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**Continuity and change in population movement: From inside a rural Nepali community**

**Subedi, Bhim Prasad, Ph.D.**

**University of Hawaii, 1993**

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**CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN POPULATION MOVEMENT:  
FROM INSIDE A RURAL NEPALI COMMUNITY**

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE DIVISION OF THE  
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REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF**

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**IN**

**GEOGRAPHY**

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**By**

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Alice G. Dewey  
Gene G. Kassebaum**

**Dedicated to**

**My Father, Shree Ram Chandra Subedi and My Mother, Smt. Jayanta Subedi,  
who did not have an opportunity to go to school but worked hard to educate me and  
my brothers.**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Most research on territorial mobility is based on an epistemology developed from the western intellectual tradition and there is an absence of perspectives from inside the local cultures to which movers belong. This study is set within the broader question of whether there is continuity or discontinuity in that behavior summarized in the term 'human territorial mobility.' It takes an interpretive stance, where understanding the meanings of human behavior is given more prominence than normative positions. A focus on rural societies of South Asia, particularly ones that are more traditional, is assumed to provide a view from inside such society and to offer alternative conceptions of mobility. It is an approach to people's mobility that is holistic and integrative, but with a particular concern for the historical, cultural, ethnic, and social dimensions.

The analysis is based on eighteen months field work in Namsaling, a village located in the eastern hills of Nepal. Information derives from a range of instruments: field census, ongoing mobility registers, family genealogies, life histories, folk sources, and participant observation. Particular attention is paid to folk sources, because these are important to illuminate the context, feelings, and attitudes of people, whether movers or stayers.

From time immemorial, territorial mobility has been an essential component in the lives of rural individuals and their households, as it manifests the cultural, economic, social, and ethnic groupings of society. In both the rural typology and the world views elicited from field data, territorial mobility displays separations of time,

space, activity, and place; it also expresses rural actions as a collective consideration of meanings, social groupings, and stages in a lifecycle. Unlike more industrialized societies, mobility does not entail the abandonment or rejection of a rural 'home' for another 'reach,' but rather full participation in social, cultural, and economic lifestyles. This inquiry demonstrates that the issue of continuity or discontinuity in mobility over long period of time is complex, being neither exclusively one nor the other. Many forms of mobility have endured, some have been modified, and some have dissipated, just as other new ones have emerged. There has been continuity and also change.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### THE PROBLEM

This study is an insider's interpretation of territorial mobility within a rural South Asian society. It begins with the basic premise that despite numerous studies on migration, we still lack a real understanding of territorial mobility in traditional societies in terms of how rural societies function and how that mobility needs to be conceptualized differently from the western categorization. Mere criteria of physical and territorial separation of people are not sufficient to understand the range of mobility found in a Nepali society and the diversity of caste and ethnic groups it reflects.

Population movement studies on third world societies are characterized by diverse theoretical and methodological perspectives. These diversities have camouflaged our basic understanding and explanation of human territorial mobility in traditional societies.<sup>1</sup> The apparent confusion reflects three basic points. Firstly, the cultural and social circumstances that lead people on the move are enormously different, and the context of territorial mobility in rural societies is vastly varied (see, Stenning, 1957; Young and Doohan, 1989; Dahal et al., 1977; Rigg 1988; Prothero, 1957; Murray, 1981).

Secondly, researchers have, implicitly or explicitly, taken one or the other ideological standpoints. Their conceptual view of people on the move, methodological tools and ultimate intellectual goals are different (to be discussed later in this chapter). This ensures emphasis on certain aspects of mobility process and

neglect others. As a result, it may not be a surprise to find contrasting, even opposing, conclusions in two studies of the same community (see, Rigg, 1988). Thirdly, related to the second, is the scaler level of investigation. Territorial mobility can be observed and analyzed at several levels of scale. The conclusions reached at different scales of investigation are not necessarily compatible. Moreover, until recently, there has been very little concern for linkages between several levels of analysis.

The varied social and cultural circumstances coupled with researchers' own ideological positions and the several levels of scale in which human mobility has been investigated have resulted in controversy about key issues, one of which is the main focus of this research, namely: whether territorial mobility in traditional societies has occurred throughout history and consequently is deeply rooted in a society's past or whether it represents more recent behavior in response to the incursion of money economy and western institutions.

This is not a completely new issue. It has been raised in some literature implicitly (see, Singhanetra-Renard, 1982; Skeldon, 1990). However, there is no articulate elaboration and discussion with case materials. This study, set in eastern Nepal attempts to address this issue of continuity and change through an integrated approach and from an insider's perspective in a rural, multi-ethnic setting without a recent colonial experience.

## **Population Movement Studies in Nepal**

Almost three decades have passed since social scientists in Nepal began to focus explicitly on the process of people's mobility in the country. Nonetheless, very little research has been done to date and virtually all of what exists in the movement literature is based on the analysis of census and survey data. Existing scholarly works have focussed on permanent migration, often at the expense of population movement in general. With few exceptions, the major concern is with the description of patterns, causes and consequences. There is little emphasis on understanding the process of how traditional societies function and how the process of mobility is linked with the customary lifestyle of the communities.

One body of research has dealt with **historical aspects of migration**, and in particular how, when, and from where various ethnic groups originated and to what extent they settled and populated the country. Karan (1960) argued that in the past, Nepal was settled through large-scale migration from China and India. Historical studies indicate a chronic shortage of manpower in the country. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the government encouraged the settlement of different regions through immigration (Bajracharya, 1973; Poffenberger, 1980; Regmi, 1961, 1971, 1979). In terms of ethnic groups and communities, Subedi (1988) looked at the history of population movement and found that original settlement in Nepal reflected the diffusion of different ethnic groups and communities throughout the hill regions. In the past, just as at present, movement reflected the links between people and their search for resources. Kansakar (1974) also traced the



history of migration assembling a range of historical sources. He argued that the process of migration towards the east accelerated through the campaign of territorial expansion in the eighteenth century.

A second group of scholars has dealt with **patterns, magnitude, scope, causes and consequences** of rural to rural migration (Rana and Thapa, 1974; CEDA, 1977; Shrestha, 1979; NCP, 1983; Kansakar 1983). Rapid growth of population in the hill region is considered to have put heavy pressure upon available resources, resulting in outmigration to the Tarai areas and emigration to countries such as India and beyond (Dixon, 1977; Gurung, 1984, 1989a; Shrestha, 1985a; Regmi, 1985; Thapa, 1985). In contrast, Conway and Shrestha (1981) argued that issues such as poverty, landlessness, and inequality are not only directly linked with the institutional arrangement of the Nepali economy but also equally influence the mobility process (Shrestha, 1990).

Whereas Dahal et al., (1977) considered migration as prime indicator of demographic pressure upon land in the far western hill areas, Shrestha and Conway (1985) argued that out-migration has been unable to relieve such pressure or landlessness, despite evidence of some reduction in land ownership disparities and some households having benefitted from government resettlement (see also, Blaikie et al., 1982). Dignan et al., (1989), in a similar manner have found that despite the existence of a state controlled schemes to grant land to rural migrants in the Tarai, a substantial proportion remain landless or near landless and have been forced into squatter settlements, a tenuous situation claimed to yield marginal subsistence

opportunities. Thapa's analysis of migration decision-making (1989) asserted that income, assets owned, and remittances affected the intention to stay, whereas an intention to migrate became a reality as access to land decreased. K.C.'s paper on proximate and structural determinants (1984) showed that migration in Nepal responded very much to government development and administrative policies whereas Shrestha (1988) focussed on the political economy and increasing landlessness in Tarai.

A third group of research workers has focussed on the problems and implications of resettlement (Elder et al., 1976; Kansakar, 1979, 1985; Ojha, 1983). Whereas Elder et al (1976) considered land resettlement programs since 1956 and analyzed the ethnic and social characteristics of settlers, Kansakar (1979, 1985) examined the effectiveness of projects located in the Tarai documenting a lack of well-defined objectives and the inability of projects to achieve expected outcomes. Ojha (1983), tracing the history of land settlement in the Tarai, pointed out that before 1950 the incentives to encourage settlers from inside the country were largely unsuccessful. Thapa and Weber (1986) in their study of the Khajura and Jamuni project found that among the four groups occupying the project area i.e., ex-servicemen, resettlers, old settlers, and squatters, the former two groups were successful and their success was associated with higher efficiency in crop production, larger land holding sizes and higher earnings, together with easier access to local community services.

Another group has focussed on **international and urban/intra-urban migration** in the cities, especially Kathmandu. Results suggested that movement into urban areas has increased, just as it has from city core to the peripheral suburbs (Thapa and Tiwari, 1977; Shrestha, 1985b). Rural-urban migration, especially to Kathmandu and the Tarai towns, is also rising (Dahal, 1983b; Sharma, 1985, 1989). These studies acknowledged the contribution of Indian immigrants to the Nepali economy, but criticized the dependency it has brought in agriculture, trade, and industry, arguing the need for gradual replacement of immigrant influence from these sectors of economy. Subedi's analysis (forthcoming) suggests that different factors have shaped the two major flows in Nepali international migration i.e., emigration from the hills and immigration to the Tarai, in quite different ways, while Gurung and Sharma (n. d.) argued that the impacts of immigration and emigration are quite different and that, although both occur at the national level, they cannot be conceived of as mechanisms in equilibrium. Emigration, on the other hand, as Dahal and Mishra (1987) stated, was tied to a number of processes central to the politics, economics and culture of India and Nepal. Over the present century, this process has subsidized the standard of living in the hills and mountains.

**The Political implications of migration** is another research focus. Weiner (1973) pointed out that despite similarity of demographic changes occurring in Nepal with other developing nations, the political framework was significantly different. The Tarai, according to Gaige (1975) has a critical problem of integration due to the magnitude of immigration from the hills and immigration from India. This also is the

finding of a government sponsored study on internal and international migration (NCP, 1983). In contrast, Paramanand (1986) addressed the issue of integration for the Indian community in Nepal and the Nepali community in India and stressed that their nature and extent are not always comparable.

**Anthropological studies** have made an important, if implicit, contribution to understanding the context for both individual movers and the movement process (McDougal, 1968; Caplan, 1970; Fuhrer-Heimendorf, 1975; MacFarlane, 1976; Messerschmidt 1976; Dahal, 1983a; Ross, 1981; Fricke, 1986). In general, they reflect three major points: i) the inability of the family unit to absorb increasing number of economically active people; ii) the paradoxical reluctance of such members of the household to leave their home communities; and iii) the difficulty of increasing local resource capacity, especially the amount of arable land. One of the implications has been an increasing intensity of short-term and circular movement, which eases the economic burden of the rural household.

With few exceptions, and as generally found in third world situations, mobility studies in Nepal are concerned with the collection, collation, and description of the nature, causes and consequences of permanent migration. The available literature is centered around migration as permanent change of residence and has not gone beyond what can be obtained from the national census and general surveys. Most studies have been conducted at the macro-level. In orientation, they are dominantly empiricist and positivist. As an exception, a few research studies have focussed on structural aspects of migration (e.g., Conway and Shrestha, 1981; Shrestha, 1990;

Thapa, 1989), while the anthropological studies are dominantly humanist, for whom the mobility of people is peripheral to their ethnographic concern.

In summary, studies on territorial mobility in Nepal thus far, suggest a lack of detailed and insider's look at what people's territorial mobility means and what are the various forms of movement meaningful to the individual, households and community as a whole. A mobility study in a rural Nepali community, in turn, needs to be conceptualized differently from the dominant western categorization. It is only then the critical questions of continuity and change in movement in general and specific to caste and ethnic groups across generations can be addressed. Moreover, there is an absolute dearth of literature that attempts to utilize the more meaningful sources of data such as local sayings, proverbs, songs, together with the more conventional methodologies as to what they have to offer about the continuity and change of people's mobility.

### **Dominant Approaches to Population Movement**

Issues of continuity and change in people's territorial mobility are complex and need greater focus. Continuity and change in turn reflect different approaches taken by scholars and the varying weight given by the intellectual community.<sup>2</sup> The complexity and range of studies on population mobility in general reduces to three dominant approaches: the empiricist/positivist, the marxist/dependency, and the humanist.

## **The Empiricist/positivist Approaches**

Empiricist and positivist methods dominate early works on population movement in general where the emphasis is on collection, collation, and presentation of facts that are mainly 'testable' and help model building. These studies are concerned with development of typologies, the search for 'scientific' explanation and the articulation of factors causing population movement to occur over space and time (Table 1.1). Ravenstein's laws of migration (1889) are the earliest generalizations. Later, research focussed upon description of migrant characteristics, magnitude, typologies, causes and consequences, individual cognitive and motivational elements, decision-making processes, and factors related to places of origin and of destination (Lewis, 1954; Prothero, 1957; Bogue, 1959; Elkan, 1960; Mitchell, 1961; Gould and Prothero, 1975; Gardner, 1981; Goldstein and Goldstein, 1981; Roseman, 1988).

In this research, population pressure, economic motives, wage differentials, place utilities, distance, modernization and social networks were identified as the explanatory factors of the movement process. Most studies were urban centered and focussed on permanent migration or resettlement. The migrant is perceived as 'a person of two worlds' (c.f. Simmon, 1986) with the community of origin as one world and the work place the other. Several neoclassical and behavioral models were developed, tested, and refined, including Stouffer's (1940) intervening opportunity model, Wolpert's (1965) behavioral model of decision making, Lee's (1966) theory of migration, the economic models of Todaro (1969), Zelinsky's (1971) hypothesis of mobility transition, Chapman's (1976) idea of tribal mobility as circulation, Mincer's

(1978) model of family migration decision, and the value-expectancy model of De Jong and Fawcett (1981).

In a narrow sense, this research argues that people are moving from an area of labor surplus to one of labor deficit, from places of poverty or disadvantages to places of economic opportunity (e.g., Elkan, 1960; Guglar, 1969). Though migrants may suffer initially, their participation in the mobility process helps them raise their income or material standard of living. This research also attempts to establish a connection between characteristics and stages of economic growth and development with corresponding stages of population movement. Zelinsky (1971: 221-222) argued that:

There are definite patterned regularities in the growth of personal mobility through space-time during recent history and these regularities comprise an essential components of modernization process.

This was an ambitious statement and the studies by Hugo (1975) in west Java, Bedford (1981, 1973) in Vanuatu, Chapman (1970) in the Solomon Islands, and Maude (1979) on Sumatra, do not confirm the assertion of patterned regularities on the growth of mobility through modernization.

Methodologically, the positivists focus on the observable, the quantifiable, and the measurable and they emphasize the hypothetico-deductive approach. As Mitchell (1983) observes, these scholars abstract by generalization but do not generalize by abstraction. The manipulation of aggregate data, collected most often for some purpose other than the analysis of movement (e.g. during national censuses and household inventories) is most common. They characterize their research as

'objective and rigorous' compared with studies based on humanist or dependency theories.

Neglected in such research is local, short-term, and seasonal movements. There is relatively less appreciation of the sociocultural and political structures of society, which are important contexts and precursor for an individual or household's decision to move. The emphasis on quantitative analysis often camouflages the cultural context to which even contemporary movement can be rooted. Moreover, so far this approach has not been able to establish whether or not migration and movement results from interruptions to existing and long-standing practices of peasant societies.

#### **Marxist/dependency Approaches**

A heavy dominance of empirical analysis, descriptive typologies, and quantitative analysis coupled with a failure to consider contextual factors, resulted in the development of the Marxist/dependency approach. This approach developed in the 1960s in general social sciences as a critique, and focussed on understanding the political-economic structure of society. Partly it also reflected the failure of modernization theorists to predict the nature of 'development.' As Kearney (1986: 338) points out, there evolved a perspective (dependency) which called attention not to 'development' itself but to the development of underdevelopment, that according to Frank resulted from the colonial encounter. The Marxist/dependency perspective in population movement emerged in the 1960s and 1970s and primarily began in Latin America, where it still remains influential (Jellian, 1977; Balan, 1980). Subsequently



**Table 1.1**  
**Basic Features of Dominant Approaches in Population Movement**

	<b>Empiricist/Positivist</b>	<b>Dependency/Marxist</b>	<b>Humanist</b>
<b>Concept of people</b>	people can create a better world for themselves	people are constrained in their thought and action by societal infrastructure	people have freedom for action though there are obligations
<b>Intellectual goal</b>	search for 'scientific' explanation, the articulation of factors causing an occurrence	search for an understanding of mechanisms of internal structure of economy and the mode of production	search for an understanding and interpretation of human meaningful experiences
<b>Characteristics:</b>			
<b>Migrant</b>	migrant as a 'person of two worlds;' as a rational calculator of opportunities	migrant as a 'person of no worlds;' respondent to the constraints and obligations imposed by society which heavily limits the choice	migrant as a 'person of two worlds'; as a proud owner of the cultural tradition
<b>Focus</b>	identification of forms characteristics, typologies; concerned with individual cognitive and motivational elements, opportunities elsewhere	interrelationships between movement and the forces and relations of production; processes of the 'system' which cannot be discovered from motivations (Amin, 1974: 93)	focus upon super structures of society, mainly its socio-cultural component and its relation with movement

Continued...

(Table 1.1 continued)

<b>Medium of explanation/ interpretation</b>	typologies, models or theories used to explain movement dynamics e.g., descriptive (Stouffer, 1940; Lee, 1966) economic (Todaro, 1969, Harris and Todaro, 1970), modernization (Zelinsky, 1971), behavioral (Wolpert, 1965), value-expectancy (De Jong and Fawcett, 1981)	neo-Marxist, dependency, and core-periphery models used to explain the movement process (Frank, 1969; Amin, 1974; Wallerstein, 1974; Murray, 1981)	interpretation based on inherent concepts and world views of society or community expressed through local expressions, language, literature, a priori model not considered (Bonnemaison, 1985)
<b>Spatial emphasis</b>	focus on movement from rural to urban areas (urban bias?), argue that people move from labor surplus to labor deficit areas	focus on rural to urban areas, from labor surplus to both labor surplus and/or deficit areas	concerned with movements as an ongoing process, not specifically either labor deficit or surplus in orientation
<b>Responsive/ influencing elements</b>	movement directed from poverty to plenty or opportunity	movement directed from one form of poverty to another	movement as a part of life and/or tradition
<b>Responsive/ influencing elements</b>	wage differentials, expected earnings, population pressure, distance, place utility	colonization, capitalist penetration, modes of production, political economy	kinship, group or ethnic network, traditional values, and obligations

Continued..

(Table 1.1 continued)

<b>Loss/gain of movement</b>	<b>migrants suffer for gain</b>	<b>migrants suffer for nothing/little gain</b>	<b>movement contains both loss and gain.</b>
<b>Methodologies:</b>	focus on behavior that is observable, quantifiable, and measurable	theoretical articulation, reconstitution of thought and practice, consideration of contextual factors in their analysis	focus on subjectivity of the observed, basically qualitative more intuitive.
	hypothetico-deductive, wide use of aggregate and formal survey data	retroductive method with emphasis on infrastructure, theories not often tested against empirical evidence	historical reconstruction, eclectic in method, analytical induction.
	mainly aggregate data but some disaggregate, data often collected for purposes other than movement	mostly broad macro-analysis, focus on politico-economic context rather than on individual decision making	usually meso level, range of sources from archival records through oral history, local sources and participant observation
	objective and rigorous	more subjective than objective	subjective and speculative

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Note: This Table is based on broad categorization and should be taken as indicative rather than exhaustive.

it appeared in studies of African societies (Amin, 1974; Cliffe, 1978; Gregory and Piche, 1978; Murray, 1981), but its introduction to Asian research was relatively late (Mukerji, 1975, 1985; Rempel and Lobdel, 1978; Titus, 1978; Forbes, 1980; Kahn, 1980; Lipton, 1980).

