011 and 2012, the 20 percent of the total revenue collected by Lamahi VDC of Dang had been distributed equally to the three major political parties (i.e. NC, CPN-UML and CPN-MC) and the VDC secretary.⁵⁶ The corruption of major political leaders was further intensified the erosion of faith in the mainstream politics- what had led the local politics of Dang and Sunsari since 1990s.

Some VDCs (like Saudiyar and Bhasi) had just reconstructed their offices which had been burned out during the armed insurgency. However, the technological know-how and recording system in the offices was very traditional. Some VDCs (Chailahi VDC of Dang and Bhasi VDC of Sunsari) had exceptional to this where the computer recording system was on the way to start. Despite this, a simple case of birth registration, even took at least of two days, even if all the documents and applicants attended physically at the office. This was more panic and time-taking for the poor Tharus and wage laborers. Following this, though the VDC offices did not have any well-managed toilets, the officials were very loudly advocating VDC as a 'free defecation area'. The researcher also found that all the political parties, social organizations and NGOs were supporting those campaigns. But contesting this larger worldview, there was another construction of social reality among the ultra-poor groups of people. Here the irony was lamented as:

I am a Tharu and my wife is Chamar [a Tarai Dalit]. We did inter-caste marriage due to which we were displaced from Saptari and settled here in Aurawani. My family has denied me from my ancestral property due to an obligatory pressure of the relatives and Madhesi neighbors. I am totally landless and now living in a rent. When I went to Aurawani VDC for my marriage certificate, they demanded me migration certificate. As I told that I was displaced from the home due to my marriage with a Dalit woman, then they demanded me a 'toilet clearance certificate'. What is this? A person who does not have any property including any land pieces, then how I could build the toilet; in which land? A requested all about saying that, but the officials did not want to issue the marriage certificate... [silence for a while]... if they do not provide this certificate I will also destroy my citizenship because I don't see any utility of this card neither for land

⁵⁶Due to ethical consideration, the source of this information has been kept anonymous upon the request of the informants.

purchase, nor for any registration...[Ram Lakhan Chaudhary, 33, based on a personal conversation with the researcher, 3 July, 2014]

Again to reflect another observation that is related to governance of the VDCs, the researcher would insist here a case that he could not find even the maps and profiles of VDC in the VDC offices. The map of Chailahi VDC could be found, neither in the VDC office, nor in the DDC or in other development agencies. The task of preparation of VDC profiles was often granted to local NGOs, so he was sent to their offices to buy and collect the profiles and maps. The researcher got a bitter experience that he paid NPR 500 even for a single black and white map of the Aurawani VDC in Sunsari. More than this, the channel was set from the DDC to VDCs through the local elites and brokers. Although he frequently visited the VDC offices of the study sites, he became confused for a long time to recognize the staff: who were governmental; who were non-governmental; and who did represent the local political parties? After observing their work, he found that the elites could do all types of jobs at the same time. Consequently, 'double standard' of governance was operated in the villages: one from the government side and another for the non-governmental organizations.

5.5.2.1 The spaces created with the local election

Based upon the above-mentioned evidences, the vacant local bodies in the rural areas in particular have some social-political implications. First, it has created spaces for corruption in the name of development. The development budget has been in deficit expense, some of being frozen as well. Elite domination in the name of APM has been created and the secretary-led VDCs have been turned into the 'virtual leaders' of the villages. Therefore, the local elections could have special meaning in the context of advocacy of people's leadership and management of fragile political circumstances. As complained by a research participant in Saudiyar: "No one in the VDC [office] recognizes us. There are not our leaders, but are the government officials. Should they follow us [the people] or the orders of above [the government]?" [Based on a personal conversation, 15 August 2014]

Second, the lack of elected local representative system has imposed some negative implications in the democratic participation and rights of the people. They have lost the places where they could go for the public services and the people or leaders to whom they would question about the development concerns and other problems. During the past 20 years, about 25% of the 14 million estimated voters (between age group 18-

39) have been added to the national demography (NEC, 2016),⁵⁷ who have been missing their fundamental rights either to be elected and to elect. Sadly, this has weakened key instruments of democracy in the rural areas among the larger mass of rural youths.

Third, it has created a political space for breeding of non-state activism in the villages. During the Maoist conflict, the vacant bodies were supposed to be the reservoir for the local mobilizations. As the whole political discourse was focusing only on the constitutional matters and state-restructuring issues, local elections were kept under a least priority though there were several political commitments. Consequently, it led to the dysfunctional of LSGA (1999) which now has also become irrelevant in the federal context of Nepal.

Fourth, there are some new political developments along with the state-restructuring discourse and local elections. Very recently at the time of the submission of this thesis, local elections have held in the country three phases on 14 May (in Provinces- 3, 4 and 6), 28 June (in Provinces- 1, 5 and 7) and 18 September (Province- 2) in 6 metropolitan cities, 11 sub-metropolitan cities, 276 municipalities and 460 rural municipalities. These elections are constitutionally obliged to be held for local governments to be executed through 753 local levels⁵⁸. Constitutionally, the local levels are granted with a list of 22-rights (Annex 8 of the constitution) which are further aligned with some concurrent rights to be practiced jointly by the federation, the states and the local levels (Annex 9 of the constitution). The new local level structures will enjoy a self-governance and legislation, as opposed to the mere service delivery functions that have been carried out by local bodies for decades. Certainly it could be the instrumental for the institutionalization of federalism in Nepal through the grassroots level of democratic participation.

There are also challenges ahead. For the government, this will be to create an environment in which Madhes-based political parties (including the alliance where Tharu ethnicity-based two political parties are involved) engage in the electoral process. Though they are very weak in the parliamentary power structure, they have been demanding 'constitutional amendment' to reform some of the constitutional

⁵⁷National Election Commission of Nepal (<http://www.election.gov.np/election/np/study-and-research-116.html>)

⁵⁸This is the first time in Nepal's political history that the Part 5 of the constitution (Art 56-60) has envisioned the 'Structure of state'. It states that the main structure of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal shall be of three levels, namely the Federation, the state and the Local level. Part 17 (Art. 214-220) has provisions about local executives, Part 18 (Art. 221-226) about local legislature and Part 19 about local financial procedures (Art. 228-230).

provisions, in particular federal delineations of the provinces and the liberal rights in terms of citizenships and language. In particular, they have been in a continuous agitation to make amendments in relation to demarcations of the provinces which would secure an autonomous Madhes state in Tarai. This has created a constant polarization in Tarai politics, and to some extent, has led to a stagnancy in the national politics too. Some constitutional experts (e.g. Bhandari, 2016) claim that with some exceptional weakness, constitution of Nepal has liberal provisions regarding citizenship (Part 2), proportional representation (Part 3 and 4), identity and recognition (Part 4) and language (Part 3 and 4). For them, the constitution is a dynamic social construct which can be ideally adjusted with the changing context and citizen's aspirations. Contrary to this, another viewpoint argues that the constitution of Nepal is a continuum of the former hegemony of the ruling caste and religious groups. It has become pro-hilly and pro-Nepali-lingual people which does not represent the whole Nepali (Jha, 2017). For them, it is 'merely an exploitative and neo-colonial instrument to the Madhesis and marginalized groups'. Amid these two contrasting views, the division of major political parties in Tarai politics, frequent changes in the government and changing positions/ alliances of Madhes-based groups/ parties of the region, are integrally making complications in the Tarai issue.

Meanwhile, with a failure of constitutional amendment regarding these issues in the parliament in 16 August 2017, Rashtirya Janata Party-Nepal (RJP-N) – a newly unified political party by merging six Madhes-based political parties in the region in 2017 – eventually took decisions to take part in the local elections which held on 18 September in Province 2. It is interesting to note that other two powerful factions of the Madhes-based political parties – Federal Socialist Forum, Nepal (FSF) and Nepal Democratic Forum (NDF) – have already welcomed the local elections and participated in the local elections of phase 1 and 2. If they continue to oppose the upcoming elections for the parliament and/ or the provinces⁵⁹ or they deny the results of the elections, even though they would participate, it could disrupt the elections leading to violent agitations and unpredicted strikes. It could further lead to a further polarization among the political parties and movement actors in the name of 'Madhes'. Consequently, this will challenge the people-state relationships in the Tarai region by affecting local representation and budget dissemination and initiation or continuation of

⁵⁹ At the time of submission of this thesis, the government of Nepal has very recently scheduled that the House of Representatives and Provincial Elections, 2017(2074) to be held in two phases: 26 November 2017 (for 32 districts) and 7 December 2017 (for 45 districts).

development activities in the region. This is how the institutionalization of the new constitution lies along with elected representatives at the grassroots levels.

5.5.3 Land and tenancy issues

Land represents all kinds of assets among the Tharus. Historically, they were the king of the Tarai with a larger plot of lands in the region. In 1960s, when the land mapping began formally in Nepal, many Tharus were denied to register their land, and most of their land was converted in the name of local landlords during the process of registration (Gaige, 2009; Guneratne, 2002). This was the case where many elderly-aged research participants of this study also recalled. The administration was itself a puppet of local landlords which used to have excessive power to hold the village affairs. Most of the landlords belonged to non-Tharu hilly people and a few of the Tharu community. A Chaudhary family in Saudiyar VDC-3 also reported that their own land was also registered in the name of the *gaunpancha* (the then village heads). Though, these types of cases were not so much reported in Bhasi and Aurawani VDC, some research participants claimed that the arrival of hilly migrants (i.e. '*Pahadiyas*' or simply known as '*Pahadi*' and '*Parbate*') and the incremental settlements of Madhesi people and some Indian migrants to the region posed a problem of landlessness in the region. Most of the studies in this regard, however, are more focused on the migration of Pahadiya people in Tarai and the consequential shrinking or loss of the lands of the Tharus.

Rankin (1999) suggests that the Nepali state's taxation and resettlement policies that created a new Pahadiya landlord class which was responsible for the marginalization of Tharu community into an oppression including the sustenance of the Kamaiya system (p. 28). This is complemented by a BASE report (1995), which states that the influx of pahadis following the eradication of malaria marginalized the Tharus already living in the Tarai (1995, p. 4). As the Tharus had no records of the land they were living on, the Pahadiyas were able to register land in their name, without other formal data sources including the site and area of the land. There was little or no Tharu representation in the central government at this time, limiting their ability to resist this change. McDonough outlines the extent of these changes as: "Where in 1912 revenue settlement most of the landlords were Tharus, by the late 1960s...the great majority of landlords were Pahari [Pahadi, hilly people; emphasis added]. In Dang by this date...around 80% of the land cultivated by Tharu tenants belonged to the Paharis (1997, p. 281).

Coupling with the historical legacy, landlessness seems to be the fundamental problem of poor Tharu families. In a group discussion, which the researcher conducted in Saudiyar, some respondents stated that they did not have cultivated land that could be sufficient to increase their food access and income. They had a large debt to a local landlord who then represented the District Panchayat. As a repayment of the debt, some family members of those households became Kamaiya in the home of the landlord. It further led them to a crucial cycle of dependency and poverty, which deprived them of constituting a sustainable livelihood. On the other hand, the distribution of land in the villages was uneven and some Tharu elites as well as upper caste migrants occupied most of the land, who were not ready to follow the tenancy provision as the state legally promulgated. Though there was not an official registration of the landholding at the VDC offices, the PRA and well-being ranking in each ward of the VDC revealed that there was less than 10 kattha for the majority of the households. It was almost a ridiculous picture for the Tharus, a historically agriculture-dependent community. Coupled with this was the failure to implement tenancy rights in the villages.

Some farmers had also been engaged as tenants on their landlord's own land in the villages, or even outside of that. The *Guthi* system was found in the villages of Dang (e.g. Swargadhvari and Ratanpuriguthi) in particular. However, neither the *adhiya* (half-half share-cropping) nor the *thekedari* (fixed amount of cash/crops paying) system was scientifically defined and practiced in the region. The systems, rather, were virtually determined by the local landlords. Many people in the village demanded 50 percent ownership of the land they work on as stipulated in the tenancy rights; but are conveniently denied. Interestingly, one of the tenants, Ramlakhan Mahato, 56, from Sunkauali remarked that:

Our issue of land would not be solved permanently until and unless the landlords and upper class elites would be overthrown from the leadership of the movement...they have deceived us many times either in terms of election or in terms of the movement. [Based on a personal interview, 4 July 2014]

As per the division of labor and the means of stratification, historically, the Tharus have been a continuing farming occupation, but in turn have been restricted from getting access to land or establishing land ownership. Consequently, the self-defined well-being ranks of the people during PRA in the villages revealed various stratified classes in a continuum with a distinct (and somewhere overlapping) characteristics (i.e. from

rich to poor). Additionally, in case of some of the Tharus, who ranked in the upper level of well-being, they had an ancestral land property which gives a clear illustration of power relations (see Chapter 7 for detail). The lower ranked landless Tharus were subjected to widespread discrimination like unfair wage, extreme exploitation, semi-slavery and food deficiency due to the lack of resource entitlement and uneven social structure for them.

Indeed, the livelihood of the Tharus was highly dependent upon the agrarian activities regulated by informal social institutions/organizations, i.e. providing their economic and social services either to the well-off Tharus or to the non-Tharus. The institutions included *Kamaiya*, *Kamalari*, *Adhiya*, *Jhara*, *Begh-Begiyari* and *Chaukidari*. These organizations lost their legitimacy in the changing context of modernization, which has opened a number of spaces for the economic activities and livelihood strategies among the Tharus. While most of the economic activities of the Tharus were dominantly allocated by the Hilly migrants in Dang, the Madhesi caste groups and Indian migrants were much benefitted in the case of Sunsari. The well-being ranking and study of demographic composition in most of the villages also supported this fact. Consequently, it led to a patron-client relation in the continuation of traditional agrarian livelihood.

5.5.4 Changing the political culture in the villages

The political parties in Nepal historically remained as the basic initiator and promoter of the democracy, though their ideology and organization remain always contested (see Dahal, 2008). The study largely observed that the problem of disbelief and dissatisfaction against the politicians was immense in most of the villages. Influence of poor people upon local Tharu politicians was very limited and the people-leader relationship is an elite-driven. Some ultra-poor people as reflected in the well-being ranking were experiencing an extreme marginalization as politicians were not listening to them. Regarding their expectations and felt-needs, most of the research participants argued that there should be increased opportunities in education and employment. Some of them even did not care about any kinds of politics. A farmer of Jhumka bazaar expresses one of the interesting negations to this as “the leaders and politicians are neither the god nor the demon; I do not care about them. For me, more important is the two potatoes than these two [leaders and politics]!”

When the researcher stayed with the people and observed their discussions, there were public talks about day-to-day grievances and about the failure of the political

parties and their leadership. In particular, there was an extreme pessimism and resistive motivation towards political parties. In Bangaun of Chailahi VDC, there was a popular teashop (Ramjananki) where many people used to come for tea and pakaudas. The researcher also made frequent visits to the shop for tea and other kinds of observations regarding his study. From there, he also followed some people for semi-structured interviews and focused group discussions. There was a search for national hero, say the political leadership of the country, who would lead the country and all the people successfully. Regarding the Tharu leadership in particular and national leadership in general, the people were divided in their arguments and perceptions. Even in a same FGD (conducted on 5 July 2014) which the researcher conducted in Khairi of Chailahi VDC, Dang, he observed a number of contrasting worldviews, for example:

A: *“The Tharu movement is for us, so we have to support it and participate to ensure our bright future...”*

B: *“The movement cannot do anything for us. We tested many political parties, Maoists and so on. In a process, Tharu leaders will also become the party leaders and work for themselves not for others...”*

C: *“The politics and leadership of the country should be destroyed and burned out...We have to just regret...”*

D: *“We (farmers and workers) do not know politics, development and this and that....we just know our work, just work...”*

E: *“We need a new leader...no matter Tharu or non-Tharu... we need a new, stronger, people-loving and development-promoting leader who can see our homes and talk with us...”*

Some people were saying that the non-Tharu leadership of the country would hinder the Tharu movement and its leadership to go ahead. Contrary to this, there was another argument, where people were arguing that there was no significant difference in the vested interests of the leaders irrespective of their caste or ethnic belongings. For these kind of elites, ‘people’s emancipation’ has become one of the saleable propaganda in the politics to hypnotize the poor which also rang true in the Tharu movement context. However, both of these perspectives, in essence critically observed that the corruption, kleptocracy, elitism, privatization and exclusion were becoming normal affairs in the villages and were being institutionalized. Therefore, the search of new and alternative discourse of political parties could have any spaces to fuel the agitation of Tharu people, which has now developed as a Tharu movement in the region.

There is a lot of literatures regarding the impact of Maoist’s movement in Nepal’s politics, development and social/ethnic movements (see Chapter 2). The researcher would argue that the movement was basically political-economic movement and it was

deeply rooted in the historical-structural problems of the society. When he was in his lower secondary school, since then he has heard about the movement and faced many strikes and grievances in various intervals of time. Having been a progressive poet at his college life, and today after a decade, the researcher still wanted to internalize the feelings of people. The Maoists had reached to the every edge and corners of villages, ethnic groups and disadvantaged sections of the society, including the Tharus. Strategically, the Maoists were leading a number of ethnic wings (*Mukti Morcha*) into its organizational structure, including the *Tharuwan Mukti Morcha* of the Tharus. Particularly in Dang, the Maoists cadres were largely mobilized in the insurgency period and the works of Mukti Morcha were thus deeply rooted with local levels of people.⁶⁰ The movement activities – occurred immensely in Dang and Sunsari, both the districts being very strategic to link the hilly districts of Nepal and Indian borders. But, the Maoists gradually shifted their issues from class to caste paradigm, both theoretically and empirically after its entry into the peace process in November 2006.

With the very schooling of Maoist movement, the people were becoming aware about their rights and ethnic identity. The historically neglected issues of gender, Kamaiya, Kamlahari, wage, land reform and so on came rapidly into the surface of social-political life during the war time. As a major part of the peace process, CPN (M-C) started to engage in the wider political issues. It became the most popular party in the first CA election, which won the major electoral constituencies in both the study districts too. But, then, according to the claim of a former Maoist leader turned-as-Tharu-activist, “it could not maintain its political strategy of class struggle, rather went to turn its politics to be adapted in the parliamentary democracy...So, we choose another path of struggle. This is about how the Tharu will fight for their emancipation”. Contesting this, one of the Maoist leaders and the-then CA member from Dang, mentioned, “The Maoist movement is a long journey, which still needs to cross different stages of both the gain and loss. So, it could not be detached from the Tharus who have sacrificed the most in the war”. Both these claims and counterclaims, however, indicate towards a ‘culture of movement’. This has paved a larger room for mobilization of the Tharus in the movement. As the findings suggest, the researcher would argue that this culture has become one of the characteristics of Nepali society.

5.6 Characteristics of the Tharu Movement

⁶⁰According to official record of INSEC, 690 people were killed; 2,300 got injured and 236 were disappeared by both the state and Maoists during the armed insurgency of 1996-2006.

5.6.1 Ideological characteristics

Ideology and leadership are unavoidable components of social movements, which is also reflected in the context of the Tharu movement, and its shaping in the local development. Not exceptionally, the Tharu movement seemed to be influenced by those ideological perspectives, including primordialism, instrumentalism, casteism, ethnicitism, federalism and class-ideology. But, the movement's propaganda posters, slogans, manifestos and statements (as occasionally issued by the name of TWS or the TJSC) did not give a systematic ideological explanation of the Tharu movement. Rather, the movement activities seemed to be more reactive, contradictory and event-based.

For example, in the post 2006 context, two dominant movements in the Tarai – the Tharu and the Madhesi - fought in the same battlefield against one another. Tharu movement opposed the Madhesi's major demand for “*one Madhes, one state*”. There was a long strike organized by both movements in the region. Many people were killed and injured in these movements. But in 2012, some of the popular leaders of the Tharu movement went to join the *Madhesi Janaadhikar Forum (Loktantrik)*, a Madhes-based political party which backed the “*one Madhes, one state*” demand. Meanwhile, a number of popular activists and leaders of the TM entered into the Madhesi camp in Dang (to mention: Yogendra Chaudhary and Prakash Chaudhary). It was also observed in the Sunsari district, though not significantly. The entry of Laxman Chaudhary, a legendary of the Tharuhat movement throughout the Tarai region, into the Madhes camp was one of the major setbacks in the Tharu movement. Most of the research participants and the cadres of the movement revealed a kind of frustration over this matter. However, it was interesting to see in some cases, that there was a Madhes movement to counter the Tharu movement which included some senior leaders belonged to the Tharu ethnicity by origin. There were some popular surnames of the Tharus in the eastern Nepal including Susnari (e.g. *Gachhadar, Mahato, Panjiyar and Singh*) for which the common Tharu people of the western region (Dang) thought to be Madhesi. This was an irony of Tharu vs. Madhes movement.

The central question of the Tharu movement as to whether it is a political, cultural/ethnic or economic movement, or a mixture of all this is not clear- as some social movements globally encounter with this problem (Lee, 2010). The agenda of their cultural identity and ethnic recognition did not seem to advocate the livelihood issues, to raise their living standard, to promote access to and control of resources, to claim basic education and primary health services, to widen the income opportunities,

and to solve the problems of poverty and inequality (see further explanation in Chapters - 6 and 7). Ideologically they were divided into different school of thoughts regarding class, caste, gender, identity, ethnic rights and day-to-day problems of the people. They perceived development as a secondary quest, putting the issue of cultural rights first. Accordingly, divergent viewpoints and the ways of solving them were constantly proposed. For example, when the researcher performed a leadership analysis through Venn diagramming, he found a slight difference in the ideological orientation of the leaders not only in the different districts, but also different VDCs and even in the same VDC. When he triangulated this information to the top leaders of the Tharu movement (e.g. of TWS, TJSC) and with some ethnic intellectuals (e.g. from University, political party and civil societies), he got the same kind of ideological gap and competing worldviews regarding the ideology of the movement.

As a reflection of above-mentioned empirical evidences, the researcher would argue that the Tharu movement was not lacking the ideology; but still there was a crisis in the ideology. This situates the movement that neither favors a collective movement, nor does it go against the existing mainstream development. This led to an ideological crisis in the movement, creating spaces for elites to lift out. Class issues were less entertained and the well-off were often played in the movement for their short-term gain. Ideological shift from caste/ethnic dimensions (indigenosity) to the class dimension had been started, but not in an organized and institutionalized way. This crisis was further fuelled with the leadership structure within the movement.

5.6.2 Leadership characteristics and information system

This study perceived the leadership as a system of strategic and ideological decision-making (by a leader or a group of people) who claim to organize and to represent the Tharu people and inspire them for participation. The study evidenced that TM leadership worked in the public domain from the central (Kathmandu) to the regional (Tarai) and local context (districts, VDCs, wards). When the researcher interviewed with the representatives of the movement organizations, they claimed to represent the public audience for public purpose; the welfare of the Tharu people in particular (see also 4.5 section in Chapter 4). Following this claim, some theoretical as well as empirical features have been observed.

First, the main strategies of the leadership were related to developing the commitment of existing cadres or participants of the movement. Accordingly, the hard liners and true believers had to be developed with a dedicated spirit of sacrifice for the sake of

the Tharu welfare and sacrifice. In turn, as what Tilly (1978) and Bebbington (2011) argued, such members created a challenge for the state to address their agendas. This has created an attracting strategy of leaders to the Tharu people by inspiring and motivating them. It increased the number of movement participants. This attraction was often based on the agendas, where 'identity formation' became the beginning step; many people involved in the local and regional networks of TWS and TJSC. It was just after the promulgation of the Interim Constitution of Nepal 2007 which was opposed by some of the Madhesi groups in some respects. It led to a powerful Madhes movement in the whole Tarai region- a region which is historically claimed to be the land of the Tharus. This brought Tharu and Madhesi confrontation in the region.

Second, public appealing for participation in the movement was another dimension of movement leadership. It broadened the appeal (e.g. saying that 'we are in the right', 'we will succeed', and 'we will get emancipation from all kinds of bondage'), created cultural bondage (e.g. language and Tharu/ethnic), and searched the ways for the sake of sacrifice of the Tharu welfare. Following this appealing, there was a vertical (top-bottom) type of communication strategies (Kathmandu to districts) of the leadership rather than horizontal (district to district and VDC to VDC). This kind of vertical flow of information did not create a room for active participation of people neither in the agenda setting nor in the movement activities. However, the movement leadership used different kinds of strategies regarding the campaign, including the use of social media (Facebook, website, email-internet), use of local media, e.g. newspapers and local FM radios (printed and broadcast in Tharu language as well). Some of the central and local leaders had used the Facebook account (with many followers and friends); the Facebook page and web links (e.g. Tharuwan, Tharu Samaj, and Tharu community). However, these new strategies of movement were basically effective to the urban participants and educated ones. This did not reach the most of the rural people in the study regions.

To analyze the adoption of communication strategies of the leadership, the researcher also became a friend with a number of leaders, activists and students working in the movement. There he found a huge transaction of knowledge about the ongoing activities of the movement. From the viewpoint of these innovative communication strategies and changing leadership pattern of the Tharu movement, the movement can be categorized as a new social movement (NSM). This is what Giddens (2009) has

outlined the new type of strategies and organizational modes as one of the basic features of the NSMs.

The leadership strategies, indeed, depend in the given context and they vary upon the social setting of the movements (Tarrow, 2009). In the context of TM, the leadership has had some issues, including developing and directing the movement actions to achieve the goals of the movement. According to most of the leaders, the maintenance of motivation towards collective behavior by organizing mass demonstrations and strikes seemed as the major challenge for the Tharu movement leadership. In doing so, adoption of quick decision-making systems was an obvious strategy which was two-folded: one in the dialogue with the government (which was led by the dialogue committee of the TJSC in peak hours of the movement, e.g. 2009 and 2012) and another between the movement networks or leaders (from upper leaders to the local leaders and vice-versa). However, many people and some of the leaders also accused the central leadership of being autocratic, and not being concerned with the local issues and realities. As a replication of the leadership of the major political parties, it seems one of the critical aspects of Tharu movement which has undergone a charismatic leadership. To some critical theorists, the leadership dualism in any types of movements or political organizations create dilemmas, which Persons (1993) would call a 'black politics' (p. 4). One of the local leaders in Jhumka, Sunsari lamented that:

We spent all day and night on the road...movement continued, we also continued our protest activities very actively...but we did not know why and when the central leaders all of sudden postponed the movement from Kathmandu...local journalists and media informed us about such kind of termination...though I am a leader of the Tharus and people ask me time and again, I cannot tell its immediate destiny of the movement...[Based on a personal conversation, 14 May 2014]

5.6.3 Uneven power distribution and structure of the leadership

This study has previously conceptualized the notion of discourse as a power. This is ultimately reflected in the leadership itself, though it has a rare scholarly analysis in the Nepali academia. When the researcher conducted leadership analysis from the Venn diagramming it was clear that the influence of local leaders (Tharu and non-Tharu) in local politics and development affairs were significantly higher; they often lived in comparatively more accessible areas; the leaders occupied the key positions in different groups and organizations; and the distance of the homes of the leaders and the main settlement in the villages was comparatively longer because of their preference to live in the nearby towns and market centers. Further, the well-being

ranking of the leaders also revealed the same message regarding the unequal power sharing among the leaders and the followers including movement participants. For most of the followers, the ideal images of the Tharu leaders – the true emancipator (*muktidata*) and people's representative (*janapratidinhi*) - were being eroded in the villages. This issue can be illustrated as in the following expression:

The leaders are very selfish. They are money-centric and opportunistic. One day they fought against the Madhesi, and then they entered into the Madhesi group on another day. They talk about land reform but do not want land ceilings. They advocate the upliftment of the poor, but they don't have any respect to the labor. [Champaklal Tharu, based on a personal conversation with the researcher, 23 March, 2014]

On the other hand, when the researcher saw this kind of dual character of power within the contemporary leaders of the local politics– he went further to investigate the issues. He asked people about the historical pattern of distribution of power and politics in the villages. Historically, most of the representatives of the state actors, leaders of political parties and leaders of the TWS belonged to the upper class groups; comparatively having a sound economic, political, social and agricultural (particular landholding) status. Irrespective of their political positions, such power elites always supported to the existing political regime, directly or indirectly. For example, a few of the historically established leaders of the Tharus (e.g. Parashu Narayan Chaudhary) entered into the Panchayat regime and assisted the King-led movement for many times. One of the very recent examples is that the researcher interviewed Chetram Chaudhary, the president of TWS at Deukhuri region. Although he was the leader of the Tharus, a former government school teacher and belonged to the ruling Nepali Congress Party, he dared to keep two Kamaiyas as bonded laborers till 2002. This is what an abuse of power in the rural politics of the region. The following case study (5.3) of one of the political leaders belonged to Tharu community further illustrates how the power and organization has been unevenly structured in present-day movement context.

Case 5.3: Leadership in the movement: A case of Ashok Chaudhary

Ashok Tharu, 78, inhabitant of Ghorahi-1, Magai, was a living legend of the Tharu movement and leftist movements in Dang, and he introduced himself not as a Tharu leader, but as a politician he would like to lead all the poor from all the caste and ethnic groups. Since the 1950s he engaged actively in left movement and brought the Communist party in the limelight in Dang among the Tharus including poor farmers, women and landless people. Tharu issues and problems of farmers were raised from a class perspective. In 1989 he was arrested by the Panchayat and sent to jail for about 15 months. Regarding recent movement affairs, he very critically noted that the Tharu movement seemed visionless due to its ideological adoption of ethnic identity; a superficial agenda which denied class differentiation. So, the movement has served more for some feudal and upper class people. It has been designed by educated Tharu

elites and petty leaders who expected to be rich in day and night. For him, the root cause and factor behind the movement was class struggle, not the ethnic identity. He was very confident in saying that “we could see the problem of caste/region or any kinds of problems or exclusion from the class angle, then all types of problems could be seen. So, caste and ethnic dimension is not the primary one”. He observed that the contemporary Tharu movement had basically three problems: (i) Lack of class agenda; more focus is only on ethnic agenda; (ii) Lack of leadership; their detachment from rural villagers and poor farmers; and (iii) Lack of holistic organization in covering all the regions, perspectives and deprived sections of the society. [Based on a personal conversation on 19 January 2014]

However, in recent years, there was a growing tension between the political party/movement and social/ethnic movements. Most of the research participants did not know about the difference, rather they perceived the political parties as old and already tested while the Tharu movement was a new and to be tested yet. Contesting this, the activists of the movement in most of the FGDs and interviews argued that the Tharu movement was the alternative solution of the political parties who failed to address the ethnic rights of the Tharus and demands of self-governance. Interesting is that there were many Tharu movement leaders in the villages, who used to work previously in the mainstream political parties including the Maoists. Despite this, some of them even urged that the political parties should be swiped away from the Tharuhat region.

According to these claims, it has theoretically become interesting for the researcher to analyze whether the political parties and Tharu movement were two competitive social phenomena of the society. Most of the leaders of political parties (even the Tharus), however, claimed that the issues of Tharuhat movement could be addressed by the political parties and the leaders of these parties. To mention one of their representative claims: “The political nature of the Tharuhat movement should be acknowledged...such demands could not be fulfilled only by the social platform like movement at the bottom while it needs a comprehensive package of social and political change from the state”, [Metmani Chaudhary, district committee member, CPN- UML, Dang; based on a personal conversation, 29 January 2014].

Ironically, some of the Tharu leaders (e.g. Rukmini Chudhary and Yogendra Chudhary from Dang) who claimed the mainstream political parties had deceived them throughout the history, participated in the elections of the first CA in the name of Tharuhat Autonomous Council. The party was reorganized as Tharuhat Tarai Party Nepal in December 2012 which has participated in the elections of the second CA in 2013. This added another contestation in the boundary line of political parties and Tharu movement in the region.

5.7 Strategies and Approaches of the Movement

Tilly (2004) argues that the social movement is a collective affair which entails group activities for the common welfare. Some other scholars (e.g. Jasper, 2011) contest this, and propose the movement as a collective action rather than behavior. However, there has been a confused room to delineate action and behaviors from a collective approach (Miller, 2013). Yet, common to them is the issue of strategy. The strategies of the TM seemed to be highly contextual, depending upon the nature of local leadership and the agendas in one hand, and the security forces of the state (the police, in particular) on the other. So, while viewing the Tharu movement at the grassroots level, a number of contested observations were envisioned, for example:

5.7.1 Nexus of collective behavior and individual behavior

There was a dilemma between collective behaviors versus individual behavior. It means that although there was a common and collective motto of Tharu welfare in the movement, there was a strong influence of images and roles of individual persons. There were many cases where there was a mob (collective behavior) relegated by a leader's personal behavior and interest, and the single persona became detrimental rather than the common people. For this, again the leader(s) played an important role and the small market centers were used for demonstrations. For example, in Sudiyar VDC, many people used to mobilize the movement under a single calling of Janaklal Chaudhary. He was further backed and authorized by the village heads of villages. The same was the case in Aurawani VDC of Sunsari, where Prakash Chaudhary was a single leader, one of the young and energetic leaders ever the researcher met. But, in case of Chailahi (Dang) and Bhasi (Sunsari), there were multiple levels of leadership, which frequently comprised of different layers and formalities in such kind of mobilizations.

5.7.2 Dilemma of structure vs agency

This contestation basically deals with the functions created by the structure of the society and/or actors and agencies of the society. Theoretically, the researcher would argue that the structural characteristics of the Tharu movement were the primary and fundamental, as being – the political, economic and social – as evident in the previous sections of this chapter. But, the agencies (e.g. the leaders) and networks (e.g. organizations) played a significant role as a part of the social structures in the villages where those causes prevailed. The social structures of the most of the villages often were dominated by upper caste and class groups, including a few Tharus. Following this very nature of the society, the Tharu movement tried to mobilize and network.

They had framed and networked the movement through their own organizations and networks. But, in many villages as the FGDs revealed, the leaders could not become pro-people to launch progressive strategies of the social change. Rather, they became pro-elitist lagging behind a large number of poor Tharus, small farmers and women in the society. For example, many Tharu leaders who previously opposed the functioning of Madhesis and other mainstream parties, have now assimilated with them and many leaders have formally entered into those parties. This was a simple but quite depressing trend as most of the interviews with the people mentioned with the researcher.

5.7.3 Fluidity in strategies

There was a kind of defined strategies of the movement with the state actors, e.g. security forces, government and bureaucracy. For the movement actors, it was comparatively a non-defined strategy, as of being fluid, contextual and flexible in nature. In the district headquarters and major market centers of Dang and Sunsari, the common strategies were demonstration, pressurizing, lobbying and agreement. In doing so, there was a kind of non-attack strategy developed between the local security forces and the movement activists. The leadership also appealed the bureaucrats to support the Tharu movement, and some of the bureaucrats (mostly the Tharus, who were working in the VDC level state organizations). It was a central policy of the movement leadership issued as a statement by the TJSC. However, some of the repressive cases occurred in the study sides, particularly in Duhabi, a movement junction of Aurawani VDC of Sunsari and in Lamahi of Dang. Some people and police personnel also got injured during the demonstration.

Structurally, the leadership was proposing peaceful strategies, though some protests also became violent. In Dang, the movement in Chailahi became more violent compared to the protests in other places. Even a Tharuhat brigade was formed with around 500 members in Dang in 2011 including the Tharu youths. The brigade was extended to the far-western Tarai districts, but not in the eastern districts. Sooner, the brigade became inactive due to the division of the leaders and the researcher did not find any formal organizational structure of the brigade during his data collection). There was not any collective violence, though a number of massive demonstrations were organized frequently.⁶¹As a part of this collectivity, there was a revenue collection in the name of 'Tharuhat autonomous state'. It had been practiced only in the Lamahi

⁶¹Here the researcher adheres to Tilly's (2003, p. 3) definition of collective violence, which includes 'episodic social interaction that immediately inflicts physical damage on persons and/or objects.'

bazaar of Chailahi VDC, and not in the other study regions. In Sunkauli, nearby the bazaar the researcher observed that there was a small counter and 4-5 staffers all time, collecting the road tax for the vehicles coming into their region and other natural resources (particularly wood, and concrete) and outgoing from Lamhai or any place of the Dang. This lasted only for six months, i.e. in the peak hour of the movement of 2011. The local security force of Lamahi was also in the non-attack policy just providing a chance to take nominal revenue by the Tharus. However, it could not continue because of internal division of the movement activists and forceful pressure of the state forces. Even, some Tharu people had claimed to the researcher that the collected revenue was equivalent to 1 million NRS and was distributed among the senior leaders of the region. When the researcher tried to ask about this, the leaders abandoned the question and moved to the other.

5.7.4 Expectation for popular support:

Getting support and raising partnership among the different stakeholders was one of the national strategies of the Tharu movement (TWS, 2012). In Dang and Sunsari, this was also reflected. The support from other movement organizations (particularly from the Nepal federation of indigenous nationalities-NEFIN, and other ethnic movements and state councils) and non-state actors (e.g. political parties, civil societies) were quite evident and formally circulated to their local level units. In most of the demonstrations and long-term strikes (e.g. in case of 2009 and 2012), the NEFIN provided moral and physical support by declaring official statements to its member organizations and janajati people. The ethnic councils and self-declared autonomous zones had strategic support for the TM, while the Tharus also provided support to other ethnic movements/organizations. In case of Bhasi VDC, however, there was conflict between the Limbuwan (one of the ethnic groups in western Hill-Nepal) movement and Tharu movement. Both had claimed the region as their governing territory. The local people also had confusion, and they had to obey both types of movements simultaneously. The general consensus was that the northern part of the Bhasi VDC fell under the claim of the Limbuwan, and the southern part was of the Tharuhat. In between them there was the national highway. The researcher had observed some of the meetings of both of the movement organizations and the strikes organized by them, but he felt almost a harmony, unlike the leaders, between the Limbus and the Tharus at community level. To quote Raj Bikram Limbu, 79, a Limbu old man of Jhumka who was also an ex-British Gurkha Army:

Who can know our history? I fought for British for the country and people of the UK. Now, in my retired life, [local] leaders in villages request me to fight for the sake of the Limbus. But, before my birth in this region, Tharu had been my neighbor and could I

fight against them, never!! The Koshi River [as the Goddess] will curse both of us!
[Based on personal communication of the researcher with the research participant, 29
May 2014]

5.7.5 Dualism in the sensitization

There was a dualism in the roles of the political parties and the movement organizations. They played a dual role against each other in terms of visions and actions. The movement activists shared a propaganda that the major political parties (The Maoists, NC and UML) were against the indigenous people and against the Tharu movement. In the villages, the local Tharu activists often claimed that the Tharus only could fight for themselves, not the others. On the other hand, the role of major political parties was less supportive of the Tharu movement at the central leadership level (i.e. in Kathmandu), while it seemed more supportive on the local level of movement. The work of CPN (UML) and TWS was quite interesting for that; the former did not support the TM directly, but its party cadres who were affiliated to the TWS led the movement at regional and local level. As the leadership of TWS and JTSC was also developed by the ex-leaders of the political parties, the influence of major political parties was very much important in local social mobilizations.

Thus, the construction of the leadership was not a new phenomenon, though many youths and students were becoming 'new and alternative' leaders in the movement. Most of the FGDs and interviews revealed that the youths, women and students had many dreams and visions to participate and sacrifice in the movement. They came into the front line of the movement demonstration. The researcher observed separate demonstrations in 2012 by Tharu youths and women in Lamahai and Jhumka bazaar. The women were mobilized from village to village and also brought to the district headquarters as well. The local leadership of TWS and JTSC in the Sunsari district was dominated by the young guys as compared to the Dang. Following the youth and women mobilizations, there was a strategic mobilization of local civil societies (including self-help groups, cultural groups, youth clubs, and mother's groups and saving groups). Interestingly, in the case of Lamahi, different kinds of development agencies (including local NGOs and partner agencies, e.g. Youth Association Nepal, Search for Common Ground, and Friends of Needy Children) also appealed local people to support the movement activities through different kinds of induced groups they created so far. In turn, the development agencies in any VDCs did not participate organizationally, but they allowed their staffers to use their personal freedom regarding the Tharu movement.

5.7.6 Media campaigning

The delivery of appeals, statements and movement updates was crucial in making a wider publicity of the movement and inviting a larger number of agitators for participation and mobilization. There was a Media campaigning from BBC, national news to local newspapers and FM radios. The role of online portal of Tharuwan (www.tharuwan.com) also played an important role among the youths, educated people and intellectual spheres of the movement. The movement activities and agendas were regularly published and broadcasted through these means. In Bhasi and Lamahi in particular, the FM radios had a number of Tharu language programs along with the news highlights. The coverage from the local newspapers was also remarkable in the region (e.g. *Yugbani* and *Rapti Aawaj*) to which many news cuttings were analyzed by the researcher. He found that in almost all day, most of the pages of the newspapers were covered by the news of the Tharu movement and its issues and strategies. The killings, injuries and physical damages had been largely manipulated to stimulate the movement psychology. One of the FM owners in Lamahi, Prakash Yadav defended that it was their responsibility to broadcast the messages, awareness and information to the rural people. He continued: "We did that in the movement period. Everything was closed in the long strikes of the Tharuhat, but we did not close the FM. We are still committed to the freedom of press to represent the diverse voices of the people". [Based on personal communication of the researcher with the research participant, 18 May 2014]. But, contesting this worldview, there was a voice to negate or devalue the role of media in the movement. The local media, even the national, could not address the root causes of the movement and the demands of grassroots people. Indeed, the people who had never been the subject of discussion or news for the media since a long history; still they got left over and elites were dominating the colorful pages and voices of the media.

5.8 Heterogeneity in the Movement

In Chapter 1, the researcher has introduced Tharu movement as a heterogeneous movement. For any kind of social and ethnic movement, as some scholars claim, there must be collectivism and solidarity (Tilly, 2004; Diani, 1999). But, the collectivism in the Tharu movement was empirically contested. Table 5.1 summarizes the key dimensions about how empirically heterogeneous it was.

Table 5.1: Dimensions and implications of the heterogeneity of the Tharu movement

The Dimensions	The Implications
Organizational/leadership	Who was the owner of the movement: TWS or TJSC? Different viewpoints of the leaders and movement organizations
Cultural/ethnic	Dangaura Tharu of the Dang with Saptariya Tharu of the Sunsari (lingual and other variation)
Political/class	Different class interests within the movement; rich people, poor people, labor, kamaiya and kamalari
Economic/livelihood	Practice of traditional agriculture and emergence of new livelihood strategies, including trade, industrial jobs/wage, foreign employment and remittances
Agenda-wise	Multiple agendas and strategies, and shifting of agendas
Theoretical	Primordial vs. instrumental vs. constructive, nationalism vs. separatism and regionalism, ethnocentrism vs. relativism

The Tharus in the study districts were observed in different cultural and regional structures, which led their cultural heterogeneous setting. For example, when the researcher visited Chailahi and Saudiyar VDC of Dang, he found a noticeable linguistic and ritual difference among the Tharus of these two VDCs. It led to the organizational and leadership heterogeneity in the movement. There were a number of actors and organizations who often claimed to be the representative of the Tharus. In particular, the leading Tharu movement organizations (e.g. TWS and TJSC) had different visions relating to federalism issue. The interviews with the activist reflected that TWS was comparatively soft-lined proposing multiple-identity-based federalism while the latter was a hard-liner group of various organizations advocating a single identity-based federalism. This heterogeneity was therefore reflected in the context of their movement.

The organizational heterogeneity was empirically based on the different class interests within the Tharu community, including the rich, poor, women, labor, Kamaiya and Kamlahari. These interests for different sections of Tharu society was further reflected in the diverse forms of practice of traditional agriculture and the emergence of new livelihood strategies, including trade, industrial jobs/wage, foreign employment and remittances. Consequently, the movement was manifested with multiple agendas and strategies as according to the region (western and eastern) and the movement context (for Constitution-making or the ethnic recognition).

However, within this heterogeneity, it is interesting to note that at the very grassroots level of rural people, the movement seemed to be unified and collective. It was not due to the leaders that many research participants did not pay so much care and faith.

Among the villagers, the researcher could not feel any type of differences or discriminations within the Tharus based on regional or ideological belongings. For example, in the course of interviewing with Kamata Prasad Chaudhary, an elderly Tharu of the Lamahi running in his mid-80s who had taught Nepali language for years in a government school, offhandedly commented to the researcher that the dynamics of Tharu movement had come in different ways to the eastern and western region of the Tarai. He further asserted: “The Tharus have different cultural and traditions according to their regional attributes and who belong to various sub-groups. Thus, the voices in the movement may differ. But, our history is common, and our present is also common” [Based on a personal conversation, 5 January 2014].

The findings suggest that the empirical evidences of heterogeneity consequently led to a theoretical heterogeneity in the movement in terms of its construction and social relations. The researcher, therefore, would claim the Tharu movement as a ‘movement of movements’ and ‘movement in movements’ both as a process and phenomenon to contest the rural development. This seems also true in the context of international studies on social movements where the scholars are divided in terms of the key drivers, motives and epistemologies of the movements. This is why Escobar and Alvarez (1992) asserts that “identifying a social movement ‘involves a complex epistemological process’ (p. 6).

5.9 Implications of Causes and Characteristics in the Rural Development

Indeed, development is important because it produces an economy, and more broadly a society and culture, that determines how people live, work and share. Rural development is also a specific part of this society with a number of actors, institutions and organizations. Viewing from a wider discourse of Nepal after 1990 and since 2006 in particular, different kinds of ethnic organizations, civil societies and social movement groups were emerging to fill in the space of local politics, development and governance system. This is exactly what Melucci (1994) calls a ‘permanent reality’ of society that adds different values and meaning in the social change. To add him again:

Movements are not occasional emergencies in social life located on the margins of the great institutions; nor are they residual elements of the social order. In complex societies, movements are a permanent reality. They may be more or less visible and they may emerge as political mobilization in cyclical form, but their existence and their effects on social relationships are neither sporadic nor transitory (p. 114).

As a part of this characterization, Tharus were organized with a number of networks, and started to frame their grievances by claiming their rights and identity through a collective movement. This movement had some close linkages with this social function, because of its coverage in the rural region and participation of rural people. Following four theoretical linkages can be concluded in linking the cause and characteristics of TM and contestation in the RD:

5.9.1 Grievances of people: 'Developmental' in nature

The causes of the TM and grievances faced by the local people were developmental often having political issue at the center. There were socio-cultural issues including gender, slavery and modernization. Following this, the political and economic causes, including land, tenancy, poverty, inequality and governance were very rapidly emerging in the study region. Consequently, it led to different types of activism and agitations at the grassroots level. Largely, the causes seemed as the rural people's (in particular Tharu people's) grievances and expectations related to their day-to-day life. As a part of these grievances, Tharu movement was emerging, what used to claim for the best representation of the Tharu people. But having said that, there were some critical reflections which evidenced the causes and grievances did not necessarily lead to the emergence of the Tharu movement.

5.9.2 Multiplicity of causes with the nature of 'underdevelopment'

Beyond the rhetoric of development, there is the underdevelopment which has been fuelling to prop the different kinds of public agitations, such as the Tharu protests in the Tarai region. The contradictions (in terms of causes and characteristics) have provoked crises, the people then build agitations, and this (in the form of the TM) became widespread opposition to the existing form of social life in the villages. The answers of rural poverty, backwardness, ethnic domination, inequality and marginalization were being observed and even dramatized by the TM. Though there were various factions and internal contradictions, the root cause of the movement was basically structural – being rooted in social, political and economic issues – and not addressed by the state-led development so far. So, contestations in RD are inevitable.

On the other hand, there were regional variations in the cause and manifestations of the TM. For example, in western and eastern part of Nepal, there were more or less similar types of causes of the movement except a few. Kamaiya and the Kamlahari bondage system was one of the structural problems in Dang, while there was a labor

movement as a critical part of a Tharu movement in Sunsari. Hence, if the causes (along with dimensional and regional variations) could be handled with a long-term political ideology and leadership, the TM could have a prospect to contribute in local and rural development.

5.9.3 Contextuality of the characteristics

The characteristics are contextual and changing rapidly. The Tharu movement has certain characteristic features in terms of its ideology, leadership, organization and networks. The movement, by nature, seems to be rooted in the pursuit of new political identities and cultural patterns, ranging from day to day problems to long-term emancipation. So, the characteristics were more fluid, flexible and often un-defined. The ideological dimension was fragmented while the leadership was also divided into according to their class and political background. Following this, the nature of movement leadership was constructed by different caste/ethnic and class implications, the well-off social prestige being one as particular. Emergence of movement organizations was simply unstoppable though the hegemony of the elites and well-off had always been in the leadership. These elites, on the other hand, had a good relationship with the elites of different state actors (including VDC) and non-state actors (including movement groups), who had a direct influence upon the local/rural development affairs.

5.9.4 Common agenda of movement and development: Emancipation

People's resistance and critical awareness in the villages indicated certain implications in rural development at community levels. As Conway (2007) asserts social movement knowledge are central to emancipatory politics (p. 8), the local and rural development has also a thrust for emancipation- which could have people's aspirations in minimizing the grievances (as discussed in previous sections of the Chapter) and maximizing the well-being opportunities (as discussed in Chapters- 4 and 7). Tharu movement, with some elites in leadership, has been particularly struggling for the inclusive policies and empowering strategies as evident in the consecutive achievements (see Chapter 7 for details). It was largely evidenced in the field that in the nexus of grievances and expectations of people, there has been always a space for agitation and contestations, which could challenge the dominant world view of the state. Despite this, the well-off sections of societies, including the Tharu elites were at the front line in the contestations. The elitism, therefore, was the most striking challenge of the TM in particular and RD in general.

Chapter Summary

The theoretical implication of causes and characteristics of the Tharu movement seemed to be very critical in rural development which has been conditioned by different characteristic features, such as ideology, strategies, organization and people's mobilization. All these were reflected within the broader domain of political economy. Although the mainstream movement and development ideology did not assume the political dimension of contestation, it was structurally rooted as the basic problem of Nepal's rural development including poverty and inequality and their underlying causes. The findings regarding the causes and characteristics would not claim for any structural or rigid type of framework, rather it indicates for a post-structural framework of social movement research which could have challenges and alternatives to the mainstream state-led development. The TM was loosely organized and there were frequent changes in its organizational and leadership patterns and in working strategies. This was further complicated with the emerging gaps and contradictions, including ideological lacunas, uneven power distribution in the leadership and heterogeneity in the movement organizations. The chapter, therefore, argues that the causes and characteristics have unavoidably situated with different issues and agendas of the movement to make a wider analytical domain of contestations in rural development – as will be discussed in the next Chapter.

CHAPTER- SIX

CONTESTATIONS IN AGENDAS AND THE ISSUES

This chapter illustrates how the contestation was prevailing in rural development in terms of issues and agendas of the Tharu movement. Theoretically, this entails the saturation of the second objective which states “to analyze the issues and agendas of the Tharu movement regarding social, political and economic sphere of rural life”. While zooming on these contestations, the chapter will have two analytic dimensions: the first is about the main demands and agendas of the Tharu movement while the second deals with the contestations in rural development in terms of the approaches, mobilizations and local issues of the development.

6.1 Setting of the Agendas and Protest Activities

To reemphasize again from the previous chapters, the Maoist’s armed insurgency (1996-2006), Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA) 2006, and People’s Movement 2006 were some of the significant political events in fueling the movement stigma for the historically oppressed people. The Maoist movement had raised different issues regarding people’s livelihood, nationality and structural changes. Meanwhile, the CPA had also agreed to adopt different socioeconomic and political reform agendas for the progressive transformation and sustainable peace-building in the country (SPECT, 2011). Following the broader aspirations of political changes, the Interim Constitution of Nepal 2007 had defined Nepal as a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-lingual, and secular federal democratic republican state. The subsequent elections for the Constituent Assembly were also engaged with the discourse of Constitution-writing and state-restructuring for inclusive development, distributive justice and sustainable peace building. In turn, the constitution promulgated in 2015 has made a commitment to a complete restructuring of the state to saturate the movement's aspirations and dissenting voices. Though there have been some dissenting voices of the movement actors, including the Tharus over the content of the Constitution, it has ensured a broader set of directive theories (Art 50) and policies (Art 51) of the state and fundamental rights of the citizens (Art 16-45) relating to the universal aspects of

human rights, democratic participation, inclusive development and community empowerment. To reflect the idea of Nepal as a modern-state, the Article 4 (Part I) defines the Nepali state as “an independent, indivisible, sovereign, secular, inclusive, democratic, socialism-oriented, federal democratic republican state” (Bhandari, 2016; Constitution of Nepal, 2015). This articulation seems to be a very progressive milestone for Nepali political and economic discourse.

However, the historical roots of political changes cannot be simply denied, which also rings true in the Tharu movement. Politically, the Tharu protests were first started in the late 1980s and the early 1990s in a formal and collective way. The People’s Movement 1990 restored the democracy and led to a new Constitution, which guaranteed fundamental rights to all people. In 1990s, the main issues of the Tharu movement as advocated by TWS were to attain their rights in language and promote ethnic welfare. The government of Nepal also inserted some special programs and projects to uplift the marginalized groups including the Tharus. Ideologically these interventions were based not on the participatory and inclusive democracy rather it focused on the material aspects and growth aspects of development. Most of the NGOs supported this mainstream intervention. The research participants recalled their experiences that the post-1990 reforms included that the distribution of goats, sheep and small funds in the poor sections of Tharu. During Maoist conflict, the grievances of Tharu people were brought under the discourse of ‘emancipation’ which was established under the Tharuwan Mukti Morcha. In the post-2006 discourse of state-restructuring and Constitution-writing, a number of political issues, including constitutional ownership of Tharu identity and regional inequalities have been added as bottom-line agendas of the movement. These agendas were further characterized by the mushrooming of different non-state actors and anti-state Tharu activism. The emergence of Tharu-based political party, entry of TWS into political issues, NGO’s campaigning in favor of the movement and political activism of TJSC were the major steps in this agitation.

Tharu political elites and activists attempted to gain support from the people by popularizing the discourses on federal delineation, proportional representation, ethnic identity and right of self-determination. Their agendas and demands can be underlined in several broad themes, as outlined below:

6.1.1 Tharuhat and self-autonomy

The Tharus demanded a new Nepali state that would address the issue of self-autonomy for them in the Tarai region by ending unitary–state system. Many translated the demand of “self-autonomy” as a sign that could facilitate the Tharus to secede from Nepal or to negate the Pahadiyas and Madhesis in their state. However, the review of documents and statements issued by the movement actors did not reflect such separatism or negation. This demand has further opposed the claims of Madhesi elites to have “*One Madhes, One Pradesh*”, which would be formed from the end of the eastern part of the end of the western part of Tarai. The “One Madhes” agenda aimed to establish a pan-Madhesi identity among all ethnic-caste and religious groups living in Tarai region, though it could not integrate all the ethnic/caste and religious groups in Tarai such as Pahadi, Tharu and a considerable number of Muslims who resisted and opposed the pan-Madhesi identity. In turn, the actors of Tharu movement demonstrated consistently opposing the idea of one Madhes and demanded Tharuhat region. While the strikes took all over the Tarai region, and occasionally in Kathmandu, the autonomous movement of the Tharus became violent and massive in the western Tarai districts including Dang, Banke, Bardiya and Kailali.

With the promulgation of constitution of Nepal in 2015, formation of a federal Tharuhat state in the western part of the region based on Tharu majority and ethnic identity has become further contested as the proposed provinces could not maintain the cluster of the districts as claimed to be ‘Tharuhat region’ by the movement actors. It turned into one of highly polarized issues both for and against it. Surprisingly, the Madhes-based political parties supported this agenda of the Tharus, while the major political parties and campaigners of unified far-western region opposed this very idea. The supporters claimed that the Tharuhat region could only promote the well-being and development aspirations of the Tharus and other marginalized groups who have been historically deprived and excluded from the mainstreams of the state, while the opponents would claim that the provinces should not be allocated in the name of single caste or ethnic groups. The FGDs and KIs along with non-Tharu people and actors reflected that it would not only break the intimate and interdependent relations among the different groups in the Tarai region, but also affect the social relations and mobility people of Hill to Tarai and Tarai to Hill. In between these schools of thoughts, a middle point of agreement could be attained that would satisfy the grassroots aspirations both for the Tharus and non-Tharus. Despite this, the researcher cannot deny the possibility that

this confrontation in coming years could lead to the nexus of anti-hill or anti-migrant agitations vs. anti-Tharu or anti-Madhese agitations.

6.1.2 Proportional representation:

Tharu leaders vowed for the end of unequal representation of their community in state bodies, employment sectors and other social and political arenas. They contended for the proportional representation (as an electoral and recruiting system) of their people in all sectors of public life based on the proportion of Tharu population and principle of inclusion. Now with different policy provisioning, the state has considered Tharu as one of the underprivileged communities and marginalized indigenous groups in Nepal.

6.1.2 Ethnic recognition

The movement has also demanded recognition for Tharu's culture, religion and language, which are typically different from the dominant culture and language of Pahadiyas and Madhese, and somehow also distinct with that of the other indigenous nationalities of Nepal. For them, it would reflect an inclusive figure of Nepali nationalism. As part of this, they have gained some religious and cultural rights recently in the constitution and the state policies have also ensured the recognition.

Box 6.1: Major demands of the Tharuhat Joint Struggle Committee

- 1) Establishment of an autonomous federal state (Tharuhat autonomous state) in Tarai region based on the Tharu ethnic identity and self-determination.
- 2) Constitutional Declaration to Tharu as principal indigenous people of Tharuhat/ Tarai.
- 3) Full proportionate representation based on proportion of population
- 4) Immediate execution of all the provisions of ILO convention 169, UN Declaration regarding Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and CBD convention 1992.
- 5) Revision and amendment of public service making it inclusive
- 6) Immediate appointment to Tharus in the post of senior administrative officers
- 7) Immediate execution of rehabilitation program for freed Kamaiyas.
- 8) Guaranty of political rights of indigenous Tharu, other indigenous people, Muslim, Dalit, women and OBCs.
- 9) Protection, promotion, execution and respect of Human rights

Box 6.1 includes some of the key demands of the Tharu movement as presented by movement actors, including TJSC and TWS to the government of Nepal in different time periods (in 2009, 2011 and in 2013 in particular). Ideally, most of these demands had been replicated to the other delegations and statements of the Tharu movement actors which made during the study period. Ideally, the agendas of the movement seem to be inclusive, pro-poor and broad-based. The core issues within the agendas

have been the demands of recognition of identity of the aboriginality of the Tharus in Tarai, guarantee of Tharu ethnic-rights, autonomous region to be declared as 'Tharuhat/ Tharuwan' state and proportional representation of the Tharus in the mainstream state. But, the findings very critically narrate that there has been a contested gap in between the idea of the agendas and their instincts. The setting of the agendas, pattern of leadership and mode of mobilization were empirically elite-centric and urban biased what the researcher will explain in subsequent discussions and chapters.

The list of demands clearly indicates that the issues of economic prosperity, development of rural regions and end of rural poverty and inequality have been left unanswered. The researcher could not find specific local demands (including wages, subsidy, gender equity, end of bonded wage relations) of the movement at the village levels of Dang and Sunsari. The researcher had triangulated these issues with multiple viewpoints, i.e. from the eyes of state and its actors, the Tharu people, ethnic elites and leadership of the Tharu movement. Despite this, there were some security concerns to save the life and property of the people as the movement followed peaceful strategies in the demonstrations. In particular, Jhumka and Lamahi witnessed such kind of security issues, where the movement used to be violent in some events, and the pressure of non-Tharu community was also powerful over the movement leaders and the security forces.

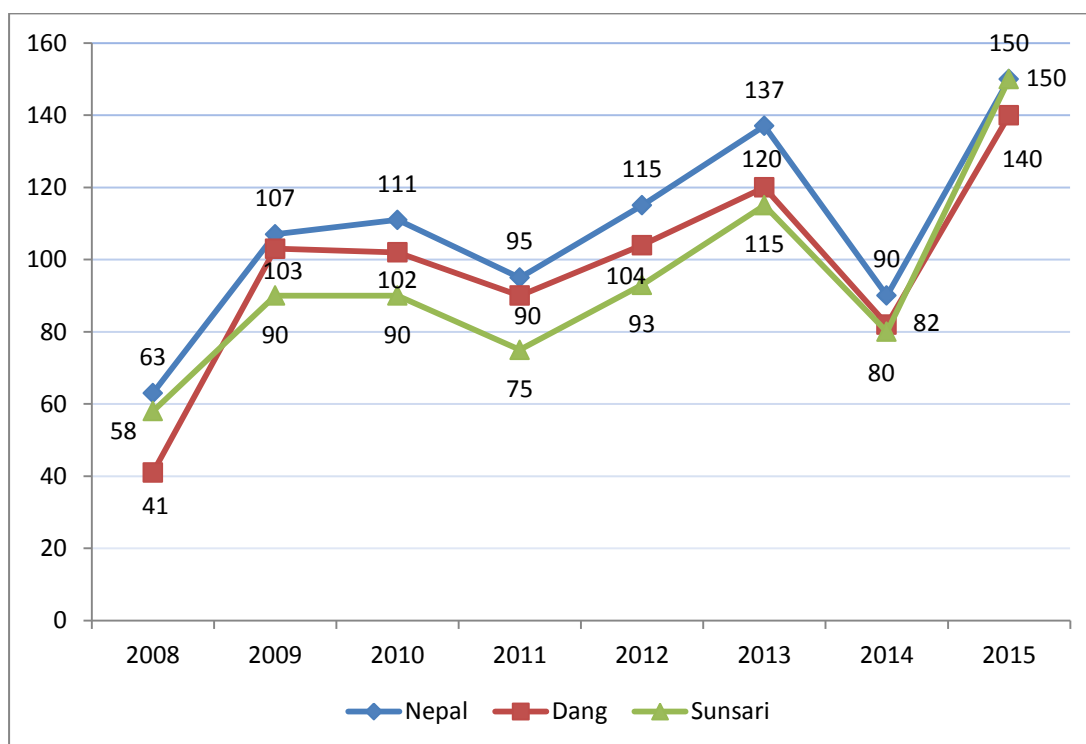


Figure 6.1: Number of movement events, 2008-2015

The modes of movement were diverse in nature involving partial (1-3 hour) agitations to the full and long-run agitations (e.g. one day, 1-3 days, 5-7 days and more than the week). Rallies, public demonstration, gherau, shutdown, general strikes, blockades, para-government and *Maghi* celebration were some important tools of the movement. When the researcher analyzed the movement days (frequency) with different secondary and primary data sources for the period of 2008-2015 [Fig 6.1], it was evident that most of the demonstrations or strike events were conducted both in Sunsari and Dang. While there were 868 public agitations (short and long-term) in Nepal, Dang had 782 and 751 events were witnessed in Sunsari during the eight year period. The number of movement incidents seems quite larger (though counted once for any of the days/ events) in the politically polarized years, including the elections for the CAs (2008 and 2009), agitation against the categorization of Madhesi group (2009), movement for Tharuhat and federalism (2012); and movement immediately after the declaration of the constitution of Nepal in 2015.

With these manifestations, there are two things empirically localized. First, the demands of the movement were largely around the issue of identity – the identity with the ideological bases of ethnicity and regionalism. Second, the economic issues, including poverty and inequality were not formally included. In between this nexus, there was a strong claim of the leaders that the movement would take its demands and agendas around the identity of the Tharu people. For them, the recognition of identity would, in turn, address different problems of the Tharus including their poverty, inequality and marginalization. Most of the senior leaders claimed that the state should recognize the identity and rights of the Tharus, and then their problems at the community and local level will be automatically solved. This claim of the central leaders was challenged by some local-level leaders in the villages. Though most of the local leaders could tell about the ready-made statement of identity, they did have alternative views upon the agendas of the Tharu movement. There was a clear contradiction between the central and local leaders regarding the setting of the movement agendas. One of the leaders in Aurawani pointed:

Let us [the Tharus] define our agendas at the local level by ourselves and in our villages; not by others – the state or the senior Tharu leaders. We do not care what they say in Kathmandu!! We have to answer the local Tharus about this claim. [Based on a personal conversation with the participant, 15 June 2014]

Contesting these worldviews, most of the research participants did not see such a linkage between the settings of agendas in central or local level. For them, the agendas were the petty politics of the Tharu elites and rich people. Even people suspected about the agendas of reduction of poverty and guarantee of identity.

6.2 Rise of Identity Politics

6.2.1 The 'identity' acclaimed

As discussed in Chapter 2, many scholars argue that identity politics is special characteristics of collective behavior where social interaction often happens on the very basic level of perception, ideology, basic needs and life conditions (Blumer, 1969; Crossley, 2009; Mead, 1967). In social movement discourse, identity-based movements have been characterized as 'politics of collective behavior', which closely allied with the methodological individualism of post-structural rhetoric (Melucci, 1996). Fundamentally identity politics has been characterized with the later stage of Maoist movement and then aggressively in the post 2006 context. While the Constituent Assembly was dissolved in May 2012 without drafting the constitution in the country, the researcher was in his preliminary field visit in Dang. It was getting a big stardom in the mainstream media. The local media, including FM radios were also making a hot debate upon the issue in the district. Contrarily, the remote villages of the Saudiyar VDC were reluctant about this news. The villagers were very busy in preparing their canals and farms as the rainy season was going to start. For many, even to the outsiders like the researcher, being Tharu meant adopting Tharu cultural traditions, referred to as 'live in our own soul' (*apne manse, mankebhitar*). Indeed, spiritualism is so strong in the Nepali society that assumes soul and heart as a common metaphor of identity. With songs like these, and through the representation of Tharu in calendars, rituals, newspapers, public documents, and leadership, the villagers sought to create a sense of belonging to the Tharu community, with the aim to transform the practices of everyday life and reconfiguring people's sense of self. In this regard, the following themes were locally evident as the findings:

Tharuhat within the identity construct:

As a cultural representation, the Tharus sought to redefine the identity of the Nepali nation. However, there were different viewpoints and practices of the identity, particularly due to the extreme diversity (cultural, economic and political) of peoples that the Tharu movement aimed to unite as Tharuhat. Indeed, the debates over culture

are often part of political struggles and are an integral part of efforts to redefine the meaning of political systems and to change the distribution of power in society (Alvarez et al., 1998, p. 7). The researcher was quite interested to examine the dilemmas that the TM encountered in trying to represent the identity of the Tharus, as well as the oppositional dimensions of the TM's cultural productions.

With a variety of propositions and criticisms, the identity politics has become one of the characteristic features of modern societies involving different theoretical categories such as ethnicity, race, gender, class, power and domination. In the context of constitution writing process, Tharu movement has also emerged as a politics of identity involving regional and ethnic worldviews in particular. In defining Tharu identity, one of the official documents of TWS states that the identity of the Tharu is the recognition of its ethnic/indigenous history, culture and livelihood practices in the Tarai region. Another statement of TJSC maintained that the Tharus by nature, respect other people and their culture. It means Tharu identity respects the other identities. But, while in case of the Tharuhat region, the Tharu should be given special rights and preferences. To reflect the views of the leaders, on one hand, they contrasted with each other and advocated a narrow-world view of the identity. For example:

- The demand of the movement actors that at least 50 percent amount of profit should be allocated for the welfare programs of indigenous groups; the allocation should be applied in local-level budgets, tenders and subsidies. All these schemes should be coordinated with TASC (district level).
- Uncontrolled migration from hill upper caste to the Tharuhat Tarai should be checked by legal regulations.
- The selling and buying of any kinds of fixed assets, including the land should be only legalized when it would be transactional between/ among the indigenous groups. Properties of non-ethnic groups/ people should not be legalized if they had been bought from the ethnic groups/ people.
- Preferential rights of the local ethnic groups over the natural resources and other opportunities of representation and participation.

Most of the research participants expressed that the movement should aim to create unity between diverse groups of people, while still affirming their heterogeneity in the region. It was also evident in the field that the non-Tharu people were also worried about the issues of Kamaiyas and Kamlaharis. They wanted to end these malpractices

that would not only benefit the Tharus but also the diverse social groups in the community. This soft version of collective identity also tends for the class orientations rather than the ethnic world view. To reflect some common issues:

- Collection of detailed database of the landless poor, freed Kamaiyas and Kamlaharis at the village-levels
- Rehabilitation of the Kamaiyas with at least 10 kattha land for each HH on suitable area
- Special provision of health, education and other life skills to the freed Kamaiyas, landless Tharus, Kamlaharis and their household members
- Mixed groups of farmers, women, children and youths that would increase cultural exchange and learnings in the society

The dynamics: Internal or external?

The activists and leaders of TM had emphasized on the purely ethnic identity of the Tharus. For them, the identity of the Tharus was inevitably contradictory not only to the national Nepali identity, but also with the identities of the neighboring caste and ethnic groups and regional groups. As a mainstream, the TM did attempt to replace identities such as Dalits, Rai, Gurung, Madhesi, and Khas-Brahman in the region. Though there were some particular movements and protests by the Tharus and these ethnic/regional groups and most of them were the members of NEFIN, the researcher did not get any evidences for their collective identity and joint movement among these groups. Moreover, the Tharu leaders were claiming that these meta-identities of different groups will be automatically adjusted with the grand identity of the Tharus within the Tharuhat autonomous region. According to this claim, all the minority groups (including the Muslims and other caste/ethnic groups) in the Tharuhat region would have special rights and provisions to sake of their rights and identities. The leaders of TM and organizations frequently expressed the urgency of the uplifting Tharu language, religion, culture and land (*Bhasa, Dharma, Sanskriti and Bhumi*), which they saw as a threat by the high-caste pahadiya Hindu culture in the country. This was a strategy of the leaders, which frequently happens in the ethnic movements, what Handler (1988) calls a cultural objectivism. However, this does not mean that the worldview of ethnic identity within the Tharu movement and among the leaders has had special visions to address diversities among the Tharu groups and their class differences.

They emphasized that Tharu identity should encompass, but not undermine, the identities of different caste and ethnic groups living in the Tarai. But the researcher had

a reflection that the differentiation between classes and gender relation was less maintained within this identity formation. Indeed, the rejection of class politics is not without social and historical bases (Lee, 2010). Following this, the social construction of ethnic identity was very poor in the grassroots level as compared to class relations and other power networks. Theoretically, it was becoming a popular slogan of identity politics in the region, but empirically it contributed to pseudo-construction of the elites in society. Virtually, it was weakening the class movement that the Tharu movement was a strong structural basis. Bernstein (2005) seems quite relevant to reflect here who doesn't see identity politics as a political practice that challenges important relations of power, but is understood in symbolic, cultural or psychological terms. In the similar tone, one of the political analysts in Jhumka who claim to belong to the Marxist school of thought mentioned in the interview that:

We [communists] left everything. Neither have we had ideologies nor programs. We don't want to engage with class issues; don't care about oppressed class and don't care about the issues of poor people, marginalized farmers and women. Then what happens? Identity politics and identity-based movement emerge. Some extreme groups of communists also lead such movements....see a tragedy... the Maoists, the championed of class war, now has turned into such anarchism. Moreover, all the INGOs and NGOs and their western ideologues are becoming part of this identity politics. But I hate this and let me appeal for the collective class movement in a Nepali model. [Based on a personal conversation with the participant, 19 June 2014]

Based on the above discussions, the researcher, therefore, argues that the emergence of identity claims and politics among the Tharus and within the Tharu movement has roots with the collective consciousness among them. This consciousness could be traced to the demands of political inclusion, constitutional recognition, proportional representation and organized voices. Despite these connotations and positivism in the identity politics, it largely neglects the structural issues of common people for what the leftist are arguing as a need of 'commonality politics' – not to particular men and women but to all (Gitlin, 1994, p. 157-58). It is more akin to the changing context of Nepali rural societies involving extra-institutional and cultural arena of lifestyles among the Tharus. It is worth mentioning in the preceding sections of discussion.

6.2.2 Changing nature of the identity and rural problems

6.2.2.1 Journey through the cycle of identity claims

As reflected in the Figure 6.2, the Tharu movement also socially constructed with different categories of the identity formation, which are essentially overlapping and mutually inclusive of each other. The first and foremost level of the construction of

Tharu identity is the 'self' which has been perceived to be the rational perception of body and life. The self is designated with the integration of three labels – 'I', 'me' and 'we'. When the 'I' and 'me' persona of the Tharus had turned into the 'we', this fundamentally became an entry point for the social consciousness of being a member of the family (and society or community) and making a progress in life. It has been therefore turned into the public positions of family and community where the research participants meant to address and settle their household needs, basic problems and livelihood strategies. Since all the social movements appear as a collective effort, the 'selfhood' should be turned into 'we-hood'. Gender, religion and profession are some intermediary factors to make a pan-structure of the movement's aspirations (Crossley, 2009; Mead, 1967).

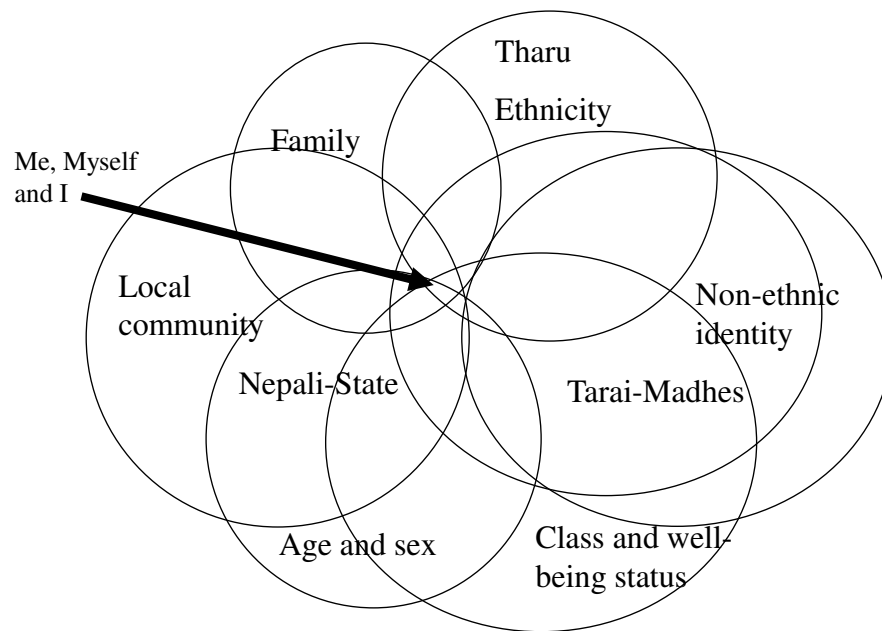


Figure 6.2: The multiplicity of identity formation within and around the Tharu movement

Going through these constituencies, other integrities have also affected the movement consciousness where knowledge and perception of emancipation mutually intersected to form and/or deform the Tharuhat movement. The FGDs and KIs among the Tharu respondents clearly indicated that they were aware of 'Tharu ethnicity'. The Tharuhood for them was different from the Madhesi and Pahadiya identities, though they also perceived that they could not negate or minimize the other communities as the Tharus were historically tolerant, embracing and sons-of-the soils of the motherland of

Tarai-madhes. The non-ethnic groups (including Janajatis, Madhesis, and Hilly migrants, and their identities— as discussed in Chapters- 5 and 7) and the state/ government (and its policies) could be external factors of identity formation in this context (Chapters- 1, 2 and 7). The corollary of this, of course, is that all these factors operated in a cyclic level, somewhere, being overlapped and changing the detrimental characteristics of dominating factors. The researcher, now, would argue that the identity formation within the Tharuhat was not linear and static. Rather, it was self-centric, highly individualized, differentiated and elite-centric in nature. Some evidences and arguments are dealt in the following points.

6.2.2.2 Values on identity: Class vs. caste

Though there was dominance of caste/ethnicity-based perceptions of Tharu identity, it was gradually changing and accommodating with the movement's aspirations. Most of the people who were mobilized in the TM had perceived the identity as a loose, liberal and open category. The class, caste, ethnicity, gender and regional identities were manifested at the same time, even within a single movement of the Tharus. In a way, it was mixed. They criticized the movement leaders and their organizations (referring to TWS and TJSC) for promoting the identities of indigenous ethnic groups rather than the identity of all the poor people and oppressed groups in the Tarai. The people in the villages witnessed a number of divisions, fragmentations, vested interests of the activists and leaders. So, a contestation lies here is that the most of the research participants generally perceived the movement organizations just as the political aspirations of leaders in terms of economic gain and vote bank. As one of the research participants had claimed, “we want to fight for the freedom of all poor and rural people, not just one group...the problem of poverty is same for me [Tharu] and for my neighbor [other caste]”.

Following this, there was a contestation between ethnic identity and secularism. There was a kind of secular cultural productions. In every village, the researcher observed that there were some neutral and secular mass of the Tharu people who did not like to participate in the TM. Neither did they support it strongly nor did they reject it completely. In Saudiyar VDC, for example, there were a number of cultural groups of the Tharus in every ward. These groups used to organize Tharu musical and dancing programs in special occasions and celebrations like *Maghi and Badki Aaitabar*. Bejhlal Chaudhary was one such charismatic leaders of these groups and he was well-known at the district as well as national level. He did not know much about the political issues

of the TM and other movements. His only concern was about the conservation of Tharu songs, music and tradition by making youths learn about their ancestral arts and music. Although Bejlal, his wife and three children subsisted by farming their land, he gave a lot of his time during his visits to his home. He was a talented musician and singer, who could not only play the instruments like flute and guitar, but also wrote songs and sang them. Yet, the researcher got to wonder with Bejlal's experience, while he continued in saying:

I do not have any faith in the movement. I did not know about the leaders. Even I do not know what *Kalyankarini* [TWS] and *Sangharsa Samiti* [TJSC] are. Let us be free from these political issues and agendas. Actually, cultural programs and music...are more dangerous than the bullet of a soldier. So, we could do that...for the conservation of Tharu identity and culture. [Based on a personal conversation, 14 February 2014]

6.2.2.3 Naya Nepal: Dream or reality?

According to Michael Foucault (2001), the science of language (semantics) always creates an ideology of power which eventually becomes a discourse of society to rule the people in the name of civilization. Creation of new terms, abstract ideas and their provocation as “dream of emancipation” has also become a common fashion in Nepali politics and development. One such dream and a major agenda of the ethnic movement is “Naya Nepal” demanding regional autonomy, self-determination, proportional representation and execution of ILO 169. Despite this, local problems and livelihood issues were less entertained in the movement ideology. In rural regions, poverty, inequality and marginalization exist as a ‘given’ social status to accommodate with (and not challenge to) the mainstream development. They remain undefined, but structurally rooted. Neither the local development plans were focused to address the issue of poverty reduction and end of inequality nor did the movement leaders have any defined world views regarding this. The changing aspirations of people, the emergence of technology, diversity in the livelihood opportunities and decreasing role of agriculture were some of the crucial issues ever contested in the rural villages of Dang and Sunsari.

Though identity had been the most popular agenda of the TM, it had never been defined within the metaphor of New Nepal. The perspectives of the leaders, general people and the state actors were often contradictory, both ideologically and empirically. While the leaders and activists consistently focused on singular identity in terms of Tharu ethnicity, most of the research participants revealed that they were living in a multiple identities in terms of caste/ethnicity, class, region and gender. Some

group of people had also been mobilized to conserve the Tharu culture and to promote the identity, but they did not like to link this issue to the TM. Indeed, cultural objectivism has been a challenge not just for the TM, but also for other ethnic groups and their movements in Nepal. While the movement organizations aimed to promote a sense of cultural unity within one ethnic group, tremendous cultural heterogeneity coupled with economic and social systems exists within all groups. Like those elsewhere, ethnic groups in Nepal are not culturally and linguistically bounded, stable communities (Guneratne, 2002; Holmberg, 1989; Levine, 1987). When the researcher went to triangulate these multiple views upon the formation and practice of the collective identity, he encountered with a critical question: how did social changes play role in shaping the Tharu identity? The identity was in the thrust of everyday agendas, but it was becoming blurred in the given social life of Tharus closely attached with the Madhesis, Muslims and other caste/ethnic groups. To quote a reflection from a movement leader in Jhumka:

[There were] One thousand agendas on Facebook, on newspapers and in the mouth of the leaders!!! Remembering all the days it seemed it was just yesterday ... Really time makes our life travel so fast. Up to now we have got and lost many things... Being far from Kathmandu we get confused when we see our movement photos; had we [Tharus] grown this much old? ... Are we the same Tharus who used to be a few years ago and will be that same few years after too... It might sound funny, but we had almost forgotten the meaning of movement and being in movement. And, we never cared about our own agendas and commitments. [Based on a personal conversation, 15 June, 2014]

6.2.2.4 Changing self

As discussed earlier, it was evident that the leadership was largely influenced by the immediate factors of identity formation even if they reached into the power positions in the government as well as at the community level. It has well-attempted to cash the people's grievances, collective sentiments, rituals and symbols for the building of rapport and making interaction among movement participants. However, the identity became a mere self-centered and ethnic-based which virtually restricted the possibility of Tharu movement being a class movement. In consequence, public sphere of the Tharu movement only became 'Tharuhat', restricting the movement formation into the 'Tharu collectivism' involving larger groups of bonded labors, landless people, and poor and marginalized sections of the society. It continued around the movement forums of the mob, and the crowd, though it has also become a mass movement in politically peak hours of contestation (in 2007, 2009, 2012 and 2015). The extent of fragmentation and erosion of the moral ethics has potentially precluded the inclusive identity politics, making a failure of Tharu movement as a broader intent on social

transformation. The identity was imbued with privatized claims to right and values which would then negate the participatory nature of the public sphere. As Lee (2010, p. 173) critically perceives this tragedy of identity politics, nothing than a 'popular political'. Though some worth-mentioning right-based claims have been achieved with the Tharu movement, it seems to be critical yet to be a public movement and addressing the development aspirations of the general mass. This is also an indicative voice in the global context of social movement where identity seems to be fluid with the structure and strategy of the social movement. A point worth noting:

To refer to social movements in terms of 'collective identities' represents a new trend and a new way of thinking. Social action is understood as the product of complex social processes in which structure and agency interact in manifold ways and in which actors produce meanings, negotiate, and make decisions. In terms of strategy, it is important to convey the range of tactics, strategic initiatives, and forms of political organization developed by collective actors....strategies have shifted from resistance to protest and from protest to proposal, without implying any linear movementthe question of strategy, of course, is intimately linked to how social actors construct a collective identity for themselves, often out of confliction roles and positions (Escobar & Alvarez (1992, p. 4-5).