Marxist-dependency research considers that people are constrained in their thought and action by the infrastructure of society. Intellectually, these scholars aim to understand the mechanisms of the internal structure of the economy and the modes of production. As such, they separate the infrastructure (economic determinants) from the superstructure and consider the former an ultimate determinant of human action which translates into how political and economic structures affect people's mobility (Young, 1982). These scholars consider that migration is the manifestation of the exploitation of rural areas. Accordingly, the process illustrates the continuous loss of resources from depressed areas to more advanced ones, and people are seen as moving from one form of poverty to another. By implication, this perspective suggests that movers are drawn generally from the dispossessed sections of society and, in the process of moving, suffer for little or no gain.

The severest critics of positivist studies, however, argue that contemporary movement reflects flows of labor rather than of people *per se*, which no amount of mathematical sophistication can camouflage (c.f. Meilink, 1978; Portes, 1978; Wood, 1982). One interpretation is that contemporary movement represents one aspect of capitalist penetration:

. . . [capitalist penetration] is one of the possible mechanisms by which rural producers are divorced from their means of production and by which they

enter more or less as 'free proletarians' into capitalist production (Gerold-Scheepers and van Binsbergen, 1978: 25).

Accordingly, population movement becomes a survival strategy (see Breman, 1985) imposed on people who, having no world of their own (c.f. Simmon, 1986) become migrants.

Structuralism is a macro-approach and its practitioners are concerned with theoretical articulation and the reconstruction of thought and practice. They are little interested in testing hypothesis against empirical (statistical) evidence, being more concerned with logical inference (Mitchell, 1983). Their method is retroductive, emphasizing infrastructure and focussing on context rather than decision making. A few empirical studies exist to support the theoretical reasoning of the Marxist/dependency approach. For example, if capitalist penetration induced movement, then obviously little mobility existed before the introduction of capitalism. This implication has been refuted in several studies (see Bedford, 1981; Chapman, 1976; Bathgate, 1985). Further, structuralists argue eloquently about why people leave home but are silent about why many of them return to their communities, irrespective of success or failure. Also, economic factors are regarded as the only context of territorial mobility. Of course economic considerations are important but that does not mean that they are equally important in all societies. More importantly, the predominant focus on political economy reflects in a neglect of local factors in movement and the motivations and perceptions of movers themselves.

The impact of movement on rural communities as reflected is inevitably seen to be negative and exploitative, despite studies documenting the positive contribution

of remittances and increased social mobility (e.g. Rose, 1969; Gmelch, 1987; Manning, 1987; Rigg, 1988). Finally, these scholars set the historical explanation of movement process within the context of socio-economic underdevelopment and pay little attention to continuities, adaptation, and change in the functioning of rural societies. Retracing the penetration of capitalism, as van Binsbergen and Meilink (1978: 18) point out, offers no blueprint for an understanding and improvement of peasant societies.

### **Humanistic Approaches**

Humanists focus on people as thinking beings, as proud bearers of their culture and heritage, and believe in the subjectivity of both observer and the observed. They emphasize the need to understand culture and tradition in peasant communities. Since subjectivity and experience are the main features of humanism, the emphasis is upon an intuitive understanding of the movement process and interpreting its meaning for the individual and community. The main goal is not to increase explanation or predictive power, but to improve depth of understanding (Johnston, 1983).

Humanists consider movement to be an integral part of life rather than as resulting solely from capitalist penetration or the stages of modernization or economic growth. This is achieved by looking in detail at mobility in the real world and by not considering its participants in the abstractions (Hagerstrand, 1963; 1975; Trager, 1981; 1984). Explicitly or implicitly, this approach is evident in specialized studies of Western Europe (Buttimer, 1980); South-central and West Africa (Mitchell, 1961; Mayer and Mayer, 1974; Olofson, 1976; 1985; Watts *et al.*, 1985); the Pacific

Islands (Bonnemaison, 1985; Chapman, 1985a; Frazer, 1985) and Southeast Asia (Kato, 1982; Singhanetra-Renard, 1982).

Some humanist interpret movement as a continuing dialectic between the centripetal forces of social obligation and the centrifugal forces of economic opportunities located elsewhere (e.g. Mitchell, 1961). Most often, inherent concepts and societal world views are traced through feelings, local expressions, mythologies, and metaphors (Bonnemaison, 1981; 1985; Buttimer, 1980; Olofson, 1976; Watts *et al.*, 1985). Generally, movers are considered 'men of two worlds' (c.f. Mayer and Mayer, 1974) and analysis incorporates how attitudes, perceptions, and emotions define the meaning of movement and the identities of those involved (Lal, 1980; 1983).

Methodologically, the emphasis on subjectivity leads humanism to be more qualitative and intuitive than either positivism or structuralism. But subjective meanings are interpreted as logically and as rigorously as possible. Generalization is through analytic induction and historical reconstruction, based on methods that are eclectic and largely personally selected. Data may be macro and micro but a focus on the community is reflected in an analytical concern with the meso or intermediate level. To improve understanding and interpretation a range of sources from archival records through field work to oral history and personal testimony is utilized.

Empiricist and positivists consider humanism to be an 'unscientific' approach because its methodology may not be replicated, while structuralists/neo-marxists criticize its lack of realism for believing that individuals have the freedom to act

whereas in fact, they are very much constrained. To the positivist, the weakness are that humanist studies are eclectic, not verifiable, and non-testable while others have charged humanist scholars with an inability to expunge their biases from data collection, analysis, and interpretation (also see Borman et al., 1986).

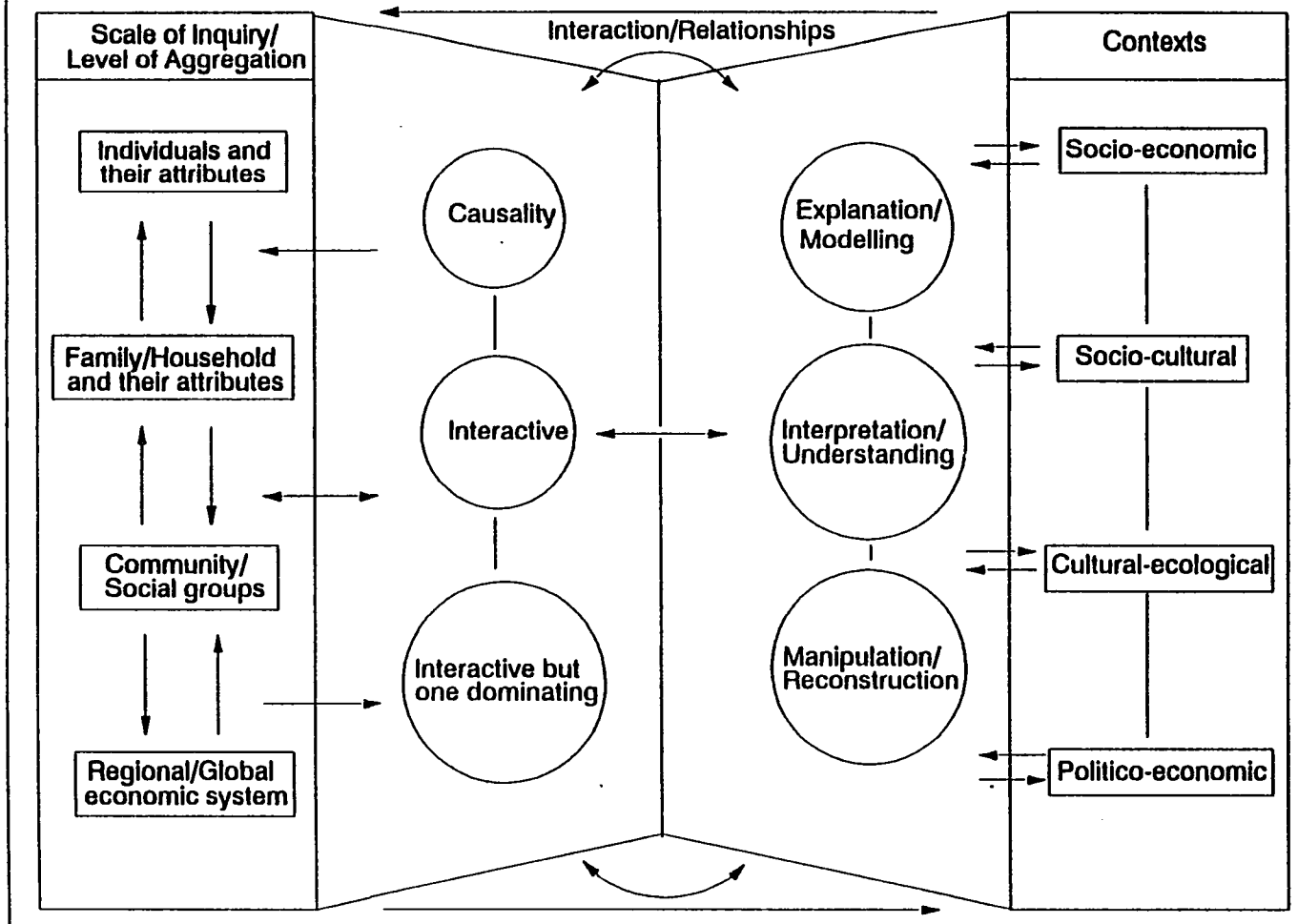
### **Common Ground**

Based on the review of population movement studies in Nepal and the different approaches to the third world movement research Figure 1.1 attempts to identify some common features. It is clear that the individual or the community/social group is the key factor in the movement process, which analytically is treated independently or at some level of aggregation and placed within some particular context. The reasons for movement is another common concern among researchers. All research explicitly or implicitly discusses movement as a survival strategy, whether defined as risk aversion or as a search for better opportunities or a life-cycle event. In addition, all studies interpret territorial separation of movers in terms of bi-polar distinction between origin and destination, conceived as two separate entities. Not all enquiries are based on first-hand field research but there is broad agreement that such investigations enrich the power of inference, either statistical or analytical.

Throughout mobility research there is concern with the relationships between scale of inquiry and substantive context, which is expressed in different ways (Fig. 1.1). Some researchers favor a strategy of explanation by modelling, whereas others emphasize interpretation and argue for understanding the complex meanings of



Figure 1.1  
Commonalities in Population Movement Studies



behavior. Still others stress the manipulation of information to examine grand theories, such as a world system or dependency.

Additionally, there are key analytical differences in the conception of the links between context and levels of inquiry. When causality is emphasized, the relationship is viewed in one direction, where any one or a combination of sets of four factors (Fig. 1.1, Column 4) can lead the actors to leave the place of residence. Or movement is interpreted as the outcome of mutual interaction between one or more contexts and any level of aggregation. In some cases, this relationship is seen to be interactive, in others either the substantive context or the actors themselves may be the dominating influence on the process of movement. Some of these differences in movement research, as stated earlier, are conceptual (intellectual goal of the researcher, conception of people) and some are methodological (scaler level of analysis or method of investigation) but the overall result is that explanations of the same phenomenon vary widely. Recently, there has been increased discussion about the need for 'integrated explanation' but this is rather general and there has not been concern with implementation. Thus, Chapman (1985b: 430) argued that the ladder of inquiry should be scaled both up and down and understanding derive from a range of data, approaches, and constructs. Similar statements have been made by both African and Asian specialists (e.g. Gerold-Scheepers and van Binsbergen 1978; Murray, 1981; Mortimore, 1982; Forbes, 1981). Recently, in an attempt to implement this stance, Firman (1988, 1991) has examined the interactions between population mobility and macro socioeconomic processes for housing construction projects in Bandung.

### **The Present Research: Towards An Integrated Approach**

Given the above intellectual history, the present research adopts an integrative framework and looks at movement as an interaction between socio-cultural processes and household obligations and opportunities within and beyond home. This approach is based on the following considerations:

- i) Given the range in levels of analysis, the movement process should be captured at the household level. It is at this middle ground that mobility can be seen as collective rather than individual action by focussing on the interactions between individuals who are household members and macro socioeconomic and political processes of which the household is part.
- ii) An interlocking field design is needed to obtain a variety of information and a range of understanding not possible from more structured and conventional methodologies. Consequently, a range of field techniques and instruments must be utilized, from field census and formal survey to participant observation, focus group discussion, personal testimony, and folk sources, supported wherever possible by archival sources.

To understand continuity and change in the process of peasant mobility, the customary patterns need to be examined both for their cultures and contexts and their links with contemporary mobility behavior. This research consequently emphasizes the cultural aspects of movement and explores how far the identity of the individual as a household member is associated with the meaning of "home territory" or ancestral place. 'Territory' is conceived as representative of a society's rootedness and cultural

anchoring and the identity of its people (both movers and stayers) is thought to be associated with it. It is argued that to understand a people's territorial mobility requires an understanding of not only physical separation between places of origin and destination but also the socio-cultural obligation of the mover, his feelings and attachments to those particular places.

In this study, movers are not perceived as 'people of two worlds' or 'people of no worlds,' but as being involved between 'home' and 'reach' (c.f. Buttimer, 1980). 'Home' is the birth place or ancestral territory of the potential mover and 'reach' is current or previous places of destination. 'Home' and 'reach' thus form a continuum in the residence-activity chain rather than being conceived as mutually exclusive entities. The territorial mobility of rural people is an integral part of their lives and can only be understood by being linked to peasant culture and life-ways.

To establish the links between contemporary patterns of movement, revealed in census and formal surveys, with traditional forms requires information from oral traditions and folk sources. Quantitative and qualitative methods are thus complementary to each other rather than competitive or mutually exclusive, and narrative and subjective information should be integrated with quantitative details.

Within the framework of intellectual history summarized above and the growing concern that mobility in traditional societies should be conceptualized differently than the western categorizations, this research is designed to address the issue of continuity and change in people's territorial mobility in a remote village in Nepal with a focus on two caste/ethnic groups. This field study attempts to provide a

view of movement process from within South Asian society. The specific objectives are to:

1. Understand and interpret the full range of territorial mobility meaningful to the rural community, its households and individuals, both historically and nowadays;
2. Assess the interrelationships between movement, which not only is part of life but also enlarges experience and reach through interaction with people and places beyond the local territory, and 'home', as reflected in its various meanings for rural people;
3. Analyze to what extent there have been changes in mobility over time and understand the extent to which contemporary movement among members of peasant households is linked with customary forms of movement, based on caste and ethnic groups, and set within the context of local lifestyles; and
4. Utilize the local sources of information such as local sayings, proverbs, and songs together with personal histories, to obtain a better understanding of territorial mobility than offered by more structured (conventional) methods about mobility and immobility.

### **Research Propositions**

1. Peasants are neither sedentary nor suspicious of the world beyond their community. On the one hand, they are tied to their ancestral land and, on the other, they are mobile between the 'home territory' (hereafter termed "home") and places beyond (hereafter termed "reach"). Allegiance to 'home' does not translate into immobility,

as suggested in many ethnographies. To understand the meaning of 'home' and 'reach' as metaphors of immobility and mobility, the dimensions of permanent or temporary change in space, residence, time, and activity (c.f. Standing, 1984) must be meshed with the individual obligations, emotions, life-cycle stage, and attitudes of rural Nepali who move and stay.

Rural movers consider 'home' as: a) the provider of life-long security both economic and political; b) a place of ancestral history, which in general should not be abandoned; c) a place of both collective identity, reflected in networks of kin and neighborhood, and emotional attachment (see, Bathgate, 1985; Bonnemaïson, 1985; Chapman, 1985a; Harper, 1987). 'Reach' on the other hand, is: a) place/s to obtain experience and knowledge of the outer world, that in turn results in higher social prestige on return; b) places of religious and traditional importance through which social and cultural obligations to family, community and ancestors are fulfilled; c) an activity space within which household income may be supplemented; and d) a possible place to shift the location of household members.

Ethnographic studies in Nepal document that it is difficult for rural peasants to leave or sever ties with 'home', and for most, any permanent change of residence carries a negative connotation (c.f. Dahal *et al.*, 1977; MacFarlane, 1976). When moving to a 'reach,' peasants may be territorially separated from 'home', but they do not conceive either as mutually exclusive. The places to which they move, whether or not they return permanently, whether or not the experience is a success or a failure; are viewed as extensions of 'home' rather than as replacements for it.

2. Territorial mobility of peasants is best understood in terms of the collective memberships of households rather than of adults acting as individuals. Even so, differences in the movement experiences of families and their individual memberships are expressed in variations in individual and household life cycles.

As members of a subsistence peasantry, the major concern of rural Nepali is to both maintain and improve the subsistence and security of the household economy (see Scott, 1976; also Popkin, 1979). This household ethic of subsistence has links with the place and home bound nature of peasant activity. Although land and other household possessions are controlled by the head of the household, maintaining and improving the household economy are the collective responsibility of all members of the household. Movement beyond 'home' is one household strategy to both maximize collective options and minimize the risks involved in meeting basic needs.

Within this collective context, the socio-economic obligations of individuals differ according to their status in the family or household. Status depends upon whether or not he or she is the household head or an earning member; and upon gender and sibling order (first or second child). The movement experience of individuals also varies according to the social and economic condition of the household. The household life-cycles in a rural community represent a summary expression of this individual mobility experience and collective considerations of movement.

3. Caste and ethnicity have been an important dimensions of rural life in Nepal. Within the larger village community, settlement hamlets known as *gaun* consist of

different caste and ethnic groups. These caste and ethnic groups have economic and social interdependence at the level of *gaun*, and they work together to ensure as high a degree of self-sufficiency in food, labor and domestic transactions. Larger land owners usually have higher social status. The higher caste status can further reinforce the social status primarily where caste-specific occupations and dietary restrictions are closely followed.

Consequently, it can be stated that the higher the household position in the local caste and/or ethnic hierarchy, the higher is its social and economic status. The higher social and economic status, in turn is reflected in a higher frequency of movement over time and over space from 'home.' In addition, the more knowledge and experience the household members gain of the world beyond 'home' through territorial mobility, the more their social prestige within the community. This situation prevails despite various social and economic changes in society over the years.

Changes such as the spread of formal educational institutions since 1950s has provided new opportunities for rural Nepali. The implementation of a new civil code in the 1960s which prohibited discrimination on the basis of caste and ethnicity, enormously increased contact between the *gaun* and the outside world is increased enormously. As a consequence, no longer are the dietary restrictions strictly followed among high-caste groups, while occupational and professional specializations based on caste have been in jeopardy for some generations. However, even though the transformations and transitions are there, the difference of the mobility experience of



people across caste and ethnic boundaries still persists, but indications are that the difference in terms of extent, purpose, and forms may well have been narrowing in recent years.

4. Since 1950, when Nepal opened to the outside world, rural communities have experienced: i) increased frequency, duration, and intensity of movement; ii) movement covering longer and longer distances; and iii) a greater diversity of purposes for the movement. Whereas in the past a move may have been for strictly religious reasons, such as pilgrimage, nowadays it might also incorporate an adventure trip together with economic and social purposes (e.g. search for a job, visit to relatives). These changes in the character of mobility are associated with other changes that are both internal and external to the rural community. Demographic changes, reflected in increased growth of population mainly through natural increase, are the most important internal component, while external influences include greater exposure to the outside world through formal education, transport and communication links, and the increasing political consciousness among new generations.

The experience of rural peasants over at least three generations reveals how the process of movement intersects with these internal and external dimensions of change. Changes in mobility through a growing interaction between 'home' and 'reach' in both time and space seem to have put pressure on 'customary inter-household relationships' (Kaplan and Shrestha, 1982) and led to even higher frequency of movement. Unlike in Southeast Asia (Scott, 1976; Popkin, 1979), these relationships are not necessarily based on a dichotomy of rich and poor households

but on a tradition of mutual understanding and help in inter-household activities (Bardhan and Rudra, 1986). In Nepali communities, mutual help is a common norm where relatively better off households help the poor or ill-equipped through cash and kind and in turn they receive needed hands for their farms.