6.3 State-Restructuring and Federalism

As the researcher has argued in Chapter 1, Tharu movement was taking into a political move of constitution making after 2006. It has championed for state-restructuring claims, particularly in terms of federal delineation for Tharuhat, whether it would be Tharuhat state, or be included in state(s) of Madhes or in others. In local construction of this issue, the following theoretical categories were developed:

6.3.1 *The historicity*

The concept of federalism was first introduced in Nepal by the Tarai Congress formed in 1954. It had proposed three provinces, namely mountain, hill and the Tarai. After this, Gajendra Narayan Singh, Founder of Sadbhawana Party pointed the relevance of federalism in Nepal in the early 1990s. He advocated for five provinces, namely Eastern Hill, Eastern Tarai, Kathmandu valley, Western Hill and Western Tarai. He did not envisage federalism on the basis of ethnicity. Twenty five years after this, federalism, not only entered Nepali politics with the multitude of fabrics, but has also largely affected and polarized the constitution writing process.

The grassroots level practices for federalism was initiated by the Maoists, though it was based on the principle of decentralization of the party committees. It is clear that the then rebel CPN-M had used the concept of autonomous ethnic provinces for the sole purpose of expanding their organization (Manandhar & Seddon, 2010; Pyakurel, 2007). Politically, 12-point agreement between the Seven Party Alliance and CPN-M in 2005, People's Movement 2006 and Comprehensive Peace Accord held in November in 2006 have committed to the state-restructuring which also became a part of the Interim constitution in 2007. However, the constitution could not devise the way and the principle of state-restructuring. A small group of Madhesi Janadhikar Forum Nepal burnt down the Interim Constitution of Nepal, 2007 in Kathmandu as soon as it was promulgated on January 15, 2007. The movement that started from this slowly spread to the 14 districts of Madhes. Proportional inclusive participation of the Madhesi community in all bodies of the state and demand for federalism ended up with 22-point agreement. The amendment made in the Interim constitution as per that agreement had provided a theoretical base for Nepal to enter into the federal government system. The Tharu movement organizations, in particular, TWS and JTSC were not active in these agitations, though they welcomed the amendment in the Constitution. Then, the demands of 'one Madhes one Pradesh' and the 'autonomous Tharuhat Pradesh' became two unavoidable political paradigms in federal discourse of Nepal.

6.3.2 Emergent demands and contrasting responses of the state

It was not possible to declare federalism keeping it aside, even when there was a huge public opinion that Nepal being a small country cannot handle federalism. On the other hand, Tarai-Madhes-centric parties started their agitation saying the constitution without provincial demarcation would not be accepted at any cost. Though the demand to declare Tharu majority Banke, Bardiya, Dang, Kailali and Kanchanpur as "Tharuhat Province" was raised for a long time, it could not draw the attention of political parties. This demand was gaining a public support not only among the Tharu movement actors, but also among the ethnicity-based autonomous councils, ethnic organizations and NEFIN itself. Despite this, the idea was aggressively opposed by the pro-federal groups (in particular, Madhes-based parties, including Madhesi Morcha) and anti-federal groups (in particular, non-dividable campaigners in far-western region). Meanwhile, the state and ruling parties were in such a dilemma where they had committed for a number of contrasting agreements with the movement actors, which

also imposed a dilemma for never-ending debate of federalism. The dilemmas in the tenure of the first CA include the following points, which further intensified after 2013:⁶²

- On 28 February 2008, the government struck a deal with the United Democratic Madhesi Front to create an autonomous region in Tarai.
- On 23 May 2012 the government entered into an agreement with the Tharu Joint Struggle Committee to delineate three provinces in Tarai as belonging to the Tharuwan-Tharuhat Autonomous Province covering the areas from West Kanchanpur to Chitwan, Mid-Tarai Simraungadh Province covering areas from Parsa to Dhanusha and Purweli Tharuhat or Tharuwan Kochila Autonomous Province covering areas from Siraha to Jhapa.
- The government also promised the Akhanda Sudur Paschim Struggle Committee on 14 May 2012 that it would conduct a referendum for an undivided Far West covering all nine districts including Kailali and Kanchanpur.
- On 25 May 2012, the government also committed to addressing the demand of the Mithila State Struggle Committee for a Mithila region in the Constituent Assembly.
- The agreement between the government and the Rana-Tharu Struggle Committee on 27 May 2012 for an autonomous Rana-Tharu region clashes directly with the government's earlier deal with the Madhesi Front.
- The government's deal with the National Muslim Struggle Alliance to include a word representing the Muslims while naming the Tarai-Madhesh region also contradicts with the Madhesi Front deal.
- The government entered into an agreement with the Karnali Autonomous State Struggle Committee to demarcate the electoral constituencies based on geography and population which goes against their agreement with the Madhesi Front to demarcate the electoral constituencies based on population.
- On 22 May 2011, addressing the demands of a struggle committee for Chettris the government agreed to include Chettris in the indigenous list. As per the agreement the Khas-Chettris would be given priority in the state's reservation quotas. The government also committed to a Khasan state. This however was not mentioned in agreements with other indigenous groups.

6.3.3 Dilemmas in the constitution writing

Political upheavals in the months preceding the expiration of the first Constituent Assembly in May 2012, as well as the large-scale protests and counter protests regarding federalism, demonstrated a remarkable expression of Tharu movement in the Tarai region, and not exceptionally to Dang and Sunsari. The research findings frame that the federalism was the basic dissenting issue of constitution making which largely relied on the governance and deliberations of political parties and Tharu movement actors. Indeed, 'federalism with identity and the constitution with federalism' was one of the core demands of the ethnic movements, as well as of the Madhesi movement. Proposals forwarded by the ethnic scholars and activists, the Madhesis, and the Maoists vary, however, as to the number of states or provinces, and how the political boundaries and their names should be created. There are many conflicts between these proposals: several groups may seek autonomy over the same territory, as this study envisioned such a case among the Tharu and Madhesi.

⁶² See detail ICG Report, 2016; SPECT (2011);NHRC (2012, 2013)

The constitutional guarantee of Tharu ethnic identity and its territorial delineation was an issue raised by Tharu groups from across the entirety of the Tarai and which seemed to provide a common basis for mobilization. This has been explained to mean a federalism in which Tharus are recognized as a group distinct from the Madheshis, giving recognition of Tharu's historical association with certain territory and access to certain rights and reservations. However, there was disagreement between various Tharu actors about what the boundaries of a Tharu state would be or how the Tarai should be divided. For example, the TJSC was in the position that there should have at least two federal Tharuhat regions in Tarai's western and eastern cluster. The TWS claimed for the four federal states in the Tarai that would be also further accompanied with special zones/ areas.

6.3.4 Perceived wholeness of the federalism

The Tharu movement regarded federalism as the best way to grant ethnic autonomy to the Tharus groups, enabling them to exercise self-determination, gain adequate representation in political systems, and support their own cultural traditions. The findings, however, reflect that the issue of federalism was likely to be the major point of contention between different caste and ethnic groups and dominant political players. Most of the political parties and movement actors agreed that Nepal was overly centralized and their efforts to decentralize the country have failed because of the short period of experience for democracy since 1990. While the major political parties accepted federalism as one way of achieving the goal of modern Nepal, they more often advocated administrative and geographic rationality rather than ethnic federalism. It is unlikely that ethnic groups, including the Tharus would accept this form of federalism, however, as it would not address the ethnic aspirations. One of the movement activists in Inaruwa, Sunsari warned that: "We don't need any kind of constitution if we [Tharus] cannot get our ethnic identity and federal state. We will deny the constitution and go for the large-scale movement. It could be violent as well as massive" [Based on a personal conversation with the participant, 15 July, 2014].

However, state actors, including senior officials in the districts maintained that it was difficult for the government to convince the ethnic groups to settle for administrative federalism where the ethnic federalism has remained a central demand of janajati groups and the Maoists. Even when the Maoists, including some regional and ethnic parties were politically strong in the first CA and they had 2/3 majority, the issue of

federalism could not be settled and the CA was dissolved. The elections of the CA for the second time and subsequent developments since 2013 have pushed the advocates of identity based federalism in a protective position. The discussion with the movement leaders revealed that in Dang and Sunsari, the parties and candidates who favored Tharuhat region also lost their electoral constituencies significantly and the ethnic discourse of federalism became weak.

6.3.5 Local politics of autonomy

Politically, it was a message of envisioning the extremist thinking of federalism and state-restructuring. But, there was an emerging unity among the elites. They followed opportunism from where they used to get benefits and could secure their interests. The leadership analysis and network analysis clearly indicated that most of the leaders in the movement were previously established elites in the society including parliamentary members, ministers and well-off traders. They had even led district development council, village development council and district level committees of political parties and chamber of commerce. From the experiences of the field the researcher also agrees that the issue of federalism is itself a broader social fact in Nepali society, which includes different issues and multiple identities of diverse caste/ethnic groups, classes and regional groups. Along with identity there should be a larger basis for economic sustainability and resource allocation. However, the state will have to ensure marginalized groups that they will be included in the political system in the future Nepali state. Adopting a mixed type of federal system, scientific representation and affirmative action policies at all levels of the state may be some ways of doing so.

The discourse of autonomy has become increasingly strident in the movement. Movement actors and the official statements of the Tharu movement often claimed that the state should reflect the diversity of the population along with the regional freedom and self-governance. It would create political stability along with a more democratic and participatory development. For them, ethnic identity and regional autonomy would provide them a social justice and a sense of Nepali nation. One of the movement leaders and Member of Parliament of Nepal as interviewed in Kathmandu argued that Tharuhat autonomy was a basic agenda of Tharu movement without which issue of identity was meaningless. She continued:

Tharus are a unique indigenous community. We always want to live in a cluster. We have always been living in thick clusters in the Tarai throughout the history. We own this land, but who is ruling over us? We are known for our honesty and hard work. But when federal boundaries will be drawn in the new constitution, our clusters should not be divided. For example, more than 400,000 Tharus live in Kailali and Kanchanpur districts, but these districts are now proposed to separate from the Nawalparasi-

Bardiya province. It is a divide and rule strategy of the high-caste rulers. It is a strategy to perpetuate slavery of the Tharus. We cannot accept this at any cost. [Based on personal conversations with CA member Hon. Ganga Chaudhary, 5 May, 2014]

6.4 Policy Negotiations and the Demands

Policy negotiations in the Tharu movement seemed to be ideal of right based issues. In most of the instances, NGOs played as a backing force for such activism. They seemed multi-layer exposure from macro-level of policy negotiations, micro-level of policy negotiations and their implications in the public spheres (i.e. livelihood of people). Despite this, they have limited concerns for development related structural questions. Following theoretical categories are grounded in the findings:

6.4.1 Demands of proportional representation

6.4.1.1 Affirmative actions and positive discrimination

This issue was persistently reflected by the movement actors along with the issue of legal identity and federal delineation for the Tharus. In official statements of the Tharu movement struggle committee, proportionality appeared to be one of the surest methods of securing representation for them in the mainstream of the political process. To quote a statement:

We, all the movement organizations under the banner of Tharuhat Struggle Committee, are aware of that we [Tharus] are historically deprived of the Nepali state due to its repressive rules for the Tharus in Tarai... So, we urge the government of Nepal to follow the proportional representation based on our population in the region. We demand for our immediate inclusion in the state bureaucracy, civil service, army, police, and all public sector decision-making. [Based on a public statement of the TJSC; an unofficial translation; 1 March, 2014]

The issue of positive discrimination was evidenced in the localization of the Tharu movement. Indeed, it was an issue as the Tharu belonged to the significantly lower status of employment rate and literacy ratio as compared to national figures. The rates for the Tharus were maintained at 3.5 and 59 percent, respectively against the national average of 2.5 and 47 percent respectively (CBS, 2011, 2012). The exclusion index for the Tharus was also significantly depressing, which counts 0.83 as in 2013 (CDSA, 2014). The reservation system in government institutions based on the proportion of the population was emphasized by all Tharu actors and organizations. In particular, youths of Tharu community were in favor of the system because of their high unemployment rate and poverty level. They argue that the Tharus should not be in the same quota as Pahadiyas and Madhesis, with whom they did not believe that they

could compete and secure the job. Some Tharu groups also doubted whether the Tharu (Tarai Janajati) should be in the same category as 'Hill Janajatis', as they felt that the Tharus cannot compete with them given what they believe to be Tharus' comparatively lower levels of education. In some FGDs conducted in the district headquarters of the study region, the researcher witnessed that the marginalization of the Tharu (Tharu categorized as marginalized indigenous group) and their immediate intervention to the mainstream of national labor/ job market was also an issue for many Tharu intellectual organizations. A few of the extremist views of the movement also maintained that all the senior Government positions in the 'Tharuhat' region should be filled by the Tharu officers.

Despite this claim, there were some contradictory issues. First, the politics of number of inclusion and quota was fallacious. The numerical quantification would not turn into the meaningful well-being of people. Second, the reservation was elite-centric, which often benefitted to the elites of the respective communities, not to the poor and illiterate ones. Empirically, it was evident in most of PRAs conducted by the researcher and the well-being ranking of people. The VDC-level statistics was not available regarding the Tharu employment, but the representation of Tharus was ensured as per the de-jure in most of the local NGOs and a few government offices. In turn, many women were organized in co-operatives, local welfare groups and forest user groups. But, these provisions did not seem as significant factor for the changing of livelihoods of people. To some extent, a kind of dependency was created among the people for the induced organizations by many NGOs and INGOs in the region. Kamlahari-based co-operatives endorsed by the PLAN International in Lamahi of Chailahi VDC were some examples to cite in this regard. The activities of SWAN, BASE and FKDF, in particular, were not exceptional in this. SWAN and BASE were politically created NGOs where presidents and other senior positions belonged to senior leadership of one of the major parties in the district. The president and former executive director of BASE took part in the election from NC in Dang and he became a Member of Parliament. Thus, boundary between movement activism, NGOs and political parties was less clear in the region.

6.4.1.2 Kamaiyas and Kamlaharis at the corners

Not to utter surprise, there were serious flaws, even in the name of Kamaiyas, where the leadership of Kamaiya groups was granted for the non-kamaiyas. They used to own the land in the name of Kamaiyas by accessing local administrations of the VDC.

In Chailahi, the non-Kamaiya political elites, including some Tharu people registered about 2 bigha of land granted by the government for 40 Kamaiyas. The district land revenue office was reluctant to this issue and avoided to give any information when the researcher asked for. Due to rampant poverty and low level of awareness, there was also less chance for the legal cases of these issues in the court. Kamaiyas and poor farmers were also denied to represent in any formal structure of political parties and civil society groups. A surprising fact was that they were not included even in the formal movement committees of the Tharu movement (e.g. TWS and TJSC) neither in Chailahi nor in Saudiyar. On the other hand, the local government bodies did not induce caste/ethnic-based community groups, though many groups and user committees were formed as collective consensus including ward citizen forums, local peace committees and VDC child protection committees. In such group formations, local political parties would share the membership quotas; and again it would benefit the local elites who had access to the leaders and could influence the leadership. The influence of NGOs in such groups was also evident in many cases. Many research participants from the Tharu community expressed that they did not know how these committees were formed and for whom they worked. According to them, such committees were created for the sake of politics, and not for the rights of the people and development of the villages. The findings, then suggest that without structural change in the social relationships and local production/ distribution system, it would further deteriorate immediate change in the society. To reflect a critique from a non-Tharu intellectual in the region:

Please don't ask me such a tricky question. I am pessimistic; in fact, realistic! What did the reservation and representation contribute to the Tharus? Nothing... it will further obstruct the self-esteem of the Tharus. It has narrowed down the scope of Tharu intelligence and their knowledge system. The poor and landless Tharu could not get anything. They will be historically deprived as they were used to be. And the rich and elites of Tharu will be benefitted much who were actually already benefitted from the old political system. It is just a political game to engage people and mobilize them either in the Tharuhat movement or as the vote bank for the political parties [Based on a personal conversation with the participant, 7 July, 2014].

6.4.1.3 Constitutional address

Despite some field-level issues of inclusion and proportional representation, and their reflection on national politics of constitution writing, the demand has been partly addressed with the promulgation of a new constitution in 2015. Prior to this, the Interim Constitution of 2007 and other Acts and policies enacted with its premise have adopted the provisions of inclusion and representation. The constitution guarantees participation in various agencies of the state and public service on the basis of the

principle of inclusion. The constitution has also ensured the special rights in empowering many social groups, including marginalized ethnic communities and the Dalits (Bhandari, 2016). For instance, Article 267 that ensures representation of Madhesi, people of backward class and backward region, among others in Nepal Army is an example of inclusion. According to Article 283, appointment to the constitutional bodies and agencies shall be made based on the principles of inclusion. In order to prevent the dominance of a particular ethnicity or community in any political party, Article 269 makes it mandatory for all the political parties to abide by the policy of inclusion. From appointment in government services to the appointment of ambassadors, this constitution ensures proportional inclusive representation. Similarly, the constitution has articulated formation of separate commissions to Madhesi, Tharu, Muslims and indigenous nationalities. These provisions have addressed some of the agendas of the Tharu movement as outlined in the previous discussions in the Chapter. However, the policy instruments for these initiatives are yet to be devised which would affect the setting of demands and causes of the Tharu movement in the coming days.

6.4.2 Advocacy of electoral policy

6.4.2.1 *The demand for proportionality:*

Since 2006, the ethnic parties and movement groups, including the Tharus have claimed that a purely proportional election system, rather than the first-past-the-post system or mixed electoral system. They would like to ensure that small parties are given a voice within the legal political system. The TJSC has repeatedly proposed a statement letter to the government of Nepal to adapt the proportional representation system of election based on the 'Tharu population' in the region. Beyond the Tharu movement, this has been also one of the major agendas of ethnic and regional movements in Nepal, along with the dissenting groups and alliances in Tarai/ Madhes.

Though there was persistent claim and advocacy for the full-fledged PR system, the leadership of TJSC became reluctant to the mixed method approach (40% FPTP and 60% PR). This has been well practiced in the two CA elections, and this was one of the major debated issues in the constitution during the data collection time. Indeed, the proportional system could diversify the parliament, given the large number of candidates from ethnic groups and disadvantaged groups. Consequently, the first CA became colorful with a representation of a heterogeneous sector of politics, caste/ethnicity, economy and gender. In the first CA in 2008, altogether 14 Tharu

members got elected, including two ex-Kamlaharis while it reached 13 in the second CA in 2013. In Dang, this figure includes 4 members in 2008 and 2 in 2013. Accordingly, this rated representation of 4 and 3 members in 2008 and 2013 in Sunsari. The majority of the elected leaders from the Tharu community, however, belonged to the major political parties that formerly did not engage in the Tharuhat movement. Most of the active Tharuhat leaders in both the districts could not even secure their collateral in the elections. This simply connotes how a movement was different from a political campaigning like election and how it competed with political organizations like political parties having rooted organizational structure.

6.4.2.2 The logic

The discourse of PR system of election in Nepal's ethnic movement was heavily influenced by 'deprivation theory'. The findings clearly reveal that the system is argued for the legal assessment of the inclusion and social participation. As the Tharus were also claiming themselves as one of the historically marginalized and deprived indigenous communities, the demand of the proportional representation in electoral constituents seems to be rational. It could accelerate the inclusion of such groups into the mainstream political structure. How has the national agenda of PR system of election got into the local aspirations of people? To critically assess the question, the researcher has made a number of observations, which resembled with the theoretical notion of some critical theorists (e.g. Michael Foucault and Stuart Hall) who prefer to say 'politics of representation' as a function of power, ideology and subject. One of the critics further levels this representation in mobilization as 'stereotyping' (Pickering, 2001). The leadership of the Tharu movement emphasized consistently on the agenda of proportional representation in terms of the population of the Tharus, though the representation of landless Tharus, ultra-poor groups, Kamaiyas and Kamlaharis could not become the prime concern for the leaders and actors of the movement. Therefore, to some extent, the demand of representation has come as a part of identity politics, which has served reactionary approach of class relations rather than making attempts to change it within the social construct of Tharu and non-Tharu.

6.4.2.3 The judgment of the leader/ representative: Mostly elite-centric

Most of the research participants reflected that they did not care the caste/ ethnic background of the candidate. Rather, they used to see the background of the candidate and the political party s/he belonged to. It was also empirically evident that

in some constituencies of Dang, where the Tharus were in the majority of the voters defeated the Tharu leaders and voted for non-Tharus too. The case of Sunsari was also similar where a Tharu-dominated constituency elected a Madhesi leader.

People could also judge the ability and past performance of the elected leader to continue his/ her constituency. For most of the Tharus, it was a deep rooted perception which often negatively narrated the victory of the Tharu leaders. The leaders once got the victory, started to turn into elite and a puppet of politics. They could not see and hear the problems of local poor Tharus and thus earned generations-sufficient money by bribery and corruption. For them, there was no more difference in the nature of leadership, whether this was Tharu or that was non-Tharu. The victory of Maoist leaders in 2008 and their significant loss in 2013 in all the five constituencies of Dang was one the critical examples of this. Before the Maoists, the NC and UML got similar experience in both the districts.

One of the critical observations of the researcher in the field for which most of the research participants were also reporting was that the elections in the villages were becoming a rich people game. Rural poor from the marginalized caste/ ethnic groups, if not granted the quotas or proportional representation would not be elected any more. They often lack access to the political dialogues and they could not spend the money as they would require for comparative benefits from the voters. But, many poor people from upper caste groups reflected that the PR has further hindered their thrust of inclusion what had been defined in terms of caste and ethnicity, and not on the economic well-being or class positions. Irrespective of caste and ethnic orientations of people, the poorer ones often lack access to the political dialogues and they could not spend the money as they would require for comparative benefits from the voters. Thus, the electoral systems can be questioned whether they were relevant to the institutionalizing democratic practices at the grassroots.

For instance, though the participation of people in local elections, which held in 2017 has not been analyzed in the thesis, some research findings that were already evident in the field study before two or three years ago have again become over tuned with these elections. In the researcher's observation of the first two phases (14 May and 28 June) of the elections (being himself a research participant), most of the electoral activities were centralized along with the party leaders and they further were influenced by the local businesspersons, contractors and brokers. In particular, the land plotting has become the main source of the candidates and they have offered a

competitive package of donations to the respective party for confirming their tickets. They spent a huge amount of money and resources at times where monitoring of the election commission was also less effective. In effect, political power, class status and social prestige of the candidates have severely affected in the nomination of candidates and their victory or defeat. There are multiple factors that decide who wins an election and how it works empirically. These include: 1) personality or charisma of the candidate 2) organizational roots or strength of the political party s/he belongs to 3) economic status of the candidate and the party 4) the relation between the candidate's party and the state/ government and/or local bureaucracy and 5) the ethnicity of the candidate relative to electoral constituency. This is what the research has termed 'elite construction' in his thesis.

6.4.2.4 Electoral champion and polarization

Electoral campaigning through the Tharu movement seemed to be more strategic. Though the movement organizations often focused on PR, the same system was not followed in their internal organizational structure. This was not exceptional to TWS and TJSC. On one hand, the representation of poor people and women were significantly lacking. On the other hand, the researcher also observed some internal conflicts in the organizational structure of TWS and TJSC, where polarizations were made and aligned with regional basis (western Tharu and eastern Tharu), and to some extent as per the Tharu sub-classes (e.g. Kamaiyas, Kathariyas, Dangaura and eastern Tharus of Morang, Saptari and Sunsari).

Moreover, at the community level, a kind of polarization arose due to electoral advocacy of the movement activism. Caste/ethnic division and political party favoritism heavily influenced the selection of candidates. Among others, lobbying for the nomination and the offering of the money for the PR listing was common setbacks for this practice. The FGDs with senior leaders of the district reflected that many senior Tharu leaders could not become the candidate for the CA election as they could not pay as much as the money what their parental parties had claimed.

6.4.2.5 Inclusive aspirations

Finally, there was an interactionist view that used to claim that the state should devise an inclusive platform incorporating a least possible weightage for proportional representation system and a larger weightage for the first past the post system. It will, to some extent, include all the groups and their voices in the state's political process,

which would discourage armed rebels and insurgencies in the future. Most of the Tharu leaders claimed for the proportional type of electoral policy as was their official agenda, a few of them in both the districts claimed that the major executive positions in all levels of government, including the head of the government (i.e. Prime Minister) and the village heads should be elected directly by the popular votes of the people. According to their claim, it would certainly legitimize the leadership by increasing their public ownership and accountability. However, this voice was very weak in the Tharu movement and did not become the formal agenda of the movement.

These field level reflections are highly correlated with the new development of politics. In every social forum of the villages, representation of all ethnic groups and marginalized communities, including women and Dalits are ensured. User committees for water, forest and other resources, local-level committees of the political parties and their different wings are highly assembled with the proportional representation. How would these numerical increments in the representation contribute to the mainstreaming of the targeted ones? Who would be benefitted and how? These questions still continue to go, where elite manipulation has been critical (as discussed in Chapter 7). In recent years, with the declaration of the new Constitution, the discourse of electoral system has its own implication at the local levels, including rural areas which have been defined as 'rural municipalities'. According to article 215, the Village Executive consists of the Village Council Chairperson and Vice Chairperson, all Ward Chairs and six other members. The six other members must consist of four women and two members of the Dalit or minority communities and are elected by the Village Assembly. A village is composed of wards, each of which has a Ward Committee comprised of a Ward Chair and four members (at least two women) elected from each ward through a FPTP system. The election of the Head and Deputy Head is held through the similar system. Moreover, it is worth mentioning in devising the mixed type of electoral system in national elections, resulting in a 60/40 split between FPTP (165 constituencies) and PR (110 seats) systems [Part 13].⁶³ Along with these provisions, one critical question still holds true in the sense that how the proportional representation in terms of elections could reflect social, economic and geographic realities and diversities of the country.

⁶³ See (Retrieved on 10 March 2017)

https://www.ifes.org/sites/default/files/2016_ifes_nepal_electoral_provisions_constitution_factsheet_final.pdf

6.4.3 Right-based claims

6.4.3.1 International instruments and movement context

Nepal has ratified most of the major international human rights conventions or other treaties, including the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and ILO Convention No. 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries. Nepal also voted in favor of the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in the UN General Assembly in September 2007. Following this, the most immediate concerns of indigenous peoples in Nepal became to ensure that their rights are recognized in the new constitution. As an umbrella organization, NEFIN followed different strategies for the right-based claims of the ethnic organizations/communities. Tharu actors were also active in this alliance and they also promoted their own movement strategy.

Most of the political documents and meeting minutes of JTSC have highlighted these issues, though there was little explanation about the ways of their achievement through movement agenda. They followed campaigning, lobbying, gherau, negotiations and dialogue, demonstrations, movement and protest. According to their claims, the right to self-identity was a fundamentally important right, recognized in both the ILO Convention and UNDRIP. They further claimed that as an integral part of their right to self-determination, indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinct political, legal, economic, social and cultural institutions, while retaining their right to participate fully, if they choose so, in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the state (UNDRIP, Article 5). This is also fully in accordance with the two human rights covenants of 1966 (ICCPR and ICESCR) that Nepal is a party to follow with the commitments.

The review of researcher also suggests that the UNDRIP recognizes IPs right to be different, to consider themselves different, and to be respected as such (2nd preambular para). Accordingly, the right to the protection, promotion and development of their language and culture are also fundamentally important rights of IPs and their survival as distinct peoples, duly recognized under international human rights law and jurisprudence. The recognition of indigenous peoples' rights to natural resources is

inextricably tied to the right to lands and territories (IWGIA, 2015; Kingsbury, 2008). Therefore, ILO Convention No. 169 establishes a basic principle that holds that indigenous peoples have the rights to the natural resources pertaining to their lands, and to participate in the use, management and conservation of these resources. This is clearly established under article 15 (1) of ILO Convention No. 169. The collective character of indigenous land and resource rights – or territorial rights – are clearly reflected in article 14 of the ILO Convention and the provisions of the UNDRIP (Articles 25-30). Article 14 (1) of the ILO Convention obliges Nepal to recognize and protect indigenous peoples' rights of ownership and possession of their traditional lands

6.4.3.2 Localized preferences

Movement groups of the Tharus also demanded 'special privileges' and 'preferential rights' with priority for their empowerment and development, and to the benefits thereof, as a 'right'. For them it would provide special priority for the inclusion of Tharus who did not compete with the other caste/ ethnic groups due to their backwardness and marginalization. The claim in particular continued to demand that the heads of local governments (e.g. Chief of ministers) and administrative units (e.g. head of the justice) in Tharuhat region should be the Tharu ones, not from the other communities. The issue has been more debated as there was no majority of the Tharu community in the proposed Tharuhat region and the issue further contradicted to the claims of other caste and ethnic groups living in the region.

In view of the researcher, the issue of special rights or privileges may only be justified if it is regarded as an entitlement to remedy a disadvantage in realizing rights. Local power relations existing in the villages should also digest the provision. For example, in the villages of Dang and Sunsari, there was a heterogeneous setting of social structure in terms of caste/ethnicity, occupation, people's mobility and acculturation. The researcher also felt that the 'disadvantaged group' as defined by the mainstream development and politics was also problematic in the local context. It has often focused on the primordial concept of caste and ethnicity. In the changing context of the political system and diversified livelihood strategies, multi-dimensions, including people's access and control to 'political decision making' was significantly missing. For example, many social groups in the villages often constituted by the majority of Tharu population and their leadership were either dysfunctional or less effective to continue their activities as compared with the groups formed of heterogeneous social setting

including members of different caste and ethnic groups. In this context, the most challenging factor could be the basis of reasonable and objective criteria of the inclusion/ reservation.

6.4.3.3 Local institutions and the thrust for legitimacy

Recognition and legislation for the historical institutions of the Tharus have become important for democratic exercises in the rural communities. The movement groups had also raised this agenda during the agitation. For example, the recognition of traditional structures and customary law was of great importance in the villages of Dang where the Badhghar system remained strong in the context of vacant local bodies and people's elected representatives. The major political and social contributions played by the Badhghars in the villages include public appealing; conflicts management; community development; generation of awareness against literacy, child rights and anti-child marriage; common property resource management; and campaigning to abolish the Kamaiya and Kamlahari practices. In Sunsari, where these traditional structures did not exist, the main appeal was in increased influence over the use of natural resources. This was also the case of Dang. Tharu movement actors in both the districts interpreted that the customary law and the relationship between Tharus and natural resources was a part of ILO 169; so all Tharu groups have advocated for implementation of the Convention. As part of this, free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) in relation to development work was also an issue raised across the Tarai by Tharu communities. The use of forest nearby Lamahi and extraction of stones and sand from Arjun Khola of Chailahi and dam of Babai River in Saudiyar were some examples from Dang while Sunsari had the issues of road extension, settlement development and production permits to the industries. In most of these development activities, however, Tharu people and movement leaders were also involved as different capacities including contractors, leaseholders, wage labors and members of user groups.

6.4.3.4 The course of recognition and implications

As discussed in Chapter 2, most of the scholars (e.g. Bhattachan, 2012; Cameron, 2010; Hangen, 2005, 2010; Subba, 2014) of ethnic research in Nepal suggest that Nepal is legally required to establish special safeguards for indigenous peoples' rights in the new constitution. Meanwhile, a few researchers (Bhandari, et al., 2009; Mishra, 2011) heavily criticized the ethnocentric discourse of Constitution-making and federal delineations. The Tharu movement in particular claimed for Tharuhat region with Tharu

identity and right of self-determination. The study reflected that the issue of Tharuhat region was more familiar among the local people of the villages, though people could not express their views on their rights, particularly in terms of right to self-determination. The right-based issues were often used to discuss at the district-level, and not in the village-levels. For example, in one of the discussions conducted in Ghorahi on 29 July 2014, comprising a group of multi-stakeholders of movement activism and development practitioners, the three contrasting viewpoints were reflected as:

Voice 1...We [the Tharu movement actors] demand that indigenous peoples' right to self-determination, including our right to autonomy or self-government, should be recognized in the new constitution's Fundamental Rights of the people. It has been also assured in UNDRIP articles 3 and 4) [a movement leader, Dang]

Voice 2...The implementation of IPs' rights, and other human rights, plays an important role in Nepal's politics. But, is this country of only IPs, not others? For me, the right to self-determination is a donor-driven agenda, which should be dismissed. Let us review it whether it is fully compatible with the principle of respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Nepal [a district lawyer, Dang]

Voice 3... [With an angry face] Stop this nonsense gossips in the name of the people [after a silence]... but, how can I say about the rights? I am a landless farmer. I know what I face everywhere is my poverty. Where is the right behind my poverty? I lost my father in Maoist conflict and what the right did for us? I just want a life, a better wage, a better education, health, a small home...just it! [A grassroots poor people]

6.5 Spaces of Movement in the Local Politics of Development

To reflect back the previous discussions have highlighted the main demands and agendas of the Tharu movement. The demands and agendas seem more complex and somehow overlapping too, as what Foucault (1982a) asks: What's going on just now? What's happening to us? What is this world, this period, this precise moment in which we are living?" (p. 790). Ideally, they oriented towards the ethnic paradigm of politics and right-based claims. Following Foucault as stated above, this section would further argue that those claims, demands and agendas as a phenomenon in the contemporary discourse of development. While the discourse of politics became quite rooted in rural life since 1990s, people's perceptions regarding development and their collective behavior as actors of development became quite evident in the villages since the people's movement 2006. It was being drawn to the historical contradictions derived from vacant elected bodies, Maoists conflict and other social movement activities, NGO-centric interventions and the derailed process of state-restructuring and constitution-writing. Tharu movement was one of the unavoidable constituents among the different actors of development with the following imperatives:

6.5.1 'Bikas' versus 'Development'

In the villages where this study was conducted, the social structure had been rapidly changing in fuelling and emerging new contradictions, likely to be agitations and protests. The poverty of people had been coupled with dependency, debt and livelihood insecurity. Following this, there were a number of factors, including the growing younger population (in average 42 % in the study VDCs) transacted with limited employment opportunities, increasing value of non-farm wages and diminishing agricultural dependence, exposure to foreign labor supply and increasing remittances, social and public awareness, increasing role of saving and co-operatives, promotion of commercial business in a few cases, increase in women and Dalit empowerment, and rise of social movements and protest behaviors (see also in Chapter 7). All were imposing a new crisis in the mainstream discourse because there was no systematic, broader and inclusive world view of development as advocated by the state and non-state groups. The anthropology of development, among the people, had been found historically imposed as a discourse of 'cultural tolerance' (see the Box 6.2).

Box 6.2: The anthropology of 'bikas' for rural people

'Bikas' is a popular Nepali term denoting 'development', something that is synonymous with improvement, growth, progress, modernization, and enhancement, to mention a few. For most of the people, development is a multi-faceted process involving a number of factors and impeded by a myriad of local and day-to-day issues. Ideally, people perceived development as the opposite condition of poverty, inequality and under-development. There were diverse views upon how development can best be brought about and the ways how most of poor achieve and experience any kind of changes in their lives. People from remote villages would assume the development to have improvements in agriculture, education, infrastructures, health, credit and employment facilities, social welfare and security. Most of the people had often critical views that neither the state and government nor the non-governmental organizations promoted the *bikas* of rural people and contributed for upliftment of their livelihood.

The perceptions were, however, contrasting, depending upon the age, class, caste/ethnic group and educational status of the people. Even within the Tharu community the development was assumed differently and some of the poor did not know what development was. The Nepali term '*bikase rajniti*' (the politics of development) was another dimension of rural life, where the elites were at the front-line of politics, power and access; and this was often indicated in the rule of the game of the state. On the other hand, the programs and projects of the non-state actors (the NGOs in most of the cases) were criticized as being the architect of '*dollar kheti*' (cultivation of dollars) in the name of 'development'. In the field, the researcher had himself learned a number of terms and concepts about (under) development.

For most of the research participants, the development (*bikas*) was a culture – the thing to follow and maintain, but not to achieve and struggle for. People used to tolerate everything – even in the cases of low wage, denial of jobs, tenancy injustice

and social violence; as far as they could remain silent. However, in recent years, social psychology of rural people has become 'momentous' where everything now started to become a movement.

6.5.2 Shadowed powerless within the Tharus

As a consequence, grievances and dissatisfaction of the rural people had been growing in different forms of agitations and movements – the Tharu took them and were mobilized. The dream of development, happiness and prosperity were deeply rooted in the mind-set of people. However, the nexus of development in general (for all villagers) and in particular (particular Tharus) was complex. Following this, the FGDs conducted with different communities reflected some critical issues regarding identity, Tharu movement and development. Most of the research participants in the field reflected that they were poor and deprived of the state and they could get some alternatives either by mobilizing in their movements. Only a few of them reflected an ethnocentric movement, arguing that Tharu movement could not be the panacea of all the problems of the Tharus. The Tharus in particular were of the view that development was not unequal for their community. It was biased and unequally distributed for the Tharus, particularly the women, Kamaiyas and small farmers. To reflect a quote of one of the research participants in Dang:

Let me briefly narrate the history. We [Tharus] were the first dwellers of this [Tarai] region. But, what happened later? Many people from northern side and from India came into this region and started to rule us. We wanted co-existence and equal development. But, the rulers exploited our resources like land and forest. In turn, we, landlord, became poor and landless. Kamaiya and Kamlahari systems were started with our poverty and debt. The state of Kathmandu, what did it do for us? Nothing at all! Political parties and Maoists left us. Some of our Tharu leaders are also taking benefits from our poverty, illiteracy and innocence...we have nothing to lose now onwards [based on personnel communication, 17 March 2014].

6.5.3 Emergence of NGOs as guarantors of the emancipation

In Dang, there were a number of NGOs involved in rehabilitation of Kamaiyas and Kamlaharis. Plan Nepal has launched Kamlahari Practice Abolition (KPA) project since 2005 which lasted till February 2015. It has included three components in the project: awareness raising for child right promotion, education support and livelihood support. The project has spent a huge amount of money (around 10 million per year) but the project documents showed that 30 percent of the total budget was spent on salaries of partner organizations (SWAN and FKDF) and 35 percent was paid for training expenses. On the other hand, there were however fewer NGOs working particularly for the Tharus and Tarai Dalits in case of Sunsari district. Most of them were located in

Inaruwa and Itahari though. Indeed, among many FGDs and KIIs conducted in both the districts, there was not so vast difference in terms of working strategies of the funded projects. By nature of the project, they had been more engaged in conventional approaches of livelihood promotion. Empowerment, participation, community development, awareness rising, gender equity, micro-credit were some of the project components for most of the organizations. To reflect upon a quote from one of the senior officials of the district NGO Federation of Sunsari who seemed very confident in the effectiveness of NGOs: “We know what the development is and what the real needs of people are. The state should promote us to get more achievements in all the sectors of rural livelihood by reducing poverty and inequality from the society”. [Based on a personal conversation, 4 May 2014]

However, for example, in Dang, there was an emerging trend of child marriage due to which newly rescued Kamlaharis and the girls of poor households were severely affected. The research participants reported that with the reduction of Kamlahari practice, increment in child marriage and male child labor was becoming intense. The issue of child marriage was a common in most of the villages, but male child labor was somehow a less exposed issue. A few research participants were talking about a boy Kamlahar who had been taken outside of the village. According to them, the rate of keeping boy as Kamlahar has been increased instead of keeping Kamlaharis. According to data of FKDF in Dang, there are 400 boy Kamlahars in this condition. There were attractive demands of child labor in market area even to Kathmandu, to assist in domestic works and not exceptionally in bus, hotel and industries. In this context, Kamlahari movement seemed to be the monolithic orientation of society as was heavily influenced by donor agencies. The FKDF which was the real initiator of Kamlahari movement was itself an induced organization by SWAN Nepal, a partner of Plan International Nepal. The FKDF then has been registered as an NGO in the district administration office of Dang. The state actors seemed to be quite known about the project interventions from NGOs, but there was no regulatory mechanism to coordinate and monitor. Nor were there any specific targeted programs to upgrade the livelihood of such poor groups and address the social problems. The local administrative structures rather would like to appeal the NGOs and donors to extend their projects and funding even in the micro level issues of village sanitation and free defecation. In the recent years, the VDCs at local level used to have a mandatory system of village child protection committee (VCPC). One of VDC secretaries in Sunsari was interviewed and he said that he did not have any idea of such VCPCs. He was quite unknown in the understanding of the committee's role and responsibility for

child rights protection. Thus, the development practice at the rural bottom was almost distorted and nullified. To reflect one of the cases from Saudiyar VDC Dang with the narration of VDC secretary [Case 6.1]:

Case study 6.1: Saudiyar VDC: Struggle against child marriage

As a VDC secretary, I have been engaged in the VDC since 2014. I am quite happy with Plan Nepal and other helping agencies. We publicly broadcasted all the receipts and expenditures as per the grant. There was participatory planning in implementing such a fund. For child friendly VDC, government has its own working procedure and strategies. The problem of child marriage is widespread in this VDC. Different means provide information about child marriage being conducted to child network or club and on the basis of this Child Network takes action against child marriage in the VDC. Child marriage has decreased significantly with the initiatives of Child Network and clubs. It seems that there is awareness about the stop the child marriage and not do child marriage in the village. Moreover, the victims of child marriage themselves are participating in street drama to raise awareness amid locals. However, there is not a lack of awareness. Assistance of Pan Nepal was effective. Due to assistance, the child friendly index is goal oriented and recently this VDC of the district has gone to be declared the first child friendly VDC. The index has been improved because of assistance of Plan Nepal. VDC with the assistance of Plan Nepal has been conducting frequent training programs for adolescent and members of the child network as income generating training. At present, training and seminars conducted by Plan Nepal are a kind of awareness building, but it will be good to emphasize on the provision of such programs that enable them to witness livelihood enrichment. The main reason of child marriage is poverty. So, the root cause of the problem should be addressed first. If poverty of the family is decreased, child marriage will definitely be reduced.