5. In rural communities of Nepal, many patterns of population movement are deeply rooted in custom. After marriage, the bride leaves her natal home to join her husband's household; kinfolks are visited routinely and in times of happiness (annual festivals) and sorrow (death or illness); and physical, technical or educational skills are learned in other places. Customary pilgrimage i.e., *tirthayatra*, vividly described by Bhardwaj (1976), is an integral part of the Hindu life-style. However, during the past three generations, contemporary forms of movement related to formal education, wage labor, non-farm employment, government careers, and military services have become far more frequent and far more visible.

Consequently, two sets of processes are at work in shaping customary and contemporary patterns of movement. The more enduring and traditional patterns reflect socio-cultural processes whereas the more recent are related more to economic processes and are far more visible because of the monetization of peasant society. Despite the obvious impact of economic processes on mobility behavior, socio-cultural processes may be historically more durable and being part of life are taken for granted, and are far less visible.

6. Contemporary movement in rural Nepal is so linked with customary patterns that a definite historical continuity exists in the movement process. Just as has been

substantiated in Southeast Asia (Singhanetra-Renard, 1982) and the Pacific Islands (Bonnemaison, 1985; Chapman, 1985b; Frazer, 1985) many of the contemporary forms of movement are extensions of pre-existing cultural themes. These cultural themes can only be captured through a collection and analysis of local sources of knowledge. Rural societies are rich in oral tradition which underpins the complex links between long-standing and more contemporary forms of behavior (Lal, 1980; Olofson, 1985; Watts et al., 1985). The inherent character of mobility for individuals and households along with their subsequent changes, can be addressed by probing rural culture through such sources as folk songs, *ukhan tukka* (proverbs), poetry, local expressions, and pithy sayings.

An indepth investigation of mobility on rural societies, particularly ones that are more traditional, and from a member of that society, is assumed to offer an alternative conception. Mobility in traditional society is an integral part of sociocultural life. Concepts such as 'home' and 'reach' and their meanings, appropriately demonstrate mobility process as the interactional system rather than a mechanistic sequence of fixed cross-sections. The integratedness of 'home' and 'reach' is one illustration of how rural societies function and there is more continuity in mobility than is normally realized.

### **Organization of the Study**

This study is organized into seven chapters. The first chapter has introduced the research issue and stated the problem. The introduction is set within the broader question of continuity and change in population mobility, followed by the review of

available mobility research in Nepal. Since the issue reflects different approaches and intellectual positions taken by scholarly community, three dominant approaches are reviewed in an attempt to a search for the common ground. This sets the background to discuss the framework of this study, its objectives and propositions, discussed in the second half of the chapter.

The second chapter discusses field methods and strategies as an ongoing process. It builds upon the strengths of qualitative and quantitative methods and moves towards the layout of an integrated field design. The rationale for selection of settlement clusters and households is followed by the details on working through formal instruments. The second part deals with instruments utilized beyond the formal instruments, namely; the focussed group discussions, personal testimonies, collection of folk sources and the role of personal participation. Field work as an experience and its limitations concludes the field design and methodological aspects of this study.

The third chapter is basically a description of the village setting. From a locational introduction of the village it progresses through village history, demography, and local economy. The chapter concludes with pressure and the coping strategies of the households in the village setting. One of the concluding themes of this chapter is that territorial mobility is an integral part of coping strategies among rural households. The chapter ends with the assessment of the severity of pressure that has to be reached before migration becomes the mechanism invoked, and both points to and establishes an explicit focus on mobility in the next chapter.

The central purpose of chapter four is to identify and examine the forms and meanings of rural territorial mobility. In doing so while it provides indigenous conceptualization of mobility, it also explores the dimension of caste and ethnicity as they are reflected in various levels of participation in the forms of mobility. It begins with the economic and social basis of household as an integrative concept. A typology of rural mobility is presented, followed by the actual analysis. This will show the high level of mobility among the rural household members.

Chapter five discusses people's attachment to a place (immobility) and the meaning of place as it relates to the outcome of mobility. It begins with the paradox of mobility and immobility and progresses through their allegiance to home. An account of the rural world view associated with the concept of 'home' and 'reach' is followed by a discussion of whether or not allegiance to home translates into immobility. A discussion of the linkages and family ties of those who are away from home completes the mobility/immobility scenario.

Chapter six focusses on the historical aspects of mobility. With examples from genealogies set within the context of national events, it highlights the mobile character of clans. It examines several processes related to the outcome of mobility in the past and attempts to relate the endurance of these processes to the contemporary forms of mobility. It also provides a perspective on how internal and external processes in the communities are related to the combined outcome of mobility in the rural areas in general.

The concluding chapter deals with the issue of continuity and change in the wider context. It begins with a brief overview of population geography as it relates to the study of third world population mobility and a brief statement of where this study stands in terms of approaches commonly used in population studies. Brief statements about the findings are followed by a simplified model that summarizes process of human territorial mobility in terms of continuity and change. The language of those who move has been discussed with what it has to offer about the understanding of the mobility process beyond what has been already achieved. A concise reflection of theoretical and practical policy implications of this study concludes the chapter.

#### **Endnotes**

1. The terms population movement, population mobility, and territorial mobility are used interchangeably throughout this dissertation.
2. To review and comprehend the huge amount of literature on third world population mobility is beyond the scope of my study. Therefore, in my discussion on dominant approaches I was selective in referring to the studies on third world societies.

## CHAPTER TWO

### FIELD METHODS AND STRATEGIES

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the preparation and conduct of the field work for this study, together with the theoretical basis of each of the instruments. My main objective in the field research is to get closer to the people and situation being studied and try to establish an authentic relationship. One of the major concerns throughout the research design was to collect as much local information as possible through sources such as folk songs, sayings, proverbs and metaphorical expressions. For this an extended stay in the study area was a must.

At the outset it should be made clear that I belong to the study area as it is my home village where I have spent several years of my life. In between I have moved to several other places for various reasons but I have continued to be integral part of the village. I have consistently maintained contact through regular visits, through letters and through other informal communications. I spent almost one and a half years in the field for this research (including reconnaissance in Kathmandu). But even so, I felt the duration still not sufficient to cover what I originally expected to accomplish. Being a native of the area has proven to be very valuable not only to obtain accurate information, but also in understanding and interpreting observations.

#### **Before Entering the Field**

The driving force to design my research was to try to understand the experience of rural people. I was brought up in a 'third world' village in the study area and involved in the movement process to several 'stations' as a student, as an

employee and as a visitor. During my time as a student I encountered studies on population movement, several of which treated people i.e. movers, not as human beings but either as statistics, or as laborers. At the time I thought something lacking in such portrayals. My contention is that migrants are proud of their rural heritage, that they have their own way of looking at things, and are full of feelings, obligations, and commitments to 'home' even if they are physically away from their village.

This led me to collect both **qualitative** and **quantitative** information. Each tells something different about the movement process. But particular attention is paid to qualitative techniques and analysis because: a) the qualitative dimension is less evident in past mobility studies and b) the persistence of movement in rural life-ways can be more comprehensively understood through qualitative approaches in a rural society, rich in oral tradition. Furthermore, as reflected in direct quotations and careful description of the events, experiences and thought, qualitative analysis also provides depth and details crucial for the understanding of what people have to say in their own words (see, Patton, 1980). In fact, both the approaches have similar goals as Borman et al., (1986:55) point out:

Statistical procedures use tools of mathematics to establish relationships and linkages among constructs across settings and groups. By contrast, qualitative researchers use tool of logic to establish the same relationships within a given setting.



The theoretical basis and significance of qualitative research is well established (e.g. Borman et al., 1986; Fielding and Fielding, 1986; Kirk and Miller, 1986; Krenz and Sax, 1986). Most of its critics use the 'scientific' method which has idealized investigative models borrowed from natural sciences. As a result, qualitative research is criticized for not being something which it was never intended to be and its strengths are conveniently ignored. In quantitative research deciding what to use as a unit of analysis is fundamentally an interpretive issue requiring both judgement and choice. 'Choice' according to Fielding and Fielding (1986) is also at the core of qualitative methods, where meanings rather than frequencies assume paramount significance.

It is important that quantitative and qualitative approaches be taken as complementary. As McCracken (1988: 18) states:

The qualitative and quantitative approaches are never substitutes for one another. This is so because, necessarily they observe different realities or different aspects of reality.

More importantly, Tuan (1989: 239) maintains:

If human reality is what we are trying to depict and understand, then we must not only construct hypotheses that explain facts but we must also continue to expand the universe of facts we are ready to confront.

### **The Chosen Trail**

Given my desire to understand the dynamic interplay of pieces of reality I decided to utilize the case study approach. Following the suggestion by Mitchell (1987) the selection of a case (i.e. the village setting) is based on its strategic value

for deepening the understanding of theoretical relationships between elements of a situation rather than being based on some notion of representativeness (see also Gluckman, 1961; Becker, 1968; Mitchell, 1983; Chapman, 1987). The significance of the case study as an established approach is strongly advocated by Chapman and Prothero (1983: 607):

Conceptually, cases studied at micro-scale are neither unique in the sense of being idiosyncratic, nor typical in the sense of representing statistical norm. Rather, their selection according to criteria indicative of specified research goals means that findings may be generalized to other cases for which the same contextual conditions hold.

### **Towards an Integrated Field Design**

To become as much a part of the study village as possible is the only way that the clearest focus on an area's mobility system be obtained. To best achieve my goals I needed a research design that included several interlocking field instruments. I intended to attach special importance to people's own version of events, while at the same time using formal instruments. I tried not to force a response in a limited time, and in a restrictive, structured form. I sought an interlocking field design utilizing both formal structured and informal unstructured instruments.

The need for an integrated field design is well argued elsewhere (see Chapman and Prothero 1985:xx). I have attempted to utilize a range of instruments such as a field census, ongoing mobility registers, family genealogies, oral reconstruction of life histories, personal testimonies to folk sources, and participant observation. A very

important part of my approach was to record opinions commonly expressed in indepth interviews and in small focussed group discussions.

I developed a tentative plan and schedule of field work in a village in the eastern hills of Nepal. Namsaling (the present study village) was my first choice but I did not rule out the possibility of selecting another nearby village. I realized that it would be naive to enter the field without a definite timetable, so I tried to finalize my field census and survey formats, as well as my choice of village immediately after I arrived in Nepal. The complexity of the situation was such that I realized that the fieldwork would probably take longer than expected, and indeed it did (eighteen months instead of the projected thirteen months).

### **Entering the Field**

#### **Initial Work**

On the first week of October, 1988 I reached Kathmandu where I consulted my field supervisor, research workers and professors involved in research related to the issues of population in general and migration in particular. Perhaps a characteristic of third world scholars is that none of them had been involved on the issues of migration or population movement. Most of them had one or two research articles on population and/or migration. Many of them had already changed their focus depending upon the 'winds of change' based upon government priority and

availability of funding from foreign agencies. Until then very few scholars had been working to develop a career as a specialist in a particular field of population.

The length of my research period as well as focus on one village would always raise the question of "why" to most of my colleagues. In time I began to feel sorry not for such a question but for the way we are trained in social sciences (except for anthropology). For many Nepali scholars, the national census tells all about migration in the country. During my stay at Kathmandu I surveyed unpublished literature and other sources about people's territorial mobility. I also consulted with the officials, academics and local experts (Table 2.1 Stage 1a). Library research was mainly based on the National Commission on Population, the Central Library at Tribhuvan University, the National Planning Commission and the Agricultural Service Centre. I also consulted the Topographical Survey Branch (HMG) for aerial photographs and 'maps' of the study area.

Dashain, Nepal's biggest festival, took place while I was in Kathmandu and offices were closed for several days. This was a good opportunity for me, so I returned to my village. On the one hand, I had the opportunity to celebrate the festival with my parents at home from whom I had been absent for the last three years and on the other hand, I had a chance to discuss my project with local people, school teachers and those who had been stationed outside temporarily. I also visited four other villages for possible selection as research sites.

This visit was part of my search for one or more locales whose livelihood was based on the intensive and year-round use of agricultural land, with caste and ethnic diversity but with each group living as a separate community. I was not constrained by the local political boundaries of the village (administrative unit) or its subdivisions providing that the two communities (one caste dominated and the other dominated by ethnic groups) were within commuting distance. This was an important criterion in the final selection of particular settlement hamlets.

After the site survey I came back to Kathmandu, and continued the literature survey and consultation. On the basis my discussion with local people and the experts in Kathmandu, within a few weeks I finalized my formal field instruments (questionnaire and schedule forms). For several practical reasons, Namsaling, my native village, emerged as the best research site. I returned to Namsaling by mid-December.

### **Back to the Village**

As I returned to Namsaling for my research, I realized that Namsaling was more remote today than ever before. Most of my respondents had similar opinions, irrespective of age, sex and education. The reason is very simple. Within the last fifteen years, most neighboring villages had gained an access to motorable road, linking them to the district headquarters, and to *madesh* (Tarai plain) including some border towns of India. Namsaling is still without a road. Before the construction of motorable roads (that pass through neighboring villages), the main trail connecting

neighboring villages with district headquarter, zonal headquarter, and the Tarai and Indian border towns passed through the village, Namsaling was a center of local interaction. Now, as neighboring villages have enjoyed access to modern transport, Namsaling has become relatively more isolated.

My first few weeks were spent getting re-acquainted with the people. I had three major tasks before starting a formal survey and census. These were: i) selecting and defining the boundaries of the settlement hamlets; ii) re-acquainting myself with my fellow villagers; and iii) hiring my field assistants.

#### **Further Down the Road: Two Settlement Hamlets**

On the basis of my previous knowledge and experience of Namsaling (village administrative unit), Ghumaune and Yakhagaun seemed to be suitable settlement hamlets for my research, the former dominated by caste groups and the later dominated by the *Kiranti* ethnic group locally known as *Yakha*.<sup>1</sup> Ghumaune includes small villages such as Ghumaune, Chaukidanda, Subedigaun and Maisthan whereas Yakhagaun is composed mainly of Noulegaun, Thulogaun and Ramite. Ghumaune, though dominated by Brahmin/Chhetri also includes households of other groups such as *Kami* (black/gold smiths) and *Damai* (tailors). Yakhagaun, as the name indicates, is inhabited by *Yakha* who use the surname *Dewan*. In terms of political boundaries, Ghumaune includes parts of *ward* (one of nine subdivisions of Village Development Committee) five and six. Yakhagaun is comprised primarily of *ward* eight of Namsaling Village Development Committee.

Two hamlets were selected for comparative purposes so that the range and diversity of caste and ethnic groups in each could be related to their differential mobility experience. Such differences were expected in previous generations but there was a question about the present. The study of a single *gaun* of reasonable size, with a considerable diversity in caste and ethnic group, would pose an analytical problem because one caste/ethnic group might dominate, and the specific mobility of minorities consequently be overshadowed. By selecting two hamlets such as Ghumaune and Yakhagaun, we are in a position to examine how the differential mobility experience of individuals, families, and households reflects the diversity of caste and ethnic groups found in rural Nepali society.

Re-acquaintance was not a simple process because I now was not only a fellow villager but I was also working as a research worker asking questions and discussing things I wanted to record. While many villagers were enthusiastic about my undertaking, a few were skeptical. I started with Ghumaune where I visited every household and met household heads and senior members. To their concerns about my research, most often I responded that I was still a student and needed to write a 'book' about our place, our territorial mobility and our life-cycles.<sup>2</sup> Since this area was affected by a recent earthquake, the concern expressed by some was whether this inquiry would lead to relief from economic hardships through government assistance. I made it clear at the outset that this research had neither the intention of changing village lifestyle nor providing an immediate relief to needy households.

In Yakhagaun, I began by talking to the local 'headman,' the school teachers and some senior household heads about my project. For some I was a newcomer and I needed an introduction from their 'headman.' But for many I was a familiar face, although with a different ethnic identity. I thought it was better for these traditional households to have their 'headman' and local teachers explain what I would be doing in the months to come. Even though I belong to the area, some of them still considered me an "outsider." We (including the local 'headman,' school headmaster, and others) visited every household and the 'headman' explained what I would be asking about in the weeks and months to come. If there were further questions about my research from the household members, I clarified. Although everyone seemed to be quite receptive, subsequent events indicated that some were more skeptical than I had realized originally.

I also looked for two assistants, one from each hamlet, to help collect information for my project. I discussed this matter with local school teachers who were very helpful. I also reviewed this matter with local leaders and the elderly. For Yakhagaun I had limited options while for Ghumaune I had four candidates all of whom seemed to be promising. Educational achievement was a consideration but the level of education was not the only requirement. Important socio-economic considerations included: i) a person whose presence in the household and the hamlets under study would not affect the situation being studied; ii) a person who had limited



alternative employment; iii) a person who needed the job to help his household economy.

The selection process also had to take into account village politics in order to obtain maximum support from all the views within the village. The field work period coincided with a time when the young and the 'conscious' people were unhappy with the existing political system and were organizing against the system. This situation was more evident in Ghumaune. Taking all of these into considerations, I selected two assistants fairly well 'educated' by the village standard; one from a *Brahmin* family and the other from a *Yakha* family. The former was from Ghumaune and the latter from Yakhagaun. Both of them were in their early twenties, which turned out to be a limitation at times, because some senior informants were uncomfortable in sharing their experiences with them because of their youth. For a week or so I provided them with an orientation of what they were expected to do by taking them to the study households. For some days I intensively supervised their activities. My Yakhagaun assistant's familiarity in the local dialect was very helpful at times. They worked together for some days. Later they were assigned to their respective communities. They worked hard and complemented each other.

### **Household in the Village Context**

The customary lifestyle in the village bequeaths a great importance to the concept of household. The collection of data and the discussion of in and out

movement of people, which follows, utilizes the concept of household as its frame of reference primarily because of i) the cultural centrality of households in customary life style and ii) the potential of household to bridge the macro-micro analytical gap. In this area, household is the basic unit of cultural, economic, and social activities. Much of this centrality is a reflection of a tradition in which households occupies pivotal position in making decisions. In the traditional Hindu system an individual has four major stages in his life-cycle, each identified as *ashrams*. It begins with *brahmacharyashram* (i. e., celibate pupil) where individuals are supposed to learn basic skills required in their later life and most importantly skills defined on the basis of one's caste/ethnic affiliation. This is followed by *grihashthashram*, which means the householder, the genuine social being in the material world. The third stage is known as *vanaprasthashram* where one leads a life similar to forest hermitage. Finally, the *sanyashashram*, the renouncer, where an individual is free from earthly goods.

Of all the four stages, *grihashthashram* has its special position because it is at this stage the individual has an opportunity to serve the whole society materially, to fulfil his ancestral obligations, and to help those on other *ashrams*. More importantly, these householders are assumed to carry four ethical goals. These goals are namely; *dharma* i.e., to do righteous duties, *artha* (desire for material gain, and power for themselves and for the posterity), *kama* i.e., to fulfil one's physical, emotional and sexual desires and have children to continue the family tree, and

*moksha* which means to look for ways to get rid of the earthly births and rebirths.

All these ethical conducts are reflective of the cultural centrality of households.

Although the latter two *ashrams* are not necessarily observed by current generations, the former two *ashrams* have remained central in these societies and more so in Ghumaune than in Yakhagaun.

Each household is an independent unit and the need to produce food for the hearth is a collective responsibility. The overall activities are designed for the common good of the household. These village clusters are accustomed to a household centered economy. Thus, the core activities of production, consumption and reproduction are centered on the household. Moreover, the household is a primary social context for every action and experience. Its boundaries are based on kinship, shared economic responsibility, and the inheritance pattern.