6.6 People's Mobilization and Issues of Development

Available literatures reveal that people's mobilization has been one of the basic components of social movement discourse while people's participation is often assumed to be the basic tenet of rural development. The nexus between participation and mobilization has been largely fluid and often fluctuating with the grievances of the day-to-day life of the people. In the points of Klandermans and Stekelenburg (2010), the studies of participation tend to "concentrate on mobilization and to neglect the development of demand and supply factors" (p. 4). With this, the key theoretical categories emerged during the field study are as follows:

6.6.1 The leadership enigma

At the apex, the debate was around the leadership level, which represents 'opportunistic' and 'strategic' orientation of the movement. For example, most of the Tharu leaders used to focus on ethnic issues and Tharu identity at the peak time of movement. A few of them argued for the transformation of rural economy through pro-

poor mobilization of the people. The researcher has also encountered with the dual position of the leaders too. There were some debates for the leadership in between Tharu community and of other communities too. While having this, the issue of Tharu movement was not denied by non-Tharu leaders, and they focused for the proper landing of the movement by granting rights and identity. But, how they define right and identity of the Tharus was a little bit different from that of the Tharu leaders. Yet, the involvement of non-Tharu leaders and people in the Tharu movement was also an interesting case to observe. To reflect the views of the leaders from both communities:

Voice 1----Why we [non-Tharu] should not be mobilized in the Tharu movement? Of course, they [the Tharus] are our friends and neighbors and their issues are our own issues until and unless they negate us and come violently against the non-Tharus, including Pahadiyas and Madhesis. We have similar agendas in the sector of justice, land reform, agricultural development and other reform initiatives. [A non-Tharu leader in Aurawani, Sunsari, 4 May 2014]

Voice 2----In fact, the 'positive sentiment of the non-Tharus to the Tharus' was of state strategy and the way of other political parties to maintain their vote bank in the Tharuhat region. They don't want to give the power to the Tharus. If we get empowered, they should lose their ruling status and therefore, they are playing upon the innocent Tharus. [A Tharu leader in Jhumka, Sunsari, 9 May 2014]

6.6.2 People's mobilization and their perceptions

Following the leadership enigma, the debates and multiple views were about the perceptions of local people. The local people were less known about the issues/agendas of the Tharu movement, but they reflected some critical ideas upon this. A few of the research participants argue that Tharu movement was a movement of the Tharus in their own, for making them free from historical deprivation and marginalization. It would, according to them, magically solve the problems of Tharus, such as poverty and inequality, if it succeeded. Interestingly, the researcher followed this perception to dig out further. He followed a number of KIIs and FGDs among the research participants. However, the linkage between development issues and Tharu movement, for local people was perceived as a self-reflective narrative. Self-narrative was in the sense that the people would define development in their own way and they also articulated Tharu movement from their insider perceptive. To quote a narrative from Aurawani:

Let me ask you what development is for you, is not the same to me. I don't know anything. Government of Nepal can give a better answer. Similar is the case of Tharu movement, and our leaders. Though I have participated in the movement, let the leaders define it. We [people] are just a puppet for them- either to mobilize for them or for the others, or vote for one or another.... I ever heard that development is a system

of discipline and politics is a service. But, it has become a business in our village. [Based on a personal conversation with the participant; 11 June 2014]

6.6.3 The nexus of leaders, people and development

Following above two dimensions (leadership and people), the majority of research participants perceived that the 'development' in the village was just opposite dynamics of poverty and inequality what they were facing in their daily lives. Further, they also opined that was a high-class affair; development and politics always to be performed by them. The well-being ranking of people in the villages also reflected same finding that most of the political leaders and movement activists were from well-off ranking, and simultaneously, most of the development practitioners also belonged to the upper ranking of the well-being. Furthermore, the resource mapping and leadership analysis in each ward also reflected that there was a loose boundary between development and politics of resource distribution.

Methodologically, it led to a categorical saturation of the sampling. It suggested that rural politics and movement activism is an outcome of class relations. The class dimension of the Tharus was deliberately advocated as of equivalent of Tharu identity and their ethnic rights, though most of the leaders were from a previous background of party politics of left ideologies. Two contrary views existed in this regard. First, movement leaders often argued that Tharu is a not a class, it is an indigenous group. Without recognition of this fact, Tharus cannot be well-developed. Therefore, for them, Tharu movement has to focus on its rights and identity as a bottom line of the movement's agenda. Second, there was a view of class politics. Most of the non-ethnic intellectuals and a few Tharu civil society leaders belonged to this school of thought. This thought was further divided in terms of socioeconomic background of the research participants and their political affiliation where they used to belong. Some wanted to totally dismiss the ethno-politics in society as it was catalyzing polarization in society. They often opined for the repression of the Tharu movement. Some other research participants, however, believed that the ethnic issues of the Tharus should be treated only after solving their economic issues and class issues. One of the representative voices as reflected in an FGD conducted in Purnao Lamahi gaun in 17 July 2014 narrates:

There is no question that Tharu is an ethnic group. No one can raise any question about their historicity in this region. But, it needs further explanation. How did they become poor and marginalized and in what way this community struggled against the rulers? Further, we should not forget that there are feudal structures and power sharing within the Tharu community. I think the issues of landlords, landlessness, Kamaiya,

child marriage, Kamlahari, child labor, gender discrimination, youth unemployment and illiteracy are the class-based issues. These issues should be politically linked to the development, and not to the Tharu movement.

6.6.4 National context of state-federation

During the data collection, the researcher was fully aware and updated with the national context. Addressing class issues of discourse on caste/ethnicity (and vice-versa) was becoming highly contested in the growing political spaces of constitution writing. During the negotiation process, the issue of 'state-restructuring' was becoming a buzz word as if it was a panacea for overall development of marginalized communities and the region including the Tharus and Tarai-Madhes. NEFIN was in the position that there should be federal delineations with right of self-determination for all the indigenous communities who share more than one percent population in the national demographic structure. Madhes-based political parties claimed for 'one Madhes, one state'. Following this, the TWS and TJSC demanded that there should be two Tharuhat states in the Tarai region. Some other groups were opposing any kinds of federal division in the name of undivided territory. With these contrasting claims, the debates in development models and practices were, however, did not come in a comprehensive way. The review of these claims informed that the development would be attained through the federalism and decentralized governance. Yet, the issue of governance was raised rhetorically, not in operational terms. According to them, the government would be ensured as much as the number of federal states the constitution could adopt. In turn, the Tharu movement activists at district level were worried in terms of deciding the number of federal states, rather than on adopting effective models for development and local governance. To reflect a statement from TWS, area committee of Dang:

In Tharuhat region, we [the Tharus] have full rights of self-rule and governance. We will access and control all the resources of this region and share with other communities and regions with high value income. We will develop a political system for local administration and development in our own leadership. [Based on the issue letter in December 2013]

6.6.5 Service delivery and hierarchies

Amidst a number of hopes and dreams of people in their daily lives, erosion of the public service delivery system (as mentioned in Chapter 5) due to vacant local bodies had created a huge gap in the aspirations of people in terms of their well-being and development. They were politically denied to make local plan and development

strategies in their own. More importantly, the rise of private boarding schools with expensive fee structure and English language-based curriculum had paved the way for class-hierarchy in the educational system. Most of the governmental and community schools were populated with the number of students who belonged to marginalized communities, particularly the poor class janajatis and the Dalits. The PRAs and FGDs conducted in the villages reflected that the class hierarchy was further institutionalized with the erosion of public health services. The rise of private clinics and abundance of the medical stores had replaced the service of health posts and community hospitals in the market centers of the all VDCs where this research was conducted. This hierarchy again defined the social prestige of community members where opportunities were granted and favored by the upper class people, not exceptions to the well-off Tharus in the study regions. Interestingly, local leaders of all the parties have been jointly involved in 'privatization' of such public institutions, though they bear the electoral slogan of 'socialism'. Many of Tharuhat leaders were also part of these events, though they wished to claim otherwise. To reflect upon one critical quote from Muslim tole of Aurawani:

A poor leader has become rich overnight. They have purchased private cars too. Vehicles for the school and motorcycles for personal use have become common phenomena. But we could not find regular transport systems in the villages. The issues of people are judged on the comparative advantages in an election or any kinds of cash incentive. In this Muslim tole, there is no difference between the Tharus and the Muslims. Our children hardly go to private boarding schools as they are expensive, and we cannot afford them... if we fall sick, whether we should tolerate the pain or we should go to the health post where the medicines and checkups are hardly provided in time. Though I heard that there is free medicines in the health posts, we don't know how to get them and for whom we should report. If we further go to the private clinics at Jhumka, we could not afford the medical fee and money for the medicines. Thus, the services of education and health are not managed for the poor people like us. [Based on personal communication; 5 August 2014]

6.6.6 Alternative practices of development

Arguing thus, the researcher, however, could not deny the emerging trend of new alternative practices of development in some villages. Establishment of social groups, self-help initiatives, saving groups and schemes, co-operatives, livelihood diversification and empowerment of women, and marginalized people, including the Tharu are some of the important dimensions of prosperity and well-being in the region. The villages had been given new names in public consensus, decided the local tax themselves and elected an inclusive leadership to execute the village development plans and co-ordinate with the VDC. This was the case of Bhasi VDC where all the villages were practicing this system – and more importantly, the consensus among the different state actors (e.g. the VDC) and non-state actors (the Tharu movement

leadership, Khumbuwan movement leadership, leaders of political parties and also the non-governmental community) was indicating a new development initiative. The case study (6.2) presents such an optimism in this regard.

Case 6.2: Case of Tole Development Committees (TDCs)

When the researcher went to the VDC office of Bhasi VDC at Jhumka bazaar on 11 January 2014, he saw a crowd of people including women and youths. At first, he did not know what was happening there. Later on, he came to know that there was a participatory planning meeting of the Tole (settlement) Development Coordination Committee. The secretary welcomed the researcher and allowed him to be there with his brief introduction. He observed the meeting and processes of the planning. All were curious and participating in the discussion. There were people of different caste/ethnic groups and political parties. The researcher felt really indebted and impressed. The Tole Development program was initiated from 2005 July with the joint collaboration with Itahari municipality, Bhasi VDC and UNICEF Nepal, under the program of rural-urban partnership program.

The organizational pattern of the TDCs was more inclusive and participatory. 54 TDCs were registered in the VDC; each TDC included more than 25 HHs up to 200 HHs, where about 4000 HHs of the VDC were organized under this system. Having permanent residence and migration certificate was the basic criteria for household membership. Further, there was a coordination committee to represent all the TDCs and dialogue with the VDC. This committee consisted of 15 members, including president, secretary and treasurer. Among these key posts, the women's representation was must at least for one. The same rule proceeded in each TDS. The leadership was selected in a public assembly with participatory method. The activities and services included administrative, developmental and welfare. The TDCs were highly contextual and had effective working strategies in the absence of local elected bodies, which could make the service delivery system more distributive and responsible. They were becoming an appropriate medium in bridging the gaps between the state (VDC), society (people) and non-state (NGOs). Through this, people were solving local problems and conflict with their own initiative and discussion. They had also made participatory development plans (e.g. electricity, drinking water, and road construction) and submitted to the VDC. The TDCs had a privilege to provide a justification letter for vital events (e.g. migration, birth, marriage and death). Additionally, they involved in a monthly saving and credit system (ranges from Rs 50 to 100 per HH per month). There were some humanitarian and social welfare activities (e.g. each member or household collects Rs 100 to support the needy ones if any member of the committee dies or his physical properties get damaged by natural hazards). The TDCs had a dream of future plan. They had an immediate plan to establish a VDC level co-operative and promote the rural finance and credit systems.

This case is one of the representative observations by the researcher in the villages. Virtually it seemed to be a state-led as the VDC was the primary service provider for the people. But this was funded by donor agencies and it allowed more of an NGO-approach to development, then a movement approach. However, some critical questions were contested in this regard, suspecting the economic dimension of the movement which could have further connotations in the reduction of poverty and inequality. Beyond the rhetoric of the national statistics (often issued by CBS and NPC), some issues were deliberately less prioritized. The issues of rural poverty, rural-urban poverty gap, and problems of inflation, unemployment and inequality were not presented from the perspective of RD. To illustrate further, the VDC profile of Chailahi

declared that development of the VDC would be ensured by extending roads, upgrading water supply and maintaining vital registration' (VDC profile, 2012). The other VDCs of the study site proposed a similar kind of vision for rural development.

6.7 Changing Power Dynamics and Development Aspirations

6.7.1 The power: An unavoidable fact

The emergence and allocation of power in social fabrics including the individuals, communities and citizens is one of the central themes of social movement studies. It creates opportunity structures as well as the hindering factors in society which are fundamentally related with the rural development and community empowerment. It would then become the proxy factor to lead agitations if the chores of a power are limited or unequally distributed. In this regard, the power seems interwoven with the state policies (at the center) as well as the collective actions (at the periphery). As Tilly opines, power in movement grows when ordinary people join forces in contentious confrontation with elites, authorities and opponents (1994). Critical to this perspective, some scholars have also questioned about the service of power, whether it facilitates progressive change and for whom it would work. For them, social movements usually emerge from the metaphysics of power attempting to gain it for the marginalized groups who lack meaningful access to other official and institutionalized means of power. In this context, Little (2007) goes on:

They [social movements] are among the "weapons of the weak", and their effectiveness usually turns on the ability of a sub-population to mobilize in collective action with determination and courage...The question here is, what are the scope, limits, and mechanisms of social power wielded through social movements? Is it possible for a social movement to cause changes in basic structures, policies, and distributions of wealth and power in society? (p.1)

During the course of Tharu movement, the rural life and realities were socially constructed to shape various desires, expectations and outcomes. To shape these changes, the ideology and practice of the movement were dominant. The researcher observed a scene like a film, everything was happening at the same time and same place: the previously neglected issues came at surface; the Kamaiyas and Kamalaries showed mass demonstrations; the small farmers left their work and went for the participation; students also formed agitation groups; women came to street with movement banners and so on. Everywhere there were wall paintings, pamphlets, shutdowns and strikes. The Tharuhat was so rapidly dreamed to be real, and for that the identity was most observable stroke as the researcher found in a poem as

presented below.⁶⁴ But, in his long stay at the rural villages the researcher encountered with a number of long-term changes and experiences too which were somehow juxtaposed with the colorful bosom of the Tharu movement.

Wake up Tharu, wake up.....Your identity makes you a Tharu
Wake up Tharu, wake up.....Your land makes you a son of the soils
Wake up Tharu, wake up.....Your forest and water are only for you
Wake up Tharu, wake up....Your country deserves for you and your neighbors too
Jay Tharuhat.... Jay Nepal...

6.7.2 Rural social construction: Tharu, Madhesi and Pahadiya

The relation between Tharu and Madhesi (in particular Sunsari) and the relation of the Tharus with the migrants from the nearby hill districts (in particular Dang) was also becoming somehow transcend. The intra-ethnic clashes did not come violently, however. Many Tharu leaders were blaming the pahadiya and Madhesi people for the cause of Tharu's backwardness. Often, they used to detach their issues from the confrontation of the state. This was a part of the strategy of focusing on identity. On the other hand, at the very operation level of public life, the antagonism did not get a chance to intensify due to the liberal-ideological root of the social structure. The people were living in the same settlement, being neighbors of each other and working together. A kind of harmony was thus maintained among the people irrespective of their castes and classes. The lower class people, including landless, poor, women, small farmers and wage labors within the Tharu community used to participate in the mobilization without any question at the very level of Tharu identity. The researcher observed that many Hilly migrants participated in the Tharu movement in Dang while the Madhesis and Muslims also took part in Sunsari. When the researcher was talking with a Madhesi intellectual, he was quite critical about the ethnic and regional dimension of the contemporary movements. He said that both the Madhesi and Tharu movement were severely suffered by ethnic nationalism, which could not challenge the state-led caste [Hindu orthodoxy] nationalism. Instead, he told this researcher about the need of class movement. To quote his/her one of the poems [Based on personal communication, 29 May, 2014]:

.....
Who created Nepal, and why?
It is the blood of poor and oppressed
Now came your turn, oh poor!

⁶⁴The researcher saw this poem in a pamphlet glued on the wall of regional office of the TWS of Lamahi, RatoDanda. The poem was then translated from Tharu to English in January 2014.

Count your sacrifices and make a bloody revolution
Open the fire, and bombard – Upon the headquarters
Who made you poor! Who made you deprived!!
And ruled you in the name of 'emancipation'
In the name of 'democracy...

6.7.3 Leadership, communication and shifting roles

Though the Tharu movement was embedded in the society as a part of rationalization, there were contrasting events and experiences. The communication systems of the movement were less understood, even less informed to the rural regions about the changing programs and strategies. Though the movement had heterogeneous imperatives, most of the research participants wanted a single and collective movement uniting all the Tharus throughout the Tarai region. They believed that the unity among the leaders could lead to the goal. Despite this, internal division among the leaders and the movement organizations were open which sometimes were manifested as ugly blaming and disputes, too. Then, the followers remained always confused, and somehow discouraged. In order to get some contested experiences, the researcher had included a question whether they narrate a memorable experience during the movement. The quotes below give voice to some of the research participants interviewed for this study:

Voice 1.....The leaders do not let us go up. They only come during the times of elections and in the hard times of movement. They appealed, even forced, to vote for them and support their agenda. But we are the same; our village is the same...see the changes in the life of the leaders! What a drama they played? [A 35 year-old metal worker Dalit living in Saudiyar-3, Dang [Personal conversation, 20 July, 2014]

Voice 2.....At least we had sacrificed a lot in the name of the Tharuhat. Even I left my job to engage actively in the movement. But, today I feel regretful...some people also blamed me for being corrupt. I will die, but never become the corrupt. The upper leaders made us foolish, totally foolish...So I remained neither here nor there... What is happening to the new generation? [A 31 year-old leader of Tharuhat movement in Sunsari [Personal conversation, 10 June 2014]

6.7.4 Erosion of public institutions/ services in rural region

On the other hand, deprivation in health and education was a crucial aspect in the contestation. The state has claimed that the basic education and health systems were being promoted for the rural poor through community schools and health posts. But empirically, it was less accessed to the poor Tharu in the region. Though there is an easy and open access to the government schools which are also cheap to afford, their curriculums are rather traditionally structured as compared to that of the private ones.

Indeed, this is a problem across all Nepal (Mishra, 2011). Some research participants remarked that their accessibility to private schools was very limited because of low income sources of people and their unaffordability to pay the costs. On the other hand, the children of local elites and the founders of the school had frequently reserved the admission quotas in the classes for their own children. The story behind the health system was just the same. The ability to afford health care services in the village was poor. Some research participants argued that though there was a health post in the VDC, it lacked doctors and nurses, and equipment. A 32-year-old Tharu woman in Dalit tole of Aurawani VDC expressed her dissatisfaction at the health services and revealed that it was difficult to reach the governmental hospital due to its remote location. The nearest health clinic was a private one, which was comparatively more expensive too. Some movement organizations (e.g. TWS in Deukhuri) often helped the needy groups, by promoting vaccination programs and launching health camps at the local level. However, these activities only took place strategically at the peak hours of the movement. Those activities which were inserted once in 2011 were discontinued in 2013. While the researcher followed the case, two contrasting claims he found. Movement activists claimed that the welfare activities including health camps were not supported by government actors, so that the TWS could not continue them. The government authorities, including the VDC officials disagreed with this argument maintaining that the TWS or any kinds of non-state actor should not minimize the role of the state and provoke the people. If it is targeted for public welfare through a formal process, then the VDC would have no any objection. According to them, it was beyond the ethics of the movement what the TWS was doing in the region.

6.7.5 Social dynamics and mode of local development

The social changes were shaped by the changing mode of rural development. The Tharu rapidly changed their traditional occupation of subsistence farming and started to enter into a rapidly growing market of wage labor, industrial jobs and foreign employment. The rapid migration of people into the villages made the Tharu learn and share with different cultural groups. For example, culture of early marriage among the Tharu had been getting gradually reduced, even some people started to follow the practice of marriage as like of the neighboring castes. Further, the educational system with a focus on girls' education was also started and there were a number of girls even from a poor family who were sent to English medium schools. The method of celebrating festivals (e.g. of Maghi), the ceremonies in the live events (e.g. in the birthdays and the death ceremonies) were also a part of social change. The other

communities also celebrated the Maghi of the Tharus in the ways the Tharu celebrate it; and the Tharus also started to celebrate Dashain and Tihar in the ways the other castes or communities celebrate them. The dresses and languages were the most important part of social change in the Tharu community. The leaders were demanding the education in their own Tharu mother tongue; they did not follow their own language in their own home. These were some of the critical observations to construct the multiple identities in the society.

Despite some interventions in terms of annual budgeting, rural development practices in the villages lacked a specific model in planning and a philosophy for its programs. Rather, it seemed guided by a top-down and trickle-down strategy as envisioned in Kathmandu and the NGOs brought what to the villages. Empirically, this paved an uneven power dynamics in the rural areas. This becomes clear by looking at the previous/ running development plans and leadership structure in the villages. The findings suggest that the rural poor were longing to have charismatic leadership for redressing their immediate problems. Unfortunately, local leadership in the region was an elite-driven middle class. As a result, brokers and intermediary groups were becoming more powerful who used to be the powerful cadres of local political parties and movement groups. They often engaged in dual professions, such as business and tendering, politics and governmental jobs and both in governmental job and non-governmental job. It is not surprising to the researcher that he witnessed a number of Tharu leaders in the villages who were engaged in multiple responsibilities, including the leader of a political party, leader of Tharu movement, owner of large-scale business and staff / members of the board in local NGOs. The local market centers in the districts (like Lamahi, Saudiyar, Jhumka, and Aurawani) remained as such nexus of dualism.

6.7.6 The power: Where to be counted?

The power in between the caste/ethnic groups and class groups remained in the cyclic overturn. In terms of caste/ethnicity a kind of polarization was emerging among Tharus vs. Madhesi, Madhesi vs. Pahadiya, Tharu vs. Pahadiya, and upper caste vs. Lower occupational castes. But, finally the root of society, in structure, remained less transform to relocate the social relations. In this context, the research findings are implicit to the argument of Sugden (2010, 2013), who argues that the political change and social movement in Nepal appear to represent renegotiation rather than a transformation of unequal power relations. Shifting of power however was still

dominated by the elites of society irrespective of their caste and ethnic background. Many Tharu leaders also became a part of this allocation of power and their claims, and what they made in the name of poor people were turning into vain in the given power structure of the villages. The power during the moving period got recycled due to contentious confrontations with elites, authorities and opponents, though the ordinary Tharu people were less privileged due to limited opportunities. This seems further relevant to quote Tarrow (1994) who puts:

There are three major puzzles in the relations between power and movement. First, although ordinary people possess the resources for collective action during many periods of history, they mainly accept their fate or rise up timidly, only to be repressed... a second question relates to the dynamics of movement. Popular power arises quickly, reaches a peak and soon evaporates or gives way to repression and routine...the third question relates to movement outcomes. Do movements have an impact beyond the short-lived mobilizations that fill the evening news? (p. 2-3)⁶⁵

The findings reflect that the political confrontation and elitism were the two parallel forces which influenced the power allocation and benefit sharing of development outcomes. What is the ultimate source of power in the villages was obviously a complex question. But, the findings suggest that the development, class, caste/ethnicity and gender roles were detrimental. This is not a surprising issue, though. The determinants of power were, however a complex whole, as they comprised the people from all classes, caste/ethnicity, sex and regions. It led to an elitism. The elitism contributed to turn the development discourse and practice to be phenomenal, not structural. The development activities have been often confined as the construction of roads, expansion of markets, supply of electricity, building schools, and so many. It has largely ignored structural issues of poverty and inequality in society. These articulations, as researcher would argue, seem pessimistic proclamations. However, findings suggest that the movement actors largely failed to adapt the wider world view of the social movement. The Table 6.1 below represents some achievements in local development activities in both the districts. In these outcomes, the local bodies (i.e. VDCs and DDCs) played a leading role while the movement actors (in the form of NGOs) championed for the role of negotiating party. This further reflects whether the movement actors really worked for social campaigning or they would easily play the role of NGOs and the development partners along with the government.

⁶⁵[http://www.d.umn.edu/~epeters5/MAPL5111/5111%20Articles/Tarrow%20--%20Power%20in%20Movement%20\(optimized\).pdf](http://www.d.umn.edu/~epeters5/MAPL5111/5111%20Articles/Tarrow%20--%20Power%20in%20Movement%20(optimized).pdf)

Following this tragedy, the Tharu movement seemed also confined cultural dimension of ethnicity rather than being a collective social movement for structural change. It has strongly captured the relative location of the Tharus in relation to all other social groups in the stratification system. The agendas of the movement were so fluid, even rapidly emerging and disappearing. To note, the voices for cultural identity and ethnic recognition did not seem to solve the livelihood issues of the Tharus in the villages. Empirically, thus, the agendas of the movement could not raise the living standard of people, making their income opportunities widened, and the problems of their poverty and inequality solved. Indeed, it was not possible to have such grand changes with this elite leadership. Nor they promoted access control of people over the resources and local service systems, including education and health. It could only popularize the issues and let the people and the state to know the ground realities.

Table 6.1: Some representative cases of development activities in the study districts

Dang (Chailahi and Saudiyar)	Sunsari (Bhasi and Aurawani)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sewing and tailoring training in Chailahi and Sishaniya (per year 20 quotas could get full supports by TWS and VDC- (only Tharu women eligible) • Formation of three women-led co-operatives (initiation of TWS, FKDF and Division Cooperative Office) • Commitment for the allocation of Rs 20000-30000 per year to be spent for the welfare of local indigenous groups (Tharu and Magar in particular) from village councils (agreement between DDC and movement actors in 4 March 2009) • Selection of 10 historical/ religious sites in Dang and regular allocation of the budget by VDC/ DDC assemblies; and allocation of Rs 10,000 per year since 2011/2012 • Conservation of the Rihar Baba Dham on the religious-cultural tourism based on the Tharu heritage • Conservation and promotion of the historical monuments of the Tharus (Panaura Museum at Ghorahi and Dangisharan palace in Dangisharan) • Support of DDC for the promotion of Tharu Model Village at Saudiyar-9 • Provision of representation of Badhghar, Bhalmansa or Mahatawa (who used to work previously or working currently as village heads) in the village council meetings at VDC; their mandatory role in designing and implementing local development plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skill development training and start-up support in Jhumka (per year 17 quotas could get full supports by TWS, VDC and DDC) • Provision for the allocation of Rs 400000 per year to be expensed for the welfare of local indigenous groups and/ or the Dalits from village councils (statement of the DDC in 2012) • Selection of Jhumka, Duahabi and Aurawani to promote the Tharu-cultural sites; and allocation of Rs 3,000,00 per year since 2011/012 by DDC; however, the program could not continue • Conservation of the Ram Dhuni Dham on the religious-cultural tourism based on the Tharu-Madhesi-Hilly people heritage • Provision of representation of Tharuhat leaders in the village council meetings at VDC; their supportive roles in designing and implementing local development plans • Inclusion of the Tharu people, particularly the women in tole development committees • Support of Rs 10,000 per year for the best performer of the women's group which belong to particular ethnic group • Conservation of the Gadi Mai Dham on the religious-cultural tourism based on the Tharu heritage

However, the increase in ethnic awareness, political consciousness and self-esteem and dignity were some of the subjective achievements of the movement. In being so, the researcher here suspects that for them, the development was a secondary quest, while putting the issue of cultural rights in the first place. Theoretically, this situates the Tharu movement, to neither favor a collective movement, nor go against the existing mainstream development. An elderly person from Gadi tole of Aurawani VDC reflects:

Everybody in the village here says that the Loktantra and Ganatantra [republican democracy] has come to the country. I have also participated in the different movements. But I do not know when it will come to our remote villages. Throughout my life I have fought for sufficient wage and adequate food. Today, my sons and brothers are also doing the same. In fact, the struggle has been broadened for a new generation...The income for life sustenance is being limited, and sources of expenditure are becoming widened, including the use of recharges [mobiles], school fee of the children, price of seeds and fertilizers [Personal conversation, 17 June 2014].

Chapter Summary

This chapter covers the interpretation and analysis of issues and agendas of the Tharu movement which have created contestations in the rural development. The demands and claims of the Tharu movement seemed to be more broad-based including all dimensions of public life and livelihood. There were direct linkages of the demands of the movement with the political regime of the state (in the center) and the social system (at the rural bottom). The shifting of agendas from narrow cultural world-view (i.e. promotion of language, customs and welfare) in the pre-2000 to broader cultural world-view (i.e. ethnic identity and regional autonomy of Tharuhat) after 2000 was significant. But, in such shifting the economic and political agendas had been less prioritized. Ethnic and regional politics had been dominating, rather than the class politics. At the grassroots level, creation of multiple identities was evidently observed, which brought many people (from different class, regional and ethnic background) together at the same place. In some cases, this had also stimulated a number of collective movements for land and women rights and labor rights (both from the Tharus and non-Tharus). Further, setting of such demands and claims had been questionable, often lacking transparency and denying poor's access to the leadership and decision making process.

CHAPTER- SEVEN

CONSEQUENCES OF THE MOVEMENT AND EFFECTIVENESS IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

This chapter will portray some of the theoretical issues and empirical evidences in dealing with the third research objective of the study. The researcher takes stock of this research question of how has the well-being of people been a function of Tharu movement to impudence political outcomes, including policy making, social justice and ethnic rights, electoral processes and legal decisions. Following this, the chapter will discuss emerging spaces and contestations in terms of people's mobilization, political complexity, manipulation of elites and negotiating actors. Then the chapter will synthesize the contestations in the rural development which were largely created by the impacts of the Tharu movement as rooted in the historical contradictions of the development.

7.1 Theoretical and methodological issues

The consequences of social and ethnic movements in the contesting rural development have been gone with multiple perspectives in international discourse and it also seems true in Nepal's national as well as local context. In the introduction (Chapter 1), the researcher had defined social movements as a discourse of political economy leading its nature and consequences essentially political. He would recite here that the social movement organizations (SMOs) as actors and organizations seeking to alter power deficits and to effect social transformations through the state by mobilizing regular citizens for sustained political action (see Amenta et al., 2010; Tilly, 1999). Yet, the central issue in the literature has been whether social movements have had any major political consequences or can be routinely expected to have them in the rural development affairs and day-to-day life of the people. This would appear to state the obvious, yet the question of whether and how movements matter has been a source of considerable debate (Amenta, 2006; Giugni, 1998; Whittier, 2004).

Theoretically, the researcher also observed many attributes of the Tharu movement in analyzing its impact, effectiveness and well-being as to have a direct impact on

political outcomes. The Tharu movement was generally effective and accountable for the most important political changes. Its impact and effectiveness in rural development were internal to and under the direct control of SMOs. The creation of collective identities and increase in individual and organizational capacities of movement participants, however, played a supportive part for this internality. This finding theoretically contests against the arguments of some researchers (e.g. Burstein & Linton, 2002; Giugni, 2007) who argue that social movements are rarely influential and overall not significantly functional as compared with other political actors, institutions, and processes. Rather, the researcher concludes that the Tharu movement was politically influential for the specific outcomes analyzed. Despite this, the outcomes could not settle the larger questions of whether the social and ethnic movements are generally effective or how influential they are in making the democratic participation and community empowerment in the rural context. This is compatible with the argument of Crossley (2009) who puts the importance of social movement in critical terms. To add: "Social movements are, in effect, natural experiments in power, legitimation and democracy. Their existence, successes, failures and more generally their dynamics, though all incredibly difficult to read and interpret, allow us to gauge the workings of the broader political structures of our society" (p. 9).

Empirically the researcher was seeking to identify the conditions under which the Tharu movement was likely to be influential and saw its impact on the state-led development (in terms of rural development) as a recursive process. The structure and activities of the Nepali state (and the government) influenced the causes and modes of the Tharu movement, and in turn, the movement seemed to influence the state by mobilizing people, resources, and claims around a number of strategies. By large, this research on the contested rural development began by hypothesizing that the contestation would be produced by the movement's four main determinants of mobilization: socio-cultural, political-economic, functional-structural, and organizational-networking (see the conceptual framework in Chapter 3). In this context, the researcher addresses a series of issues in regard to the impact and effectiveness of Tharu movement.

7.2 Political Dimensions of the Consequences

Mapping of movements in the political landscape is one of the critical dimensions of social movement studies. Scholars of the political impacts of movements have moved away from addressing whether movements or organizations are successful in gaining

new benefits or acceptance (Gamson, 1997) and have turned to examining the causal influence of movements on political outcomes and processes drawn from political sociology literature (Amenta & Caren, 2004; Amenta et al., 2002). Following a similar context, Offe (1985) theoretically levels economic growth, distribution, and security as the concerns of “old politics”. According to him, the new politics has emerged as a new paradigm which includes the essentialism of movement dynamics in development discourse and political discourse (p. 824-826). Linking it to the politics and emancipation is somehow complex though. As King puts, “a social movement that only moves people is merely a revolt. A movement that changes both people and institutions is a revolution” (1964/ 2000, p. 4).

Following this, the researcher has observed the main political consequences of Tharu movement at the grassroots level of the social life, which were the extension of ethnic rights and practices and the formation of new political identity. At a more intermediate level were the changes in policy and government approaches, which has provided consistent benefits to a movement’s constituency (the Tharus) as well as aided challengers in struggles against state-led rural development. Tharu based political activism and movements have brought several consequences in Nepali politics. As local evidences suggested, the consequences can be underlined in the following theoretical categorizations.

7.2.1 Emergence of new political and regional elites

In post 2006 context of a social movement, a group of new political elites has emerged in Nepali society that challenged the dominant political forces including the Maoists. In the villages, this new political force, though mainly based on the rich and educated rural people, was comprised with multiple groups involving both the Tharus and non-Tharus. In the platform of Tharuhat movement, the Tharu elites have been pursuing similar discourses and agendas like the Maoist did during the insurgency movement. In addition to incorporating the Maoist agendas, they put emphasis on Tharuhat regionalism, though they did not deny entirely the integrity of the Nepali nation with different provinces. Both the secondary and primary data sources clearly reveal that this regional political force has also largely been a result of the political frustration against the mainstream political parties (such as NC, UML and Maoist). On the other hand, the Maoists who have already been heavily loaded with many promised agendas to each ethnic, caste and minority groups created further frustration to the Tharu people, especially to the elites, and they left to join the new movement. Despite

this, the political opportunism and self-interest tendency has also led to factionalism among the Tharu elites who have been divided into different political parties, NGOs and civil society groups.

7.2.2 Formation of new political identity as alternative to ‘Madhesi identity’

As discussed in previous chapters, the Tharus used to claim that they were the earliest inhabitants of Tarai region who cleared the jungle of the region long before the Madhesis began to settle and, thereby, have more rights to form Tharu-based federal state than any other ethnic groups in the region. Although a small number Tharus had been assimilated with the Madhesis (especially in case of Sunsari), most of them (in case of Dang) did not identify themselves as Madhesis. With the Tharuhat movement, they became conscious about their own identity and resist an inclusive aspect of Madhesi identity.

The ‘political’ identity of the ‘Tharu ethnicity’ was the prominent one about which all the sectors of rural development were contested. How did the cultural part of ethnicity become a political one? This trend was further supported by subsequent observations, including the ethnic wings in political parties and the formation of the political culture of movement in the community. Even a small social event was a subject to rapid politicization and polarization in the society. The welfare approach and cultural conservation strategies of the traditional Tharu movement organizations (e.g. TWS) started to change and adapt the local political context. Such organizations became politically powerful in the villages. Consequently, most of the development programs, including local planning and budgeting of the VDC were politically dealt not by the government decision, but by the bargaining of different political parties and movement groups. To reflect one of the critical observations from the VDC secretary of Chailahi:

Some people and many of the political leaders blame us that the government is doing nothing. This is totally ridiculous. We could not set any development plan and budgeting without the consensus of major political parties. Since last year, we are also inviting the Tharuhat leaders in such meetings. But, there is not unity among the leaders, even to construct small roads in different wards of the VDC. They also show interest in the bidding process of the construction. Many development programs could be accomplished in time and then the budgets were frozen due to political conflict among the party leaders and movement activists. [Based on a personal conversation 3 March 2014]

7.2.3 Creation of an ethno-regional dichotomy

The most significant negative consequence of the Tharu movement is the increasing visibility of socio-psychological and ethno-regional tension and divisions among different ethnic-caste and region-originated communities in Tarai. The confronted communities and their counter-perceptions include Madhesi (perceived with the metaphor of *Deshi*, local inhabitants), Pahadi (perceived as hill-originated migrant people and ruling elites) and the Tharus (perceived as an ethnic indigenous community who claimed to be the original inhabitants of Tarai). Another irony was that the agendas, knowledge and argumentation of Tarai and Madhes-based leaders were simply denied by the Pahadiya leaders or intellectuals, and blamed to be pro-Indian, anti-Tarai-Madhes, anti-nationalist and divisive. Similarly, the leaders and intellectuals of the hill origin had been negatively blamed as being '*shasak barg*', '*janajati birodhi*', '*pariwartan birodhi*', '*pratigami*', and so on. Tharus were unwilling to define the Pahadis living in Tarai as Tarai inhabitants, rather used to consider them as outsiders who settled in the region by deliberate state policies. The construction of such ethno-regional tension has created a socio-psychological tension, though had not turned into the violent agitations against each other as was witnessed between Madhesi vs. Tharu. Moreover, there was not the active opposition of the Pahadis against the Tharu agitations. During the fieldwork, only a few Pahadis and Tharus were found who had moved their houses to a place where their own community people are in majority. Earlier, they used to inhabit together without any apprehension of ethnic division.

7.2.4 Challenge the hierarchical structure of the dominant political parties

As a political force, Tharu movement also challenged the hierarchical structure of the dominant political parties. Many Tharus championed the discourse that the mainstream political parties' leaderships had always at the hand of the hill-originated upper caste Hindu people, though this claim was not locally valid as the researcher would put the evidences in Chapters- 5 and 6 through leadership analysis. In the national leadership of the political parties, there has been a representative position of the Tharus in major political parties in the Central Committees and Politburo Committees. Another contesting factor is that the supreme leaders of the NC and UML were born in the Tarai districts and had witnessed several generations in the region, they were called 'Ruling elites of Pahadiya origin'. Some Tharu political activists whose political affiliation has shifted towards the regionally-informed Madhes and Tarai-based

parties from the mainstream parties often justify their reasons in terms of their underestimated positions in the party. However, they didn't want to talk about the issues of socioeconomic disparities within the Madhes and their personal qualification and dedications that would require for the leadership. Nevertheless, the rise of Tharu political frontiers has already weakened the dominant presence of the mainstream national political parties in the region. In this context, the mainstream national political parties are now reconsidering their organizational structure to distribute the parties' positions in terms of underprivileged ethnic-caste and regional varieties, which might help get back their former supporters in Tarai region.