The household as an integrative concept is well summarized in the literature. Wood (1982) argues that household is an integrative concept which captures the multiple dimensions of a rural population's response to changes in socio-economic conditions. As such it represents an appropriate unit in which to comprehend the interaction between the macro and micro levels of social and spatial structure (Wolf, 1986). Similarly household is a bridging concept. Schmink (1984:87) observes:

Household studies . . . have the potential to bridge the analytical gap separating micro-economic theories that concentrate on the atomistic behavior of the individuals (sometimes aggregated within household units) from the historical-structural approach that focuses on the political economy of socio-economic and political development.

In the Nepali context, many studies have argued in favor of the economic centrality of the concept of households (Caplan, 1970; Macfarlane, 1976; Fricke, 1986) and have established the relevance of households as the viable unit of analysis. Moreover, households are also centers of cultural and social activities and this centrality has transmitted from tradition.

### **Household and Its Memberships Defined**

The working definition of household in this study is based on economic and cultural criteria, and on the inheritance pattern and its independence as a land holding unit. Household possessions are controlled by the head of the household and most often the male. Every male child (even the female if remained unmarried and is of specific age) is entitled to have the right to share their parental land and other property by virtue of membership in a patrilineal descent group. As long as the absentee member has not taken his share of parental belongings or abandoned it the household head will continue to consider him as an integral part of the household, irrespective of his return.

Thus, a broader definition of the household is adapted here which includes not only those who currently share the hearth and are bounded by kinship network but also those: i) who are away from home and are not formally separated and ii) who have not established their residence at 'reach' irrespective of their length of absence from the village. Since the response from the household heads about those away from home was consistent, practically, household membership is defined by the head of the

co-residential group. The bottom line for deciding whether those away from home are part of the household, is whether the head of the household considers them as a part of his hearth or not. This criteria does not discard the economic criteria of all household members pooling their individual income earned out of agriculture. This is so because movers from this area either remit to the village household or receive money from village household. In addition, this broader criteria takes into consideration that every individuals would like to be associated with an area for his/her place identity.

### **Working through Formal Instruments**

Field strategies designed for this research included both formal and informal instruments (Table 2.1). Some of the instruments selected were overlapping in time and also in content (Figure 2.1). To begin with I had no statistics, not even the list of the household heads. After revisiting the area and the households, I prepared a list of household heads for the subsequent detailed **household census**. The household census included information on the social and economic status of households and individual family members together with their presence or absence at the time of the census (Appendix A). This field census served as a base line for further inquiry. Most importantly, it helped identify the cohort of actual and potential movers so detailed information about their territorial mobility could be collected. The two hamlets selected had a total *de jure* population of 483. Ghumaune (42 households)

**Table 2.1**  
**Field Survey Schedule**  
(October 1988 to March 1990)

Stage	Month of Survey	Location	Type of Work/Instruments	Respondents	Information to be Collected
<b>Formal and Structured Instruments</b>					
1a.	October -Mid-December 1988	Kathmandu	General survey, Secondary material collection	Government officials and local experts	Survey of existing literature, Study village profiles, Explore possible field sites.
1b.		Ilam district	Reconnaissance and preliminary site observation	Local informants and resource persons	Socio-cultural background of the village, Ethnic composition, General village economy.
1c.		Kathmandu	Final work on field instruments: census, survey and other forms necessary for the field		
2a.	Mid-December'88-Mid-January'89	Namsaling	<i>Gaun</i> selection (two),  Re-acquaintance	Local school teachers and elderly  Members of household	Politico-economic condition of the clusters, areas of settlement concentration (general boundaries).  Open ended (informal talks).

Continued ...

(Table 2.1 Continued)

50

			Selection of local assistants and orientation	Available references	Educational, economic, ethnic and overall background of prospective candidates.
2b.			Household census <i>de jure</i>	Household head or next available adult (88)	Basic information about all the members including age, sex, place of birth, marital status, educational and occupational status; Presence/absence and more detailed information for those absent from home for various durations.
3.	January - August 1989	Ghumaune/ Yakhagaun	Identify synthetic cohort Prospective mobility register (residents and visitors)	Those aged 15 and over	<i>De jure</i> residents: Information on movement such as: date, duration, distance, purpose and means of transportation; local terms for particular movement.  Visitors: date present, age, sex, place of origin, distance from <i>gaun</i> , duration of stay, relationship with the household head visited, local terms (if any) for such moves.
4a.	Mid-April - June 1989	Ghumaune/ Yakhagaun	Collecting genealogies	Mostly head of the households (20)	Generational change in mobility pattern and its link with national socio-economic, political context. Continued ...

(Table 2.1 Continued)

			No. of family members in their previous generations (as much as possible), marriage partners, place of residence for each sibling (male) and generation, birthplace of the children.
51	4b. Mid-August - October	Economic survey	Head of the household or the senior member (73)
		Survey of marketing	All the households
	4c. May - November	Life-history survey	More than 35 individuals, mostly heads of household
			Information on land owned, tenurial status, types of land, crops grown, yield, crop calendar, plot number and size, livestock, other sources of income, system of labor supply.
			Transaction of goods; information on who, where and what items are bought and sold.
			Retrospective information from year of birth to 1989 about changes in life-cycle, reproductive, occupational and most importantly mobility history (when, where, how long such events occurred and the context), points and 'reaches' of important events in the life-cycle.

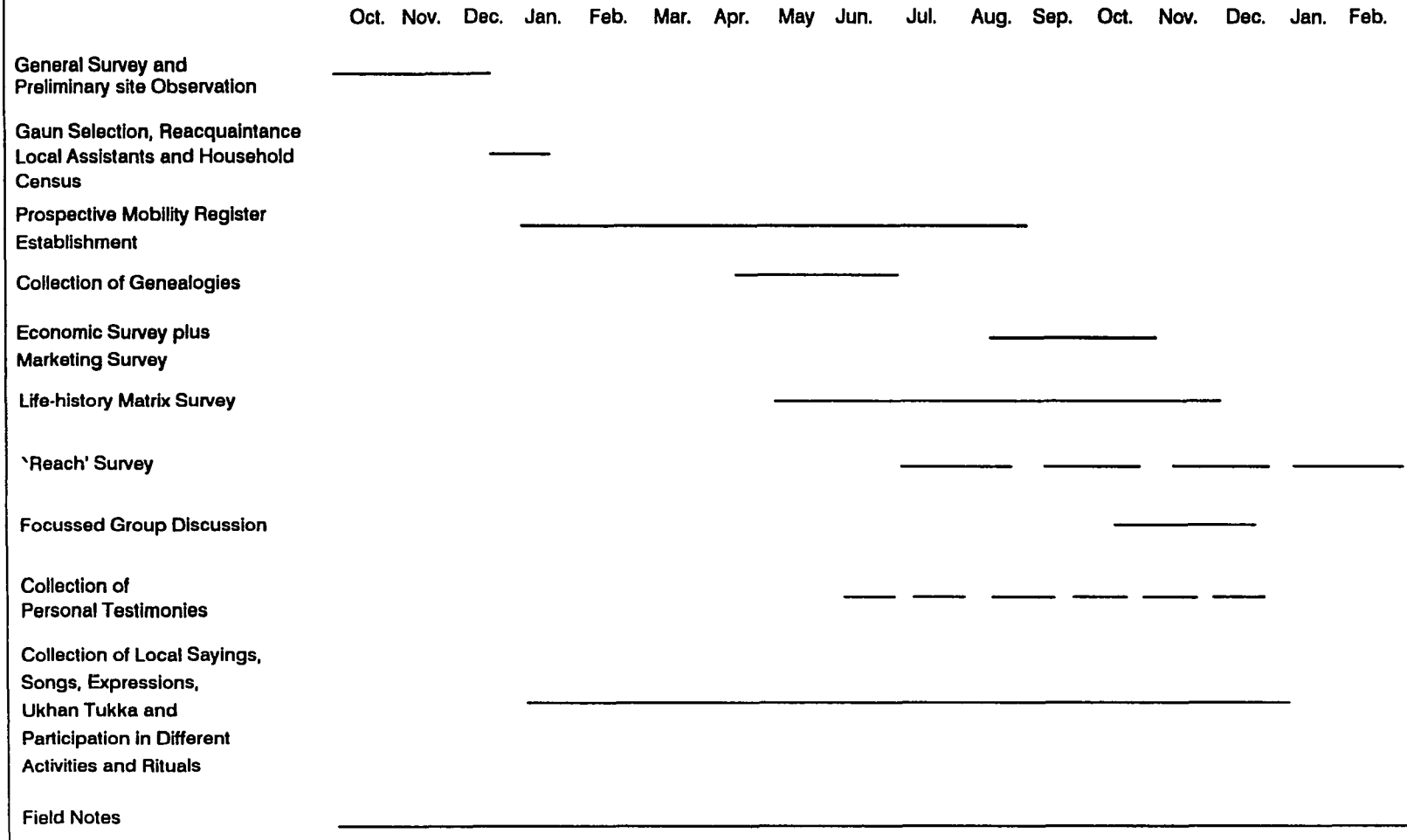
Continued ...



(Table 2.1 Continued)

5.	July, 1989 - February, 1990	Tarai, Kathmandu	'Reach' survey	Individuals away from <i>gaun</i> (14)	Personal characteristics, why, when, questions about mobility,  interaction between 'reach' and 'home,' residential identity and commitments, informal discussions.
<b>Informal and Ongoing Instruments</b>					
6.	October - December 1989	Ghumaune/ Yakhagaun	Focussed group discussions	A Total of 14-16 people	Various forms of moves observed and participated, meanings and significance of moves in daily lives and culture, links to the home territory, changes observed through introduction of modern institutions.
7.	May - December		Collection of personal testimonies	Six elderly	Recording of personal histories, memoirs and experiences.
8.	January 1989 - December 1989		Collection of folk sources and participation in different activities and rituals		Understand the meanings of territorial mobility over time, its links to culture and to contemporary life style.
9.	Open	Open	Field notes		Open ended.

**Figure 2.1  
Field Survey Schedule 1989/90**



had a population of 293 and Yakhagaun (31 households) had a population of 190. Initially I included fifteen more neighborhood households in Yakhagaun, but I dropped them from further consideration because none of them were Dewan. They were Limbu (10), Rai (3), and Newar (2), who are related to Dewan and had settled in the vicinity of their Dewan relatives.

After the household census was completed and ages of each individual members of the households were identified, a **Prospective mobility register** (Appendix B) was established to identify the inward and outward movement of individual members ages 15 and above for a period of eight months from December 15 1988 to August 14 1989. This age limit was based on two observations shared by local parents: i) normally this age marks the completion of high school and the beginning of either further study or a job or a career or, if not, an adventure trip out of curiosity; ii) according to the conventional wisdom this is the age that parents would consider their daughter approaching marriageability. In addition, for boys, age fifteen marks the beginning of a new phase where sons are supposedly treated as equals and not as innocent children.<sup>3</sup>

During December 1988 and early January 1989 I had to record the moves retrospectively. The register was intended to capture local level short-term movement and find out local terms for those moves and the socio-cultural meanings associated with these moves. Any move into or out of the hamlets involving an absence of one night or more was recorded. Prior to initial inquiries and based on the experiences of

previous studies on Southeast Asia and other parts of South Asia (e.g. Mantra, 1978; Singhenetra-Renard, 1982; Mahbub, 1986) I had considered to record an absence of more than eight hour from the hamlet. But after the initial inquiry I realized that for the short-term movements the spatio-temporal dimension (see, Gould and Prothero, 1975) was less important than whether the household members regard some of their members as absent from home or not. For this reason, an absence overnight from home is the minimum taken as the base line. Similar recording was done for visitors to these hamlets.

The recording of short-term mobility among the members of the households provoked some suspicion among some young people. This was a politically sensitive area and was closely monitored by the government because of increased opposition politics during the last one or two years. It was understandable that in such circumstances some of them were uncomfortable to have their daily moves recorded. Ghumaune was more sensitive than Yakhagaun in this matter. After a while, when they realized that I had no link with government monitoring and I was not concerned with the local politics, they seemed to be more comfortable. It helped that one of my assistants had close contact with some active young people. More importantly, none of my subjects was in the forefront of local politics though some of them were active.

The **Economic survey** was an integral part of my research because I needed to obtain information about people's material and agricultural situation. I attempted a flexible schedule to administer this. Depending upon the convenience of the

household head and/or senior member of the households, it was conducted at different times, but within a span of three months during the second half of the field work. The economic survey was mainly concerned with land possession, assets, crops and the cropping calendar, livestock, and other sources of income, along with annual expenditure, self sufficiency and coping strategies (Appendix C). Identified discrepancies were reduced if not eliminated by subsequent visits and further discussions. Information about rural household income was very difficult to obtain, given the multiplicity of sources and the involvement of several members for the collective well-being of the household. To find out transactions of money and goods in kind and provide some sense of seasonal fluctuations and a sense of annual cycle of agricultural income, I conducted a survey of marketing habits of the family members to supplement the economic survey. The following information was collected: who goes for shopping, how often, what are the main market centers, for what particular items (buy or sell). This information was also supported by field notes on household transactions.

I started collecting genealogies (patrilineal) after about three months from those who were most knowledgeable about their clan. The focus was on the number of family members in previous generations, with particular emphasis on the place of residence for each of the generations. The number of marriage partners and the place of birth for each of the siblings were recorded. The details of this approach and its role in research are discussed later (chapter VII). This collection of genealogies was

done to permit an understanding of generational change in mobility patterns and their links with social, economic, and political changes in the society. Not every head knew where their forefathers had lived, and this was especially the case in Yakhagaun. Many local elderly were invited to participate in such interviews. The group approach was very helpful and was most successful in the evening i.e., after a meal. No registers such as baptism registers (e.g Chung, 1987) or parish registers (Hagerstrand, 1975), were kept in this area. Whatever is available about previous generation is solely based on the memory of informants.

I constructed more than thirty five **life-history matrices** to obtain longitudinal data about the territorial mobility over time as it relates to other life events (Appendix D). In selecting the individuals for this life-history survey, I was mainly concerned to include: i) the most elderly; ii) the most formally educated village members, iii) the largest land owner; iv) the household head with the least amount of land.; v) the active social and political participants at the local level; and vi) the head of the largest family. Some of these criteria overlapped and when more than the required number of people met the criteria, the informants were selected randomly. Some of them had fairly wide experience and were able to recall much information whereas others knew little. I had an especially difficult time in Yakhagaun because most of the household heads had difficulty in recalling their life-cycle events. National political events, natural calamities such as droughts, floods, earthquake disasters, together with the main family events were used as main hints to recall participants' life stories. Peers

were very helpful in this regard to find out for how long and when the subject left home for a particular 'reach'.

The life-history technique, originally developed by Balan (1969) in Mexico and subsequently utilized by Perlman (1976) in Rio de Janeiro and Lauro (1979) in central Thailand, is a concisely-formatted instrument for stimulating, ordering, and cross-checking an individual's recall of life-cycle events. Based on the experience of Asian studies (Hugo, 1979; Singhenetra-Renard, 1982), the individuals in this research, were encouraged during indepth interviews to describe not only events of movement but also their contexts and the 'reaches' they felt important during their lifetime.

I was able to conduct a 'reach' survey for only 14 households most of whom had left Ghumaune. As very few households (of the current generation) from Yakhagaun had left, and as some were in India, I was unable to get information about them and their views. Even my earlier plan of a 'reach' survey in some towns and in Kathmandu city remained a failure because political unrest limited movement.

The majority of the informants in my reach survey were located in the Tarai region with a few from Ilam, Dhankuta and Kathmandu. Because of the scattered nature of the movers and my own movements, this survey was conducted in several places between July 1989 to February 1990. The structured survey followed by extended discussions focussed on individual perceptions of movement process and of feelings, emotions, and attitudes about both 'home' and 'reach' (Appendix E).

### **Beyond the Formal Instruments**

Beyond these formal and more structured inquiries, I used more open-ended techniques to explore the meaning and the significance of mobility from both cultural and individual perspectives. In-depth discussions with people, especially the elderly and village leaders, focussed on oral histories, life stories, and personal testimonies. I realized that information that emerges when people recount their experiences of movement differs markedly from responses given to pre-coded and formally structured questions.

I found that there are always things that rural people hesitate to say publicly and sometimes they even do not know how to verbalize their feelings. They are the common experiences of life. For this reason I thought it important to observe how people behave rather than depend solely upon what they say. As de Boulay (1979) points out:

One's way into this experience is through noticing the villagers not only as they speak but as they behave at different times.....these details may be slight but they add up slowly overtime, and point the way to other elements .... which otherwise may go unobserved (cited in Ellen, 1984:220).

#### **Organizing Focus Group Discussion: The Difficult Task**

To facilitate collective discussion about mobility experiences I organized six focus groups of five to six persons at different times, three in each village covering young (roughly aged 16 to 30), middle-aged (aged 30 to 45) and the seniors (roughly aged 45 and above). Organizing and conducting a focus group is the difficult task.



However, it was also an opportunity to collect information from group interaction. There were all kind of participants some of whom were very vocal. Some I had to stop talking, but others I had to encourage. Some spoke for the sake of speaking, some remained shy, while one or two tried to dominate, notwithstanding my arduous effort to counter them.

Before the formal discussion, I explained to all the participants what I was interested in. However, it is very difficult to say 'no' when someone you have invited to express his views talks on, however relevant it may be. Usually the discussions were open-ended, tape recorded with myself working as a moderator raising issues and trying very hard to channelize discussion. Arguments can be made about both the high and low involvement of research workers to channelize the discussion (see Morgan, 1988). I tried to put my involvement in the middle of the two extremes.

The main focus of discussion was how people perceived different forms of movements, their experiences, local expressions about movement and changes if any in the extent and meaning of movement or migration among generations. "I did not realize how much common experience many of us in this village had and once or twice all of us had left the village for *baralina* (walkabout) without any idea of where we are going, before the discussion of today" commented Krishna Prasad after the group discussion in Maisthan, Ghumaune was over.

There has been little use of the focus group approach in mobility research although it has been well established in marketing research (see Merton, 1987). One good example in population is research on the fertility transition in Thailand (Knodel *et al.*, 1983). The focussed group differs from a collective interview in that participants react to each other's comments. Such an interaction stimulates memories and feelings, thereby leading to a full and wide ranging discussion about the topic of discussion. As Knodel and Pramulratna (1987: 2) point out it is this group dynamic that distinguishes focussed group sessions from indepth interviews with individuals or key informants (see also special issue of Studies in Family Planning, Dec. 1981).

#### **Collecting Personal Testimonies**

During the course of my field work I obtained narrative information (personal testimony) from six individuals. The Social Science Research Council (1987:7) defines personal testimony as a self, reflective, first person narrative of a particular experience. Included in personal testimony is a broad range of self-accounts, including the spontaneous, the formally and informally elicited, the confessional, the didactic, the therapeutic, and many literary and quasi literary narratives including autobiographies, memoirs, and diaries. One rare example in the literature of third world mobility is Racule's (1985) account of F. B. Vulaono, whose father's tape-recorded interviews provided the basis for a detailed description of his experience as a government doctor during the period 1924-76. Narratives, by adopting freer forms of expression than can be elicited from formal questionnaires, probe unknown facets of

individual and collective experience. These personal testimonies help create understanding of how the meaning and significance of movement has endured or changed over generations, and the links of these situations with internal demographic changes and greater external contact of the village with the world beyond. I collected them from the elderly, elite, community leaders and women.

Most of the time, lapse of memory on the part of informant makes it a tedious job and even if the main events are not forgotten, the information provided is disorganized in terms of time and sequence. A list of important local, regional, and national events were very helpful to overcome some of these problems during my narrative collection. A senior household head who is in his early seventies had this to say:

If I would have known that some day some one like you with a concern of our lives, would come and ask about our personal narratives and it would mean something to people like you, I would have tried hard not to forget all my days of the past.

Most of this work was done in the evenings. Only two cases was done during the day because these two senior people were too old to be active in agricultural tasks.

### **Attempting the Neglected: The Folk Sources**

The general practice in third world population studies research often has been to use tools and techniques developed for research on other forms of society and culture. This is quite natural; but it may not necessarily portray real human

conditions. The neglect of folk sources in the literature is surprising. While most scholars would not deny that village communities are rich in folk sources and these sources are important to illuminate the context, feelings, and attitudes of people, movers and/or stayers in this context, they have been little used.

I tried to collect information such as songs, local sayings, metaphorical expressions, and local proverbs as a means to substantiate the narratives obtained through other sources. The task of collecting such material is time consuming and sometimes even after several days of close observation not a single expression can be recorded (a watched kettle never boils?). Being attentive all the time is the key to collect such things. The value of folk sources lies in the fact that they express and evoke attitudes and concerns important to people themselves. Moreover, in non-literate cultures, the oral tradition is the major means of perpetuating the culture through songs, proverbs, and sayings, that, in turn must be sung, remembered, and taught from one generation to another.

Personal participation in different rituals and social functions helped identify local saying, proverbs and metaphorical expressions. Being from the same place was the biggest plus for me in this adventure. I knew some of these expressions and used some of them during the talks. This would encourage the villagers. I also asked direct questions on whether they knew more expressions related to people's movement, but it was not of much help. As we know, for many, things and expressions do not necessarily come to the mouth when wanted. I consulted

publications related to *ukhan tukka* (proverbs) and monitored their use among the villagers. The focus was on those sayings and expressions which are related to meanings of 'home' and of 'reach', all set within the context of movement. Very rarely, research workers in mobility have utilized these local sources. Watts et al. (1985), for instance, collected proverbs, rhyming couplets, and other pithy sayings for the Yoruba of Western Africa to establish the large body of oral wisdom used in daily conversation. As a result, it was discovered that the Yoruba word 'ile' remained central to the conception and analysis of movement.

My one year stay in the field was not sufficient to collect all folk expressions. A big loss to the local culture was due to political 'consciousness' among youth whose 'cultural' performances most often carried political messages, rather than cultural. As a result, traditional songs and performances had almost disappeared. To recall one of my senior informants:

The traditional songs and dances are becoming obsolete. There is very little interest on the part of the youths to revive them. As soon as the "modern" songs and songs of political interest (left oriented) penetrated the village along with modern musical instruments, the whole traditional folk lore such as '*malsiri*' (a song for special occasion), '*sangini*' (song sung by women at groom's residence on the wedding night), '*baalan*' (male specific performance including dancing and singing from *vedic* verse) and '*maruni naach*' (combination of songs and dance performed by special group symbolic to the joy of Dipawali festival) have all gone away. This new generation will never know that they existed.

### **Towards an Authentic Relationship through Personal Participation**

The overall goal of these informal and open ended strategies was to become as much part of peasant life-ways as possible and to establish an authentic relationship, not merely as a research worker but as a fellow human being, subject to the same intemperance, frustrations, weaknesses, joys, and sorrows (c.f. Rowles, 1978). This experience was informed by ongoing discussions, participation in community affairs, and indepth observations. Such a combination of different techniques and instruments has provided for more detailed information and a deeper understanding of rural mobility over several generations than could be derived exclusively from national censuses or inferred from formal surveys. During my discussion and informal talks I addressed my informants through a proper concern for family relationships. The structure of the society is such that calling seniors by name would be impolite. Indeed many people did not even know their name outside of their title obtained through sibling order. This was common in Yakhagaun, especially among women. Depending upon age, gender, profession and interest, I addressed them as brother, sister/in law, uncle, aunt, grandfather, grandmother etc. which made our discussion more relaxed. However, increasingly, the convention of address through sibling order i.e., *jetho/jethi* (first male/female) is giving way to that of addressing by personal name. Nevertheless, while dealing with personal names may be convenient, the former system provided more information about kinship, family size and of course sibling order in a single word expression demographically.

### **An Experience and Limitations**

Planning for long term field work and predicting what to do and precisely when is difficult. One can only make a tentative plan. This is what happened in my case. The original thirteen months plan plus an exact time table for utilizing each of the instruments hardly worked. Once in the field somehow I had to organize complex reality in practical terms. There were periods such as planting and harvesting when people were so busy and tired that they did not have time to talk. And it would not be fair to disturb them as the local saying goes during the planting season: *manu khaera muri ubjaune bela* ( a time to work for producing one *muri* i.e., 160 *mana*, as you eat one *mana* today). This indicates that every moment during this season is crucial for agricultural tasks. Wasting this time would result in a heavy price for the coming year.

For research of this nature, time was a definite constraint because collecting information from local sources is a very time consuming task. That perhaps explains why very few scholars attempt such an endeavor. I could have done more, with more time and resources. I must admit that being a member of the caste group from Ghumaune I had more knowledge about caste groups than the *Kiranti* groups (Dewan). If a Dewan had done this study, he would have collected more insights from Yakhagaun than what I have been able to. I have tried not to be biased in

collecting and interpreting information. However, the fact that more information was collected in depth on caste groups might have some impact in interpretation.

Although I collected information with several instruments some of which are often overlapping, it is evident from the subsequent analysis and interpretation as the chapters unfold that I have used only a fraction of all the materials collected. Of particular importance in writing were the field notes including information on the date, place, people present and physical setting. I spent much time taking field notes. These notes are integral part of living in the field. In the words of Lofland (in Patton, 1980: 160) "field notes provide the observer's *raison d'être*. If he is not doing them, he might as well not be in the setting." One of my limitation which I noticed later was that at times I judged poorly on what to record. Some of the incidents and discussions were so obvious for me at that time that I thought I would recall them whenever I needed, but later some of these events were very difficult to recall.

Overall, I enjoyed my field work, although at times it was frustrating and tedious. I lived a very simple life and dressed the same way as my fellow villagers. Being born there I had no difficulty in adjusting to the local people and the village lifestyle. The villagers were curious to know about the world beyond and, understandably, the places I had been. Almost all of them wanted to know how life was in the United States. They had a perception that every one in the West was rich and need not work in the field the whole day. With my limited knowledge, I



described the life of people in the United States and also the place and seasons. This curiosity among my informants helped me because it made communication a two way interaction between me and the villagers.

I enjoyed being with local people and getting insights about the village and village life from my fellow senior villagers from their age old experience. I feel that they also enjoyed my being there sharing the pains and pleasures of rural life, asking questions about their daily village lives and overall activities which many of them had not thought about. This is exemplified by an elderly lady who told towards the end of my work that:

Because you were 'highly' educated, were employed in the city, and that there are no jobs suitable to you here in the village, we had almost lost the hope that you will come to stay in this village for this long a period to share the poverty of our village. It is so nice to find that folks like you have not forgotten this village, our way of life and care about our village. Now I can hope that our other educated children of this village will not forget our village.

#### Endnotes

1. The two villages selected are a combination of compact and discrete settlements. While each of the villages are composed of several compact settlements, they also include some isolated households in the neighborhood. These settlements are bound together by caste/ethnic and kinship ties. For the lack of an exact English word coupled with several contextual meanings of the local term *gaun*, I have referred to these settlements as hamlets in my discussion.
2. The term dissertation as it translates into Nepali, does not mean much to many of the villagers. For this reason, when I explained the purpose of myself asking questions to them, participating in their daily activities and observing their lifestyle; I had to tell them that I was going to write a 'book' which would make sense to them.

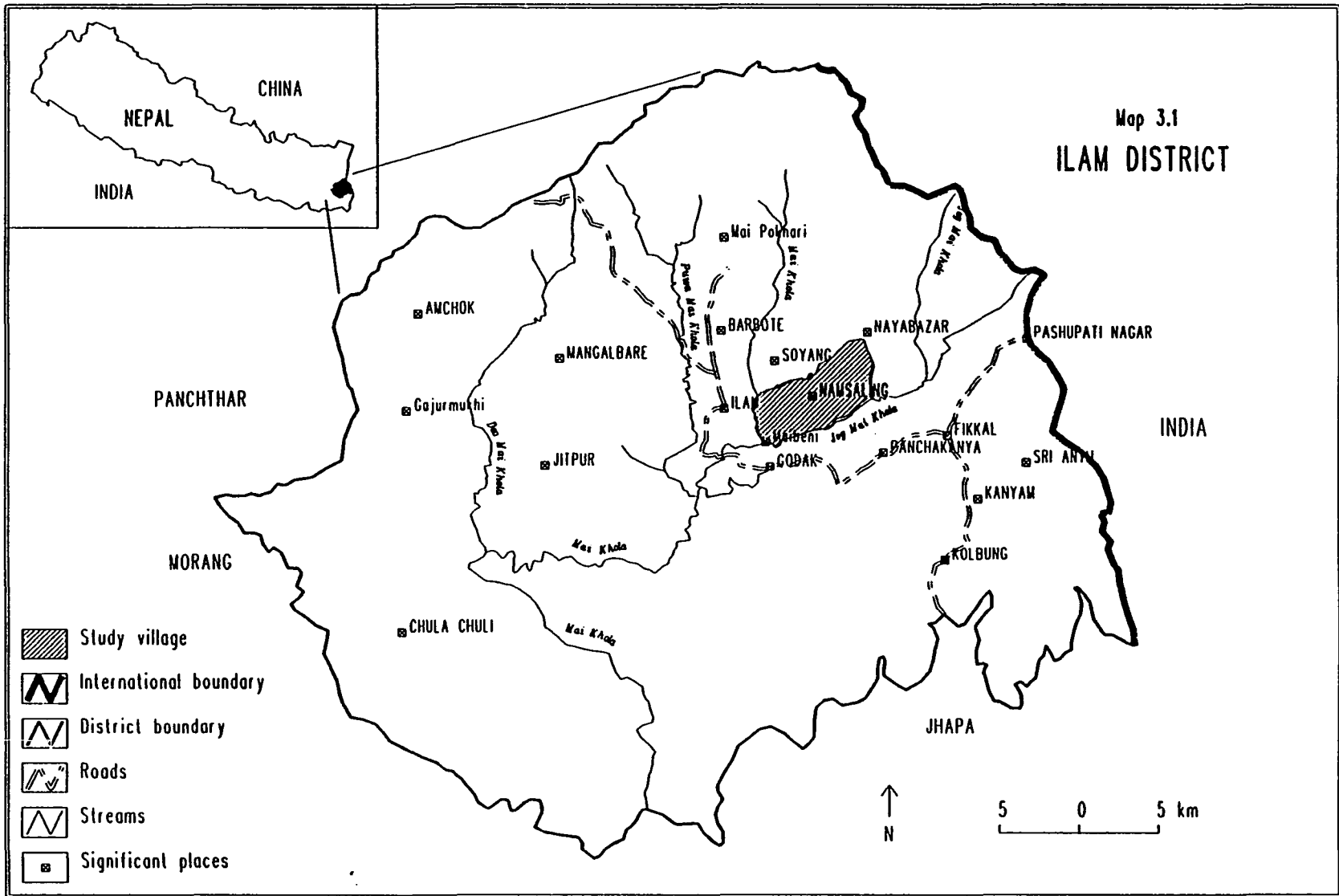
3. ***Gurus*** of Sanskrit literature reiterate a saying which translates as: 'give enough love and affection until your child is five year old, the next ten years keep him under strict discipline. When he gets sixteen i.e, fifteen years old, treat him as a friend and equal, not as a child or an innocent.

CHAPTER THREE  
DEMOGRAPHY, LOCAL ECONOMY, AND COPING STRATEGIES  
OF THE VILLAGE

Namsaling, the setting of this study, is a remote village in the eastern part of Nepal. Until recently, economic interaction was more with the frontier towns of India than with towns and cities in Nepal. Namsaling lies in the eastern section of Ilam district known as *Maipar*,<sup>1</sup> one of the historical subdivision of the district (Map 3.1). Ilam, one of the 75 districts of Nepal, has a population of 178,356 within an area of 1,703 square kilometers and a density of 104.7 per square kilometer (according to 1981 census). Ilam bazar is the district headquarters and Namsaling lies to the east, two and a half hours walk from the district center. Physiographically, the area is hilly and forms part of the lesser Himalayas commonly referred to as the Mahabharat range. Elevations range from less than 200 meters in the river basins in the southwest to 1800 meters in the northeast. The following statement describes the Namsaling area as seen by the people from nearby villages:

A relatively flat landscape rising up slowly from the basins of Mai and Jogmai *khola* (river), facing south and south west, good agricultural terrain most of which is utilized to a vast extent, with patches of rice fields giving a spurious glimpse of *madesh* (plain areas of Tarai). Mostly warm, densely settled in the middle part, inhabited by energetic and assiduous peasants, fertile though desiccate in seasons, on the traditional route to Darjeeling from Ilam bazar and west, with Sukrabare functioning as a local market center.

The name of the village, Namsaling is a *Lapche* (misused as Lepchas in literature) word. According to the local people Namsaling is named after 'Namsa,' a



*Lapche* headman. Literally, 'Namsa' is the name of a *Lapche* person and 'li' (or ling?) means "home" or "the (pleasant) dwelling place." Accordingly the Namsaling area was historically settled by *Lapche*. While the term "*Lapche*" translates as 'vile speakers' in general, it also means 'borderers or frontier people' in the *Kiranti* language. According to *Lapche* mythology they are the children of Mt. Kanchenjunga (third highest mountain peak in the world) and they call themselves 'Rong.' Today, they are mainly found in Sikkim. However, there are a considerable number in eastern Nepal, Darjeeling district in India and Bhutan. It is estimated there are about 80,000 *Lapche* in total (Chattopadhyay, 1990).

*Lapche* previously practiced shifting cultivation (*jhum*) and are generally proud of living in nature. Namsaling forms the western border of their traditional territory. Gorer (1984) names Mai khola as the western boundary (see also Tshiring, 1971). In Namsaling they occupied the upper part of the village, and some of their descendants are still there. A vivid picture of the *Lapche* is painted by Waddel, 1899 (cited in Das, 1978: 5-6):

[*Lapche*] is, indeed, with his distinctive traits, physical and moral, very much what his environments have made him. Living in a country which yields to him, without husbandry, a profusion of wild fruits and edible roots and other jungle products, the Lepchas is naturally indolent and easy going. His close companionship with nature has made him naturalist, .... his solitary life in the peaceful depths of the great forests makes him timid and shy of strangers. His hard experience of the forces of nature, the storms and floods which wretch his home and scanty crops, and scatter desolation and death around him, has made him a worshipper of malignant devils, and intensely superstitious. . . . his roving life has made him love liberty and hate restraint, leading him to shun service and preventing him ever combining with his fellow tribes men against common foes. And this unwarlike spirit, has left little of the heroic in his composition when he is pitted against disciplined masses of other tribes.

The *Lapche* have been submerged by recent immigrants from the west and north. Their agriculture has been displaced by permanent forms of cultivation, and there has been intermarriage, especially with other Mongoloid peoples. Certainly today they are disappearing from the area. Plausible interpretation for their disappearance include: i) the loss of their milieu; ii) their non-competitive and non-aggressiveness (c.f. Gorer, 1984); iii) the influence of immigrants which has broken down their homogenous interlocking community and has pressured them to leave the area; and iv) intermarriage with other communities. Most importantly, even though there are *Lapche* households, their identity has been largely denied at the expense of other similar and dominant ethnic groups. A 1988 household baseline survey of Namsaling (the only thus far) conducted by the Agricultural Projects and Service Centre (APROSC) which is a non-government research organization in Nepal (APROSC, 1988) is one example. It documents the ethnic composition of the nine wards of the village, but does not report any *Lapche*. This is despite the actual existence of several *Lapche* households, and the fact that one of the ward chairs happens to be a male descendent.

For how long *Lapche* dominated Namsaling is unknown. But they were here when people from *Pallo-Kirant* (far eastern Kirant) or *Limbuan* (the kingdom of Limbu) came from the west and settled in this area. *Limbuan* includes the current six districts of east Nepal namely; Sankhuwasabha, Terhathum, Dhankuta, Panchthar, Taplejung and Ilam. Very little can be derived from the available historical documents about *Lapche-Limbuan* rule in this area. It is very likely that the *Lapche*

kingdom and *Kiranti* kingdom were concurrent, with *Limbu* dominant in the hills, Vijayapur in the southern part (Morang area at present) and to the east of *Limbu* was found the *Lapche* kingdom. Over time many Kiranti groups (Limbu, Rai, and Yakha) moved eastward and some eventually settled in Maipar. Over the years they came to outnumber the *Lapche*. However, Namsaling was never under the direct control of *Limbu*.

During the eighteenth century Ilam was a part of Vijayapur kingdom ruled by the Sen dynasty. During their rule, chieftainships were held by the locally dominant Kiranti. Disagreements between chiefs and kings were frequent. Consequently, in 1768 A.D. Sikkim took advantage of this and extended their control over the Maipar (Ilam) area and made incursions into *Pallo Kirant*.<sup>2</sup> Limbus were afraid of Sikkim's increasing dominance and recurrent advances. At the same time Prithvi Narayan Shah's Gorkha army advanced across the Koshi river and conquered first the powerful kingdom of Vijayapur, and then forced *Pallo Kirant* to join the Gorkha kingdom (Map 3.2).

Sikkim now realized that it could be the next target of the Gorkha kingdom. Therefore, to avoid confrontation with Prithvi Narayan Shah, Sikkim proposed a deal in which Sikkim would restore the area of Vijayapur captured earlier i.e, Maipar, if Gorkha troops agreed not to attack Sikkim territory. Both the parties agreed to this proposal in September 1774. The Maipar (Ilam) area thus became part of Nepal. Although the subsequent rulers of Nepal fought with Sikkim until 1815, the treaty of



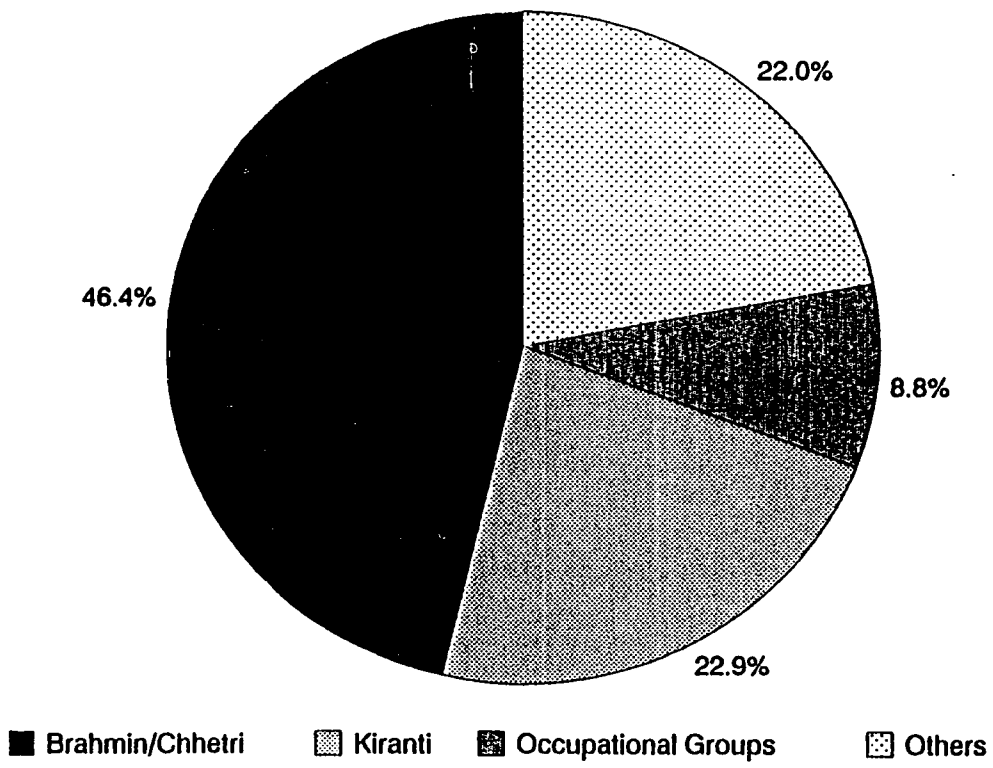


Sugauli (1816) marked the Mechi river the eastern border of present Nepal and ended the territorial dispute with its southern neighbors (see Acharya, 1966; Regmi, 1961).