7.2.5 Influence of ethnic wings in the major political parties

Formation of ethnic wings in the major political parties was also phenomenal in the local politics and development. Due to the popular uprising of the Tharu movement after 2006, major political parties started to establish separate wings as their sister organizations. There were a number of Madhesi wings and Tharu wings in the villages of both districts which emerged as movement organizations. However, Madhesi groups were in majority in Sunsari and Tharu groups in Dang. It could be due to the demographic setting (dominance of the Madhesi caste group in Sunsari and the dominance of the Tharu ethnic group in Dang) of the districts which often coupled with the mass demonstrations in the Madhes movement and Tharu movement. All the major political parties, including NC, CPN (UML) and CPN (Maoist-Centre) had their Tharu community-based wings extended up to the district and VDC levels (e.g. Loktantrik Tharu Sangh of NC, Loktrantik Tharu Morcha of UML and Tharuwan Mukti Morcha of Maoist-Centre). These networks were highly mobilized during the elections for CA in 2008 and 2012. Though these organizations differed in ideological perspective of their mother parties, it is interesting to note that most of the leaders of these wings were also the local leaders of the Tharu movement, and some of them also led its leadership. Consequently, they started to play a dual role from the different capacities they would have in the given hierarchy of power relations. The Case Study 7.1 of a school teacher recruitment process represents how politics was shaped and negotiation occurred in the villages.

Case 7.1: The politics in recruitment of teacher in a school

When this researcher was living in a home of Chetram Chaudhary at Lagadi village of the Chailahi VDC in Dang during his main field visit in early in 2013, a group of the Tharu people came to meet Chetram to dismiss the decision of a School Management Committee that recently recruited a teacher from a non-Tharu community in the

Bangaun Secondary School. Chetram had a number of responsibilities at the same time: an active member of the NC and of the Tharu Loktrantik Sangh, secretary of Area Committee of TWS in Deukhuri region, local leader of the Tharuhat movement, a former school teacher of Bangaun School. The researcher followed the case. Major political parties were involved in this case who would get an economic commission on a monthly basis from the selected candidate (30% of his salary). The Tharu leaders who denied such type of commission, now started to claim a larger share in the commission. In surface, there was a demand of nomination of Tharu candidate instead of the non-Tharu, but hidden reality lied in the share of the commission. When all the leaders became ready to share the commission equally, the Tharu leaders agreed to support the whole process of candidate selection in the school.

The political outcomes and the idea of 'success' of the Tharu movement generally did not correspond well with the degree of potential influence over the state and political processes. In particular, success of the movement was perceived as the realization of new advantages and political goals, such as gaining ethnic rights and identity. But, there were some perceptions regarding the 'failure' of the Tharu movement which had limited the consideration of many possible political impacts. The movement organizations and activists had failed to achieve their stated program—and thus be deemed a failure—but still won substantial new advantages for their constituents. Indeed, there was a situation which was politically structured and could falsify the far-reaching goals of Tharu movement. For example, most of the long-term strikes of the Tharu movement (except the one which held in 2012 February) during the study period terminated without any agreements between the organization leadership (TWS and/or TJSC) and the Government of Nepal. In the FGDs and interviews, it was quite evident that the sentiment of people regarding the movement was becoming reluctant for the participation and sacrifice in the name of 'Tharuhat'. As one of the research participants lamented that:

I am a father of Prakash Chaudhary, who was killed in the Tharuhat movement in 2065 [13 March 2009] in Sisahaniya, Dang. Many leaders, including non-Tharus came to me and expressed their deep condolence. But what after then? The Tharuhat movement became very powerful and it soon speeded over the whole Tarai... I have nothing to gain from the leaders. But, in the name of Prakash and other martyrs, many people became leaders of the movement. But today, no one [Tharu leaders] comes to us and likes to see our problems. Neither I got anything yesterday, nor am I expecting from them today. I just want to ask the leaders what the value of life of my son is. [Based on the researcher's personal conversation, 24 March 2014]

7.2.6 Fluidity in movement leadership

Though the TM has got a political identity with a wider exposure of Tharu leaders nationally and locally, the leaders were divided and everyone was claiming to be the authentic leadership. Nationally, the major political parties were divided regarding the worldviews of Tharu movement and their demands. The demand of Tharuhat autonomous region was one of the contested issues, which radicalized both national

and local politics. Some Tharu leaders of the major political parties have left their parties and entered into the 'Tharuhat movement', whereas some of them have recently gone back to the home parties.

Moreover, when the researchers interviewed the key leaders with TWS, TJSC, BASE and other leading movement organizations, he found that there was not any consistent vision of agendas. Though they were talking about ethnic identity, they could not define the identity in a scientific basis regarding what was exactly told by the government and what they wanted to change in it. It led to another contestation, i.e. formation of Tharu-based political party and participation in the election (even of CA) in the region. The establishment of Tharuhat Autonomous State Council (TASC) in 2007 and Tharuhat Tarai Party Nepal (TTPN) in 2012 were some of the examples of this very initiative of the Tharu movement in political negotiation process. The TASC participated in first CA in 2008 while the TTPN took part in the second CA on November 2013 (see also Chapter 2). But, empirically, what is evident is that only a few Tharu people were mobilized under these parties, particularly in Dang. It was due to a number of causes. First, the leaders who were involved in making the TASC (e.g. Laxamn Tharu) established the TPPN in 2012. Thus, the leadership was not new and unique for the people.

Second, there was no co-ordination and alliance between these two Tharu-based parties in the context of CA election and the Tharu movement. Moreover, each of them claimed to be carrying the legacy of TM levelling the other as being 'abandoned' from the movement. Third, the entering of the main leaders from TPPN in the Madhesi Janaadhikar Forum (Loktrantik) in 2013 and some other Tharu leaders into the other Madhes-based political parties created a crucial departure of Tharus from the ethics of the movement as the movement was initially rooted with the alternative praxis of Madhes movement in the region. With the enactment of new constitution in 2015, both the mainstreams of Tharuhat and Madhesi movements are organizing their agitations under a common alliance (the Federal alliance) where twenty eight major regional based political parties are united. The alliance has demanded identity-based demarcation of the states and proportional representation based on their population. It has diluted the hairlines between the campaigns of Tharu and Madhesi though it could be hardly imagined in the early years of the movement. These rapidly changes scenarios indicate that the Movement has become more fluid in nature, and the dynamics of fluidity cannot be easily predicted because of loss of leadership, ideology, electoral strategies and immediate benefits of the actors. Theoretically saying, these

losses, alliances and uncertainties are quite comparable and mutually inclusive in movement pragmatism. As Conway (2007) asserts:

Coalition of social movements is a particularly fertile for the production of social movement knowledge. They are political spaces where the sustained encounter across constituencies and issues produces new cultural, political and organizational practices. Coalitions are spaces of experimentation, and this is especially important in a period of flux and uncertainty in both practice and theory (p. 8).

7.2.7 Reduced distance between Kathmandu, and Dang and Sunsari

Politically, the TM has been an unavoidable component of the peace process and conflict management. The development agendas such as rural development, regional development and community developments have become more targeted for the Tharus with respect to their demographic and social characteristics. Moreover, the new political elites of Tharu community could reduce the distance between the center (Kathmandu) and the periphery (Tarai/ Madhes). These political elites, who had no opportunity to be part of the state power, became negotiator and important actors of the state. Despite this, the geographic interdependencies of Kathmandu and movement districts could not essentially lead to the political interdependencies to break the elite domination for which the larger mass of poor Tharus as well as non-Tharus had been denied historically. Now their social and political grievances have been recognized in various political and legal structures including the constitution of Nepal in 2015. Social and political integration of the Tharus to Nepali state and nation has been heightened than any other time in the history. Despite such changes, forms of ethnic and region-based tensions have been constantly emerging and getting polarized at local levels. Based on the field reflections, the researcher therefore would argue that if the tripartite separation and division among Madhesis, Tharu and Pahadi would not be addressed and resolved at the community and political levels, social harmony might be at risk in the years to come.

7.2.8 Conversion of 'political culture' into the 'movement culture'

As reflected in the discussions regarding well-being ranking and leadership analysis, the social and political statuses of the Tharu political elites have been transformed in the recent years. The elites have developed as iconic leaders of the movement and they have shifted from general elite of the political parties to the specific elites of the Tharuhat (the cases are methodologically sensitive, but the researcher has some evidences to reflect the personal case histories of the changing elite roles of Rajkumar Lekhi, Laxman Tharu, Yogendra Chaudhary, Gopal DA Hit, Ramjanam Chaudhary).

Earlier they used to compete with the mainstream national political elites, now they need to compete amongst themselves and in the future they would be more fragmented in securing the power of newly formed federal states in the Tarai.

Beneath the elite layer of the movement, there has been a young generation with different kinds of movement aspirations. The rural unemployment seems to be one of the major factors in pushing the youths for more alienation. Search of new life options, employment opportunities, wage chores and availability of social services have been phenomenal factors which have contributed to change to close status of Tharu community into an open and modern one. Amidst these factors, there were some beneficial consequences, although not intended formally. The realization of political power has been integral to the public as they wished they could through the peace movements. In the villages of the Aurawani, the support of vegetable farmers in the Tharu movement was an exemplary for this. A continuous strike of the Tharus started in 2012 February throughout the Tarai region. The Tharu movement postponed after 13 days of continuity, but the farmers did not postpone the movement and continued additionally for a week. Later, it formed a strong base for peasant movement and the labor movement in the region. Consequently, it could be able to raise the daily wage of the laborers working in the Duhabi industrial area, as was executed from 1st May on 2013. This is exactly what some scholars argue that the people can do worse than fail; they can be poor, but not the foolish, and they can be ignorant but not stupid (Korten, 1980; Snow & Soule, 2009).

There was also an alternative based on the concept of collective goods or on group-wise advantages or disadvantages. Theoretically, both the non-participants and participants, and the well-off and impecunious cannot be easily excluded, and here the researcher would focus explicitly on the state and political processes to impact on a broader political life. In the rural regions, most of the political collective goods were material and statistical, such as the number of Tharu who got good education, owned homes and land, and got nominated in the social organizations. But, within this, there was also an existence of less tangible issues; such as the question of who took the ruling position in the leadership and why this would be functional. As an example, the researcher got encountered with a debate in an FGD conducted in Lagadi village, Dang [13 February 2014]:

Leader: "We made a lot of progress and established our strong position in the VDC affairs; there a condition has come that they [VDC officials] could not take budgetary decisions and all party consensus without the support of the Tharu movement leaders."

Supporter: “[Pointing to the leader] what did you say? Why did you nominate your son-in-law as a chief of the Kamaiya co-ordination committee? I know he is a landlord of our village, and when did he become Kamaiya and how did he fit into this position?”

The benefits and positions were highly contested. The ideas regarding new benefits and collective goods have been connected to political and sociological concepts (see Amenta et al. 2002). From this perspective, the greatest impact is the one that provides a group with continuing leverage over political processes and increases the political returns to the collective action of the movement. The researcher was also instated with this perspective. The gains were, however, usually not at a structural or systemic level of Nepali society and state, which remained historically exclusionary and elite-driven in many ways (see Chapter 2 for the nature of Nepali state). Thus, the manifestations of the Tharu movement constituted a kind of meta-collective benefit to the Tharus. The gains were also observed in the mainstreaming of the development practices of the state, such as in the legal guarantee of the ethnic rights and the priority in the janajati-oriented development projects and policies in periodic plans and annual budgets. Constitutional guarantee for an inclusive state and governance seems one of the important achievements in the movement dynamics. To mention the fifth paragraph of the Preamble of the constitution of Nepal 2015 (p. iii):

Protecting and promoting social and cultural solidarity, tolerance and harmony, and unity in diversity by recognizing the multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-religious, multi-cultural and diverse regional characteristics, resolving to build an egalitarian society founded on the proportional inclusive and participatory principles in order to ensure economic equality, prosperity and social justice, by eliminating discrimination based on class, caste, region, language, religion and gender and all forms of caste-based untouchability.

7.3 Collective Actions and Negotiations through Policy

The researcher has observed a number of policy implications and contestations in rural development in the study region. It is quite evident that the collective actions were fragmented due to policy dilemmas and negotiations. In such a fragmentation, bureaucratic reform and policy reforms were localized by the state while the setting of the agenda and mobilization of people were the initiatives of the non-state actors (i.e. the Tharu movement). In connection to this, the empirical findings were three-folded.

7.3.1 Setting of the agendas

There were the collective actions through agenda setting of the movement and mobilization of the people. This was particularly led by the leadership of the TM and the movement organizations, including TWS and TJSC. Different kinds of issues were

set as the agendas of the TM and the people were mobilized to fulfil these goals; though these strategies were not set broadly and inclusively.

While the SMOs placed their issues onto the political agenda (see Chapter 6 for the agendas), it has increased its probability of winning some collective benefits for the movement's largest constituency. The impacts of movement in the process of creating new laws that contain collective benefits were channeled into a number of ways, including the agenda setting, legislative practices and implementation. However, the government did not form separate policy arrangements to address the issues of Tharu movement or the demands of Tharu community, because there were a number of ethnic movements and regional protests – countering each other in many ways. For example, once, while the researcher was doing his field visit in Sunsari, he was surprised to see the *Sunsari banda* (shut down) organized separately by the three ethnic alliances (Khumbuwan, Tharuhat and Kochila) at the same time.

The emergence of political agendas within the movement mattered in achieving local development gains. With this, the coverage and intensity of the protest activities were most influential at the early stages of the rural development planning in the ward levels and VDC councils. In both the districts – Dang and Sunsari – the meetings of village development council and district development councils were mandatory to represent the Tharus. It indicates that there had been a noticeable increase in the political power of the previously neglected Tharus.

7.3.2 Policy and bureaucratic reforms

Social movements are part of policy reform process, though the dimensions of those outcomes are debated globally (Amenta, 2003). In the Tharu movement context, manifestation of policy reforms and bureaucratic reforms were locally constructed with the movement praxis. While the Ministry of General Administration has not disaggregated statistics of government employees by caste or ethnicity, the Government of Nepal has committed itself to reserving 27 percent of all government jobs for Adibasi Janajatis, of which the Tharus are the second largest group (Nepal Civil service Act, second amendment, 2007). The state did policy reforms to address the growing demands of the ethnic movements, though the Tharus were categorized within the 'Madhesi group' in Representative Bill in 2009. This created further disagreement with the Tharus and was amended which granted the Tharus a separate ethnic representation within the janajati category. The positive discrimination, proportional representation and reservation all became a crucial part of policy reform in

the country. Under the new state policy, 55 percent is recruited from open competition and remaining 45 percent is from social inclusion quota. Of the inclusion quotas, 28 percent is for Madhesi, 32 percent for various ethnic groups, 20 percent for women, 15 percent for Dalits and 5 percent for various backward groups. What is important is that the Tharus along with all other ethnic and regional groups began to negotiate for the integration process of a new Nepal, where all diverse communities would be recognized and granted equal rights. By incorporating Tharu people in different state organs, however, has strengthened the integrity of Nepal. It started categorical and targeted inclusive programs in the state structures, including civil service, security forces, and constitutional organs and even in the diplomatic agencies. Many Acts, Rules and Regulations, including the election guidelines and user group formations, were then amended to ensure such positive discriminations.

In the state actors who were aligned with the VDC level, there was a shift in their working behavior and attitude towards the Tharus. As many of the research participants perceived, the Tharus (particularly the poor ones) who were previously neglected now became respected in the society, and their burdens with the administrative services started to decrease drastically. Various vocational training programs, poverty reduction strategies, women empowerment, micro-credit programs also became part and parcel of local development planning. The Tharus gained rights of entitlement as the beneficiaries to these benefits of inclusive policies. One of the members of the CA, Shanta Chaudhary in Dang remarked this progress as:

We cannot do everything overnight. Nepali state is being inclusive. There are many Tharu leaders in the CA. Though I was an ex-Kamlahari and I did not get any chance of education and personal development, I also attended the Assembly. The reservations for the Tharus and women in all the sectors have been increased. They can enter into the service by both open and closed lists. It is our great achievement to increase our prestige and status as a Tharu. [Based on a personal conversation, 5 April, 2014]

Empirically, the inclusive policies and programs were less tenable for some research participants. Critics suggest that the gains of local development and political changes were manifested as the elite interests, which ever favored to the big farmers, local leaders, well-off people and other upper caste non-Tharu groups. For example, many poor people in the villages did not find any meaning in such targeted programs, or in the reformist policies. The elites were privileged in every aspect of local politics, including the VDC council, party mechanisms and movement organizations. The regulatory bureaucracy could not do any more in such elitist networks. The recruitment

of illiterate members in the CA from the proportional representation quota was one of such debated issues during the tenure of the first CA (2008-2012) and its still continued to the second CA in 2013. Most of the research participants in the villages who belonged to the non-Tharu ethnic group heavily criticized this positive discrimination policy. They said that there were no defined rules and criteria for the talent and capability of the individual in the selection process. To represent an emerging reaction among the youths of non-ethnic background in Bhasi:

Where do we have to go? The upper caste groups and younger generations have very limited options in the selection process. Is this a rule of justice? This will ruin the whole governance system of the state... As we saw Shanta Chaudhary as a CA member who just passed the grade 5: is she rational to represent the constitution writing process? Again, what can we predict about the representation of Binod Chaudhary, the billionaire member of the CA? All these systems won't care to the rural poor and was designed mainly to reassure an audience of voters, particularly from the janajati communities [and the Tharus]. [Based on a personal conversation, 29 June 2014]

7.3.3 Nexus of state vs non-state actors

There were a number of negotiations, emerging consistently in between the state and the non-state actors. In terms of the welfare activities and reformist strategies, there was not any tensions emerged in the working of both the actors. Different kinds of welfare activities were promoted by the Tharu welfare groups and cultural groups to enhance the awareness and capability of the Tharus. The government had also launched a number of welfare programs, including vocational training, empowerment of women, vaccination and immunization of the children, and micro finance and saving.

The researcher had also observed that some of the welfare activities were promoted with a combined effort of the twos. The role of TWS of Dang and Jhumka Jaycees (an NGO) of Sunsari was remarkable in this regard. Through some reform policies, the state has ratified and attempted to undermine emerging collective identities of the Tharus and helped to create new ones (in terms of gender, for example), though often inadvertently. Insofar as the movement organizations (MOs) constructed a new collective identity that extended to a beneficiary group (the Tharus) and provided psychological rewards, winning a political affirmation of this identity including the Kamaiyas and Kamalaries. Most of the research participants agreed that this was their community 'Tharu' which became known not only at local region but also national and international level. It was what a potentially important courage and desire for the emancipation as mentioned in the following interview quote:

I had myself been fighting with the [Kamalahari] system and had been a victim of exploitation by the owner. So, there was a sour feeling in my heart that it is not right for a human being to be a slave to, or under oppression from, another human being. And I felt I had to raise my voice against the system and many people, including the both Tharu and non-Tharu supported our campaign of the rescue of the Kamalahari sisters. [Based on a personal conversation of researcher with Manjita Chaudhary, program coordinator of the Freed Kamalahari Development Forum, 29 May 2013]

7.3.4 Central vs. local agitations

Most of approaches and strategies of Tharu movement were designed at the central level, with exceptions of some short-term strategies at the local. This followed a kind of top-down approach. When the researchers reviewed the documents (e.g. meeting decisions, and statements of the movement organizations) they clearly revealed that the benefits would continue to flow from Kathmandu (which could negotiate the state) level to the rural regions unless some countervailing action was taken. Most of the leaders and activists and representatives of non-state actors in the VDCs generally wanted major legislative changes in state policy (at the center) and the bureaucratic enforcement and implementation of that policy for the larger benefits of the rural people (at the periphery). However, these demands were largely contested with the perceptions of local people who used to view the leadership and development as an 'unholy combination of destiny', as a political analyst pointed in an interview with the researcher. Despite this, most of the representatives of the state actors (e.g. VDC secretaries) often claimed that the government policies were, to some extent, institutionalized benefits that provided collective goods in a routine fashion to all those meeting specified requirements.

Following these claims, when the researcher asked the secretaries to show the political and legal engagements of those poor groups, including the Tharus in their decision making systems and local development plans, the fact was very depressing. For example, there were only three women involved in the ward citizen's forums (out of nine in a VDC) of Saudiyar in Dang. There was no any representation of Tharu women, though they were in the majority in most of the ward's population. The case of ward 7 of the Aurawani VDC in Sunsari also followed the similar tragedy. Though there were 115 HHs in the ward, including 95 HHs of Tarai and hill Dalits, the ward citizen forum could not represent any Dalits. Rather, some of the members of the forum were brought by another ward's upper caste groups and Madhesis. Again, this was what happening in the name of inclusion and positive discrimination approach of the state. To reflect a voice of the Dalit in Saudiyar:

I am a young boy of 19. I could not pass the SLC [high school level] due to my domestic problems. Does the government policy work for me? It will need a higher level of education. Nor have we such special training. There are no any Dalits and Tharus who have passed the SLC in this ward [ward no. 6 of Aurawani VDC]. I don't think that it will work for our family and our wives. [Based on a personal conversation of the researcher with Chandan Harijan, 3 July 2014]

7.3.5 Public responses, emotions and preferences

Many global questions regarding whether or not, most movements have mattered in development outcomes or to what extent have not been conclusively addressed (Bebbington, 2010). Indeed, the outcomes are reflected within the construction of emotions of people. The emotions in the broader sense involve both the public sphere of the movement and the preferences of the people. Undoubtedly, social movements produce emotions; and the emotions produce the movements. However, the social movements do not simply reflect emotional orientations, but also predict the emotions as collective behaviors. Social movements also differ in the extent to which and the manner in which they build normative structures for emotions (Jasper, 2010). In the Tharu movement context, the researcher observed that SMOs and other civic organizations had been influential to create a broader level of emotions to respond to the movement, emotions; often contingent on goals, activities, and forms of organization. It was also evident that movement influence depended in part on the circumstances under which movements contended or was confined to the agenda-setting.

The setting of movement in all the VDCs and wards was somehow different though the common center for demonstrations were the local markets or bazaars. For example, in the Saudiyar (Dang) and Aurawani (Sunsari) VDCs the movement often targeted to go to the district headquarters because of their lacking of strategic locations and participation of people. The Lamahi of Chailhai (Dang) and the Jhumka of Bhasi (Sunsari) were the two local epicenters in both the districts. Yet, for several reasons, the study could conclusively answer why public demonstrations were massive in the markets and more accessible areas as compared to rural and remote areas. It was typically found to be contingent on other circumstances, such as favorable political alignment, road networks, social mobility, mass population, representation of media and civil societies in these regions. However, ascertaining the degree to which movements have preferred regionally would require analyses over long time periods and across many different movements, issue areas, and countries. The researcher's

frequent field visits in the region during the study time helped him to make some consistent claims in this regard.

Empirically, the Tharu movement was causally influential as various political institutions, conditions, and actors previously in the villages found to affect the rural development at large. Those conditions, institutions, and actors have largely created a public sphere of the movement and of the local politics. In shaping the consequences, there was a mixed tone of responses of public spheres which came as a manifestation of diverse social relations and actors existing in the society. It included both organizational as well as individual levels of the leaders, intellectuals, supporters, followers, opponents, and diverse form of state and non-state actors. Following their perceptions and activities, the researcher has categorized six types of public response for and against the Tharu movement, including fair participation, active participation, ignorance, co-option, resistance, and suppression. These strategies have been dealing with the following sub-sections:

7.3.5.1 Fair participation:

As a constituent of this public sphere, some people were fairly participating while some actively participated in the movement. The fairly participated groups included an ordinary mass of Tharu community, particularly the lower class people, women, poor farmers, Kamaiya and Kamlahari. Their fair participation was evidenced with a number of contexts as they narrated. For example, most of them felt that neither the government agencies included them in development programs, nor the political parties did understand their grievances. Moreover, the Tharuhat leaders also did not want to address their issues by highlighting the common agenda of the Tharu movement. Therefore, a kind of frustration was emerging among these groups and did not want to engage actively in the movement.

7.3.5.2 Active participation:

Of course, the actively participating members included the movement organizations/ members, leaders, activists, central and regional networks. For their pro-active involvement and communication strategies, the researcher has given a number of cases in many places in the chapter (see also Chapter 5). Theoretically, this can be labelled as an essentialist approach or primordialist orientation of ethnicity, which often claimed ethnic bases of the Tharus for their immediate emancipation. Contesting this activism, most of the people responded to the movement just as ignoring it, or by giving sometimes a moral support in some issues. Indeed, this was a huge mass of people in the villages who did this type of moral support to the movement of the

Tharus. This included upper caste people and political elites of the villages who were being displaced from their home and workplaces of Tarai due to Madhesi movement since 2008 particularly in Sunsari district. The hill-janajatis (particularly Rai and Limbu in Sunsari, and the Magars in Dang) were also supporting the movement because of the political campaigning of NEFIN for the ethnic people's mobilization in the context of constitution writing.

It should be noted here that though all the ethnic groups struggled for the ethnic identity and they had a number of common issues (e.g. proportional representation, and ILO Convention) to negotiate with the state, the leadership of those groups contested each other. For example, the researcher's interviews revealed that the secretary of the Khumbuwan State Council heavily criticized the role of Tharuhat leadership. The Tharu leaders did show a similar kind of egoism to the leaders of other ethnic groups. Notwithstanding this, The Tarai Dalits and Muslims showed sympathy for the Tharus because all these groups were categorized under the 'Madhesi group' in 2009 for which they also organized a collective protest with the Tharus. The moral support of the upper caste Hindus and Dalits was also shaped by both the empirical context and psychological reward.

7.3.5.3 Co-option:

Following the above spheres, there was another kind of public response which often focused on the co-option and inclusion of genuine issues of the Tharu movement into a broader framework of policies. The group in favor of co-option often wanted to address the movement issues by policy negotiations, including different reformative measures such as positive discrimination. It included social movement activists, civil societies and non-state actors, and a very few people of bureaucracy. Theoretically, this position of public response can be labeled as a constructive approach of ethnicity, which often values the rights to development and participatory social relations. With this liberal position, they often focused on the economic inclusiveness of the poor Tharus, such as by promoting scientific agricultural policies on behalf of them. Despite this, the issue of political change was more important in the villages which could satisfy the movement sentiments and promote the courage to the people.

7.3.5.4 Resistance:

Contesting the worldviews of active participation and co-option, some people wanted to resist and suppress the Tharu movement. It was often ideological, but there were a few cases of physical resistance, too. The researcher could not find any groups in the villages who wanted to suppress or resist the TM by an open violence. Most of the

state-actors (security and bureaucracy) and a group of Madhesi movement/leaders wanted to resist the movement in a way. The state actors, including security forces in all the VDCs explained their strategies with the researcher that they should maintain law and order thereby respecting the existing policies and security sensitivity.

Following this, some Madhesi groups, particularly the sister organizations of the Madhes-based political parties maintained a suppressive views towards the Tharu movement. This was often evident in Sunsari and in the villages of Dang. The leaders of those groups said that the Tharus should not negate the Madhesi in the name of Tharuhat. Some of the leaders also claimed that the Madhesi movement became violent because of the violent nature of Tharu and other caste/ ethnic groups. Contesting this, some of the Madhesi leaders defended that they did not fight against any groups, including hilly migrants or the Tharus, but against the state. One of the prominent Madhesi leaders mentioned that Madhesi and Tharu were the oppressed groups in the Madhes, so they could have a common movement in the days to come. Empirically, the leaders never attempted for this type of collective movement, though some Tharu leaders joined Madhes-based party in 2012. It has made the movement always crossed by Tharu ethnicity to the Madhes-based regionalism. Despite this, most of the research participants of the Tharu community introduced that they were the Tharus, not the Madhesis.

7.4 Discontinuity in the Collective Framework of the Movement

From the very beginning of the thesis, the researcher has mentioned that the nature of social life of the Tharus is heterogeneous in nature. Following this, the empirical findings (as in Chapters - 5 and 6) also suggested that movement was heterogeneous in terms of its agenda, organizations and leadership. In consequence, this was further evident as a discontinuity in the movement which theoretically challenges 'continuous negotiations' notion of the social movements as opined by some scholars (e.g. Della Porta & Diani, 2015; Tarrow, 2011). Probably with this disguising of the movements and sudden appearances, with plural worldviews and emotions, Melucci advocates 'listening' to social movements rather than moving too quickly to 'resolve' them or the questions they raise (1996, p. 2). Empirically, however, it has created different consequential effects and spaces in the rural development affairs.

7.4.1 Ideological discontinuity

Even though the Tharu movement recognized constitution making context as an opportunity to overcome from a historic oppression of the Tharus, it could not identify its constraints and limitations. Theoretically, some scholars (e.g. Giddens, 2009) argue that the political opportunities within the existing structures can influence the trajectory of ethnic and social movements. In turn, the ideology of ethnic centrism and determinism was more dominant in the development visions and in agenda setting rather than structural changes in class relations. Consequently, it created the rooms for elites to play in the way whatever they liked in the name of emancipation of the Tharus. For example, in case of Aurawani VDC-3, there were a few families of Tharu and Dalit squatters living in a community land of the river side (Koshi canal). They were actively mobilized in the Tharuhat movement and have taken part in most of the demonstrations since 2006. Even before that, they participated in the political movements of 1990 and 2006 including the Maoist conflict. Most of them in interviews and group discussions revealed that their only one motive of the participation was the land registration, i.e. the land now, which they used to live in should be in their own. On 2012 October the VDC office approved to pledge the land to those families with the permission of the Chief District Officer. When they went into the District Land Revenue Office for the claim, the squatters surprised when the officials told that the land was already registered by some people of their own VDC. After getting this narrative, the researcher then followed the case. He found that the three people in Aurawani transferred the land in their own name rather than giving it to the landless squatters. These people were the middle-class elites who belonged to Tharuhat Tarai Party Nepal, NC and CPN (M-C). A similar case was observed in Chailahi Dang, where the land of Kamaiya provided by the government after their emancipation was registered in the name of local elites of the villages.

7.4.2 Discontinuity in terms of leadership and organization

The statutory regulations in Nepal did not allow the formation of an ethnically based political party or a cultural party. Historically, this has been never done because of the lacking of Tharu-based ethnic parties. But the internal dynamics of the political parties was infiltrated by ethnic movements in a regional setting and rural setting of VDC councils, All Party Mechanisms, School Management Committees, and Forest User Groups. The local leaders often belonged to major political parties and played a dual role in local development and in the movement. There was a sudden emergence and disappearance of the leaders in his frequent visiting in the villages, the researcher

found different persons as leaders of the movement. The TJSC was also not mobilized on a regular basis. It was formed in peak hours of the movement, immediately mobilized, and left passive after some time. It was very interesting to see that there were not any consistent claims, even in the name of this committee. In interviews and the public speeches, some activists (e.g. Laxman Tharu, Gopal Dahit) claimed that it was Tharuhat Joint Struggle Committee while some (e.g. Indrajeet Tharu) claimed that it was Tharuwan Joint Struggle Committee. In between them some of the activists (e.g. Metmani Chaudhary) also claimed that it should be simply Tharu Joint Struggle Committee or Tharuhat/ Tharuwan Joint Struggle Committee. There was nothing new in their arguments, however. Different kinds of personal egos (e.g. in elections), previous background (e.g. political parties) and existing political interests (the credit of the movement) of the leaders played a crucial role in these debates.

Indeed, the ethnic elites within the TJSC and TWS wanted to gain power by negotiating with the political parties – from the central level to the village level. Most of the events which were observed regularly by the researcher and the views of the research participants upon them reflected that their endeavors failed to establish ethnic causes as a collective colloquium among the Tharu people of the villages. Rather, the grievances of people were increasing day by day and the government largely neglected these issues. It could not promote the service deliveries in an efficient way through the people's representatives in the local bodies (see Chapter 5). Consequently, it created a kind of vacuum in the local politics and in the Tharu movement too, bringing no public support and legitimacy in a long-term mobilization. Most of the research participants in many villages claimed that they did not have any representatives to negotiate with the VDC and the government. Despite this, the ethnic elites tried to mobilize ethnic loyalties and identity issues behind them during the elections for the Constituent Assembly 2013. They did these campaigns on behalf of their own political parties (e.g. NC, UML, CPN-MC or so on) or by the recently established Tharu-based political parties, including Tharuhat Autonomous State Council and Tharuhat Tarai Party Nepal. The election results pushed them to a further weakened position as most of the Tharu leaders in the study regions were defeated despite having a majority of the Tharu voters in the election. Indeed, this was a setback for the Tharu movement in its organizational and leadership dimension.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Ironically, they could not make electoral alliance to ensure the constituencies in the CA and parliament. Both the parties had lost their seats in their own region in the first-past-post system. The TJSC and TWS were also divided to support their election campaign.

7.4.3 Strategic discontinuity

Aforementioned two discontinuities led to a third component of discontinuity, i.e. the strategic. The review of the political documents of the movement activists and coding of the transcribed interviews of the activists reflected that there was not fixed strategy of the movement. Was it welfare or of radical; old or a new, there was not any clear evidences. Nor could they have any strategies to challenge the conventional development discourses/ practices of the state, though the interests of the leaders in local budgeting were very much acknowledged by the most of the research participants. For example, in case of Aurawani, some of the leaders and VDC officials were found to be involved in the collection of tax from the local haat bazaar. Both the parties, instead of being responsible towards people, were sharing the economic gains from such a collection. In Chailahi, the researcher observed a similar case where there was an equal sharing of the economic gains from the bidding of sands and gravels on the (Arjun Khola) river side. The VDC officials, Tharuhat leaders (from TJSC), members of major political parties and some NGOs (e.g. Srijanshil) were involved in such activities and the security force was also claiming for its part.

7.4.4 Undefined boundary-line of political parties, NGOs and Tharuhat movement

Not surprisingly, some of the ethnic movements and organizations were also turning into the local NGOs, and in some cases, the NGOs had also become the movement and then a political party. For example, most of the Tharu leaders were still affiliated with Basic Society Education (BASE) and the Tharu Indigenous NGO Federation (TINF). Following the case the researcher knew a leader who was in the leadership position of TJSC, was also the president of TINF and who had been recently nominated as a member of CA in December 2013. When the researcher asked him about his position, he diplomatically replied that the leaders of other caste/ethnic group could do everything, but people only questioned the Tharu leader's personal life which he did not think worth answering. Tharu movement was not only the case for this, though. Historically, the critics say that the Madhes movement was initially campaigned by an NGO named *Madhesi Jana Adhikar Forum Nepal*, which later became a powerful political party in the region in 2007. Indeed, the growing ethnic and regional issues in the last decade compelled all major political parties to establish separate wings for the different ethnic groups (see Chapter 5). Even the class-based Marxist parties, including the CPN (Maoist-Centre) turned for ethnicity after its entry into the peace process from November 2006. This further braided pro-ethnic issues and the Tharu movement remained not exceptional, nationally and locally. There were

some striking questions, therefore, relating to the conditions of the Tharu movement and/or mobilization becoming a political party. This illustrates a transformation process, turning political parties into ethnic movements, and ethnic movements into the NGOs or vice-versa.

7.5 Representation and Participation of People

Scholars have focused on a movement's mobilizing structures, framing and other strategies, and political contexts favorable to mobilization (McAdam et al., 1996). Foucault (1980) very critically observed that representation of people is itself a politics and the truth of participation is not outside the power. These arguments hold true in case of the Tharu movement. Specific forms of Tharu organizations, strategies, and political complexities in the villages paved the ways for representation and participation of people in the movement. For this, the researcher has observed the following two empirical foundations:

7.6.1 Mobilization of the people

7.6.1.1 Search for resources and comparative advantages

The simplest argument has been that mobilization in itself is likely to be influential; a throwback to rational choice accounts in which once a collective action problem (say, gaining an ethnic identity) is solved, a collective benefit (recognition) is automatically provided. In the Tharu movement, the ability to mobilize different sorts of resources (including organizational and financial) were thus the key to the impact of movements, and mobilization of resources and membership did provide some political influence. Because the possibility of having influence was based on the survival of Tharu movement organizations, the organizational characteristics that promoted it cannot be ignored. The changing nature of TJSC, TWS and other influential movement organizations were in crisis (of ideology and leadership---see Chapters - 5 and 6) which could not prolong the mass-based movement in the region. But there was little room for alternative movement organizations because these were always grabbed by the power elites to saturate their interests. To quote a movement participant from Lamahi:

Where do we have to go? Who can reduce the conflict between *kalyankarini* [TWS] and *sangharsa samiti* (TJSC)? The same leaders are playing the same card...no one can win! If the welfare of the Tharu people is the same motto for all of us, then why do they have differences in organizational and leadership forms? [Based on a personal conversation, 23 January 2014]

Thus, the researcher witnessed multiple worldviews at times in addressing which forms of organization or mobilizing structures were likely to promote well-being of people. But, he found that long-term organizations which were bureaucratic in nature (e.g. TWS, cultural groups) were more likely to gain new advantages. Beyond that, the induced organizations (e.g. pressure groups, and some youth clubs in villages) with greater strategic resources were deemed and likely to prevail for short-time over others in the field. Resourceful Tharu movement infrastructures, including diverse leaders, complex leadership structures, multiple organizations, informal ties, and resources coming substantially from members, would have larger demonstrations and mass appeal. Yet organizations designed to mobilize Tharu people and resources behind a cause did not engage in the tasks of political influence, persuasion, or litigation.

For example, the TWS, an organization highly successful in mobilizing the farmers, gained almost a large number of members very quickly, but it could not present coherent testimony in politics. To some extent, this problem was alleviated to the national level; a large number of tactically diverse organizations were associated with 'Tharuhat Joint Struggle Committee' to make political influence through a collective movement. It became powerful, but eventually was fragmented due to the vested interests of individual organizations, diverse leaders and complex leadership structures. Consequently, they could not promote revolutionary strategies in the movement.

7.6.1.2 Adoption of intermediate strategies

Through the emerging categories the researcher has conceptualized intermediate strategies as a cumulative function of framing, protest, and electoral activity. It gave him a second line of thinking that addresses the potential influence of mobilized groups focuses on their strategies, singling out for special attention claims-making and framing. Theoretically, a movement or its group must employ resonant prognostic and diagnostic frames—to identify problems and pose credible solutions to them. But, the mobilizations across the Tharu movement did not lead to favorable outcomes, because the leaders could not define problem as a serious and broader sense nor did the state listen to them seriously. This prognostic crisis led further to the diagnostic crisis in framing of the Tharu movement. In scope, it could neither provide a clear rationale, nor offered a concrete pressure to intermediate the development discourse.

Other problems remained, however, with using frames to induce political outcomes. Only rarely was the influence of frames addressed in multivariate contexts. For movements to be influential, their frames need to be minimally plausible and culturally resonant (Taylor & Van Dyke, 2004), but their value likely varies by setting. The Tharu movement frames did not change much, but its influence varied greatly over time and space. For example, the massive movement context for the Tharus in 2008 had been the opposition of the Madhesi movement's one Madhes one state campaign. The voice of Tharuhat became stronger when the government made political commitments with the Madhesi leaders to agree to autonomy of Madhes Pradesh in Tarai. It established Tharuhat frame. Then in 2009, the Tharu movement got heated on the issues of self-identity other than the 'Madhesi category'. It established Tharu ethnic frames. The movement in 2012 was related to the issues that the upcoming constitution should provide a guarantee of the Tharuhat region in the federal structure and proportional representation of the Tharus based on their population in the state apparatus. Then, it became political framing.

More importantly, frames that helped mobilize supporters sometimes became counterproductive in trying to influence the state actors. For example, the tax collection strategy in the name of Autonomous Tharuhat region adopted in Lamahi bazaar in 2011 initially was framed to achieve victory over the local security forces. But, later on, it became regressive to lose the morality of the movement leaders due to lack of economic transparency. The frames were empirically deduced with different kinds of strategies, though there had not been much documentation about this. It means that there was no clearly defined relation with the frames used to mobilize the Kamaiya, Kamlahari, women, poor and landless Tharus. The mobilization was often relative and localized. The participation of people in the movement was mandatory in some cases and regions. For example, the researcher had observed a public appealing system by the traditional heads of the Tharus to 'actively' participate in the movement of a person from each household.

7.6.1.3 The biased nature of participation

In a show of solidarity in the Tharu community (ethnic) sentiments, participation in the movement of ordinary people became desirable, while for the cadres it was made compulsory. There were some public appealing systems, made by the village heads of the Tharus (aguwa) who called the people to participate in the movement. In some cases, the researcher also observed the punishment systems if a Tharu household could not send anyone in the demonstrations. The participation of people in the

movement was undeniable. As shown in Box 7.1, there was another dimension of participation from a gender perspective. But, it leads to the question of representation from the poor people (including women, bondage laborers, wage laborers, tenants, slum dwellers, squatters and small farmers) in decision-making structures of the movements (particularly, in organization and leadership) in contestation.