There are no written records available to discover the sequence of incoming ethnic and caste groups to this area. The only source is 'memory culture' or, what the people know of the whereabouts of their forefathers. People say that the movement of caste groups into this area coincides with the campaign of territorial expansion by Gorkha rulers (Dahal, 1983a). If this is so, we could assume that the Kiranti groups (people of the adjoining state) came to the area before the immigration of the later caste groups. However, the information from genealogies, obtained from Brahmin/Chhetri and Yakhas does not confirm this assumption. Rather, it shows that both the groups arrived at almost the same time. Again, if the Kiranti people were the earlier settlers most probably Limbus would have dominated because the area near Namsaling was *Limbuan* and was demographically dominated by Limbus. But today the area has more Rai than Limbus (to be discussed later). This indicates that whatever the current demographic scenario may be, the Kiranti people and the caste groups probably came at the same time to clear the forest and settle in this area.

Today the population of Namsaling is dominated by caste groups primarily Brahmin/Chhetris (Table 3.1). Brahmin households outnumber all other groups in the village. This is followed by Kiranti (including Rai, Limbu, and Yakha). Occupational groups, at the lower end of caste hierarchy are also found in a considerable number (Figure 3.1). This includes Kami (black/gold smiths), Damai

Figure 3.1  
Namsaling  
Household Distribution by Caste/Ethnic Groups  
1988



(tailors), and Sarki (leather workers). The other category includes Tamang, Magar, Newar, Gurung, and Lapche.

**Table 3.1**  
**Namsaling: Household Distribution by Caste/ethnic Groups**  
**1988**

Caste/Ethnic Groups	Percentage of Households
Brahmin/Chhetri	46.4
Kiranti (Rai, Limbu, Yakha)	22.9
Occupational groups (low caste)	8.7
Others	22.0
Total	100.0

Note: The total number of households is 811 with a total *de jure* population of 4477.

Source: APROSC, 1988.

Although all these groups are distributed throughout the village territory, there is a tendency for each to cluster. This is more the case for the ethnic groups than the caste groups. The current distribution of caste and ethnic groups appears to have been fairly stable over six generations. The caste and ethnic composition of the village of Namsaling is fairly consistent with other villages of eastern Nepal. Dahal's study (1983a) of Barbote village (adjacent to Namsaling) showed that the village contained 51 percent Brahmin/Chhetri; 26 percent Kiranti; 15 percent other Matwali; and 8 percent low caste households. Limbu were more dominant among Kiranti groups in Barbote, whereas Rai far outnumber the group in Namsaling.

Over the past five centuries, Namsaling has undergone three phases of ethnic change. The first phase is represented by the dominance of *Lapche* who lived in the

forest and mostly concentrated on the upper ridges of the village. This was followed by a transition when *Kiranti* groups entered this area. They had better agricultural skills and were immediately followed by Hindu caste groups around the eighteenth century. It is likely that none of the three groups namely, *Lapche*, *Kiranti*, and the caste groups, were numerically dominant at this phase. The third phase was characterized by the internal growth of groups with competition as the campaign of 'clear the forest and settle' continued. The *Lapche* declined, but the *Kiranti* and the caste groups flourished. Over time it developed as an area of mixed Aryan/Mongoloid civilization. Small settlements of caste/ethnic groups along kinship lines evolved. Yakhagaun which is exclusively occupied by Yakhas and Ghumaune by Brahmin/Chhetri are some examples.

### **The Making of a *Gaun*: Boundaries and Meanings**

The term *gaun* which is commonly translated as "village" in English does not carry a specific physical limit most of the time. The villagers have only a vague idea of boundaries when they use the term, *gaun*. In fact, the term refers to differences in scale and the contexts of scale as well (Table 3.2). At the lower end, *gaun* indicates a household's immediate neighborhood based most often on kin network. This neighborhood may consist of a settlement served by a common *dhara/pandhero* (a local term meaning location of a local spring and/or well where villagers travel to fetch water and also take bathe and wash clothes). Sometimes *gaun* refers to an exclusive ethnic enclave such as Yakhagaun or Magargaun. In their daily agricultural work many villagers use the term to indicate an area within which they have

interhousehold relationships based on the form of mutual labor exchange commonly known as *pareli* or *parma* (a system of labor exchange between neighbors).

Table 3.2  
A Sketch of Hierarchical Use and Meanings of *Gaun*

Hierarchy of <i>Gaun</i>	Meanings/Boundaries
Level I	immediate neighborhood,
Level II	settlement hamlet or ethnic enclave,
Level III	areal extent of <i>pareli</i> (labor exchange) and interhousehold relations,
Level IV	social area (areal extent of participation and invitation during events such as marriage, funerals, and other rituals,
Level V	a political and administrative unit (e.g., Village Development Committee),
Level VI	rural areas in general

Source: Field Survey, 1989 (based on discussions with local people).

At a higher level, *gaun* may mean an area occupied by the settlements within which all the households, without any discrimination, are invited to important occasions such as marriages, annual rituals and funerals. Another level of usage of the term refers to the service area of a local school. As a political term it is used to indicate a village *panchayat* (currently Village Development Committee) which is the lowest political and administrative unit in the country.

*Gaun* is also used in a broader sense to mean the rural areas as opposed to the urban areas in the local dichotomy of *gaun* and *sahar* (towns and/or cities). The various uses depend upon the context. The most important aspects of context include to whom a person is talking, where the conversation takes place, whether the issues

discussed are social or political, and whether there is a neighborhood relationships between the two or not. Here are some examples:

One day an upper caste household head, aged 46, was little late to be home for our planned discussion one afternoon. We were already there at his home. When he finally came home while we were waiting, he said that he had gone to *gauntira* (to the village) in search of *khetala* (laborers or helping hands) to cut and collect the firewood for the following day.

In an another incident:

One day, early in the morning, when we encountered a young adult aged 33 at the cross-road. We chatted with him for a few minutes and inquired him of where he was headed. The immediate response was *gauntira* to invite people in the upcoming wedding ceremony of one of his neighbor's son.

Similarly:

Every time when we come back to Kathmandu from the village, we try to visit our friends, neighbors and relatives. Most often when we visit some senior people/official at Kathmandu who come from Namsaling the first question they ask is *gauntira ko halkhabar ke chha?* (what is the news from the village?).

In these three cases the term *gaun* conveys differences of scale and contexts of scale.

The first case uses it to refer to the immediate neighborhood whereas the second uses it to refer to a wider area including a social and kinship network. In the third case the term refers to the whole village, a broader administrative and political entity or neighboring villages in collective terms.

But more importantly, to the people of Namsaling, *gaun* has a qualitative meaning. It means living in a rural place as opposed to the city. It means arduous work in order to survive. It means living a very simple but congenial life through sharing joys and sorrows with the neighborhood, *marda parda, bhar/abhar ka sathi*, which roughly translates as "the friends in need and for all." It means a lifestyle

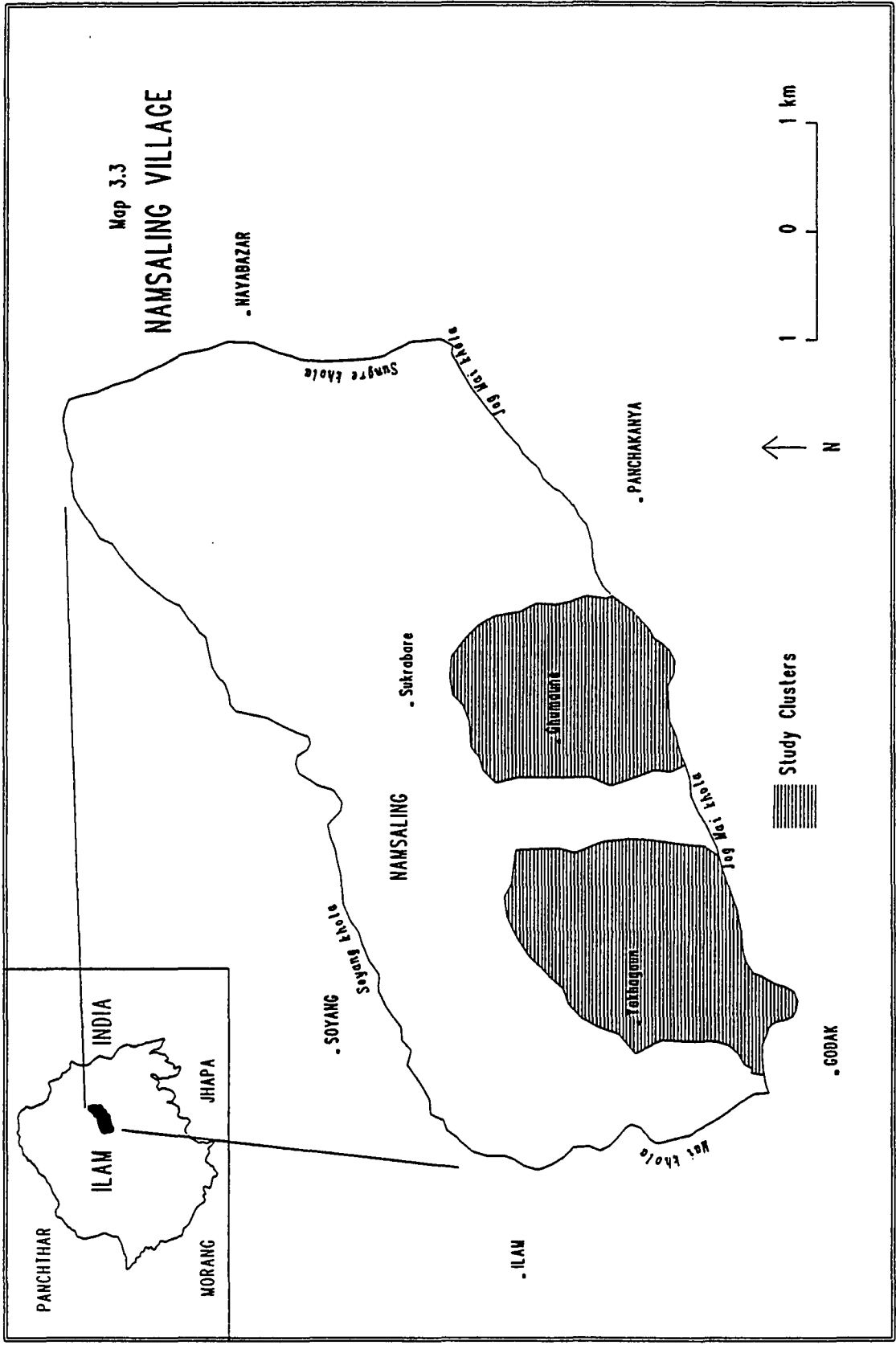
where visiting kin and neighbors do not require formal notice or invitation in advance and where guests are always treated warmly.

*Gaun* in a physical sense means a clusters of huts and houses in the midst of agricultural fields with each hut or cluster connected by a narrow trail. While there is no electricity or formal communication links, talking at *dhara* or *pareli* circulates faster than in urban areas with modern facilities. *Gaun* has the connotation of subsistence and working with the local environment. Although some *gaule* (i.e., rustic people) think that living in a village is harder than living in the cities, many of them are critical of city life. Moreover, while nobody disagrees that urbanites enjoy modern facilities, they also say that this does not necessarily mean urbanites live a superior life.

*Gaule* often express their pride in being able to produce and consume their own food. On occasion they say that urban people would not eat if villagers did not produce for them. Overall, the image of the village to the residents is that it is a genuine place to live, where their parents and families have cultivated the soil for several generations and where they also hope to continue to follow the tradition.

### ***Gaun* in Focus: Ghumaune and Yakhagaun**

The *gaun*, Ghumaune and Yakhagaun, the main focus of this study (Map 3.3), include several small settlements. Within the boundary of Namsaling, a political-administrative unit, these two hamlets are distinct in their social and economic characteristics. These place names carry specific meaning and description of landscape. Whereas Yakhagaun gets its name from its people, the Yakha, Ghumaune





is named after its circular shaped *tar* (flat land) landscape. Both the settlements were developed for agriculture by the ancestors of current residents. An elderly man from Ghumaune, aged 79 (who died after I left the village in 1990) had this to say:

This area was a *jungala muluk* (extensive and densely forested) with some *Lapche* in the upper part. Our *purkha* (forefathers) happened to arrive here perhaps accidentally. They did *khoria phadna* (slash and burn) and began to grow crops, eventually making a suitable area for fixed agriculture. Even in our early days the danger from wild beasts such as tigers, bears, and leopards was very common and the incidence of killing goats and cattle by wild beasts at the stall were frequently heard.

Agricultural colonization was a common historical occurrence in Nepal, especially during early days of the Shah kings (eighteenth century). The government encouraged the expansion of cropland through the conversion of wastelands into arable land in order to support their large military force and to collect more revenue. The expansion of agricultural land was the government's major priority not only through clearance of jungle but also through relocation of huts and houses. One of the royal order of Prithvi Narayan Shah recites:

In case there are houses on lands which can be converted into fields, these shall be shifted elsewhere, irrigation channels shall be constructed and the field shall be cultivated (quoted in Regmi, 1971).

After the original settlers established farming communities, waves of individuals followed. The present caste and ethnic diversity amply demonstrates this. Ultimately, internal population growth led to the development of the current demographic and economic characteristics of the settlements.

The two settlement hamlets are within a distance of two kilometers of each other. The crest of the ridge and the upper end of the agricultural fields are

customarily preferred locations for houses. While some settlements are nucleated, others are discrete. Dandagaun and Thulogaun are examples of nucleated settlement. This nucleation reflects clan and kin relations. Because the discrete homesteads are scattered, boundaries of small villages within these hamlets often fade imperceptly into the next except when there are prominent streams or trails. More importantly, the externally imposed boundaries of *wards* (sub-section of village as a political administrative unit) have no significance for these social and residential units except in the case of local election.

A house is an integral part of farm life. In the rural context, a house is a collection of several structures with the human dwelling as the core structure. The local expression *ghar katera* (loosely, homesteads) describes this collective feature. Around the main structure and at the edge of the courtyard are separate huts for cows/buffalo (*gwali* i.e., cowshed), for goats, poultry and pigs (all termed *khori*), for storing fuel wood (known as *kadkudo*). These structures also are covered with climbing vegetables such as squash, pumpkin, and cucumber. The number and size of structures differs according to the number and types of cattle possessed. This also reflects the relative economic status of the household.

Two-story buildings with two to three small windows are commonly found in Ghumaune. In Yakhagaun, although houses with two-story are not uncommon, windows are almost non-existent on upper stories. Building material for the construction of homesteads comes primarily from local sources. Bamboo and its products are the commonly used construction materials. The walls of the houses are

built of stone and/or raw brick with mud used for mortar. The outer walls are either painted with red earth or are white-washed with lime, while the floor is painted with a mixture of water and fresh cow dung which dries to a shiny odor free glaze and is much less dusty than an earthen floor. There are patches of red earth paint at the bottom of doors, at fire places, and at the bottom of the primary pillar of the building. Although thatched roofed houses with stone/brick walls dominate the housing landscape, *Chime* huts (one-story huts whose walls are made of bamboo and straw) have not completely disappeared. However, the use of timber produced by local sawmills is increasingly used to construct new buildings.

Traditionally, small mats made of maize or paddy straw called *pira* are used for sitting on the floor. However, wooden furniture has become fashionable recently. Among relatively better off households guests are offered woolen blankets (commonly referred to as *radi*) to sit on as a symbol of respect. In both the settlements, roofing material is either *khar* (thatch/straw) or in some cases 'tin' (zinc plates). A tin roofed three-story building has become a symbol of wealthy and pride among the villagers. However, the increasing scarcity of local materials, especially roofing materials, has forced many middle level households to use tin to construct new houses, especially in Ghumaune. The following expression from two middle-aged local school teachers, who recently built houses clarifies this situation.

The marginal slope lands that previously grew thatch have been increasingly terraced and brought under crop cultivation. This change is further aggravated by the loss of local grazing lands. This has forced many households to cut thatch to nourish the stall-fed cattle. This has limited the production of thatch suitable for roofing purposes. On the other hand, the need for replacement

every other year has pushed people like us to use tin as a roofing material although our standard is far short of this.

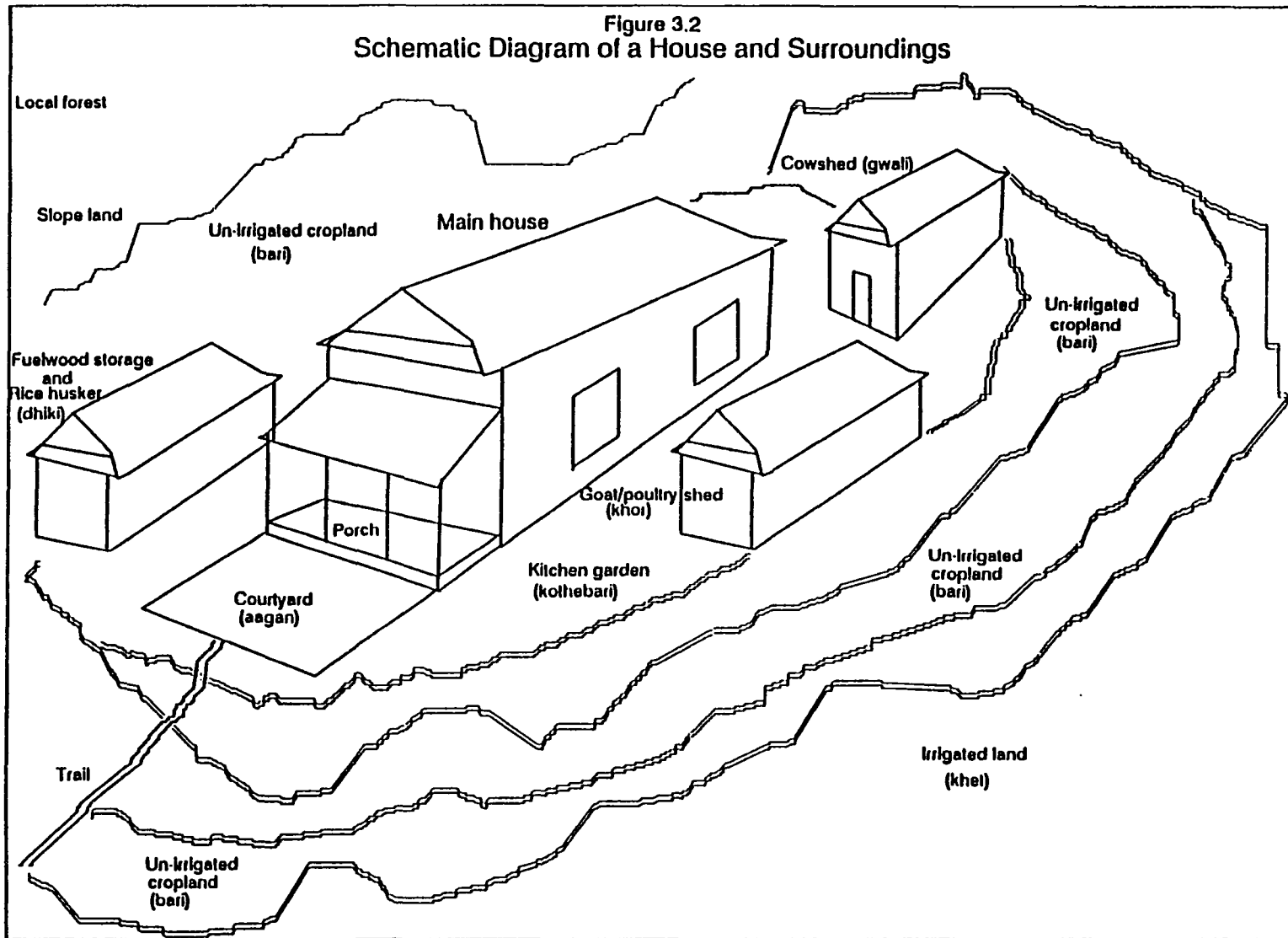
A similar concern was stated by a local social/political worker who settled in the area seven years ago and who by the winter of 1989 was constructing his new house in Ghumaune.