Box 7.1: The gender dimension of participation

The researcher had noticed relatively few female staffers and writers in brochures and websites during his visits to the Tharu movement organizations. Some women-led co-operatives in Chailahi VDC of Dang had predominantly female staff, was an exception. Moreover, the researcher did not see female representatives in many of the meetings of Tharu movement organizations where he was also invited as a guest observer. To pinpoint a more specific example, when he was participating in a district level meeting of TWS in Sunsari, there he asked his queries about the absence of female representatives. Then, the president of the society immediately phoned his vice-president to call some women in the meeting. Before their arrival to the meeting, all the decisions had been already made and the women had to make signatures upon the minutes. In case of some larger demonstrations the women participated making their own groups in different organizational banners e.g. in the co-operatives, sister organizations, mother's groups and saving groups.

7.6.2 The elite mediation

7.6.2.1 Hedonism in Kathmandu

The findings suggest that once the people were mobilized, the impact was the political context or opportunity structure. It has been argued that in open states with strong administrative capacities the movement will achieve policy gains (Kriesi, 2004; Kriesi et al., 1995). The researcher contests this claim on the empirical findings that, within contradictory social relations in the villages, the impudence of Tharu movement has varied over time and there were also a variety of state's bureaucratic capacities (so, the researcher prefers the term historicity of the movement). The long-standing characteristics of Nepali state and political institutions which included exclusionary mechanisms and continued electoral practices in favor of upper class elites were shaped with the very grassroots of the rural life. As usual, the existence of democracy has been always questioned in the rural areas. Only a few research participants were aware about the Kathmandu-based politics and its relation with the framing of Tharu movement in their villages. Of course, there were huge changes in the local politics and political culture due to Maoist's movement, People's movement of 2006 and subsequent movements of Tharu, Madhesi and other ethnic/regional groups. Significant political changes were achieved too, including inclusive platforms for the disadvantaged groups.

Despite this, a kind of frustration was empirically emerging among the rural people, and they used to blame the political leaders, government of Nepal and the existing political system of the country. The researcher has presented some empirical evidences in Chapter 5 that narrate about the local-level aspirations of people in the name of national consensus among the mainstream political parties which was further exacerbated by the vacant local bodies. Consequently, the constitution writing process was becoming complex along with the tag of the federalism and the rise of dissenting voices with the Constituent Assembly and beyond that. The popular leaders who were established from the movement (including the Tharu movement) were gradually turning into elites. In many places, they had owned private boarding schools, large-scale bidding projects and direct influence of the major political parties. People started to perceive the leaders as corrupted and vested for the personal profits rather than the common welfare of the Tharus. It was contributing to create anti-political alienation among most of the research participants.

7.6.2.2 The ghost of 'transition' with the frustrations

With this frustration among the rural people, state-related consequences of Tharu movement were also blurred. Establishing a movement's impact on the Nepali state means to demonstrate that state-related collective goods would not have appeared in the absence of the movement or specific actions taken by it. To reemphasize again, the political crisis in Nepal has been fuelling an emergent contestation. The crisis was also locally constructed and framed with the movement sentiments in the villages of Dang and Sunsari. The weak development performances, rampant exclusion, massive poverty and inequality, vacant local bodies, prolonged constitution drafting process, increasing role of remittance economy and emergence of power elites were some of the basic features of the rural political economy in the study region. The researcher often encountered with the people's grievances, tears, sorrows and pains. Even he saw suicidal cases due to poverty, and in some cases the people also lacked money to perform a funeral ceremony when a person died in the family.

In this kind of hard times, there was a reoccurring quotation from every leader as if these problems were happening due to 'political transition' in the country. The researcher observed that the vacant local bodies, corruption in the government budgeting and local development services, and emerging dissenting voices all were explained in the rhetoric of a transition period that would automatically resolve after the making of the new constitution and the success of the Tharu movement. But, what did the transition mean? Who defined it? It had been less answered. For the poor Tharus,

neither the CA nor the government was hearing them and about their day-to-day problems. There was more fear than the hope with the existing politics of the state. One of the development practitioners in Aurawani claimed that:

I have been working in an INGO for more than 12 years. But, still I am confused with the development: for whom it is designed. This was the government which used to make people always poor, and the NGOs and INGOs are also doing the same. I think without political change we could not do any magic. But, the political change in Nepal has been always fashionable. We have nowhere to go. [Based on a personal conversation, 14 June 2014)

Following this kind of fears and hopelessness, framing of Tharu movement was localized. The government of Nepal and its local authorities treated Tharu movement in a very different ways though. The central government was trying to watch and see the long-term strikes of the Tharuhat movement. When the pressures repeatedly arose and the movement started to become violent, then the government used to call the Tharu leaders for dialogue. The repression and use of security forces was also used to opt simultaneously. Participation of local leaders in the villages (even on the district level) was simply undesirable in the national dialogue committee because of the dominance of central leaders in the TJSC and TWS. The leadership analysis and well-being ranking further evidenced that no any bonded laborers (ex-Kamaiyas and Kamlaharies), wage laborers and representatives of the poor farmers were included in such a committee. Consequently, it led to a gap between the Kathmandu-based politics of Tharu movement and its local reflections in the villages of Dang and Sunsari. Some groups of Kamaiyas, Kamalaharies and landless people were organizing different movement campaigns in Dang and it further expanded to other western districts as well. The Kamlahari movement in 2013 reached Kathmandu with their own grouping and campaign as supported by some local NGOs and civil societies. The mainstream Tharu movement did not lead/ include such campaigns of the Tharu sub-class groups. It was thus a kind of challenge bred up within the rhetoric of the mainstream Tharu movement thereby creating alternative spaces.

7.6.2.3 Increase in the self-esteem and awareness among the people

In spite of this kind of degeneration and alternative spaces, there was an increase in the self-esteem of the common Tharu people due to the movement. Many poor Tharus started to talk openly in the community with the upper class Tharus, non-Tharus and upper-caste migrants in the villages. The women participants also revealed such kind of confidence to some extent that they were becoming confident to talk with their male counterparts in the community and with the women of other caste/ethnic groups.

Negotiations in local budgeting and planning and representation of Tharus in the VDC councils/ APM and in many social/political actors were also started by the local Tharus. But, was this confidence sufficient for the long-term emancipation of the Tharus who often came at the frontline of the negotiations? These questions were less answered. Indeed, this kind of consciousness emerged as a false consciousness of people what Marx talked about the context of the revolution in societies (Marx, 2000). It could not contribute to create real consciousness among the people because the actors (Tharu movement) and roots (the state) were designed as reactionary and elite-centric entities of social relations. For example, most of the research participants consistently focused on the land reform and access to income generating resources for the Tharus. The mainstream discourse of development which was often state-led could not settle the structural issues of rural inequality and poverty.

Further, the consciousness was falsified with the derailed peace process and constitution writing in the country. While most of the leaders of the movement, political parties and senior officials of the government were claiming that a new constitution could work as an overall panacea and immediate solution of the problems and miseries of the people. For them the constitution was necessary because it was going to be written by the people's representatives at the first time in the history. Contrary to this, there was another perspective that suspected and questioned on such glamour of the Constitution. Most of the research participants from poor category often claimed that they did not have any concerns in the constitution because they could not get anything from its drafting and execution. One of them in Aurawani claimed that:

I love my work and my family. I do not know much about the constitution because the constitution cannot provide me wage, employment and other things that I need...I have witnessed a number of policy changes in the name of we [People], but what, in turn we get? [But] it does not mean that I never love the country Nepal, and my community [Tharu]... [Based on a personal conversation, 19 July 2014]

The above-mentioned quote is a representative voice of many poor people, which the coding of the interviews evidenced. Theoretically, it challenges the essentialism of grand narrative (i.e. constitution) in the country, thereby demanding micro-narratives (i.e. alternative issues) for the change and development. Again, it was based on the national context of political dilemma and controversies. Though there were elections for CA in two different intervals of time, the constitution drafting process got delayed and uncertain, which rendered the optimism as envisioned in the movement times. Its impact on rural development seemed to have been more threatening as there had been loss of hope, confidence and dignity of life in the broader social context. Based

on different observations, the researcher could not predict the further complexities. However, the loss of hope among the people could trigger the movement in any time and in any form which could further be intensified with the responses of the state.

7.6.2.4 Elites in the frontlines

Theoretically, many scholars (e.g. Amenta, 2006; Amenta et al., 1992; Skocpol, 1992; Piven & Cloward, 1977) have developed different political mediation accounts of social movement consequences. With the emergence of some collective benefits at the community level, there were continuous negotiations and mediations in the villages. The emergence of elites and their mediation to influence local politics and development activities was unavoidable. The researcher would call it 'elite mediation'. Indeed, democratic political system in the villages where ethnic activism was possible required relatively a large number of committed people to be mobilized by a few elites. In turn, the movement was more likely to produce results when political actors (the elites) saw benefit in promoting the mobilization of grassroots people. To secure new benefits in the changing political landscape (for example, in terms of inclusive positions), the elites typically needed help or complementary action through the disadvantaged groups of people. It was becoming common in most of the villages. For example, the issues of Kamaiya and Kamlaharis were highly localized in the Tharu movement of Dang, while the issues of wage and problems of squatters were prominent in Sunsari. To illustrate further, Tharu leaders and the VDC secretaries in the Deukhuri region had registered the land in their own name, which was provided by the government for the Kamaiyas after their freeing. The researcher followed three cases as such. Many subsidized fertilizers, seeds and targeted cash investments of the government were occupied by such a powerful group of Tharu movement, political parties and the state officials as well. Thus, the movement elites made an alliance with the elites of local development and other political parties to secure their long-term benefits.

In this way, movement participation has covered a range of activities including both in terms of leading of the movement at the leadership level to the grassroots, and from part-time or one-time to full-time activity. The perceived cost and benefits of different activities had varied greatly with the age, class and other status of the participants. This might be also due to the substantial differences in perceived costs and benefits between individuals, across regions, and during the life cycle of the movement. This

has important implications for mobilization campaigns among the Tharu both in Dang and Sunsari.

7.6 Changing Role of the Actors

With the emerging spaces for the elites in politics, different kinds of Tharu civil society organizations emerged rapidly and they adopted movement initiatives and welfare programs (see Chapter 5 also). However, most of these organizations were politically divided and there was a kind of strategic difference among them, thus making it difficult to define Tharu movement in a holistic way. Rather, it seems an incomplete narration with a mix of differentiated actors. The authenticity of the movement leadership was claimed by different kinds of strong networks such as Tharuhat Joint Struggle Committee (TJSC), Tharu Welfare Society (TWS) and Backward Education Society (BASE). There was a widening ideological gap and weak coordination among these organizations. Again, there was an elite mediation in between the gaps.

For example, the TWS was active in the whole Tarai region since a half century, and also in the study villages. It engaged more actively in the social and cultural welfare of local people, rather than in the political affairs. In the changing context of movement intensity, the TWS gradually shifted towards the political issues. However, it has some contradictions with TJSC including in the positions of federalism. Since 2007, the TJSC was strongly rooted with the villages, but it seemed more strategic and politically structured as it included different organizations and leaders, including the representatives of TWS and BASE. Along with this, there was an obvious blame that such organizations were working as puppets for major political parties. Some of the participants in this research also shared that they were tired of the politics of the Tharu movement. Many activists claimed in cross-sectional interviews that the TJSC was guided by ultra-leftist ideology (affiliated with CPN (M-C), the TWS oriented with soft-leftist ideology (inclined to CPN-UML) and the BASE was more influenced by democratic ideology (credited to NC). The general secretary/ president of those organizations were the representatives of the political parties as stated. Even some of them took participation in the CA election of 2008 from their respective political parties. Some leaders also established their own Tharu-based political parties as well. This created a contested boundary line in between the political parties (and movement) and the social/ ethnic movement of the Tharus.

Besides these active networks, there were some loose networks to frame the movement in the local context. They included mother groups, youth clubs, different

kinds of cultural groups, Land Right Forum (LRF) and groups of Kamlahari and Kamaiyas. These organizations, with the exception of the LRF, were not established from movement perspective. Many of them existed as self-help groups before the movement began its political campaigning in post 2006. They used to engage continuously in different kinds of welfare affairs and collective functions. However, in recent years, they were subordinated to the Tharu movement along with their welfare activities. These groups were strategically used to create 'critical mass' for the demonstrations and strikes called by the TJSC from the district to the village levels. The members of these organizations were asked (somehow compelled) to participate in the program and give collective voice.

Though there was a very weak coordination, these organizations collectively worked in some social welfare programs. In 2012, the FKDF rescued 42 Kamlaharis from the Dang district and among them seven were from the Chailahi VDC. But, can this rescue process be generalized as a sole outcome of the Tharu movement? So far, the literature and researcher's empirical evidences have revealed that the emancipation of bonded laborers and conduction of welfare programs were not set as the prioritized agenda of the Tharu movement (see detail in Chapter- 5 and 6).

Indeed, the emergence of different kinds of NGOs in the villages was widely observed. The NGOs supported for various development programs and livelihood enhancement projects. The researcher got wondered that there was no any village without having a registered NGO working there. In some of the villages, there were particular the Tharu community-based NGOs working on the issues of Kamaiya, Kamlahari and Tharu women. For example, the roles of BASE, SWAN and FKDF were remarkable in Dang while in Sunsari there were FORWARD, HUDEP and RRN working with the poor and marginalized groups. Since these groups were far from the mainstream development, and also ignored by the Tharu movement, the role played by the NGOs could not be denied. To reemphasize here, the name of BASE and FKDF in Dang should be historically honored for their struggle to end the Kamaiya and Kamlahari system in the region. One of the ex-Kamlaharis told this researcher that she did not recognize anybody: the state, the government, even to her mother and father; and she only recognized the FKDF which emancipated her from the darkness of the bondage. Though some of the research participants were also questioned about the role and transparency of these organizations, most of the people perceived them as a 'donor' and the people as 'receiver'. The people, however, had fewer ideas about the long-term impact of this donor-recipient relationship.

With the emergence of different networks and their changing roles in the movement, the modernization of Tharu community in particular went through a number of social changes. The increasing value of education, promotion of girls' education, health awareness, mass communication, ideologies based on identity, search of charismatic leadership and coercive government authority were some of the important drivers of social change and modernization in the Tharu community. The researcher here argues that these social changes and TM were mutually interrelated, though the movement's impact was not direct and detrimental. Rather the impacts were induced as a part of the whole modernization process in Nepali society since 1990 in general and more aggressively since 2006. The institutional life was being converted from traditional to modern ones, including the livelihood strategies and cultural life of the Tharus. The Tharu community has been exposed not only to the regional (Tarai) context, but also to the national as well as international regions. But, during the periods of researcher's field visit (in 2012-2014) and according to the self-reflected narratives of local people, the structural changes mostly remained the same as uneven. The family relations, social relations and class relations, in essence, remained more or less conservative. There became an evident discrepancy between mass education and employment opportunities. Ironically, most of the roles adopted by Tharu people were becoming modern, but their values continued to be traditional.

7.7. Constitutional-legal Impacts on Social Life

In section 6.4.3 of Chapter 6, the researcher has highlighted some right-based claims of the Tharu movement. Indeed, the right-based demands and claims are highly correlated with many social movement studies (e.g. Giddens, 2009; Tarrow, 2011). The scholars also argue that there is not only a legal or constitutional aspect of the agendas and issues of the movement, but also the consequences of the movements are also legally and constitutionally affected and fluctuated. Ethnic movements, among the others, have deeper connotations with the legal issues of fundamental rights and property rights (IWGIA, 2015; Kingsbury, 2008). As reflected in previous discussions, the Tharu movement got succeeded to achieve some important constitutional-legal recognition. They include the enactment of the ILO 169 Convention in 2007, Interim Constitution of Nepal (2007) and recently promulgated constitution in September 2015. Despite these recognitions, the movement of the Tharus had significantly affected the rights of the people, whether they were the Tharus or not. The movement strategies were often peaceful, though the consequences of the strikes and the responses of the state towards those agitations apparently violate the fundamental rights of the people

and obligations of the state. From constitutional-legal framework and existing systems, the researcher has analyzed legal impacts of the Tharu movement upon the general mass and public sphere particularly in the Tarai region [Table 7.1].

Table 7.1: Constitutional rights and their status during the Tharu movement

SN	The Rights and Duties	Legal-Constitutional provisions ⁶⁷	Impact on the public life
1	Right to Life	Article 16 of the constitution of Nepal, 2015; Section 1 of General Code, 2020 BS; Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), 1966	Though data is disputed, loss of 59 Nepalese citizens (2012-2015); 7 in Dang and 4 in Sunsari; a considerable number of injured [MoHA, 2016]
2	Right to Freedom and Security	Article 17 of the constitution of Nepal, 2015; Section 6 of the Civil Rights Act, 2012; Article 9 of the ICCPR, 1966	Obstruction caused in the local transportation by the agitators; Complaint of arousing fear among the people migrated from the hill to Deukhuri region and Aurawani
3	Right to Assemble Peacefully	Sub-Article 2 (kha) of the Article 17 of the constitution of Nepal, 2015; Section 6 (2) of the Civil Rights Act, 2012; Article 21 of the ICCPR, 1966	Enforcement of the order of prohibition and curfew began with the vandalizing and arson of individual property, government and public
4	Right against Torture, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment	Article 22 of the constitution of Nepal, 2015; Article 7 of the ICCPR, 1966; and various Articles of the Convention against Torture, 1984	Complained of being insulted and been treated inhumanly by the police forces; some people of hill origin also complained as of being tortured from the movement actors
5	Right of the Human Rights Defenders	United Nations' Human Rights Protection Guidelines 1998; Human Rights Defenders' Guideline 2012 by NHRC in Nepal	Not properly regulated and managed by the National human rights commission (Nepal); Defenders being only active in the peak hours of movement
6	Right to Education	Article 31 of the constitution of Nepal, 2015; Article 13 of the International Convention of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), 1966; Article 28 of the International Convention on Child Rights, 1989	Most children from the districts of agitation were fully deprived of their right to education; though a few private schools operated; Educational sessions highly affected in community schools
7	Right to Freedom of Expression	Article 19 of the constitution of Nepal, 2015; Section 6(1) of the Citizen's Right Act, 2012; Article 19 8(2) of the ICCPR, 1966	Provoking the general public to come to the protest carrying domestic weapons against the enemies stating that up to 5 million would be provided if anyone died
8	Child Rights	Article 39 of the constitution of Nepal, 2015; United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1992	Use of children to the programs of protest; Commitment to "Children are Zone of Peace" violated
9	Right to Health	Article 35 of the constitution of Nepal, 2015; Article 12 of the ICESCR 1966	Treatment of sick people especially senior citizens, people with disabilities and pregnant

⁶⁷For international context of human rights and IPs, see also IWGIA (2015) and Kingsbury (2008)

			women became challenging due to the closure of the means of transportation
10	Consumers' Rights	Public services; Article 11 of ICESCR, 1966; Article 12 and 13 of the United Nation Guidelines on Protection of Consumers Rights, 1999	Services halted and disrupted; Agitators were not found to announce their program of indefinite and continuous closure giving sufficient notice prior to the program
11	Cultural Rights	Article 32 (2) of the constitution of Nepal, 2015; Article 15 of ICESCR, 1966	Regarding the festivals the agitating parties were not found to have been serious about the communities' cultural right to enjoy their rights

[Source: Field observations; the list of rights and other facts are adapted from NHRC, 2015)

7.8 Emerging Contradictions and Future Dilemma

The Tharu movement seemed to have been historically rooted and structured. Most of the evidences on both the primary and secondary sources claimed that Tharu movement was not a sudden rise as an activism. Rather, it emerged as a reflection of historical spaces in between the Tharu community and the state. Consequently, it created a number of contradictions to form and deform the movement which surrounded upon the local issues of development.

7.8.1 The contradiction with the state

The major source of contradiction in the villages was obviously the state which perceived Tharu as a 'marginalized group' but never treated the Tharu people as to mainstreaming in the development. Locally available critics suggested that Nepali state by and large imposed different kinds of economic, socio-cultural and political dominations upon the Tharus. Though the movement opposed very nature of exclusionary and a unitary design of the state, it did not raise the issues in changing class relations and feudal forms of exploitation within the local community level. There were some local narratives of Tharuhat Autonomous state in the villages (in the local artifacts as well) and many leaders also used the term 'Jaya Tharuhat'. Despite this, the movement did not negate the existence of the state or the government.

7.8.2 The contradiction with the migrants from the Hill, i.e. the Pahadiyas

This contradiction was related to land encroachments by the hilly migrants to the Tarai (esp. upper caste *Bahun*s/ *Chettries*) and their cultural dominance in terms of

language. Moreover, the representation of high caste hilly migrants in the local administrations and service system was another source of contradiction. Some Tharu activists also claimed that it was the migration of the hilly people in the Tarai districts which institutionalized landlordism in the region. Politically, this group claimed for the recognition of Bahaun and Chettries as indigenous groups like the Tharus thereby taking multiple identity based federal set up in the country. This claim in turn rejected the agenda of Tharus and other ethnic groups which used to claim for single identity (ethnic) based federalism. Consequently, the Tharu movement was contradictory with the hilly upper caste migrants.

7.8.3 The contradictions with Madhesi group and Indian migrants

This type of contradiction was also shaping the complexities in the Tharu movement. This contradiction was about the claim of the both groups for the real inhabitants of the Tarai region. A simple antagonism was that the research participants from Madhesi caste category often used the term 'Madhes', while the Tharu people often liked to use the term of 'Tarai'. The rejections of '*one Madhes one state*' and the Madhesi caste/ethnic provision were such political slogans which the Tharu movement has raised since 2008, and it made it to come the Tharus into the national politics. According to the similar claim, land encroachments of Tharus by the Madhesi groups and their cultural dominance in the villages were some other local issues for the Tharu movement. In his initial observations in 2012 and 2013, anti-Madhes sentiment was popular among most of the Tharu leaders and movement participants. But the Tharu people at the grassroots level did not claim any such agitations for the Madhesi people. The researcher got some evidences that some Tharu people participated in the Madhes movement in Sunsari and some Madhesi people also participated in the Tharu movement of Dang. It was further increased in the subsequent field visits in 2014 as some of the leaders from both groups started to work within the same alliance or in the same political party. However, the nexus between the Tharu movement and Madhes movement was not easy because there was still a dominant thought of hardliners in both the groups. The hardliners wanted to conduct the movement in a single effort of agitation. In the Tharu movement context, some political analysts also claimed that the movement was very fluid as its alliance with the Madhesi lost its political identities and social legitimacy as a movement.

7.8.4 Internal contradictions

Unavoidably, there was contradiction among the Tharu elites within the community and/ or movement. Historically, it was shaped by the political elites (e.g. *chaudharies*) and landlords (*jamindars*) of the Tharus. In recent years it consisted of upper-middle class (as evidenced by well-being ranking) Tharus including educated ones who had direct access to political parties, and the different actors of the state and beyond that. The researcher observed life styles, competitions and personal egos among these elites. Indeed, these elites did not have any ethnic and class identity than their rationality of the potential benefits. There were a number of cases where the Tharu elites made an alliance and worked together with the elites of the state and Madhesi group whatever castes or ethnic groups they might belong to. Consequently, the charisma of Tharu movement for the poor people was decreasing with the rise of political opportunism and contestations in local/rural affairs.

Within these various contradictions, the expectations of people regarding the Tharu movement were a complex whole. It had following connotations: first, there were diverse views, hopes, despairs and perceptions. Typically for the Tharus, it was emancipatory tool, without which their emancipation was impossible. Contrary to this, for the non-Tharus and opponents, it was an unnecessary business in the society. Some of them even claimed that the movement could harm the traditional values, harmony and unity of the society. Second, there was always a shifting of the expectations on the supporters' side. Initially, the working class and poor Tharus participated in the movement with great enthusiasm thinking that the movement would eradicate their problems of debt, wage, tenancy and poverty. The elites were manipulating the agendas and motivated the poor people to participate and sacrifice. When the researcher observed this motivation in a long-term basis, he found that the motivation was being lost in the last moments of the movement. The expectations, which were previously dramatized, then became falsified.

7.9 Questioning on the Local Issues of Development

The real world of the development, as the findings suggest, has been a complex whole of the people's day-to-day grievances. Chapter 5 has outlined those grievances as manifested in terms of poverty, livelihood insecurity, landlessness, unemployment, bonded labor and vacant local bodies and weak service delivery systems. Tharu movement, in turn, has been knotted with these issues of people in the villages. In such a knotting, there were some evident worldviews of the study site that contradict

each other. They include the universe of the Tharu people, non-Tharu people, class hierarchies, leaders of the Tharus and other leaders, and the perceptions of different actors and political parties. Consequently, the analysis of the effectiveness of the movement becomes somehow complex, which undergoes with the narratives of development outcomes. In this context, Wallerstein (1999) critically observes the contested notion for analyzing social facts and their impact in shaping the social realities. He asserts:

We live in an imperfect world, one that will always be imperfect and therefore always harbor injustice. But we are far from helpless before this reality. We can make the world less unjust; we can make it more beautiful; we can increase our cognition of it (p. 20)

Then, with this, an emergent question strokes the present research: how did the movement contribute in shaping the local development issues and vice-versa? The following discussions will lay out a narrative presentation for this:

7.9.1 Confused entry points

The consequences of social and ethnic movements in contesting rural development have been gone with multiple perspectives in international discourse (see Amenta et al., 2010; Tilly, 1999). Escobar (1992) was very optimistic about alternatives to development which would require a theoretical and practical transformation drawing on the practices of social movements in developing countries. Following him, the researcher was seeking to identify the conditions under which the movement was likely to be influential and saw its impact on the state-led development (in terms of rural development) as a recursive process. The structure and activities of the Nepali state (and the government) influenced the causes and modes of the Tharu movement, and in turn, the movement seemed to influence the state by mobilizing people, resources, and claims around a number of strategies. By large, this research on the contested rural development began by hypothesizing that the contestation would be produced by the movement's four main determinants of mobilization: socio-cultural, political-economic, functional-structural, and organizational-networking (see the conceptual framework in Chapter 3). In this context, the researcher notices a series of issues specific to the impact and effectiveness of Tharu movement. The local dynamics of these changes, however, was very complex and plural in nature. It then surfaced with an overlapping of many strategies and actors, and discontinuities in the movement. This is what Conway (2007) asserts that "... neither single nor together can they be

viewed as a unit. This irreducible pluralism raises complex questions both about how to identify movement as an object of study and how to study them” (p. 10).

7.9.2 Shifting multiplicity

The research participants and activists of the movement used to talk in various dimensions of the movement, including long-term political issues and short-term development concerns. They reflected farming of different kinds of grievances from social-cultural life of poor Tharus in their organizational mode of the leadership. Despite this, the formal documentation about these issues was not available, and the decisions and demand lists of the Tharu leaders did not include such varied issues. Rather, there was a clear historicity in the shifting of paradigms of the Tharu movement (see Table 7.2 below; also see Chapter 2 for historical analysis). The actors, agendas, leadership, organization and coverage of the Tharu movement has been changing in the local as well as national context to achieve a wider influence on political negotiation in the post 2006 context.

Table 7.2: Emerging trends of the Tharu movement in post-2006 context

The dimensions	The trends
Actors	Tharu joint struggle committee; Tharuhat independent council; NEFIN BASE, SWAN, FKDF; Kamlahari movement
Agendas	Autonomous zone (Tharuhat) with right of self-determination; execution of ILO 169; social inclusion and participation in the state; more focus on identity (caste) -based issues
Leadership	Regional level leadership transferred into Kathmandu-based leadership, grabbed by ethnic leaders, intellectuals and propagandists; strong and deliberate influence through NEFIN
Strategy	Coalition among different Tharu and ethnic organizations; mushrooming of party-wings to represent Tharu community; establishment of separate wings for Tharu students, youths and women; and collaborative networks from the I/NGOs
Organization	Cadre-based and mass-based
Coverage	Regional, national and international
Power dynamics	Selected elites who have heavy influence (or leadership) upon the state or government, I/NGOs, donors and major political parties

Indeed, these trends have been politically unavoidable, though the clear-cut outlook of its impacts and implications in rural development could hardly be found. The movement actions triggered a chain of events which could not have always foreseen or controlled and they sometimes provoked backlashes and other unintended responses. These processes of change and movement are important from a political-economic point of view because the discipline revolves around questions of stability and change: the problem of maintaining ‘old or existing order’ and the problem of

transformation for 'new or alternative order'. In this contestation, the Tharu movement had been located very contextually. Advocating the progressive nature of SMS, Blumer rightly maintains that "social movements can be viewed as collective enterprises seeking to establish a new order of life...the career of a social movement depicts the emergence of a new order of life" (1969, p. 99).

7.9.3 Emergent crisis and need of rethinking

With a diverse manifestation of agendas and strategies of the Tharu movement, the consequences paved a way for rethinking the notion of development. Politically, it was related to the political system of the Nepali state and its ideology of the development. The state-led mainstream development discourse continued to neglect the subjective well-being of the Tharus at the local and community levels. Even the current development plans after 2006 have followed top-down technical approaches of targeted programs for the disadvantaged groups including the Tharus. For the poor, it looks as though many of the lofty objectives intended to cure the ills of the impoverished world as determined through the eyes, brains and pens of experts in Kathmandu. Local evidences suggest that Kathmandu-based elites did have direct connection with the elites of district levels of Dang and Sunsari. For example, a group of Tharu leaders in Dang imposed government to waive tax for the handicrafts of the Tharus and the government did accordingly. Soon after, some well-off Tharus and non-Tharus of Lamahi bazaar invested in a number of handicraft industries. It occupied a larger coverage of the wholesale market for export of the products up to Kathmandu and beyond that. In the meantime, the retail products which poor Tharus used to produce in their own home lost their market as they could not compete with the large-scale productions. Despite this, some Tharu leaders who contributed a lot in the framing of the Tharu movement engaged in some innovative professions including commercial agricultural activities (fermentation of the fertilizers) and cultivation of new cash crops and vegetables.

Ironically, freedom of expression gave the rights to Tharu political elites to be more vocal about their issues, if they could represent them. But it was a cumulative struggle and achievement of contemporary political parties, including the Maoist and the civil society movement groups which transcribed democratic rights and political freedom with a long journey of political contestation. They did not only give them a new impulse in raising their political consciousness, but also legitimize their demands. The negation of history is becoming quite undesirable phenomena in contemporary political discourse of Nepal by some anarchists in the name of glorification of some recent

particular achievements. In the post-2006, issues for inclusion, proportional representation, good governance, indigenous rights and gender equity have been raised not only from development viewpoints but also in the political context of constitution writing. It is naïve to believe that these unmet goals will ever be achieved through the current development framework, which would require fundamental transformations in society and its power dimensions. Moreover, the demands reflected in the Tharu movement seemed to be even desirable, whose goals for dignity and livelihood found little space for articulation within this top-down route of development. This simply rejects the position of Kriesi (2004) who is very much optimistic about the success of social movements. Entrenched within contradictory local realities, it is thus unsurprising that so-called development outcomes could not touch the actual lives, values and well-being needs of the people. Despite this, these issues were not consistently explained and highlighted by the leadership. It led the movement into a more disintegrated and discontinued structure. The researcher was surprised to see no further explanations of these political issues relating to the state's nature and the context of federalism. To mention a critical analysis of Nepal's one of the senior bureaucrat-turned-civil society movement leaders:

I don't think that the politics of Tharu movement is not in right track as they have clear claims. But they still have to contextualize the issues of identity and Tharuhat autonomy on the political/ ideological basis. The leaders could not do this, because their previous background and existing life style do not show their honest dedication. They still do need to identify their best opportunities what they have. Initially they contextualized their movement against the Madhesi, and then against the exclusive Bill of the government, and so on. But is this rational explanation to intervene the existing political system? Let us hope for their next moves. [Based on the researcher's personal conversation with Dr. Devendra R. Panday, 22 Oct 2014]

7.9.4 The matrix of human rights, ideology and subaltern

With the rise of Tharu movement, there have been a number of implications in the Human Rights based approach of development. Tharu NGO federation and BASE have officially defined development as a right of Tharu people, though the official documents of TJSC and TWS did not talk about this. Despite this, the local level development ideology has been shifted from economic rights to the political and civil rights. People used to emphasize on the issues of inclusion and representation as their fundamental rights. Some research participants also claimed that the Tharus have been poor from generation to generation because the state never included them in its decision-making levels. Rather, it has promoted dominance and exploitation inherent in the existing political system that impoverished the Tharus. It has contributed to

restore the power of the economic elites in the region. Consequently, underdevelopment was waiting to breed different kinds of social unrests and movements as alternative voices of people. Tharu movement seemed to be a rational part of this dynamics. As a subaltern, the Tharus are one of the subordinated groups in terms of class, caste, gender, race and culture and the elitist bias of Nepal's historiography denied their recognition as the subject of history. This critic is theoretically aligned with the post-structural position of subaltern studies that argues that the reason, knowledge and ideas of development have become the source of mainstream discourse of western modernity than the real history and the emancipation of the oppressed people (Peet & Hartwick, 2009).

7.10 Changing Politics and Future Course of the Tharu Movement

Methodologically, the researcher holds an assumption that the social science research is not only an interpretation of the history but also a prediction of the future. Based on the primary data sources and their predictability, the following points narrate some of the possible political impacts of the movement upon the changing context and vice-versa:

7.10.1 Constitution as a progressive discourse

The constitution of Nepal deliberates a foundation of liberal democracy and ensures a commitment to nation building process in the framework of the institutionalization of people's sovereignty and federalism based on the principle of equal citizens, inclusive governance, universal social protection, and the rule of law (Bhandari, 2016). The unitary system of the governance has been replaced with the federal delineation of the state-restructuring which involves three layers of the government: the federation, the province and the local. However, as outlined in the Chapter 1, there are some visible challenges, particularly in addressing the dissenting voices and institutionalizing the Constitution. In this research context, the foreseeing question is whether and how the Tharu movement will impart in contesting or shaping different issues and agendas at the grassroots in the days to come.

7.10.2 Legitimacy of the agendas

Through the constitution, there has been an established notion of 'representation and inclusion'. This notion has been introduced to the guiding principles of the state, which largely addresses the movement agendas of the Tharus and other ethnic/ regional groups too (Part 4). The agendas of Tharu movement in particular could be benefitted and further institutionalized through the Tharu Commission, which has provisioned in

the constitution (Part 27)⁶⁸. Another significant achievement is that there is a mandatory provision to elect/ nominate different caste/ethnic groups and sex categories in the state-headship, constitutional entities/ bodies and local bodies of the state. Thus, it has ensured legitimacy of the better representation of the marginalized groups in the mainstreams of the development. It could convert the role of Tharu movement from constitutional discourse to the policy discourse in the upcoming process of making the Acts, policies and guidelines to implement the spirit of inclusion and participation as envisioned by the Constitution.

7.10.3 Possibility to emerge as a regional political force

As illustrated in the Thesis, the Tharu movement has shifted its discourse from the cultural to the political movement since 2006. One possibility is that it could be more localized in the federal structures rather than covering a larger national sphere. As Tharu is the most populated ethnic group in the Tarai and the second one in the country, the politics of demography could be also detrimental in shaping the power relations. Apparently it would be more powerful in the districts and provinces where the presence of Tharu population is meaningful. As the study findings suggest it is possible to contradict or align the Tharu movement with the hilly migrants in the western region (in Dang), while it could face such contradiction or alignment with the Madhesi groups in the eastern region including Sunsari. The interaction with the Tharu community and other non-Tharu groups and the alliance of the Tharu movement actors, ethnic movement groups/ organizations and the Madhesi movement can be another critical dimension of the Tarai politics. In turn, this can also affect the provincial structures and federal government.

7.10.4 Inclusive mechanism and better representation

More and more Tharu leaders and people of the community could be engaged in the given framework of the inclusive platform of the local levels – the 753 units in the meantime which include a number of rural municipalities, urban municipalities, and subsequent ward committees. In addition, there are different constituents where the representation of the Tharu people could be ensured as mandatory provision. These include bureaucracy at the ward and village municipal levels and local-level NGOs and CSOs (e.g. school management groups, user committees, construction committees

⁶⁸ The Legislature-Parliament has endorsed and enacted the 'Tharu Commission Bill-2074 BS' and 'Muslim Commission Bill-2074 BS' in 19 September 2017.

and ward citizen forums). It would promote the state-society interaction in a more participatory way as compared to the traditional practices as used to be before the state-restructuring. The state could reach easily into the wards level and village municipals with distinct administrative design and budgetary allocation. As the constitution has also assigned different 22 rights for the local levels, they can work as more autonomous regions in increasing the living standards and public welfare of the community people and marginalized groups including the Tharus.

7.10.5 Upcoming elections and the electoral agendas

The constitution mandates to accomplish the elections for the local levels, the province and the federation by the end of 21 January 2018. As stated earlier in Chapter 5 (section 5.5), local elections were already held in three phases in 2017 (14 May, 28 June and 18 September), while the elections for the House of Representatives and Provincial Councils 2017 are scheduled to be held in two phases: 17 November and 7 December 2017. From the perspective of constitutionalism, these elections can be instrumental to implement and sustain the political achievements. The movement actors can be further benefitted from the elections where the participation and representation of different groups has been ensured with the electoral policies and guidelines. Accordingly, more and more Tharu leaders could be directly elected or mandatorily nominated in the Tharu dominant clusters of the wards and village municipals. This type of democratic practice for the leadership ultimately holds the position at the decision-making levels of local development, administrative structures and political parties. Politically, these elections, in particular the local election can be used as power negotiations and sharing, as there have been vacant local bodies since 2002 and this would be the first election in the federal context. This would be more visible in Dang due to the dominance of Tharu population and intensity of the Tharu movement in the district as compared to Sunsari.

7.10.6 Simulation of local development issues and movement agendas

In the changing context of political-administrative structures in the country, there is also possibility to reduce the gaps between the local issues of development and the agendas of the movement. For instance, local transportation, infrastructural development, agricultural transformations, employment generation, women empowerment, community development, resource management, service delivery, social security, rural tourism, agricultural market, educational and health reforms, rehabilitation of Kamaiyas and Kamlaharis are some of the issues that count more value for the local elections. Then, the gaps among the leaders and agendas then

could be diluted; though some ethnic sentiments are hardly deniable in the preface to affect and local dynamics. With these issues and agendas, the Tharu actors and other groups could be engaged and empowered. It would further promote interaction between leaders and people at community levels. The Tharu leaders and movement actors, in effect, could be more accountable for their commitments and strategies. Despite this, as the findings suggest there is a constant threat of the emerging opportunities and benefits being grabbed by elites both at national as well as local levels.

Chapter Summary

The chapter has highlighted different outcomes, impacts and effectiveness of Tharu movement in making the issues of rural development more contested. The researcher argues that the Tharu movement was basically characterized by its relationship towards dominant streams of ideology as well as towards economic and political power of the elites within the Tharu community and beyond that. First, the Tharu movement was a collective social movement that gave rise to meanings and values that otherwise remain unheard. The movement seems to have achieved some of the cultural and civil rights as also adhered by constitutional and legal provisions. It has gained those achievements by framing specific issues or grievances of people, including the worldviews of identities and Tharuhat autonomy. Second, the contestation has come as a function of political-economic and socio-cultural issues, the former being dominant to create further contestations in the state and non-state confrontations. The movement is still struggling to achieve broader political and structural changes, which are inherently rooted with the issues of socioeconomic changes and livelihood transformation of people in the villages. In consequence, the outcomes, though not emancipatory in nature, were observed as to challenge the hegemonic opinion, authority, culture, discourse and institutions either by an inducement of desired social changes or by protesting the conventional direction of social changes. These are further prone to the elite-capture despite of having some progressive fabrics and motives of social mobilization. Yet, the consequences are to be formalized and institutionalized, both legally and empirically in the coming days to come.

CHAPTER- EIGHT

TOWARDS ALTERNATIVE DISCOURSE OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT

This final chapter reflects back upon the key findings and arguments discussed throughout the thesis and seek to saturate a theoretical space in between the rural development and the Tharu movement. Theoretical and scientific contribution of the study has been theorized as a 'movement mobilization framework of contested rural development'. Then the chapter will go on to its implications in social change, including its concerns in policy and practices. The chapter will end with the future research prospects in the field of contested rural development.

8.1 Rethinking of Conceptual Framework and Summary of the Findings

Indeed, there are a myriad of micro-findings, ethnographic and occasionally theoretical, which are written into the body of the thesis and could not be evidenced here to repeat large sections of the original text. In zooming of the concluding reflections from the research findings, the researcher has re-assessed the conceptual framework which itself was modified twice during his field visit. The framework consists of four basic elements (socio-cultural, political-economic, functional-structural and institutional-organizational) which would manifest Tharu movement and contest the rural development in effect. A cyclic relationship was assumed, which indeed came true in the research findings. Following the conceptual framework (Figure 1.1 of Chapter 1), the Table 8.1 below summarizes the major findings and their insights.