The location of houses with respect to the fields is an integral part of rural life. There are distinct 'zones' of activity from inside the house to the outer fields (Figure 3.2). The outer part of a house within the shade of main building is known as *sikuwa* (porch) which is the resting and meeting place for household members. This is also a place where guests and visitors are received. Among upper castes this portion of the house forms the boundary into which occupational castes cannot enter. Outside the *sikuwa* is the cleared and levelled courtyard, *aagan*. The courtyard is used to conduct several domestic chores. For example, *thangro* or bamboo storage containers for maize and often finger millet are made and located here, grains are left to dry in the bamboo mats, bamboo baskets and straw mats are woven, and agricultural implements are maintained and repaired. *Aagan* merges with *kothebari* (roughly, kitchen garden). Beyond this, are the dry agricultural lands followed by irrigated fields and 'forest.' This pattern is found consistently throughout the villages.

### **Demographic Characteristics of Ghumaune and Yakhagaun**

Because of their proximity, environmental conditions are similar, as are many of the demographic characteristics between the two hamlets. However, there are

Figure 3.2  
Schematic Diagram of a House and Surroundings



subtle differences that are important along ethnic and caste lines. Household size is an important demographic indicator. The average household size in Nepal is 5.8 persons. The eastern hills are the same and the households in Ilam district have 5.7 persons per household. However, the average size of the households in both the hamlets are larger than average with Ghumaune averaging seven persons per households, and Yakhagaun six (Table 3.3). Both the settlements have a minimum household size of two. The maximum size is significantly higher for Ghumaune where the largest households has one-fourth more members than Yakhagaun. Thus, the range is obviously greater for the former compared with the latter. One reason for this is that caste groups have larger household sizes than ethnic groups.

**Table 3.3**  
**Household Size in Ghumaune and Yakhagaun**  
1989

	Ghumaune	Yakhagaun
<b>Population</b>		
Total	293	190
Male	151	95
Female	142	95
<b>Households</b>		
Total	42	31
Male Headed	35	28
Female Headed	7	3
<b>Household Size</b>		
Average	7	6.1
Male Headed	6.9	6.4
Female Headed	7.1	3.7
<b>Range</b>		
Overall	14	10
Maximum	16	12
Minimum	2	2

---

Source: Household Census, 1989.

As commonly observed in other south Asian societies, males far outnumber females as heads of households. Customarily, household property remains under the control of the male member and passes through his sons. It is only when the household head dies and/or male offsprings are young, and their widow mother manages the household, that she is regarded as the head. An exception to this general practice is when a man has more than one surviving wife, married formally or informally, and one of his wives is compelled to live separately, taking her share of her husband's possessions.

For no obvious reasons there are more female headed households in Ghumaune than Yakhagaun. The household size for female headed households is small (Table 3.3). It is likely that the small size is related to the way in which a woman becomes the head of the household and how the household is formed. The following statements by women, one from Yakhagaun (aged 46) and the other from Ghumaune (widow, aged 61), illustrate the contexts in which they become heads of households.

My husband lives with my *sauta* (co-wife). I have one daughter and my *sauta* has many daughters plus sons. The two of us could not get along. Somehow I felt that my husband favored her. Ultimately, I had no choice but to live separately with my daughter. Now I am in charge of myself and my daughter.

and

Five years have gone by since my husband left me alone (i.e., died). My eldest son was already separated by then, while the rest of us are living together. Myself along with three sons and youngest daughter have managed well on what my late husband has left for us. In fact, we are doing better now than before. My sons do all the farm work. I provide some guidance and facilitate them. I am looking forward to my second son getting married so that I can take some time off from my indoor household chores, I hope.

A household is composed of several generations. It is customary that married couples live with their parents long after they become parents themselves. Household distribution by number of members and generations shows that two generations, irrespective of age, living together is a common practice. While 68.5 percent of the households are composed of two generations, 30 percent have three generations living together (Table 3.4). Moreover, households with members of one generation only are rare. Generational composition of households does vary along caste and ethnic lines. For example, while 38 percent of households in Ghumaune has members of three generations, Yakhagaun has less than 20 percent in this category.

Table 3.4  
Household Composition by Number of Generations Living Together  
1989

Number of Generations Living Together	Ghumaune		Yakhagaun	
	No. of Household	Percent	No. of Household	Percent
One	1	2.4	0	0
Two	25	59.5	25	80.6
Three	16	38.1	6	19.4
Total	42	100.0	31	100.0

Source: Genealogical Survey, 1989/90.

Households range in size from two to sixteen members, but six member households are modal. This is true of both the settlements. Nevertheless, the overall household size distribution suggests that while Yakhagaun is skewed to the lower end, Ghumaune is skewed towards the upper end. In other words, Ghumaune has more households with more than six members and Yakhagaun has more households with



fewer than six members. This seems due to lower mortality, relatively higher economic status and public health consciousness, all of which favor Ghumaune and are plausible explanations.

A large household size is still valued as a symbol of pride and prestige. This is based on the psychological notion that to have many children (strong and intact) is the best way to achieve material and emotional satisfaction. There are traditional expressions to this effect. A very widespread expression is '*kera jhai ganjinu, dubo jhai maulaunu*' which roughly translates as: "may your family remain solid and intact as banana (bunch) while you prosper and proliferate as *dubo* (a ground grass)." This is reiterated as a form of blessing to youngsters by the priests and the elderly in annual festivals/occasions.

Because of the persistence of the idea that a large family is good, efforts to limit the size of the household has not met with success. However, many household heads were aware of modern means of family planning. The older generation are quite resistant to it. In fact, an elderly person (aged 69) in Ghumaune had this to say:

These days people talk much about family planning and limiting the number of births. I do not believe it is fair. Every newborn comes with his/her hands and with his *karma* ('fate'). There is enough to survive even though they have to struggle for a while. In fact, none of the 'out-migrants' from this place who have been successful were single children.

This is not the whole story and many young people would disagree with such statements, and they have been trying to put forward convincing contrary arguments to the elderly. However, what is important is that conventional social norms have

avored the establishment and development of large families and this may take some time to change.

Ghumaune, being dominated by higher caste groups, has a tendency to have large households, and some studies done in the past have supported this assertion. For example, as early as in 1950s, Lewis (1954:16) made a similar observation in this area. Household sizes should also be interpreted carefully because each household experiences a development cycle in which its memberships contract and expand as the married individuals get separated from their parents, or members marry, have children and eventually die. In fact, after this survey was completed two additional households emerged in Ghumaune. One emerged through separation from parents. The other emerged as two brothers who were living together since the death of their parents, decided to live separately after the bride of younger brother joined them.

Details on how many generations live together are important because they have implications for the decision making process and the roles played by individual members. It probably also reflects the relative economic status of the household. Households with three generations living together have above average economic status compared with other households. When asked to respond to something important, the junior members of the household do not reply immediately, but wait for advice from parents or elders. This is an indication that in this society the collectivity that is the household is more important than the individual.

**Table 3.5**  
**Household Composition Based on Generation Living Together**  
**1989**

Composition of Households	Percentage of Households	
	Ghumaune	Yakhagaun
Head's generation only	2.4	-
Head's generation and older generation	2.4	-
Head's generation and younger generation	52.3	87.1
Heads with older and younger generation	19.1	-
Heads with two younger generations	23.8	12.9
----- Total	100.0	100.0

Source: Household Census, 1989.

Children most often live with their parents until they get married and/or have their first child. The overwhelming dominance of households with head and their children living together (Table 3.5) indicates the continuance of patriarchal values and norms. The substantial number of households with three generation living together and where leadership is held by the grandparents is symbolic to maintaining the integrity of the households. It has also helped to consolidate household resources, especially land. It is also an indication of continuing respect to the elderly in the face of increasing individualistic way of life.

#### **Age and Sex Structure of Population**

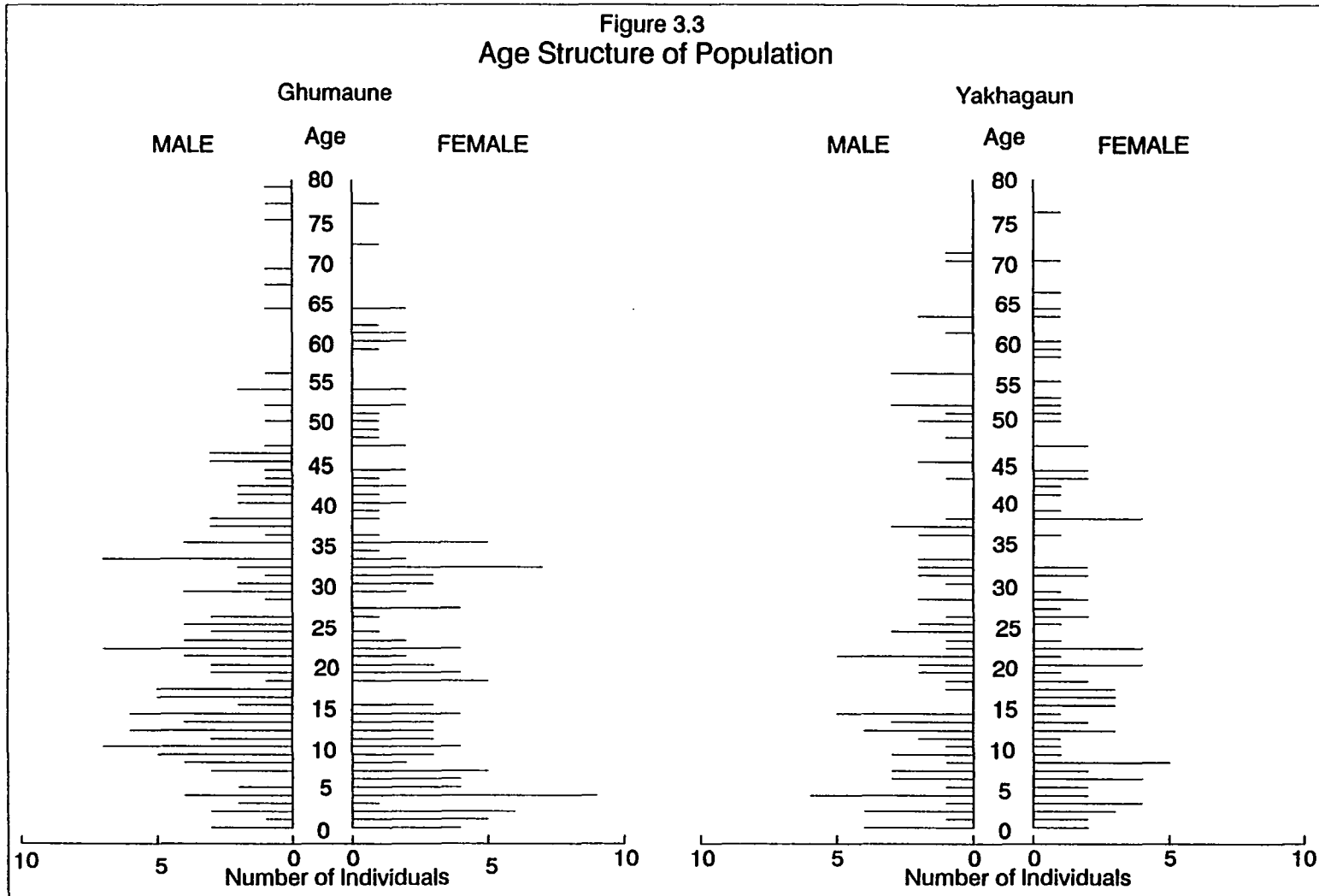
The balance of sexes affects social and economic relationships within a community. This has direct linkages with social roles, cultural patterns, labor force participation and the occupational pattern of a community. Age and sex data can be instrumental to understand many other demographic and socio-economic processes.

The age structure (plotted for each individual ages) of Ghumaune and Yakhagaun has a broad base and tapers upward although there are some irregularities (Figure 3.3). Such irregularities are not uncommon due to random variation in small population (see, Dahal 1983a; Firman, 1988). Ghumaune and Yakhagaun have a youthful age structure with a high proportion of the population in the young age groups. Twenty five percent of the total population is below ten years of age. Although both the settlements have young age structure, this is more pronounced in Yakhagaun where 43.2 percent of the population is under fifteen years of age compared with 40.6 percent in Ghumaune.

The median age of the population, which is 21.0 for Ghumaune and 20.0 for Yakhagaun, is another indication of a youthful population structure. There is a difference between ethnic (Yakhas) groups and caste groups. This observation is consistent with findings elsewhere with similar context. For example, Dahal's study (1983a) in Pipalbote village had similar findings where Brahmin/Chhetri had a median age of 20.0 and Matawali (ethnic groups including Yakhas) had 18.8 years. The youthful population structure results in a high overall dependency ratio of 0.73 for the former and 0.68 for the latter. These ratios demonstrate the difficulty faced by the economically active population in maintaining and improving the overall household economy. Given the relatively higher dependency ratio in Yakhagaun, the economic and social pressures to support the household economy are greater there.

The overall sex ratio is 104 which is consistent with what has been found in other village studies and with the sex ratios at the district and national levels.<sup>3</sup>

Figure 3.3  
Age Structure of Population



However, there are seeming differences between the two settlements. For example, the sex ratios for Ghumaune and Yakhagaun are 107 and 100 respectively. The fact that Ghumaune has more males than females corresponds to the national pattern of male dominance (Table 3.6). However, when categorized into 5 year age groups, the two younger age groups i. e., 0 to 4 and 5 to 9 are different in that females far outnumber males (Figure 3.3). Whereas female dominance in these age groups is generally attributed to higher mortality (primarily infant) among males, the available data on infant deaths recorded in these settlements make it difficult to substantiate this assertion (discussed later).

**Table 3.6**  
**Age and Gender Composition of Population**  
(in percentage)  
1989

Age Group	Ghumaune			Yakhagaun		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
0 - 04	4.4	8.5	12.9	8.4	6.8	15.2
5 - 09	4.8	5.8	10.6	5.8	7.4	13.2
10 - 14	8.9	5.8	14.7	7.9	4.2	12.1
15 - 19	5.5	4.1	9.6	2.1	6.3	8.4
20 - 24	7.2	4.1	11.3	6.3	5.2	11.5
25 - 29	4.1	2.4	6.5	2.6	3.6	6.2
30 - 34	4.1	5.5	9.6	3.7	2.1	5.8
35 - 39	3.7	2.7	6.4	3.2	3.2	6.4
40 - 44	2.7	2.7	5.4	0.5	3.2	3.7
45 - 49	2.4	1.4	3.8	1.6	1.1	2.7
50 - 54	1.4	2.0	3.4	3.2	2.6	5.8
55 - 59	0.3	0.3	0.6	1.6	1.6	3.2
60 - 64	0.7	2.1	2.8	1.6	1.6	3.2
65 and above	1.7	0.7	2.4	1.5	1.1	2.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>51.9</b>	<b>48.1</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>50.0</b>	<b>50.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Household Census, 1989.

The overall composition of population based on caste and ethnicity and the youthful character of the population, has remained consistent over the decades. Dahal's study of Barbote village about ten year ago had similar findings (Dahal, 1983a). A comparison with a study conducted twenty years ago (Caplan, 1970) in Indreni settlement, a neighboring village, suggests that overall, the youthful age structure has remained the same. Today, the proportion of young is still high, but the number of elderly is growing. A simple observation verifies this. For example, while most of the senior household heads reported that they never saw their grandparents, the fact that nearly one-third of the households today contain three generations (refer to Table 3.4) clearly indicates the growth of elderly population in these areas.

#### **Marriage: Universal Phenomenon in the Community**

Marriage in these communities is universal.<sup>4</sup> To use contemporary demographic nomenclature, Ghumaune and Yakhagaun are 'high nuptiality' areas. Marriage is considered a serious institution, most importantly by Brahmin/Chhetri because of their higher position in the social structure. It is important that members of the household get married when they attain marriageable age. To arrange for suitable marriage partners for their children is also a collective responsibility of the household, primarily the parents and the guardians.

Arranged marriages are the norm as is caste endogamy. A marriage not conforming to the norm is exceptional especially for the Brahmin/Chhetri group. Of forty two households in Ghumaune only three involved inter-caste marriages. These

households, however, are not looked down upon as they would have been two or three generations ago. When an inter-caste marriage happens among the upper caste (and none of the partners belong to untouchable groups) the couples usually leave the community for a short time (a matter of days or weeks). Yakhagaun is different. Because of its ethnic makeup, the community is quite open. Intermarriage of a Yakha (Dewan) with Rai, Limbu, and Newars is common and is well accepted in the community.

Early marriage is a common feature of Nepali society. However, this does not mean both the villages are comparable. There is a conspicuous difference in the mean age at first marriage between the two villages. The mean age at marriage for Ghumaune is 17.5 years while the corresponding figure for Yakhagaun is 21.2. In addition, the mean age at marriage for males is higher than the females in both the hamlets, which is to be expected. Ghumaune not only has a lower mean age at marriage but also the age difference between men and women is considerable (19.6 for males and 15.9 for females). Yakhagaun has a relatively higher mean age at marriage for both the sexes i.e, 22.3 for males and 20.2 for females, and the age difference between genders is low.

Child marriage was common until recently, primarily in Ghumaune. Three elderly women in Ghumaune reported that they were married before they were seven years old. One was only four years when she was married. Such occurrences are rare today. Current data shows that both in Ghumaune and in Yakhagaun 75 percent of the female population was married by age twenty. These village results are not



inconsistent with the data at the national level. A study of the ethnic factor in the timing of marriage by Thapa (1989) had similar findings. Nearly two-thirds of women married before their twentieth birthday and ninety four percent were married by age twenty four.

These nuptiality differences between the two hamlets have to do with the traditional values associated with the different castes and ethnic groups. The impact of literacy and improving economic condition are muted at this stage in these hamlets. Brahmin, at the apex of the caste hierarchy, have remained as a priestly and advisory class. Customarily, it is their societal responsibility to not only earn merit for themselves i.e., *dharmā garnu*, but also to help earn merit (*punya*) for other groups. *Kanya daan* (offering a virgin girl to a suitable groom) is one way to achieve *punya* (merit) which according to traditional belief, leads them and their ancestors (up to seven generations) to heaven after death. Conventionally, in order to accumulate *punya*, parents/guardians must arrange marriage for their daughters/sisters before their first menstruation. This was a very serious matter. Cases of adopting girls and arranging their marriages with a suitable groom for the sake of achieving *punya* were not uncommon in the past. This explains why child marriage was a common feature in Ghumaune. To this day the preference for early marriages especially for girls can still be found even among the educated.

In Yakhagaun, there is no apparent traditional belief favoring early marriage. The community is quite open in this matter. Boys and girls are often free to choose their marriage partners. *Dhan naach* (a traditional dance performed after the paddy

harvest and named after the crop), where boys and girls sing and dance together has been an important occasion in choosing marriage partners. To be able to perform in that dance means the person is young adult. This obviously has implications for the higher age at marriage among Yakhas.