In relating with the research questions, these issues are overlapping to contest the rural development in the region. The narrations of the movement seem an unfinished and unfolding story. Among the major ones, the political and economic issues seem to be more critical than the others. The research findings revealed that the whole development discourse has now shifted from considering 'backwardness' to the question of 'indigenouness', and from the 'cultural/ ethnic' to the question of 'political'. The Tharu movement has remained as a part of this localization. This has allowed the researcher to understanding the local issues with a highly engaged grounded realities, it also asserts a critical approach to the understanding of social change, movements and emancipation of the people. It is how Marx asserts, "the philosophers have only interpreted the world differently, the point, however, is to change it (1845, p. 199).

Table 8.1: Contested issues in the rural development and Tharu movement

The dimensions/elements	Contested issues
Social and cultural factors	Issues of gender relations, bonded labor, heterogeneous rural-cultural setting, and cultural (ethnic) identity; the Tharu agendas of the movement gradually tending towards the national political context of constitution writing
Political and economic factors	Local power-sharing in favor of elites; less interest, of the state and the mainstream Tharu movement to engage in the structural problems of the society; no uniform world view of poverty and inequality; right to development of the poor and backward Tharus including their political access in the state-restructuring
Functional-structural factors	The structure of society and nature of the state has been gradually inclusive and participatory, though it is not opted with the political and economic issues; therefore, the Tharus were less convinced about such changes and they continued the movement activities
Institutional and organizational factors	Different ethnic organizations and leaders being networked in local development, and in the movement; but ideological and class divisions among the actors have made development more contested

8.1.1 Regarding the first research objective

The study concludes that the causes and characteristics of the movement were multidimensional, and often remained structurally rooted in the national politics in general and local development activities in particular. Though there were different kinds of causes fuelling the Tharu movement, its present-day manifestation is politically induced in the form of identity politics. Historically, Kamaiya movement and Kamlahari movement have also contributed to shaping the present-day Tharu movement, though the agendas of these groups were still kept lagging behind. Further, the findings conclude that for the most of poor people and small farmers, the causes were rooted with the underdevelopment of Tharu community in rural society. Following the grievances of the people in day-to-day life, which kept them always marginalized and exploited from the mainstream rural development discourse, the movement mobilized critical mass of the people to campaign the demonstrations. The vacant local bodies, unequal gender relations, deteriorating leadership and service delivery were some of the prominent causes of the emergence of contestation. In its heterogeneous setting of movement organizations, the movement followed peaceful strategies and generated a massive support in the region. Despite this, it did not have a well-defined ideological base and unified leadership foundation in the villages inviting a number of spaces for political complexities in the region.

8.1.2 In dealing with the second research objective

The findings suggest that there were a number of agendas and demands of the Tharu movement, which were further contested with different issues of local development and politics. There were direct linkages of the demands of the movement with the political regime of the state (in the center) and the social system (at the rural bottom). The shifting of agendas from narrow material world-view to a broader political and non-material world-view after 2006 was significant. But, in such shifting the economic and political dimensions had been less prioritized, as was done with the ethnic and regional issues. At the grassroots level, the creation of multiple identities was evidently observed, which brought many people (from different class, regional and ethnic background) together at the same place for collective movements (e.g. in land and gender issues). This posits a theoretical message that the issues and agendas of the movement had contributed to formalize the identity politics in the region. However, it had less chance to shift the paradigm of conventional rural development in addressing the underlying causes of rural poverty and inequality.

8.1.3 Regarding the third research objective

The study concludes that the consequences of the movement were politically value-loaded, which affected development outcomes in multiple ways. The findings reflect that the political dimension of the rural development has been extended both empirically and theoretically. While the consequences were largely perceived as well-being of people, the changing perceptions of well-being reflected a number of paradigm shifts from material to non-material and from economic to non-economic, including the identity and social dignity of the Tharus. The effectiveness of the Tharu movement could not be denied to influence policy making, social justice and ethnic rights, electoral processes, legal decisions, political parties, and state bureaucracies. To some extent, those agendas have been also encoded in the recently promulgated constitution in 2015. The movement raised a number of questions in challenging the predominant path of development, though empirically it was in crisis of ideology, organization and leadership. It has contributed to the social construction of political awareness for people's rights, their bargaining power and negotiation strategies. The conventional perception towards the Tharu people, women and small farmers has been changed into a mutual respect and dignity. Most importantly, the movement has also contributed towards shaping and legitimizing the issues of ethnic identity, inclusion and proportional representation in the constitution. It has also widened the

presence of Tharu movement as a detrimental factor of Tarai politics in the changing context of federalism.

Despite this, there was a huge gap in between the people's expectation and outcomes of the movement. Within the given structure of the Nepali state, the emergence of elites within the movement was one of the significant consequences which prevented the movement to be a radical and pro-poor. Most of the elites belonged to the upper-most well-being ranking who have had direct access to the state and political parties, and they used to control and command the powerful institutions and organizations of the society. Moreover, regional dimension of the movement, including territoriality and local political-economic construct and the networks were also evident in the study. Though the study did not follow comparative research design to study the Tharu movement in Dang and Sunsari, the findings clearly suggested a comparative insight. The researcher, however, rejects the generalization of the Tharu movement in both the districts and in the whole Tarai region as it has been manifested as a complex, unfinished and dynamic process of contentious politics. The Table 8.2 summarizes the key commonalities and differences in the dimensions of Tharu movement and their implications in rural development in both the districts.

Table 8.2: Commonalities and differences in the movements of Dang and Sunsari

Research Objectives	Commonalities	Differences
First	Causes related to ethnic marginalization; tenancy, underdevelopment, vacant local bodies and poor service delivery	Among the others, the causes like rehabilitation of Kamaiyas and Kamlaharis, and ethnic marginalization were more vibrant in Dang
	Centered to more accessible areas	Large-scale and long-term demonstrations in Dang, and less frequent in Sunsari
	Division in leadership and their ideological bases	Less polarized in Sunsari and more fragmented and polarized in Dang
Second	Issues as proportional representation, ethnic identity, and autonomous Tharuhat state	Issues of Kamaiyas, Kamlaharis and guthi lands in Dang; though no specific issues in Sunsari except problems of squatters
	Mobilization of different networks from national to district and VDC/ward levels	Strong and deeply rooted networks in Dang and loose in Sunnari
Third	Contradictions emerged and changed with the given context; also incepted in national politics at large	Mainly to the state and less to the hilly migrants (in Dang) and mainly to the state and then with the Madhesi community (in Sunsari)
	Actors emerged from and assimilated with political parties; emergence of Tharu community-based ethnic parties	A huge influence and coverage of such political parties/ groups in Dang (e.g. TTPN, TASC) while not observed as such in Sunsari

8.2 Theorization of the Findings

With these specific findings on respective objectives/ research questions, the research concludes the following three key theoretical propositions:

- 1) *Tharu movement in particular remained as an integral constituent of power structure in villages.* It seemed to be an unavoidable force in bringing about social changes within the societies along with reform initiatives and political campaigning. Claims and counterclaims of the different actors (within the Tharus, and among the Tharus and non-Tharus) constantly constructed a plurality in the issues of identity, and setting of the agendas and the leadership. This happened very often, but the kinds of changes the movement achieved were inclined to cultural and civil rights; whilst a few impacts laid on long-term political, economic and ideological changes. It has been manifested within a continuum of heterogeneity. This, therefore, leads to the second proposition.
- 2) *The existence of complex and multiple worldviews:* The Tharu movement was essentially a progressive discourse of power, legitimation and democracy of the grassroots. But, the emergence and/or replication of elites in the movement/ community tended to hinder the prospect of momentum to challenge (and replace) the mainstream state-led development or relocate the market opportunities. The role of social institutions and structures in the villages, and their role in the mobilization of the Tharu movement implies that territoriality matters both in the development and in the Tharu movement. It was often a complex whole of heterogeneous, multiple and contradictory world-views positioned and conditioned a constantly emerging elite interest. In consequence, it leads to the third proposition.
- 3) *Contestations are diverse, dialectical and dynamic construct of the society.* Primarily the contestations in rural development were localized and Tarai-centric, though they have been also inclined to the regional and national politics along with the rise of Tharu movement at times. The 'contestation' positioned as open-ended characteristic of the contemporary rural political economy in the study region due to different claims and counterclaims, changing strategies and leadership. The nature of social change, policies and programs (opportunities for mainstreaming of the movement) has relatively affected the consequences of the movement and its future direction.

Based on the empirical findings and above-mentioned theoretical propositions, the present study finally concludes a theoretical framework, termed as 'Movement

Mobilization Framework of Contested Rural Development'.⁶⁹ The framework outlined here builds upon grounded theory approach based on theoretical linkages of the findings and their dialogue with the conceptual framework. There are four theoretical constituents of the framework which, in an integrated system, confront the rural issues and problems in shaping the contested landscape of rural development. They are: a) Movement actors and the state; b) Social institutions and structures; c) Nature of political change, policies and programs; and d) the Tharu movement. As presented in Figure 8.1, the four constituents of the contestation are mutually inclusive, though they overlap at points.

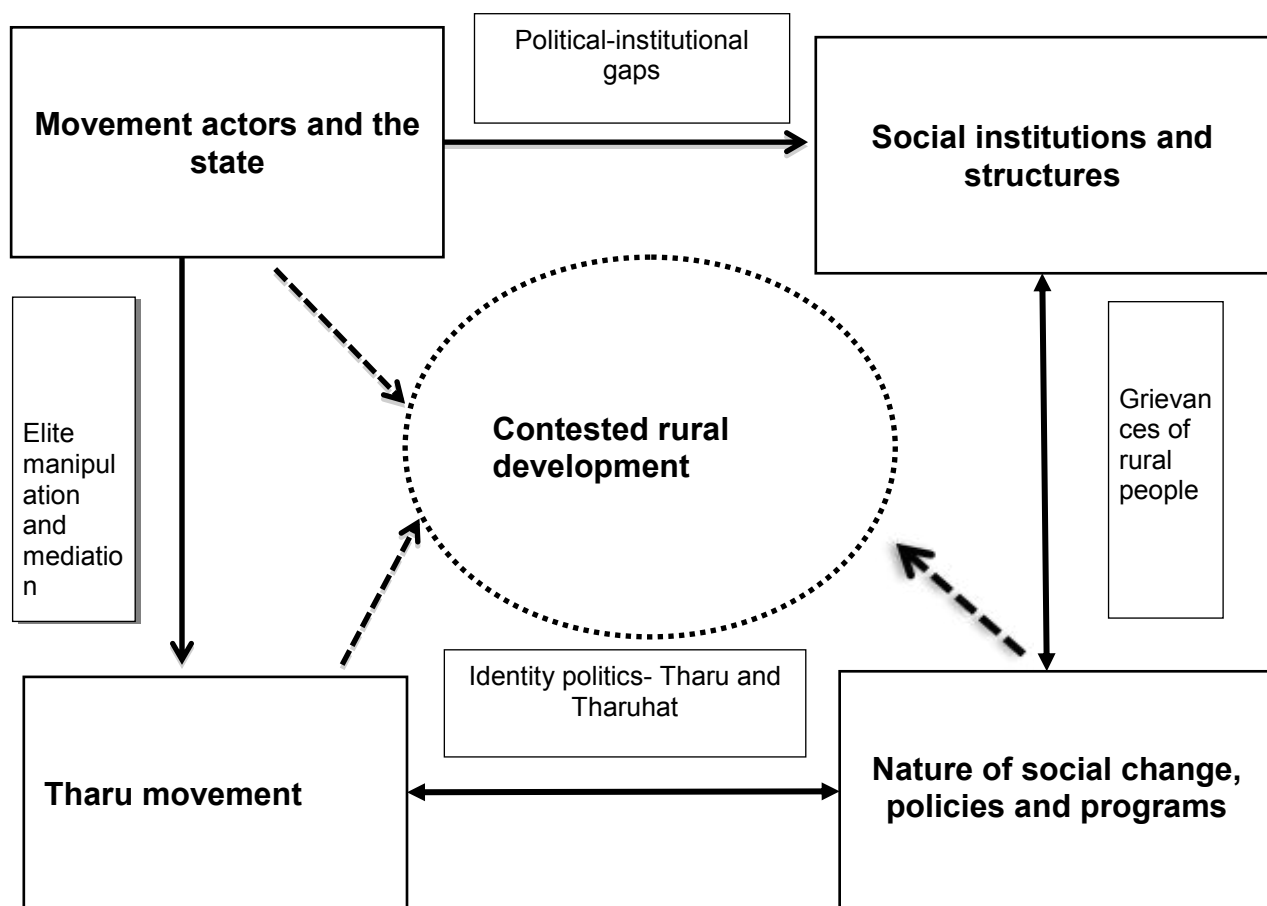


Figure 8.1: The ‘movement mobilization framework of contested rural development’

⁶⁹ For this kind of literatures in global academia the researcher did have substantial reviews on Samir Amin’s work on post-socialist movement, A.G. Frank’s nine thesis on social movements, Antonio Gramsci’s work on the maintenance of ideological hegemony, Anthony Bebbington’s work on poverty and social movements in developing countries, Joan Roelof’s critical analysis of liberal philanthropy, oppressed pedagogy thesis of Paulo Freire, William Robinson’s writings on the elite manipulation of popular revolutions, social movement theory of Jürgen Habermas, Michael Foucault’s thesis on discourse analysis, and Steven Luke’s three views of power to describe the dynamics of social movement.

1. *Movement actors and the state:*

To conclude this dimension of the contestation the study has evidently presented the following issues in-depth:

- Emerging actors, which constituted the movement organizations
- Movement organizations, which led to the networks of the movements
- State actors versus non-state actors
- Ideological and strategic gaps among the key actors of the Tharu movement
- Gaps in the well-being stratus of the leaders and participants

There was an impeding contradiction among the state actors and non-state actors in the rural areas. The former include the state, government and the state-bureaucracy, though people perceived them all as the forms of government which they relied upon for the services delivered by the VDCs, including budget, incentives and development infrastructures in their settlements. Historically, structure of the Nepali state remained a detrimental factor among these state apparatuses where the power of political elites used to accumulate. This complexity included the contradictions regarding power, sovereignty and existence. This further included structures of dominance or hegemony, exclusion, uneven development, economics, politics and superstructure or ideology. Though the nature of the state is gradually changing and becoming inclusive since 1990s, it is primarily incepted within the structural complexity of the capitalistic mode of production and market interventions. State-led development has become largely the driver of modernization projects where some significant achievements have also been achieved in terms of poverty reduction and expansion of private sector economic activities both in case of Sunsari and Dang. Despite this, it has become aid-dependent and urban bias, which indicates another political gap in the villages.

Contesting the claims of the state (and its apparatus), a number of non-state actors (NSA) are emerging so rapidly to challenge the state-led development and political systems. In fact, with the neo-liberal platform of the Nepali state, the NSAs possess sufficient power to influence and cause a social change. Most of the NSAs in Nepal are often institutionalized as per the state rules and regulations, so they cannot go beyond the mainstream of the state. Though the market related NSAs (e.g. private sector groups and franchises) are often motivated by profit oriented claims, the public-type of NSAs, in particular the movement groups have been negotiating the issues of rights and identities through advocacy and campaigning. As compared to the state

actors, a kind of heterogeneous setting in the issues and agendas of the non-state actors is prevalent. In the particular context of Tarai which has remained the land of political agitations (as the findings also suggested those issues in terms of land, migration and regionalism), the Tharus and Madhesis are two emergent actors that have been breeding with a number of movement groups. Formation of TJSC (extended up to VDC and some ward levels), the social roots of the TWS, registration of Tharu-ethnically based political parties (e.g. TTPN, TASC), the revitalization of the roles of Badhghar systems, spaces created with movement-oriented NGOs (e.g. FKDF, BASE) and changing mode of alliances (among the Tharus and Madhesis) represent some major developments in preface of the Tharu movement. However, the findings also manifest that only the emergence of movement actors could not necessarily lead to the movement, which further require other fundamental bases of the movement along with organization, leadership and mobilization strategies.

2. *Social Institutions and Structures:*

Emergence of the movement actors and weakening of the state actors is largely shaped by the institution and structures of the society. The findings reflected their manifestations in terms of class, gender and caste/ethnicity within the Tharu category and beyond. As an institution, the caste, ethnicity and religion remained as super-structural tools for the most of the social changes in the villages. These tools were constructed as flexible as enough to be changed, to meet the occupational and social needs of the Tharu people over a time. So, a kind of multiple identities was also emerging at the local level, and singular boundaries had been weakened. The relation between Tharus and Madhesis, and other non-Tharus were not necessarily contradictory as some researchers used to claim.

Not surprisingly, the class has appeared as the crucial analytic category in the social structure. Though a class, theoretically represents a group of people having a common relationship to the economy, the researchers observed that people often used to define their class interests in status group terms and expressed their class consciousness in national, ethnic and religious forms. There were many sub-classes (e.g. Kamaiyas, Kamlaharis, landless groups) and livelihood-making groups (with a variety of cultural and economic assets) within the Tharu 'ethnicity'. Consequently, no classic form of 'class' was functional to determine the local identities within the narratives of Tharu ethnicity. Economic classes (the well-off groups as evidenced in the well-being ranking) were largely represented by the political elites of the respective villages. On the other hand, the middle class was those groups who were in a contradictory

structural location to contest the class formation as a static feature of rural society. Classes (and thus consciousness) have become more fluid and dynamic in the rural economy being interwoven with other parameters of social status and identity—the gender and caste/ethnicity. The findings of the study also reveal that the Tharu movement was not a class movement often adhered by Left ideology, because there was a dominance of the elitist setting of agendas, letting a deep contrast with poor and oppressed people/ groups of other caste and ethnic communities. Further, the findings also reject the theoretical debates regarding the possibility of changing political systems and introducing emancipation of the Tharus in their own. This is how the following insights of the findings as evident in the previous chapters can be summed up:

- Nexus of collective behavior and individual behavior
- Dilemma of structure vs. agency
- Fluidity in strategies and characteristics
- Dualism among the key actors and networks of the movement
- Grievances of people: 'developmental' in nature
- Multiplicity of causes with the nature of 'underdevelopment'

The findings acknowledge that the government policies politically have asserted the legal frameworks for human rights and gender equity. Despite this, there was a dominant political system that is historically based on inequity and injustice, particularly towards the rural poor women of lower caste/ethnic groups. The system was also challenging to the classic structure of patriarchal society which denies women from right of ancestral property, access to the means of production and guarantee of social justice. The role of the Tharu women, from a bonded slave to a common woman, seemed to have contested largely with the state, though there were more frequent confrontations with the male counterparts in their own household and/or community and with the women of non-Tharu community too.

3. Nature of political change, policies and programs:

Aforementioned institutions and structures, consequently affected the process of social change in the villages. Indeed, social change and reforms had been the basic working strategies for both the state and non-state actors, including the Tharu movement organizations. A huge amount of money has been invested to uplift the socioeconomic condition of the rural people, both in Dang and Sunsari, with further addition of local

VDC-level budgets and annual plans. Accordingly, several claims have been made in poverty reduction through different policies and strategies. Despite this, all the efforts ultimately served to the mainstream of the state, i.e. the dominant ideology of the development assimilated in favor of the elite class people of different caste/ ethnic groups. Moreover, those acclaimed changes became an instrumental tool for the status quo to maintain the failed development in the villages. Neither the state attempted to end the rural problems and exploitative systems of production nor the non-state actors (including private sector and NGOs) tried to work on the structural issues. For example, the state could not fulfil its local bodies with people's representatives; nor it could execute scientific classification of different Madhesi groups and Tarai janajatis. Rather, it welcomed development aid without any purposeful ideology of rural development. Thus, the state policies and development aid were the external factors to shape the discourse and practice of social change.

The researcher has noticed that during every social ritual and development activity, there was a dominating role of rich and high caste groups, men, ethnic elites, Nepali-spoken people and the people who used to live in comparatively accessible areas. In effect, the granted privileges (versus marginalization) of class, caste/ethnicity, gender, region and language were the major components of social change- the class being the most significant one. This further became problematic due to the emergence of elites within the local communities and ethnic groups, what the researcher has termed as 'ethnic elitism'. In this way, the exploitation and unequal social relations became a complex mix of political domination, control over economic production and property, and ideological hegemony. Though human nature is conditioned by one's membership in society, it is essentially a lover of freedom and progress. This also rules out in the context of Nepali society, and not exceptions to the Tharu people. Due to political awareness rooted with the Maoist's movement and the context of new constitution writing, the Tharus became more proactive towards this kind of activism to secure their identity and rights. So, the emergence of different kinds of social and ethnic movements (including Tharu movement) in Nepal was a politically unavoidable phenomenon irrespective of their consequences and long-term impacts. The findings have therefore credited to the nature of political change as being the roots of the contestation in the following points:

- Bonded labor systems and slavery of the Kamaiyas and Kamlaharis
- Emergent spaces in the class movement within the Tharu

- Persistence of poverty and inequality
- Nexus of poverty and social conflicts
- The non-state actors-biased development
- The missing aspects of economic transformation and inclusiveness
- Vacant local bodies and emerging complications
- Land and tenancy issues
- Changing political culture in the villages
- Uneven power distribution and structure of the leadership

4. Tharu movement:

As mentioned earlier, the oppressive character of development, heterogeneous social setting and elite domination gave the political spaces for Tharu movement in Tarai. The movement is also going through the historical trends of its span: emergence, growth and decay. As a continuous evolution, the movement went through a series of historical ups and downs, and was driven by different political contexts. In the changing context of 2006, it took a formal structure and strategy of the movement in the political landscape, which was previously remained within the domain of cultural and reform movement. In this stage the manipulation of agendas and issues has become formal and institutional involving a large mass of the public sphere. It contributed Tharu movement to establish politically not only in the Tarai region, but also in the multiple levels of National context, particularly in the state-restructuring. To emphasize again the major political consequences of the movement:

- Emergence of new political and regional elites
- Formation of new political identity as alternative to 'Madhesi identity'
- Created an ethno-regional division and tension with the dichotomy of Madhesi and Pahadi
- Challenge the hierarchical structure of the dominant political parties
- Influence of ethnic wings (of the Tharus) in the major political parties
- Fluidity in movement leadership and fragmentation
- Reduced distance between Kathmandu, Dang and Sunsari
- Conversion of 'political culture' into the 'movement culture'

During the study a number of demonstrations, massive protests, collective actions and social mobilization were maintained through the largely extended formal network of Tharu movement organizations in different regions and strategic locations. In some

cases, different kinds of civil violence and disobedience, including a long-term Tarai strike were also occurred that had captured a larger public sphere. With these public confrontations, a direct tussle started with the state (its security and bureaucracy to the most) and the non-state actors (the Tharu movement organizations, in particular). There was a constant negotiation process with the movement parties. Identity politics became wider characterization of the Tharu movement, though elites were divided and thus leadership went through a huge ideological gap around the issues of proportional representation, federal states and ethnic recognition. Role of media, intellectuals, donor agencies and civil societies became apparent, but to some extent, they had contributed to polarize the situation and politicize the issues.

Along with these manifestations, the study also reached to a conclusion that the nature of the Tharu movement cannot be defined in a singular term of its characteristic feature. It is primarily due to its heterogeneous setting (cultural and ideological) which has also become a complex manifestation with the emerging political issues in the regional and national politics. It is also difficult to separate or to create a boundary line in between the Tharu movement, political parties, NGOs and advocacy groups. The Tharu movement, therefore has crossed the linear and pure dimension of 'ethnic' and it then became 'multi-local' and 'multi-linear'. What is this a 'movement pluralism' and 'movement in movement' as argued by many scholars in global studies of social and ethnic movements. The pluralism ensures dynamism of the movement, but dilutes its opportunities to be emancipatory and transformative (Crossley, 2009; Wallerstein, 2003). Melucci (1998) beautifully asserts this condition of social movement as: "...although movements may appear unitary, they are in fact 'made-up of multiple motivations, relations, and orientations,' and 'their origins and outcomes are equally heterogeneous (p. 424). Following this, the researcher would conclude that there were three levels of the characteristic features of the Tharu movement:

- From the grassroots level and insider perspective, it is grounded largely as a social-economic and cultural movement involving heterogeneous setting and multiple identities
- From the national context and outsider perspective, it seems to be political which is primarily linked to the issues of identity politics and human rights
- In meso-level, unavoidably, it is also manifesting as a regional movement in Tarai in the context of federal delineation, which further contested with other ethnic movements and the Madhes movement

Indeed, the social movements are future course of social change. Following this epistemological position, the present study further projects, some insights about how the Tharu movement will matter in the future course of politics and development. The researcher thus conclude a number of possible implications. These include:

- Constitution as a progressive discourse
- Legitimacy of the agendas
- Possibility to emerge as a regional political force
- Inclusive mechanism and better representation at the local levels
- Upcoming elections and the possibility of the movement claims to be the electoral agenda: Simulation of local development issues and movement agendas

With these arrays of opportunities, there is a multiplicity of implications. First, there is a possibility that the recently promulgated constitution has guaranteed the recognition of Tharu identity and inclusive platforms. Despite this, it fails to delineate the separate provincial, state comprising the Tharu-dominant Tarai districts (though not in a dominant position in the proposed district) in the name of Tharuhat or Tharuwan. In such a condition, the mainstream movement could go for further movement, making different alliances with the Janajatis and Madhesis. In being so, however, there still remains the issue of whether it will mobilize a large group of poor people, including the peasants, Kamaiyas, Kamlaharis and landless people or not. Second, even the constitution could not provide such a space for the Tharus, the movement could remain as 'static' due to organizational and leadership crisis. Rather, they can be easily co-opted in society or converted into a political party or NGO. The process, indeed, would ease the political assimilation of the movement further letting it not being a social property or movement at large, rather making of its political face-saving and safety of the career of the elites of the movement. Third, the movement can become violent in its future negotiating process at the federal-state level confronting with both national elites as well as local regional elites. In such a condition, it can be repressed forcefully by the state power to maintain the local peace and security. If one of these possibilities is fulfilled in some ways, then the progressive nature of Tharu movement will start to vanish, and it cannot remain as an 'alternative' force of society. However, it depends on the locally given context from the below or nationally driven imperatives from the above.

5. Contestation in rural development:

Throughout the thesis, the researcher has argued and provided evidence that the Tharu movement finally arrived at the contestation stage where there were various kinds of contradictions and crisis operated to contest the rural development. The gaps and lacunas in the development, on the other hand, also fueled the movement. So, the contestation seemed dialectical to both rural development and Tharu movement. In a liberal democratic system of the post-1990 Nepal, where the electoral policies were dominant, the state-led development explicitly started to manipulate different issues for public appeal, such as democracy, poverty reduction, targeted programs, political consensus and inclusive growth. Then, the 'new Nepal' became an emergent slogan as if it would solve all the problems existing in the society. The Interim Constitution of Nepal (2007) had made significant changes in legal forms of exclusion and marginalization, providing Constitutional guarantee for them. All these changes, however, occurred within the mainstream political system which seems more beneficiary for the political elites within both the Tharus and non-Tharus. The newly promulgated constitution in September 2015 has opened up a number of opportunities with federal delineation, but it is yet to be seen how it will work at the operational level of grassroots and the ways how the policy initiatives will be taken to saturate the goal of making just a prosperous and new Nepal. Within the broader framework of economic reforms, civil rights and development initiatives, in effect, the state has promoted elite interests in implementing the reformed strategies and policy instruments.

Meanwhile, the Tharu movement came to challenge the mainstream, though it seemed to have been such apparent at the surface. It has contested local development issues in various dimensions which the Thesis has evidently presented. In particular, the contestation has been manifested in terms of:

- a) Confused entry points and policy frameworks
- b) Shifting multiplicity and alliances
- c) Leadership and elite domination
- d) The matrix of human rights, ideology and subaltern

Empirically, the rural elites and the movement elites, who were close to the state elites, become the ultimate beneficiaries of the development outcomes. The power is conferred, delegated, shared and limited within the circles of elites. In this, there seemed a lacking of class ideology of the society. Rather, there were other deliberate manipulations of caste, gender, minority and regional issues. An alliance of elites both

from the state and non-state actors, including the Tharus was vested to ensure the upcoming benefits and opportunities which in turn could make them escape from the possible cost of well-being status. Very interestingly, the elites who emerged from the Tharu movement became not only the part of the state elite, but also the instruments of political parties and NGOs. Some of the national figures of the movement, however, were already established in the major political parties and they had joined the movement in the meantime. Dualism of the NGOs and TM was another critical feature of the movement, facilitated by the NGOs.

In this way, one of the central arguments of the Thesis is that the 'formation of elites' (through the movement) gradually turned into the 'replication of elites' (through the state, NGOs and political parties). In this shift, power was institutionalized and elites became the product of such institutional landscape of the society. But, the structural problems of underdevelopment, deprivation and livelihoods of rural people become either twisted or misled in such a shifting of politics and elite structure. This led to the contestation at micro-level politics, which often lies at the grassroots and functions through village and wards-level governance structures including the role of VDCs and other local actors. Consequently, there is always a political space of contestation in rural development.

8.3 Contributions of the Study

8.3.1 Contributions in knowledge (theory and discourse)

Globally, research on social movements reveals relatively fewer insights into rural development, while the rural studies engage more in state-led approaches. The studies are largely drawn from European and Latin American context than that of the Global South, particularly from the South Asian countries. In this context, the present thesis could contribute to the analysis of the contestation of rural development in the global discourse from a view point of Nepal's contentious politics that has been characterized with the rise of social/ ethnic movements. Sharing part of this critique, the researcher argues that the social movement has been undergone with the formation of the contested domain of polity incorporating the previously neglected development issues of poverty, inequality and marginalization. The movements, thus, have become contested power games around the issues of class, caste/ethnicity, gender, region and development. This is becoming more frequent in the context of the end of the Maoist conflict and the beginning of the process of constitution writing and

its subsequent implementation. This kind of political dynamics of Nepal within the social movements could contribute in seeing and debating global social movements, particularly in Arab, sub- African countries, Latin American countries and in Indian sub-continent. The researcher, thus, recommends that the movement mobilization framework of contested rural development (as discussed in sections 8.2 of this Chapter) can also be one of the analytical tools for the global knowledge and discourse to view different dynamics of state actors, non-state actors and social institutions in a given political context.

Following this, the findings of the research ring true to contribute in south Asian countries where the society is rapidly changing with a complex set of state-society relationship. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is such a political platform among the South Asian developing countries, which remains an economic and geopolitical power of the region. Being a homeland of number of caste and ethnic groups, the ways and the process of how the social movements interact with contentious politics (and vice-versa) have been still less theorized empirically in the south Asian societies as compared to European and American context. It is seen that modernization, democratization, political ideologies and the emergence of mass societies threatened the personal and collective identities and the advancement in information systems have sustained people's struggles against the dominant world view of the state and elites. With the end of the Cold War, the social movement discourse of South Asia has been featured with identity-based movements, and it became more apparent after the emergence of non-state activism in the region. Interestingly, while the People's Movements in the respective countries were structural and political in nature, subsequent movements have been fueled with the voices of identity and rights of socially disadvantaged ethnic groups as was seen in the context of Tharu movement in Nepal. More critically, the global studies can take reference of this study to see how the rural elites and social movement elites who are close to the state elites become the ultimate beneficiary of the development outcomes.

Indeed, the discourses of social movement and identity politics are highly contested, and these are less attributed towards the neo-liberal dynamics of dominant development discourse. This is in fact a high time when an initiative needs to be taken at the global and regional level structuring a social movement research into a broader discourse of rural studies including the issues of different caste/ethnicity, class and region. The present study perceives social movement as a network of contested interactions for sharing or gaining of power between a plurality of individuals, groups

and/or organizations, engaged in political or cultural conflict, on the basis of shared collective identity. This worldview has also been reflected in the methodological approach of the researcher as he has followed social constructivism. It could provide an important analytical insight for the further research. As Lyotard (1984) puts it in classic tune: “all intellectual disciplines and institutions take for granted that not everything has been said, written, or recorded; that words already heard or pronounced are not the last words” (p. 37).

8.3.2 Contributions in policy and practice (social change)

The implications for social change from this study are wide-ranging and potentially affect the larger audience, including rural people, Tharus, non-Tharus, policy-makers, development planners and movement activists. The concept of Tharu and other movements was quite easy to understand, but the impacts of the movement in development and social change are exceptionally difficult if not impossible to accomplish. Beyond the case of Nepal’s traditional practices in ethnicity, it is almost a new implication that the findings from this study are development related, often politically expressed and socially constructed. In this context, this research provides empirical data that can bolster the affirmative action policy efforts of the Tharu movement that call for inclusive state structures and distributive development opportunities.

The study findings can give a way to create more broader-based inclusive platform for the rural development. Contestation in the form of demands, agendas, policies, strategies, leadership and organization are very much implied in the social change and development practices. But, it is imperative that the social change so desired should understand the value of political change. It means that any kind of social change that the movement activists desire for or the government intends to bring in the rural power relations must be incepted by political context. The political context should then address the structural issues of society, including class, gender, caste/ethnicity, religion, and good-governance. Non-ethnic groups, particularly non-Tharus must play a proactive role in the Tharu movement. Simply empowering Tharus without taking into consideration other communities in a locality will not solve the problem.

The study is quite rational in analyzing Nepal’s contemporary political context of state-restructuring process and the writing and subsequent implementation of the new constitution. The study reflects Tarai-Madhes-based contests, accessing out the

different claims, issues and consequences of the Tharu movement. The study notes that most of the right-based issues in terms of civil rights and cultural rights are also a part of the fundamental rights and state policies as adhered by the present constitution and state-restructuring process of Nepal. The constitution has recognized all the historically deprived sections of society, including the Tharus and women by committing to their fundamental rights for the development and distribution of productive resources through reforms in electoral policies, judiciary accessibility, and representation in decision-making systems and regional autonomy at the local level. However, present study offers some micro-level evidences that could be better for future policy initiatives at the local levels. In this regard, the government should cautiously check the manipulation of elites and their replication in the respective communities which in turn will discourage the elitist agendas of development and in movement. Therefore, the study strongly relies on the position that the larger part of social change, if politically addressed, could address the root causes of social conflict and underdevelopment in Nepali society.

In liberal democratic systems where the electoral policies are dominant, the state-led development explicitly deploys reformative schemes on diverse sectors, including democracy, human rights, poverty reduction, targeted programs, political consensus and inclusive growth. Following this, 'New Nepal' has emerged as a metaphor of over-optimism as if it will solve all the problems existing in the society. There may also be changes in the legal forms of exclusion and marginalization, providing Constitutional guarantee for them. All these strategies will most probably occur within the 'boundary of political system' of the state. The state and its apparatus describe their own activities as strengthening democratic processes in order to promote well-being of grassroots people. In effect, though this, as the study findings suggest, the liberal development approaches of the state could not undermine elite manipulation of society; the rural society in particular. It is there becoming policy implications to the state that the liberal foundations of development should recognize the Tharus and other disadvantaged groups. The policies, in turn, should strictly discourage elite interests. Moreover, the stereotype approach of bureaucratic planning and insignificant legal reforms in many ways are undermining the change in power relations in rural society, which have made the spaces for ethnic movements always contested.

8.3.3 Contributions in methodology and the scope for the future research

The questions the researcher asked in this PhD research should compel him to ask further questions. First, his work shows the need for more critical social research to serve the alternative development discourse. This means, there is a growing space for movement-aware research. The researcher here argues that methodological and theoretical pluralism can address the emerging discourse of contested development. Indeed, the research in rural development confronts important limitations which have been further challenged with the emergence of non-state actors and social movements in recent years. It leads to a methodological reconstruction in the studies of social movement and rural development in effect to contribute the discourse and knowledge generation through;

- a) Rebuilding concepts, methods and field research approach to theorizing the networks, emotions, identity politics, development aid, social change and resistance in the changing context of contemporary societies;
- b) Seeking a more critical approach which enabled an understanding of how changes in social relations either constrained or enabled contestation in development; and
- c) Linking the nexus of different livelihood strategies of people, their collective voices and struggles, including actors and leadership, which contribute either to alternate development or to challenge it or be the part of mainstreaming.

This methodological argument gels with the critical realist explanatory approach. This would link the social movement studies as a part of development studies. It is not only the ideological fervor or theoretical speculation. Rather, it is that social movement studies is itself grounded in many contexts – the households, the community, the region, and the nation – whose contested nature we can theorize inductively. The social and cultural structures must be understood from the perspectives of both the eye lens of social movement and rural development. In these contexts, we may more fruitfully study and understand how power governs the contestation in the development.

Second, the issues of 'contestation' is challenging both from philosophically/theoretically and empirically. In this context, future research should be concretely based on empirical data generated from intensive and in-depth study of particular localities. This study clearly suggests that territoriality matters in the social science research, though it cannot be confined by any particular methods or tools. A plural,

comparative and multi-local perspective is desired for grabbing the multireal world. The upcoming research should examine the activities and values of individuals and their collective behaviors in their social setting of particular complexities. For this, comparative studies in various regions within Nepal, as well as between countries of similar development status, will help social scientists answer these questions and forge effective policies that address the contested issues in rural development in general and in the social and ethnic movements in particular.

Third, future research should also develop new research methods that will help us gather a large quantity of data and develop high-quality analysis. Moreover, we must collect the data as a narration from and about the people and their behaviors and views. In addition to this, it requires to develop more sophisticated methods to analyze data. This includes the need to utilize complementary frameworks and concepts that contribute to an interdisciplinary approach to the study of social movement in particular and rural development in general. The researcher believes that any theoretical approach that emerges from the present period of theoretical transformation and development crisis will not only be a powerful research arm, but also be more political relevance.

Fourth and the final, the current links in Nepal between social research, and policy making and practices are weak. There is a need to link social research not just with the local, but also with the state, social movements and the process of globalization. Though most of the primary data collection process was completed during the constitution writing process, the evidences and arguments could be further compatible and rational in the context of the implementation of the Constitution and federal delineations in Tarai and around. In particular, the following area of Nepal-based studies could be acknowledged for the global knowledge system of movement research and (rural) development studies:

- i. Prospects and challenges for rural development in the changing political context of federal state-restructuring and implementation of the constitution
- ii. Changing nature of rural society and contemporary rural life (in terms of well-being, livelihood, class relations, caste structure and other social relations)
- iii. Persistence of poverty, inequality and exclusion
- iv. State-led development and its strategies in rural development

- v. Emergence of non-state actors and social movements, including youth and civic activism
- vi. 'Perceived benefits' versus 'real benefits' of the proportional representation for the marginalized groups
- vii. Experiences and expectations of rural poor with the state actors and non-state actors (including the social movements)

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APPENDICES

Appendix-A: Semi-structured Questionnaires for SSIs and FGDs

Objective 1: *To understand the root causes (e.g. political, economic and social) and characteristics (e.g. collective organizations, actions and strategies) of Tharu movement.*

A) Questions to the people (particularly poor)

1. What do you know about Tharu movement? When and where did you observe it?
2. Who did participate in it and why? Have you ever participated in the movement and why?
3. What do you think are the major causes of this movement, e.g. political, economic, socio-cultural, gender or any? Why?
4. Are there other factors like poverty, inequality and exclusion in the society also play role in the movement? How?
5. How are the different organizations emerging for collective actions of the movement (e.g. mobilization, welfare activities, protest activities, etc.)?
6. And, how do you see the strategies of the movement being organized for people (e.g. poor, disadvantaged, landless, youth and women)?

B) Questions to the state-actors or bodies

1. What do you know about Tharu movement? When and where did you observe it?
2. Who did participate in it and why?
3. What do you think are the major causes of this movement, e.g. political, economic, socio-cultural, gender or any? Why?
4. What is your view about non-state actor movement in general and Tharu movement in particular against the state?
5. What are the common and differences among various Tharu movements at various locations?
6. How does Tharu movement link to various other social groups and movements at different levels?
7. What is your view about the future of these movements?

C) Questions to the non-state actors (movement activists, leaders, civil society leaders)

1. What do you know about Tharu movement? When and where did you observe?
2. Who did participate and why? Have you ever participated in the movement and why?
3. What do you think are the major causes of this movement, e.g. political, economic, socio-cultural, gender or any? Why?
4. Are there other factors like poverty, inequality and exclusion in the society also play role in the movement? How?
5. What is your view about non-state actor movement in general and Tharu movement in particular against the state?
1. What is the historical significance of Tharu movement? What is its link to the current state formation?
2. What is your view about the future of these movements?

Objective 2: *To analyze the issues and agendas of the Tharu movement regarding the livelihood and reduction of poverty and inequality from the society.*

A) Questions to the people (particularly poor)

1. There are different claims of the Tharu movement, and how do you see them?
2. In what way the issues of livelihoods have been set as the agenda of the Tharu movement?
3. Do you also see any claim or issues in the Tharu movement about the reduction of poverty and inequality? Why?
4. In your view, how is the ethnic identity of Tharus manifested in the agendas of the movement?
5. And, do you think that the issue of identity means purely an “ethnic” issue or it is also related to the development, e.g. in your livelihoods or poverty? Why?
6. You told about different issues. How are the different issues and agendas of the Tharu movement related to each other? Why do you think these are important?

B) Questions to the state-actors or bodies.....Same as above A

C) Questions to the non-state actors (movement activists, leaders, civil society leaders).....Same as above A

Objective 3: *To analyze the expectations and perceptions of people meeting their well-being from the Tharu movement at grassroots level.*

A) Questions to the people (particularly poor)

1. In your view, how is the Tharu movement representative and inclusive of poor, disadvantaged, peasants, landless, youth and women)? Can you give any examples?
2. How do various groups represented at different levels including leadership positions?
3. What is the coverage of various groups?
4. How are the material (e.g. basic needs, physical assets, access to resources etc.) and non-material (e.g. self-esteem, dignity, freedom etc.) well-being of people addressed by the Tharu movement?
5. Finally, in your view, how effective is the Tharu movement to address your well-being needs and aspirations?
6. What are the key strengths and weaknesses of Tharu movement? Why?
7. What is your view about state institutions and their service delivery? How can this be made more effective and accountable to the people?

B) Questions to the state-actors or bodies

As above A

Plus additional questions:

1. What are the various programs of the state institutions in the research areas?
2. How effective are these programs addressing the well-being needs and aspirations of the Tharu people?
3. Why do you think non-state actor movement is rising in Nepal? Do you see any link with the vacant local bodies and poor service delivery? Any examples?

C) Questions to the non-state actors (movement activists, leaders, civil society leaders).....As above B.

Appendix-B: Historical perspectives on rural development and their implications

Decade	Dominant ideas of (rural) development	Basic theme/focus	Critiques
1950's	Modernization	Scaling up the small scale subsistence sector to the large; mechanical-ideological worldview	Western-dominance; benefitting only to rich farmers for large-scale production
	Dual economy	Parallel operation of relatively modern or advanced sector & backward or traditional sector	No specific route of devt followed; shadowed by growth approach of modernization
	Community development	Mobilization of rural communities into local devt	Heavily influenced by US foreign policy; turned into political instrument
	Lazy peasants	Perceptions that the peasants were lazy and required motivation	Backward attitude and bad work ethics of the peasants taken as the hindrance of RD
1960's	Green revolution Technology transfer	Focused on large scale & input intensive agriculture based on higher yielding systems	Small farmers largely affected; environmental impact; loss of soil quality & food quality
	Agricultural extension	Rural farmers to adopt new technologies & farming practices	Local and indigenous knowledge or production system largely ignored
	Growth role of agriculture	The contribution of agriculture to economic growth; small farm efficiency	The local/small farmer's role largely focused without their economic inclusion
	Rational peasants	The changing perception of rural people as rational producers & managers	The innovative part of the small-scale farmers could not extend as expected
1970's	Redistribution with growth	Direct transfer of income; taxation; targeted investments; redistributing land or assets	IDS/WB guided approach (1972; created aid dependency; maintained 'redistribution' without alteration the power relations
	Basic needs approach	Third World devt to gain or meet social services & transfer payments; designed to help the poor through extensive projects of health & education	Only talked about the 'basic' needs; no alternative ways & additional needs mentioned to change the elite structure of society
	Integrated rural development programs (IRDPs)	Large scale, state-led approach to RD; supportive to meet national policies & planning; focus on institutions & area devt	Complex, top-down & blueprint approach; dependent to externalities or donor agencies; techno-centric; promoted new elites in the rural regions
	State-driven agricultural policies	Extension services from the state; subsidized inputs and controlled prices to the rural farmers	Local knowledge system largely neglected; gender issues also not articulated
		Focus on the direct linkage	Casting the poor people as

	Limits to growth— World Conservation Strategy (WCS)	of population growth, poverty and environmental degradation; promoted disaster narratives; gave rise to 'WCS'	environmental destroyer; neglected disproportionate and wasteful use of resources by the industrial countries
	Women in development (WID)	Aimed to reverse the exclusion of women from devt process	No specific focus on genders relations, productivity and capability
1980's	Structural adjustment program (SAP)	Neo-liberal economic policy; WB's initiation to lend money for structural adjustment following the Washington Consensus; progressive removal of price & wage controls through deregulation & other fiscal policies	Instrumental to market liberalization at the apex of debt crisis; significant impact of rural economies poor households of the South; reduction in the govt expenditure on social services; increased hardships to the poor & lost access to input subsidies
	NGO-led devt	Shrinking the state & the rise of international development NGOs	Significant rise of non-state actors in devt; initiated globalization to root
	Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA)	Enabling outsiders to better understand rural realities; qualitative & participatory research methods	Outsiders vs. insiders' realities; ignorance to indigenous technical knowledge
	Gender and Development- GAD	Emerged as alternative to the WID; to empower women and transform gender relations	Did not challenge the overall power structure that prevented equitable access to resources
	Poverty alleviation	Focused on interventions which would reduce the impact of poverty on poor HHs	Neglected the causes and consequences of the rural poverty and urban-biased devt; lacked long-term strategies
	Environment and sustainability	Emphasis on Brundtland report (1987)'s sustainable devt approach	Remained difficult to shift the traditional ethics of devt to sustainable rural devt
1990's	Structural adjustment	Renewed SPA in the context of transition of former communist countries	End of cold war psychology; mainstreaming into the globalisation
	Good governance (GG)	Focus on more selective allocation of resources for the quality of the governance; focus on institutions & public sector management	GG treated as a part of 'democracy', and not as a part of 'empowerment' of people from the below; dominance of post-Washington consensus
	Micro-credit	Appraisal of micro-credit (as a human right) to poverty reduction; targeted to poor women; succeed as 'Grameen Bank' from Bangladesh	The programs could not match to the state-led devt; rather gave a room for NGOs to play among the rural poor in the forms of poverty reduction strategies
	Poverty reduction	Introduced as PRSPs in 1999 by the WB & IMF to enhance domestic accountability with devt	Imposed as a 'debt relief' condition; increased dependency; elites of the GOs and I/NGOs mutually

		partners	benefitted
	Participatory rural appraisal (PRA)	Emphasis on how rural people behave, adapt & recognize; RRA renewed as participatory research & planning	Long and expensive process; though people or insiders supported it, the process could not empower the people to change the social power relations
	Actor oriented rural devt	Mapping of relationships & participation of local actors; anthropological & social network research techniques	Focus on endogenous development with the 'actors', and not the 'structures'; so, did not unlock the rural problems
	Stakeholder analysis	Tuned rural devt planners in searching the real/possible stakeholders of devt; recognition of different interests & institutions; helped to cost-benefit analysis	Stakeholders identified without their class/caste privileges; divided into the project 'winners' and 'losers'; reluctant to the bad consequences among the poor; puppet of elitist stakeholders
	Environment and sustainability	Contribution of environmental goods & services to make rural livelihoods; shift from 'ecosystem' to 'livelihood' approach; community based natural resource management	Lacked natural resource governance to improve access and control of key resources by the poor. Still unanswered the question: who need sustainability – poor or rich? Rural or urban?
2000's	Sustainable livelihoods (SL)	Transdisciplinary approach of RD involving agriculture, wage labour, farm labour, small-scale enterprises, and multi-sector programs	'Local perspectives' of livelihood well-explored; but the local/rural perspective could not challenge or replace the central/urban perspectives
	Millennium development goals (MDGs)	Set goals for 2000-2015; aimed to halve extreme poverty in all its forms; focus on national policies/plans to adopt the goals and targets	Guided by Northern donors and WB; no clear assessment of aid effectiveness; rural devt not treated as mainstream discourse
	Decentralization	Came as a part of 'good governance' agenda; responsibility & subsidiarity of/from the authorities of all the levels – central, regional, local	Lacked financial decentralization; restructuring of the institutions largely neglected; decentralization as 'political' agenda vs. 'developmental' agenda
	Critique of participation	Participation to cast the market idiom; people being 'consumers' of the services	Challenged existing discourse of participation, but did not propose the new one
	Sector wide devt approaches	Sector policy and strategy; formalised process of donor coordination with monitoring system	Guided by the donor mentality to 'country ownership of donor' programs
	Social protection; direct cash transfer	Putting money directly into the pockets of the poor to invest & use at their discretion; maintaining safety measures	Not functioning at the communities facing chronic poverty; dominated by private sector
			Goal 1 of MDGs; as a part

	Poverty eradication	of second United Nations decade for the eradication of poverty (2008-2017)	any comprehensive & radical plan of action to reduce poverty & inequality
	Revitalising small-holder farming	Poverty of the poor treated as multidimensional	Needed to link food security issues
	Information, Communication Technologies (ICTs) for devt	Use of ICTs for pro-poor devt; focus to fill the space of digital divide; price information & market access	Technological social of devt problems; mechanisation of rural resources & knowledge; does not care small-scale production
	Climate change	Mounting awareness of the challenges posed by climate change & its impacts on poor & vulnerable HHs	Less talk about the role of industrialised countries; monolithic psyche: 'everything and everywhere is the climate change
	Fair trade	Globalising agriculture; secure niche markets for producers of particular commodities	Risks for dominance of global supermarket over the world food economy
2010's	Contested rural development; new social rural movements; Millennium development goals (MDGs); Sustainable development goals (SDGs); Inclusive development; Resilience building; Disaster risk reduction		

Source: Adapted and reviewed from different sources⁷⁰

⁷⁰ For this assessment of timeline, the research is indebted to various scholars and literatures. To include: Berry and Cline (1979); Clover (2003), Collier (2007), Carley and Christie (2000); Cornwall and Nyamu-Musembi (2004); Cornwall and Pratt (2003); Ellis and Bigs (2001); Fairtrade Foundation (2009) Fields (2007); Holdcroft (1976); Jolly (2006); Streeten (1984); Aubut (2004); McArthur (2008); Chambers (1997); Nemes (2005); Scoones (2009); Booth (2008, 2012); Larson and Ribot (2005); Cornwall (2002); Patel, Holt-Gimenez and Shattuck (2009); Peppiatt, Mitchell and Holzmann (2001); Peppiatt and Holzmann (2001); Phuhlisani and PLAAS, 2009

Appendix-C: Theoretical perspectives and major ideas of social movements

Theorists	Main works	Key concepts and ideas
On the conflict and collective actions		
Karl Marx and Frederic Engels	The Communist Manifesto (1848)	The ghost of communism in the Europe; class struggle as driver of world history (social change and revolution); dialectical nature of nature and society; universalization of revolution through the leadership of proletariat; problems of capitalism and the capitalist mode of production eventually to lead the emergence of socialism
Karl Marx and Frederic Engels	A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy (1859)	Material conception of history; analysis and critique of capitalism and mode of production; commodity, measures of value and money; medium of exchange; the precious metals; the method of political economy; general relations of production to distribution, exchange and consumption
Karl Marx	The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte (1852)	Theory of making of history in the given circumstances and social revolutions in nineteenth century
Emile Durkheim	The division of labor in society	Description of how social order was maintained in societies based on two very different forms of solidarity (mechanical and organic), and the transition from more "primitive" societies to advanced industrial societies; discusses how the division of labor is beneficial for society because it increases the reproductive capacity
Emile Durkheim	The elementary forms of religious life (1912)	Development of religion to the emotional security attained through communal living; society is not at all the illogical or a-logical, incoherent and fantastic being which it has too often been considered
Georg Simmel	Conflict (on individuality and social forms) (1971)	Sociological relevance of conflict; unity and discord; conflict as an integrative force in society
Gustave Le Bon	The crowd: A study of the popular mind (1895)	There are several characteristics of crowd psychology: impulsiveness, irritability, incapacity to reason, the absence of judgment of the critical spirit, the exaggeration of sentiments, and others.
On the hegemony and collective behavior		
Max Weber	The city (1921)	The analysis of city consists of many different subjects—including study of religion (especially Protestantism), history of development of democracy in Western Europe; Weber argues that the development of cities in European culture (occidental cities) as an autonomous associations with its own municipal officials
Max Weber	The distribution of power within the political community: Class, status, party (1914)	The three-component theory of stratification, with class, status and power as distinct ideal types; that reflects the interplay among wealth, prestige and power.

Antonio Gramsci	Prisoner's Notes	30 notebooks and 3,000 pages of history and analysis during the imprisonment; considered a highly original contribution to 20th century political theory; cultural hegemony as a means of maintaining the capitalist state; the distinction between political society (police, army and legal system) which dominates directly and coercively, and civil society (family, education system, and trade unions) where leadership is constituted through ideology or by means of consent; a critique of economic determinism that opposes fatalistic interpretations of Marxism
Antonio Gramsci	Notes on Italian History	History of the subaltern classes: methodological criteria; the problem of political leadership
Antonio Gramsci	The modern prince (1959)	Drawing from Machiavelli, he argues that 'The Modern Prince' – the revolutionary party – is the force that will allow the working-class to develop organic intellectuals and an alternative hegemony within civil society.
Herbert Blumer	Social movements	Social movements as collective enterprises to establish a new order of life; general social movements (new cultural trends, indefinite images and behavior, characteristics); specific social movements (stages, role of agitation, esprit de corps, morale, reform and revolution); expressive movements; religious movements
William Kornhauser	The politics of mass society (1969)	Mass behavior as a collective behavior in mass society; activist interpretations; accessible elites and political activism
Neil J. Smelser	Theory of collective behavior (1962)	Human civilization and episodes of dramatic behavior, such as the craze, the riot and the revolution; norm-oriented movement; structural conduciveness; value-oriented movement
On the resource mobilization		
Manchur Olson	The logic of collective action (1965, 1971)	Public goods and the theory of groups; the groups will act only when it becomes necessary to further their common or group goals
Anthony Oberschall	Social conflict and social movements (1973)	Resource management/ allocation approach; conditions favorable to the initiation of mobilization: the loosening of social control, the relations between city and countryside
John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald	Resource mobilization and social movements: a partial theory	Interaction between resource availability, the preexisting organization of preference structure (e.g. a SMO), and entrepreneurial attempts to meet preference demand
C. Craig Jenkins	Resource mobilization theory and the study of social movements (1983)	The emergence of resource mobilization theory; sources of contention: resource mobilization vs traditional approaches; the formation of social movements; the process of mobilization; the organization of social movements; the future of resource mobilization theory
Gerald Marwell and Pamela Oliver	The critical mass in collective action	Free riding and the logic of collective action; group heterogeneity and the critical mass; models of decisions and models of information; social networks: density, centralization and cliques; organizing cost and incentive structures

On the social movements and the political process		
Robin Cohen and Shirin M. Rai	global social movements: Towards a cosmopolitan politics	Definition of social movements; new and old; rise of global social movements; towards a cosmopolitan politics (human right, women, environment, labor, peace , religion)
Sidney Tarrow	Power in movement	People engage in contentious politics when patterns of political opportunities and constraints change and then, by strategically employing a repertoire of collective action, create new opportunities; consensus mobilization and identity; mobilizing structures; dynamics of movement; cycles of contention; outcomes of movement
Sara Evans	Personal politics	Social roots of feminism in the fifties and sixties; social spaces; threat to self; role models
Peter K. Eisinger	The conditions of protest behavior in American cities	Urban politics; political behavior; political action; political opportunities; political actions and opportunities are limited and closed with centralization of power with the government
Nick Crossley	Social movements and the theory of practice (2002, 2009)	Problems of agency and structure; limitations in resource mobilization, political process and rational actor theory; habitus and social movements; the value-added model and the theory of practice; durable struggle, the political field and resistance habitus
Hanspeter Kriesi and Dominique	Social movements and direct democracy in Switzerland	Federal context- federal, cantonal and local levels; optional legislative referendum; popular initiative and legislative initiative
Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward	Poor people's movements	Institutional limits on the incidence of mass insurgency; the patterning of insurgency; the electoral system as a structuring institution; social location and forms of defiance; the limited impact of mass defiance
Doug McAdam	Political process and the development of black insurgency 1930-1970	The political process model and institutionalized politics; the generation of insurgency; structure of political opportunities; indigenous organizational strength; cognitive liberation
Charles tilly	Social movements and national politics	The rise of social movements; why study repertoires? Contemporary collective actions; crystallization of national social movements and emergence of other social movements; the growth of national electoral politics, and the proliferation of created associations as the vehicles of action
On the new social movements		
Jürgen Habermas	New social movements (1981)	Conflicts in advanced Western societies have been deviated from the welfare-state pattern of institutionalized conflict over distribution. Rather, the new conflicts arise in areas of cultural reproduction, social integration, and socialization. The underlying deficits reflect a reification of communicative spheres of action; the media of money and power are not sufficient to circumvent this reification
Claus Offe	New social movements: Challenging the boundaries of institutional politics	The old paradigm (economic growth, distribution and security); the new paradigm (environment, human rights, feminist, peace movements and alternative spaces); new protest movements; new politics

Alain Touraine	An introduction to the study of social movements	All collective behavior are not social conflicts and all social conflicts are not social movements, but a social movement is a special type of social conflict; nature of new social movements
Alberto Melucci	A strange kind of newness: what's 'new' in new social movements? (1994)	New movements? Information societies; symbolic challenges; two-pole pattern of mobilization (one-polar and bipolar- the two poles are reciprocally linked; latency; visibility; political system
Arturo Escobar and Sonia E. Alvarez	Theory and protest in Latin America today	Trends of movements; theory and research; collective manifestations are found in all countries of the region— in varying political regimes, levels of development, cultural contexts, and traditions of protest
On the new directions of the movements		
Bert Klandermans	Mobilization and participation: Social-psychological expansions of resource mobilization theory	Social psychology and resource mobilization theory; persuasion and participation; mobilization and participation; method and research design; importance of structural factors, such as the availability of resources to a collectivity and the position of individuals in social networks, and the rationality of participation in social movements
David A. Snow, E. Burke Rochford, Jr., Steven K. Worden and Robert D. Benford	Frame alignment processes, micromobilization, and movement participation	The problem as the issues of support for and participation in social movement organizations and their activities and campaigns; types of frame alignment processes; bridging, amplification, extension and transformation of frames; summary and implications
Mario Diani	The concept of social movements	A proposal for synthesis; networks of informal interaction; shared beliefs and solidarity; collective action on conflictual issues; plurality of actors; conclusions
Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison	Social movements: A cognitive approach	Social movement as a cognitive praxis; deep structure; sociological discussion — sociology of knowledge; feminism; environmentalism; translation of scientific ideas into social and political beliefs; historical function of social movements as social laboratories
Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald	Comparative perspectives on social movements	Linking opportunities, mobilizing structures, and framing processes; the question of movement emergence; the question of movement development and outcomes; the organizational structure of the movement; framing processes; using the perspective comparatively — mobilizing structures and framing processes
Craig Calhoun	Putting emotions in their place	Importance of emotions in the genesis and maturation of social movement; normative structures for emotions; psychoanalysis
On the globalization and social movements		
Arjun Appadurai	Grassroots globalization (2006)	Transnational activist networks from local, regional to global levels; coming crisis of the nation state; Democracy, globalization, and pedagogy; the anxieties created by globalization are even more specific for the poor

Marjorie Mayo	Globalization and gender: New threats, new strategies (2005)	Women, development and globalization: different approaches; from 'women in development' to 'gender and development'; development alternatives with women for a new era (DAWN)—critical feminist perspective from the south
Jackie Smith	Globalizing resistance: The battle of Seattle and the future of social movements	Movement origins: structures and identities; global political processes and movement tactics; building coalitions and joint strategies; innovative repertoires; expansion of transnational social movement organizations-TSMOs
Sanjeev Khagram, James V. Riker and Kathryn Sikkink	From Santiago to Seattle: Transnational advocacy groups restructuring world politics	Forms of transnational collective action; advocacy networks; coalitions; joint mobilization; domestic and international opportunity structures; transnational advocacy group and massive demonstrations against the globalization and hegemony of WTO, IMF and WB
Donatella della Porta and Sidney Tarrow	Transnational protest and global activism	Social movements developed with the creation of the nation-state, and the nation-state has for many years been the main target for protest; diffusion, domestication, internationalization and externalization; transnational collective action (environmental change, cognitive change, relational changes)
Nicola Montagna	Social movements and global mobilizations	Transnationalization of social action in different fashions; network organizations ; a global frame; global campaigns; globalization of movements and political opportunities ; transnationalization of politics; a transnational public sphere
Vincenzo Ruggiero	Dichotomies and contemporary social movements (2005)	The debate on social movement revolving around a number of conceptual and practical dichotomies; dyads of 'reform-revolution' and recognition-redistribution'; identities and resources; the social as mobility; impacting on choice; reform or change? Social equality and cultural difference ; the free city and the end of Jerusalem; rationality versus emotions
On the neo-Marxist and critical perspectives		
Marta Fuentes and Andre Gunder Frank	Ten theses on social movement	Social movements (SM) mobilize social power appealing to morality, justice, survival and identity. Most "new" SM are not new, but have new features, particularly more women's participation. They are cyclical and related to long political economic cycles. SM are mostly middle class in the West, popular/working class in the South, and both in the East
Immanuel Wallerstein	Antisystemic movements: History and Dilemmas	The creation of antisystemic movements and the debate about strategy, 1789-1945; post-war success of the movements: triumphs and ambiguities; forward to what? The debate on strategy reopened; agenda for the movements (repoliticization of the mass base; reconceptualization of the concept/ program of transformation; bringing together of worldwide antisystemic movements; and deghettoization of the movements
Giovanni Arrighi	Marxist century—American century: The making and remaking of	The communist manifesto revisited; the rise of the world labor movement; global wars, movements and revolutions; US hegemony and

	the world labor movement	the making of the world labor movement; the crisis of Marxism in world-historical perspective
Samir Amin	The social movements in the periphery: An end to the national liberation	Actually existing capitalism; China 1911-80: the uninterrupted revolution; recovery of national political independence and national liberation movement among the colonized countries; after world war-II: From the bourgeois national project to recompradorization; the need of revolt against peripheralization; new stage of transnationalization and new issues of the popular national revolution
Andre Gunder Frank and Marta Fuentes	Civil democracy: Social movements in recent world history	Liberty, Equality and Fraternity (with Solidarity or community)—LEF/S; cyclical history; state formation in nationalist and socialist revolution; a Marxist socialist parenthesis; autonomous self – empowerment and state management; class composition; coalition and conflict; moral motivation and social power; civil democracy and social transformation
Alan Woods and Ted Grant	Reason in Revolt: Marxist philosophy and modern science	Reason and unreason (introduction, philosophy and religion, dialectical materialism, formal logic and dialectics); time, space and motion (the dialectics of geology, how life arose, the revolutionary birth of man, the genesis of mind, Marxism and Darwinism, the selfish gene); life, mind and matter; order out of chaos (mathematics at the crossroads, chaos theory, the theory of knowledge, alienation and the future of humanity)

Source: Adapted and compiled from different sources by the researcher [see also Amin, et al. (2009); Crossley (2009); Ruggiero and Montagna (2012)]

Appendix-D: Planned development in Nepal and rural development implications

Five-Year-Plans and Interim Plans	Rural development strategies	Achievements and implications
1 st (FYDP 1956-60)	Continuity and priority to village devt programs. The country was divided into 150 devt blocs (led by bloc devt officers-BDOs)	Limited knowledge and experience; the progress unsatisfactory in term of physical and financial output though the plan had good orientation
2 nd (IP 1962-65)	Focus on agricultural devt and village devt programs; shift from area-oriented program to sector-oriented program; initiation of Land Reform Act, 1964	Preliminary implementation of Land Act 1964; but the benefits of programs could not go to the rural poor and landless peasants; started to follow 'Panchayat' politics of devt
3 rd (FYDP 1965-70)	Decentralisation and people's participation; Panchayat program to a full-fledged sector; mobilisation of local resources; agricultural productivity on the basis of geographical regions, e.g. cereal and cash crops in Tarai, horticulture in hills and animal husbandry in the mountain	No explicit mention of rural devt, but given high priority to agricultural devt through the Panchayats; empirically the programs were concentrated only in the Tarai and Kathmandu valley, which induced huge decline in agriculture production in the hilly region; and therefore, promoted Hill-Tarai migration
4 th (FYDP 1970-75)	Adopted regional devt strategy to reduce the regional disparities in allocation of economy and resources; adopted District Administration Plan (DAP) in 1975	No special focus on rural areas or people and their inequality, but some projects directed in the region with the objective of Panchayat polity of devt
5 th (FYDP 1975-80)	Shifted to mobilise the rural people for local devt schemes; initiated 'integrated rural devt programs – IRDPs; laid emphasis on output maximisation and labour intensive technologies; conceived 'small area devt program (SADP)	Tried to initiate development corridors but the programs suffered from lack of proper coordination among the sectorial agencies; no significant impact on the lives of the people due to complex political and bureaucracy structure
6 th (FYDP 1980-1985)	Focused to satisfy and supply the 'basic needs' of people; emphasis on local devt by promoting people's participation; continued in IRD approach	Ministry of panchayat and local devt (MPLD) formed in 1981; promoted devt planning from the local panchayats but failed to gain people's participation
7 th (FYDP 1985-90)	IRD approach; decentralisation scheme (Act of 1982); training schemes; remote area devt; welfare programs	No separate and comprehensive policies of rural devt employed though the plan had a number of remote/ rural devt programs
8 th (FYDP 1990-95)	Rural devt programs under 'local devt' section of the Plan; focus on raising living standard of poor communities, developing backward areas and infrastructures, creating employment opportunities and promoting 'self-reliance'; some populist programs included	Changed panchayat devt structures into Village and District committees; the strategies were merely confined to slogans rather than to effective implantation in the context of changing political system after 1990; weak monitoring and evaluation system; suffered from anti-Panchayat politics

9 th (FYDP 1997-2002)	Poverty alleviation; focused on agriculture and forestry to enhance rural livelihood; physical/rural infrastructures; implementation of Agricultural Perspective Plan-APP	Initiation of Local-Self Governance Act–LSGA; severely affected by Maoist’s insurgency coupled the inability of political parties and frequent change of the governments; conflict sensitive devt
10 th (FYDP 2002-2007)	Implemented as PRSP; broad-based economic growth; multiplicity of poverty (income, human, exclusion); enabling policies for local bodies; targeted programs and rural infrastructure devt	Conceptually broad, but not supportive institutions mobilised; vacant local bodies and weak implementation of the programs; donor-driven and MDGs-dependent; failed to resolve devt dilemmas in rural areas
11 th (TYIP 2007/8-2009/10)	Context of people’s movement 2006; New Nepal dreamed; conflict management strategies, e.g. relief, reconstruction and reintegration; focus on rural infrastructure and energy sector	No ‘rural devt’ approach proposed; (under)development dimension of Maoist’s rebel largely ignored; donor-driven reformist measures; targeted rate of economic growth and poverty reduction could not achieve
12 th (TYIP 2010/11-2012/13)	Focus on quality of life and livelihood through poverty alleviation; equitable growth; inclusive devt; aimed to be instrumental for future structure of federalism; proposition of the action plans for governance and financial reforms	Achieving majority of the 60 targets of MDGs; No rural devt strategies proposed specifically; guided by jargons of ‘quality’, ‘inclusive’, ‘federal’ and ‘equity’; affected by structural problems and supply-side weaknesses including the vacant local bodies
13 th (TYIP 2013/14-2015/16)	Poverty reduction to 18% and upgrade Nepal from least developed to developing; most of the previous strategies continued including governance, energy & infrastructure	Again the Nepal’s progress towards MDGs is being romanticised; nature of rural poverty not analyzed; no visionary plan of rural devt in changing (federal) context proposed

Source: The researcher’s review from different sources and reports including CBS and NPC (see also Chapter 2 for detailed analysis)

Appendix- E: Chronology of social and ethnic movements, and important political events in Nepal

Year	Events and Implications
c. 1700	Beginning of Indo-Aryan movement into the Indian sub-continent
1768	Formation of modern Nepal by the expansion of Gorkha empire
1770	Ten Limbuwan rebellion in far east (Pallo Kirant)
1773-81	Majh kirat rebellion in Dudhkoshi Arun region
1778	Limbu language repression in Pallo Kirant
1792-93	Limbus and Bhotas assist China in Nepal-china war; Arun-tista (Limbus) and Nuwakot (Bhotas)
1793	Tamang (Murmi) rebellion in Nuwakot
1790s	Jumla rebellion in Jumla; Led by Sobhan Shahi
1808	Khampu rebellion in Bhojpur; two executed, properties of 15 confiscated
1858	Sukadev Gurung rebellion in Lamjung; Killed after 17 year's jail
1867	Dashain boycott in Dhankuta; Ramlihang and Ridima killed
1870	Limbu language repression in Pallo Kirant; Sirithebe exiled
1876	Lakhan Thapa Magar rebellion in Gorkha; Seven hanged
1877	Supati Gurung rebellion in Gorkha; Execution at Tundikhel
1890s	Arya Samaji movement for the reform of orthodoxy Hindusim; repressed by the state
1908	Rai rebellion in Manjh Kirant; Atal Rai, Bharatsingh Rai and Kanthabir rai executed
1920	The Maikaiko Kheti (maize farming repression); Subba Krishnalal got exile
8 July 1920	Abolition of sati system
1924	Abolition of das pratha (bonded labor system)
1925	Monks exile in Patan; Chriring Norbu Lama and four Buddhist monks expelled
1926	Nepal Bhasa movement in Kathmandu and Kolkata; Nepal Bhasa Sahitya Mandal (Newari language) movement
1927	Buddhist monks expelled in Kathmandu
1936-40	Yogmaya's political-religious and feminist movement in the eastern-Hill; Repressed by the Panchas; Yogmaya supposed to commit a suicide along with more than two hundred her followers in 1941
1941 Jan.	Execution of 'four Martyrs': Gangalal, Dharmabhakta, Shukraraj and Dasharatha Chand; Capital punishment to some Newars of Kathmandu
1943	<i>Beth-begari</i> movement in 1943 in Mainapokhar of Bardiya district; the Tharu peasants demanded land for the tillers and boycotted beghari, i.e. tax to the landlord. The movement prolonged to 1947. Eventually, it succeeded to gain back a huge area of land (25000 bigha approximately) to the tillers.
1947	Anti-touchability movement in Baglung and Kaski; Led by Bhagat Sarbajit Bishokarma, but failed
1947	Jayatu Sanskrit movement in Kathmandu
1949	Formation of Tharu Kalyankarini Sabha (Tharu Welfare Society) in Rautahat in the leadership of Kewal Chaudhary
1950	Peasant movement in different central Tarai region and the movement was repressed; Initiated in November 1950 from Gaur (Rautahat); extended in Bara, Parsa, Sarlahi and Mahottari in 1952; Several killed and got injured
1950-51	Kiranti movement in Majh and Pallo Kirant
28 April 1951	Anti-landlord movement in Bardiya; five people killed in firing; popullary known as 'kherhanawa movement'
1951	Chiniya Kaji death episode in Kathmandu
1951	Bir Gorkha dal revolt in Kathmandu
1953	Peasant-landlord conflict in Pyuthan
1953	The movement regarding the economic and political rights in the far-western region (in Doti particular); the first and systematic armed rebel against the Nepali

	state; repressed and the leader Bhim Dutta Panta killed by the Indian Armies
1954	Dalit temple-entry movements in Kathmandu and Doti; Pashupati and Shaileshori
1956	Anti-Nepali language movement in Tarai region; Movement against making Nepali the only language of instruction
21 July 1960	Killing of Gumara Tharu in Belawa of Dang; popular as 'Belawa-Banjari Kanda'
1961	Tamang rebellion in Nuwakot
1964	Kirat movement in eastern hills; Against elimination of the kipat system
1965	Dalit temple entry movement in Bhojpur; Siddhakali temple; but the attempt failed
1966	National college related movement
1976	Four month-long student's movement; Repressed and the movement failed
1979	Nepal Bhasa Manka khalah established in Kathmandu; Large public rallies organized
1979	Pakistani PM Bhutto death protest; Led by students; turned into a movement against Panchayat
1979	Chintang killings in Dhankuta
1980	Workers and peasants' wage increase movement in Dhanusha
1981	Piskar killings in Sindhupalchowk
1985	Congress launched civil disobedience campaign against the Panchayat
1990 March/ April	People's movement 1990 and dissolution of Rastriya Panchayat; establishment of multiparty democracy in 8 April 1990
1991	Dalit movement in different districts; Mobilization to sell milk to dairies (Udiyachaur, Syangja); temple-entry movement (Nawalparasi)
1992, 1995	Hindu-Muslim riots in Nepalgunj; during the Deepawali (Oct.)
3-4 Nov 1994	Hindu-Muslim riots in Nepalgunj; Druing the parliamentary election
1-9 Dec 1994	Hindu-Muslim riots in Nepalgunj; During well renovation at a temple
1994	Dalit movement in different districts; Campaign to sell milk to dairies (Chitwan); Gorakhkali temple-entry movement (Gorkha); right to water from a public source (Sipapokhari, Sindhupalchowk)
13 Feb 1996	Maoist launched the people's war by attacking a number of police stations in the different regions of the country
1997 May	Hindu-Muslim riots in Nepalgunj; During local election
1999	Khambuwan National Front (KNF)'s insurgency in Khotang, Bhojpur, Solukhumbu and Okhaldhunga; in 2001 it united with Limbuwan National Front (LNF) and became Kirat National Front (KNF); increased in 2001-02 in its own name; but merged and split from the Maoists several times.
26-27 Dec 2000	Parbate-Madhesi riots in Kathmandu and Tarai; Against the Hritik Roshan's anti-Nepali speech in media
2000	Dalit movement in different districts; Anti-carcass-disposal movement (Lahan and Siraha); mobilisation to sell milk to dairies (Nawalparasi)
1 June 2001	Royal Massacre occur in Narayanhiti Royal palace where then king Birendra including his family member were shot dead
17 July 2002	The GoN released 18,291 kamaiyas in the western and far-western Tarai districts from their bondage
1-3 Sep 2004	Riots against Muslims in Kapilvastu and Banke
22 Nov 2005	12-point Understanding concluded between the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) and the Seven Political Parties
2005-2006	Madhesi insurgency started and culminated in Rautahat, Saptari, Siraha and Sunsari; Led by Janatantrik Mukti Morrcha (JTMM) – Tarai people's liberation front – a split from the Maoists. Again in 2007 it got two distinct groups of Jaya Krishna Goita samuha and Jwala Singh samuha
2006 April	People's movement 2006; parliament reinstated. The parliament declared the country as secular and non-discriminatory state
18 May 2006	The reinstated parliament made 14-points declaration which termed Nepal as a secular and caste-discrimination free country, ended Raj Parishad, mentioned to

	decide royal succession by the parliament, took Royal Nepal army as Nepal army under the parliament, made provision for the change in national anthem and committed to proportional representation of women
21 Nov 2006	Comprehensive Peace Accord concluded between the government of Nepal and the Communist party of Nepal (Maoist)
15 January 2007	Madhes uprising in the leadership of MJAF Nepal; government became ready to amend the constitution in keeping the position of federal-set up the state
7 Aug 2007	Agreement between the government of Nepal, Nepal Adivasi janajati mahasangh and Adivasi janajati samyukta sangharsa samiti (included the issues of inclusiveness, ILO 169, gender mainstreaming, proportional representation in CA)
30 Aug 2007	22-points agreement between the government of Nepal and the Madhesi Janaadhikar Forum, Nepal; addressed Madhes related issues and governance system
14 Sept 2007	ILO 169 ratified by Government of Nepal
10 April 2008	The first CA lection for its 601 members that served from May 28, 2008 to May 27, 2012
28 May 2008	Declaration of Nepal as a federal democratic republic at the very first meeting of the CA
2007-2008	Laxamna Tharu (Roshan) and top Tharu leaders left the Maoist in 4 May 2007; In June 2007 they established 'samyukta Tharu rashtriya morcha Nepal' which later turned as 'Tharuhat Swyakta Rajya parishad' (i.e. Tharuhat Autonomous Council) in 9 June 2008 by the morcha's general assembly held in Bangaun (Dang); Together with this TAC and other representative organizations, the Tharuhat Joint Struggle Committee was organized in 2008
28 Feb 2008	8-points Agreement between GoN and United Democratic Madhesi Front (UDMF-samyukta loktantrik Madhesi morcha); commitment for federal set-up in the state-restructuring and proportional representation of Madhesi people
5 Sep 2008	Agreement between Rastriya Haliya Mukti Samaj Mahasangh and the GoN; formal emancipation of Haliya freeing of their debt and bondage
2008	Tharu movement against the state and against the claims of Madhesi movement (led by TJSC)
21 June 2009	Agreement between the GoN and Nepal Pichada Varga (OBC) Mahasanga; follow up and implementation of Backward Community Upliftment Development Committee (Formation) Ordinance 2065
2009 March	Tharu movement against the inclusive bill of the government; 19-day Tharuhat strike in the Tarai; two people were killed by the security forces in Chitwan (Kamal Chaudhary and Bipin Khadka) and two in Dang (Prakash Chaudhary and Ram Prasad Chaudhary) in March 5 and 13 respectively
14 March 2009	Agreement between the GoN and representatives of Adivasi Tharu community and Nepal federation of indigenous nationalities; addressed the issues of rights and minorities, proportional representation, recognition of Tharu identity and their proportional inclusion in all govt organs
16 March 2009	Movement of Muslim community in the Tarai region; Agreement between the GoN and Samyukta Muslim Ratriya Sangharsa Samiti; commitment to recognize Muslims as minority by legal provision
April 2009	12-days public strike by Tharuhat in the Tarai region (2066 Baishakh)
14 Nov 2009	Agreement between the GoN and Kirant Janawadi Workers Party; the party joined into a negotiation process
26 Nov 2009	Letter of 22-points Memorandum to the GoN by Adivasi janajati brihat morcha; common issues for Adivasi/ janajati and their rights to be ensured in the Constitution
4 December 2009	Police attack and invasion on the settlement of squatters residing in Dudejhari jungle of Baliya VDC- 8 and 9 in Kailali district; 5 people killed in the confrontation
February 2009	Inclusion of Tharu and other ethnic groups of Tarai under 'Madhesi' category; 13-days strike by the Joint Tharuhat Struggle Committee
2010	Madhesi movement and Tharu movement in different regions of the Tarai; both claimed for the implementation of agreements what the GoN did with them in

	different dates and contexts
2011	Madhesi movement and Tharu movement; ethnic movements of some ethnic groups (Rai, Kirat and Limbu) for self-autonomy
2011-2012	Establishment of Tharuhat Tarai Party Nepal in Nepalgunj by Laxman Tharu and Yogendra Chaudhary (12 Aug 2011); these founder leaders left the party before its registration in the Election Commission (19 Dec 2012) and entered in the Madhesi Forum Democratic (4 Oct 2012)
2011	Baluwatar occupy movement for gender equity and human rights
2012	Ethnic movements of different ethnic groups collaborated by NEFIN; non-ethnic movements; non-divisionary movements; anti-federalism movements
2013	Movement against montesagto; movement for the price of sugarcane in the central-western Tarai; feminist movements in eastern Tarai against social evils and gender discrimination;
27 June 2013	' <i>Balbalika bachau andolan</i> ' and kamalari movement in Tarai districts and in Kathmandu; declaration of 'freed kamalari' by the GoN
19 Nov 2013	Elections for the second CA though some left-wing parties including a larger split of the Maoist boycotted the election
2014 March, July	Alliance of Tharus, Madhesis and other regional/ ethnic groups for collective protest in Tarai; NEFIN's movement in eastern hilly districts and TJSC reformulated which led further agitations and campaigning
2015 June/ July	Reformation of Tharuhat/ Tharuwan Joint Struggle Committee; continuous movement started; alliance made upon the Madhesi morcha and other regional/ethnic actors or groups; confrontation with the campaigners of <i>akhanda sudurpachhim</i>
August 24 2015	Tikapur (Kalali) incident where seven police officials and a one and half-year child was killed by the Tharuhat agitators by using domestic weapons
20 Sept 2015	Promulgation of the constitution; Tarai agitations
2016/ 2017	Alliance and unification of different political parties, ethnic groups and movement actors

Source: The researcher's review from various sources⁷¹

⁷¹ See further details in Chaudhary (2017), Gaige (2009); Gellner et al. (1997); Lawoti (2007); Pyakurel (2014); Regmi (1978); Sarvahari & Chaudhary (2016), SPECT (2011); Upreti et al. (2010); WB/ DFID (2006); Whelpton (2005); various newspapers and some narratives found in the studied villages