The timing of marriage has been changing and the achievement of full adulthood is now considered the appropriate time for marriage. Due to education, external influences, and the relaxation of traditional regulations, the marriage age among both the sexes has been on the rise. Brahmin/Chhetri have worked out several measures, including purification rituals in case girls fail to marry before their first menstruation. In the last five years, none of the brides were under nineteen among formal marriages held in Ghumaune. There were at least six unmarried Brahmin/Chhetri girls aged over twenty two located during the survey. Parents were concerned but, as they said, not as much as they would have been a decade ago.

#### **Place of Birth: Inside/Outside, Attachment**

People in Ghumaune and Yakhagaun are very attached to their birthplace. The inner attachment of an individual is expressed by the frequent use of the terms 'my' and 'our' with reference to a particular place. Customary expressions such as *kaha basne?*, *ko hunu bho?* (where do you live? who are you?) that initiates introductory conversation with strangers is indicative of importance given to the locational and hierarchial attachment of people. The first expression is indicative of attachment through birth and/or place of residence while the second stresses membership attachment to social grouping.

Unlike the western style of introducing people by names, individual names are less important than birth place in an introduction between outsiders and the insiders. The concern for being attached to a place is very ardent among households. Sense of place (birth) is a very strong component in keeping community together, continuing tradition and investing in posterity. The place of birth is also the most revered place. For many, the sense of attachment and the feeling of home was something which they could never find elsewhere. Many household heads, thus, reported that their visits, travels and journeys to outside world were short and ended in their coming to the place where they belonged.

While place of birth has implications for individual identity and attachment to place, statistics on place of birth are indicators of settlement history and stability, and patterns of social life in the community. They also are indicative of the relative mobility of household members. Data on place of birth for Ghumaune and Yakhagaun show that the overwhelming majority of people are born within the hamlets (Table 3.7). This is to be expected as these are long established settlements. Those born outside, dominantly female, have come in after marriage. After marriage it is a universal custom for the bride to move to their husband's place. Although 99 percent of the residents are born within the country, two females in Ghumaune were born in India. They are living here because of marriage migration.

None of the males were born outside Nepal, an indication of absence of immigration. However, 11.8 percent in Ghumaune and 2.1 percent in Yakhagaun were born in adjoining villages, other villages in the district and in other Tarai and

Hill districts. The high percentage of those born outside Ghumaune is explained by the fact that three households had come here within the last decade.

**Table 3.7**  
**Place of Birth by Gender**  
**1989**

Place of Birth	Ghumaune			Yakhagaun		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Within the hamlet	133 (45.4)	77 (26.3)	210 (71.7)	93 (49.0)	69 (36.3)	162 (85.2)
Within the village	1 (0.3)	7 (2.4)	8 (2.7)	0 (0.0)	4 (2.1)	4 (2.4)
Adjoining villages	11 (3.8)	17 (5.8)	28 (9.6)	1 (0.5)	8 (4.2)	9 (4.7)
Within the district	6 (2.0)	31 (10.6)	37 (12.6)	1 (0.5)	14 (7.4)	15 (7.9)
Tarai district	0 (0.0)	5 (1.7)	5 (1.7)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Eastern hills	1 (0.3)	2 (0.7)	3 (1.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
India	0 (0.0)	2 (0.7)	2 (0.7)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
<b>Total</b>	<b>152</b> <b>(51.8)</b>	<b>141</b> <b>(48.2)</b>	<b>293</b> <b>(100)</b>	<b>95</b> <b>(50.0)</b>	<b>95</b> <b>(50.0)</b>	<b>190</b> <b>(100)</b>

Note: The figure in the parenthesis indicates percentage.

The term "village" in this table refers to political administrative unit.

Source: Household Census, 1989.

While the details on place of birth in Ghumaune and Yakhagaun reveal residents are long established, stable, and without a large ebb and flow of migration, they also demonstrate variation in terms of caste and ethnic groups. The larger percentage of Ghumaune population born outside the village reflect Brahmin/Chhetri's wider interaction with the outside world, wider marriage fields as evident from the presence of an India-born female (Table 3.7), and more ebb and flow of population

compared with ethnic groups in Yakhagaun. The fact that the three households which were born outside the village, belong to caste groups (two Brahmin households and one blacksmith) amply points to the higher mobility in Ghumaune.

### Educational Status on the Rise: Changing Meanings and Opportunities

While only one-fourth of the national population is literate, Ghumaune and Yakhagaun are well above the national average. Regardless, there is a wide variation between the hamlets and along caste and ethnic lines.

Table 3.8  
Ghumaune: Educational Status by Age Group  
1989

Age Group (5 years)	Educational Status (aged 10 and above)**										
	Total	N	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	
10 - 14	43	3	22	18	-	-	-	-	-	-	
15 - 19	28	1	7	13	4	4	-	-	-	-	
20 - 24	33	5	3	12	6	3	4	-	-	-	
25 - 29	18	3	2	2	4	3	1	3	-	-	
30 - 34	28	6	7	5	2	2	2	2	1	-	
35 - 39	19	3	4	4	4	-	1	3	-	-	
40 - 44	16	5	7	-	2	1	1	-	-	-	
45 - 49	11	2	7	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	
50 - 54	10	5	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	
55 - 59	2	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	
60 - 64	8	4	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
65 and over	7	2	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
<b>Total</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>Percent</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>17.6</b>	<b>32.4</b>	<b>25.2</b>	<b>10.4</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.5</b>	

Note: This table excludes a blind man who is in his early thirties.

\*\* Educational status is categorized in completed degrees (where applicable) and as follows:

N = Non-literate	III = Secondary school	VI = Bachelors degree
I = Literate only	IV = School leaving certificate	VII = Masters degree
II = Primary school	V = Intermediate level	VIII = Occupational/ technical skills

Source: Household Census, 1989.

Data show a lower literacy level among the Yakha community (57.3 percent literate) as opposed to Brahmin/Chhetri in Ghumaune (82.4 percent literate). While only 17.6 percent cannot read or write in Ghumaune, 42.7 percent belong to this category for Yakhagaun. There is also a difference between the hamlets in terms of level of education. In Ghumaune 14 percent of the population are high school graduates (Table 3.8), but less than three percent have graduated from high schools in Yakhagaun (Table 3.9). Moreover, all high school graduates in Yakhagaun are in their twenties. This is an indication of increasing realization of the importance of education in the community.

Table 3.9  
Yakhagaun: Educational Status by Age Group  
1989

Age Group (5 years)			Educational Status (aged 10 and above)*							
	Total	N	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
10 - 14	23	5	14	4	-	-	-	-	-	-
15 - 19	16	4	5	7	-	-	-	-	-	-
20 - 24	22	8	4	6	1	3	-	-	-	-
25 - 29	12	4	3	1	3	1	-	-	-	-
30 - 34	11	4	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	2
35 - 39	12	5	3	3	-	-	-	-	-	1
40 - 44	7	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
45 - 49	5	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
50 - 54	11	8	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
55 - 59	6	4	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
60 - 64	6	5	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
65 and over	5	4	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Percent</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>42.7</b>	<b>28.7</b>	<b>16.9</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>5.9</b>

Note: Source and Categories as of Table 3.8.

The statistical difference between the two hamlets should be interpreted with caution. There are social as well as economic reasons behind it. Economically,

Ghumaune is better off and people are more concerned about education. The social reason is apparent in meanings associated with education along caste and ethnic boundaries.

Educational skills are highly valued in Brahmin/Chhetri communities. In fact, the caste hierarchy which places Brahmins at the apex is directly related to their instructional duties. This is reflected in the high educational status of Ghumaune whose residents are dominantly Brahmins (plus Chhetri). For Brahmins, the priestly group, learning either through *gurukul* (i.e., learning skills by dwelling at *guru's* residence) or visiting places such as Varanasi, Kalimpong, or Kashmir (India), focuses on the performance of rituals and spreads the customary teachings among the communities. Traditionally, Chhetri i.e, the warriors, were also supposed to learn a range of skills from self defense to the defense of the community from a *Guru*. In Ghumaune the Brahminic tradition still persists.

The maintenance of caste responsibilities may have worked as an initial impetus for education among Brahmin/Chhetri. When the formal educational system began i.e, around 1950s, Brahmins (including Chhetri) took the lead in establishing the present schools in the village despite unwillingness on the part of the government. Yakhas were very slow to respond. It was only very recently that they began sending their children to the local schools. Only four among 190 Yakhas had completed their school education (S.L.C.). That female literacy is low is obvious. But the gender ratio at the two schools in the hamlets has been decreasing for the last six years. In

Nepal Jyoti Primary School where the majority of Yakha children study now has a 93:100 ratio of boys to girls.

Yakha had no tradition of sanskritized learning and education had a low status. However, daily activities, incentive to be a *lahure* (military recruit in foreign army i.e., the *Gurkhas*) and the need to lessen the dependence on caste groups for any literary matters are leading Yakhas to education. Nonetheless, they do not like sending their children to school as it interferes with agriculture and costs money (fees and school supplies). It is not surprising that they still use the expression *padho guno ke kaam, halo joto khayo maam* (what is the use of schooling, [forget it] cultivate your land, produce crops and live with it).

The meaning and value of education have been changing over the years. The hamlets had different values and incentives in the past. At present, education is frequently related to economic motives, a passport to get jobs outside agriculture, and a means to support the family through external income. Most importantly parents educate their children in order that they will be able to get a job to support themselves. Thus, they also would not be dependent on parental property which a son could claim when he gets married and has a family. An elderly person from Ghumaune (aged 64) had this optimistic comment:

My wife and I ran a small business of buying *dhan* (raw rice) in loan and preparing *chamal* (rice), and taking them to every weekly markets in order to make money to pay school expenses of my children. In time I had to sell cattle, which I did not want to, and also the jewelry. I was not sure whether I had done the right thing. Today it appears that I made a good decision. My children have jobs and I do not worry about them anymore. And most importantly, since they have jobs outside, I believe they would not bother to



claim their *ansha* (share) and construct more huts on the amount of land I possess which can accommodate only one family.

While expectations of new generations have gone up over the years, so have parental anticipations. How well the new generation will be able to fulfill their parents aspirations is to be seen in future given high unemployment, underemployment, inflation, and an increasingly competitive labor market.

### **Economy of the Village: Agriculture as a Way of Life**

Agriculture is the main source of livelihood in Namsaling and in the hills (*pahaad*) in general. It is a way of life. Expressions such as 'We are born here [in agriculture], brought up here and we consider *khetipati* (agriculture) as more than an occupation and more a way of customary life' are very common among these settled agriculturists. However, local terms, such as *lekh* i.e., arable land located in the higher elevation, [and] *besi* i.e., arable and fertile land in the lower elevations, and *gaun* i.e., village, [and] *besi* together with *kharka* and *nagi*, (pasture land in the higher elevations) indicate that pastoralism and shifting cultivation were once common in these areas. Slash and burn farming practiced as an adjunct to fixed agriculture is still fresh in the memory of many residents.

*Khetipati* (agriculture) is still traditional, labor intensive and oriented more to subsistence than to the market. Close relationships exist between population density, arable land, agricultural intensity, and the use of labor. Children in the households enter agriculture as soon as they grow old enough to help their parents.

From dawn to dusk people have chores to keep them busy. It is common to see people weaving *damlo* (string to tie to keep animals in the stall) or winnowing crops or preparing *choya* (splitting bamboo into small and thin piece to be used as substitute for rope or to make woven items such as *ghum* i.e., an umbrella, and *doko* i.e., bamboo baskets) when someone visits them. These activities continue during conversation. People are extremely hardworking and busy. Some specific activities are seasonal, but many remain constant. The following is a typical example recorded in Ghumaune of an ordinary male member (aged 44) of the household:

[June 5, 1989] He woke up at 5:30 in the morning, made fire in the fire place and put a big pan filled with water, added *bhus pitho* (ingredients of cattle food) plus salt, asked his wife to boil it and went to the cowshed to clean up their stall. After clearing the cattle bed he came back, prepared *khole* (liquid diet for cattle) and distributed it primarily to the milking cows. He then milked the cow, distributed some hay plus green fodder and came back home. He warmed the milk and put it on the jar, drank a cup of tea (with milk but without sugar) and went to collect fodder for cattle. After an hour he came back with a huge load of grass from around his field. He then distributed it to the stalled cattle. During his absence, his wife had prepared the morning meal. They had their meal, took a rest of about 10 minutes and went to work in the field at about 10:15 A.M. He worked the whole day in the field with *khetala* (agricultural exchange worker or wage laborers) with brief breaks once for tea and once for snacks with tea, left the field a little earlier to have some time before dusk to collect fodder. He came back in the dusk with a load of grass, again cleared the stalls (took away the dung and the mud from the stall), milked the cow. Only after the distribution of fodder with straw did he come back home, tired. After some rest he began to prepare strings for the cattle and by the time he went to bed it was already 11:00 pm.

This is the work routine for most of the villagers. The nature of mid-day work differs from season to season but the morning and the evening chores remain the same. People do not have holidays or weekends because they have to look after their livestock.

## **Land as the Major Asset of the Households**

Land is the major asset of each household. The land is greatly respected and on several occasions each year *dharti mata* (land, the mother) is worshipped. Land is comparable to a mother because both nurture the inhabitants. A household is economically stable and secure if it has some land. The common belief is that except for land, there is no other sources of income and assets that are permanent and can assure security for the current generation as well as for the future. Every other source of livelihood is temporary and has no guarantee for the future. The importance of land is illustrated by expressions such as *uttama kheti, madhyama byapar, adhama jagir* (agriculture is superior [job], business is medium and service [white/blue collar job] is the inferior).

To have land means hard work, but it ensures a long term return and survival. A household with large land holdings, especially big parcels of *khet* (irrigated land) will have higher economic and social status. In addition, owning land is a measure of attachment to 'home.' It ties families to places. Land is controlled by the head of the household as are other agricultural assets and belongings. Government records often describe many land owners within households but in fact land is controlled by a single household head. Official registration of land among several members is done primarily to circumvent state regulations concerning limits on amounts of land any one individual can own.

In Ghumaune and Yakhagaun, all households have some cultivated land. Cultivated land is divided into two categories: *khet*, irrigated land and *bari*,

unirrigated land. However, *bari* is further subdivided into *bari* and *pakho*. *Bari* is utilized for the cultivation of crops such as maize, millet, beans and vegetables. *Pakho* is usually a slope-land which is utilized primarily to grow thatch, bamboo, trees for fuel wood and tiger grass i.e., *thysanolaena maxima (amliso)*. *Khet* is valued because of its irrigated nature, but *bari* is not less important because it has multiple uses.

Basic statistics suggest that in local terms, Ghumaune is economically better off than Yakhagaun (Table 3.10). There is more cultivated land in Ghumaune than in Yakhagaun and thus, the amount of land per household in Ghumaune is higher. Ghumaune also has much *khet* land. This means ownership of more fertile land.

Table 3.10  
Basic Statistics on Land  
1989

	Ghumaune	Yakhagaun
Land Possessed (in <i>Ropani</i> )		
Total	2,327	1,301
<i>Khet</i>	1,197	502
<i>Bari</i>	610	637
<i>Pakho</i>	520	162
<i>Khet bari (pakho)</i> ratio	1.06	0.63
Total plots of land	263	141
Average size of plots	8.9	9.2
Land per household	55.4	42.0
Land per capita	7.9	6.9
Person per <i>ropani</i>	0.13	0.15
Person per hectare	2.47	2.90

Note: One *ropani* equals 0.051 hectare. One hectare corresponds to about 20 *ropani*.

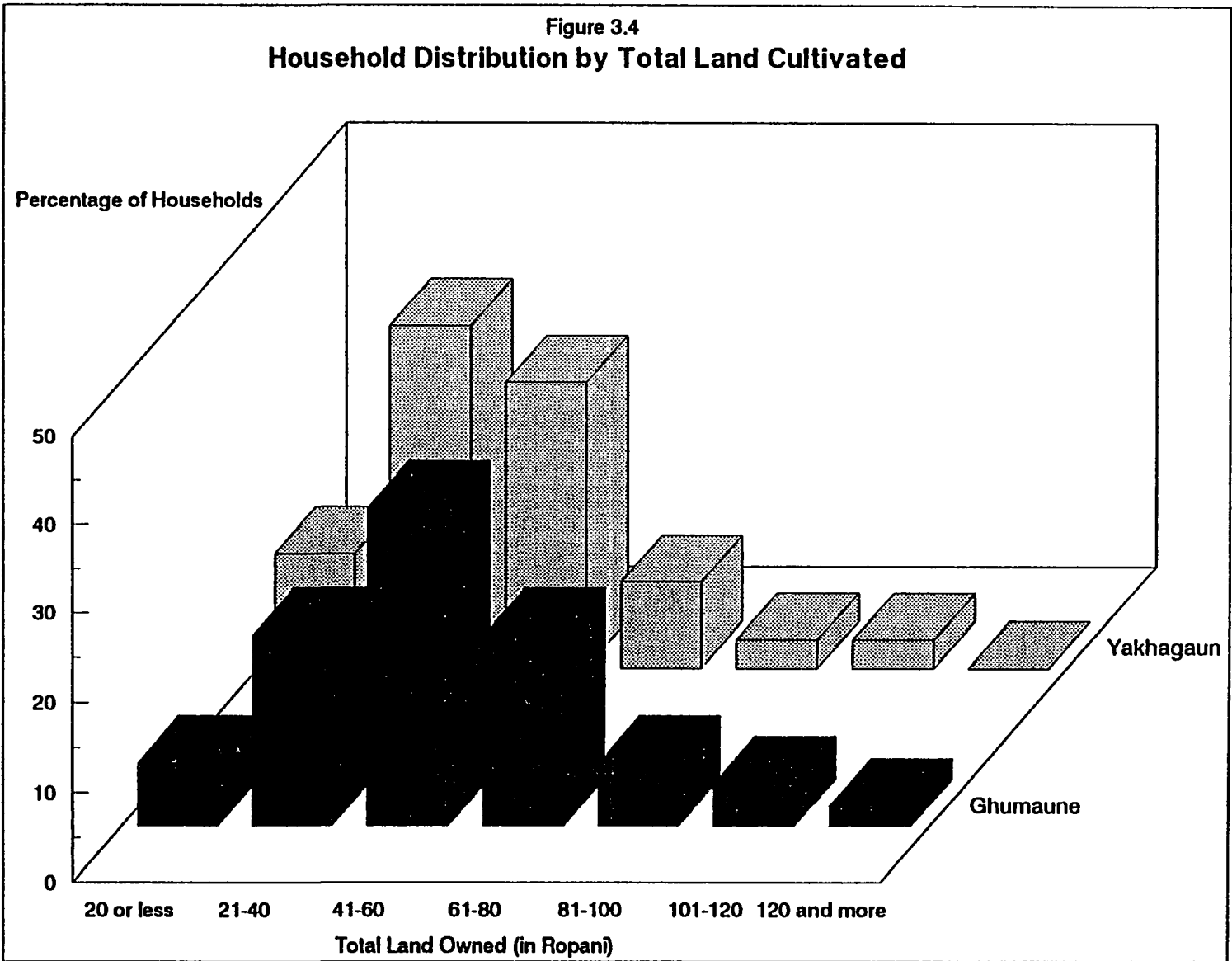
Source: Economic Survey, 1989.

Ghumaune not only has more land per household but also per capita holdings are higher in this hamlet. The pressure of population per household as indicated by person per unit of land is lower for Ghumaune. Most importantly, the *khet Bari* ratio (irrigated non-irrigated ratio) is higher in Ghumaune than in Yakhagaun, which has a direct effect on total crop production.

Historically, Brahmin/Chhetri everywhere in Nepal, have emphasized wet rice cultivation. Rice not only has importance as a staple item for them but also it has cultural significance. There are certain festivals and occasions where rice must be used. Not surprisingly, Brahmin/Chhetris have converted *bari* into *khet* wherever possible. The people of Yakhagaun are picking up this trend slowly. In both the hamlets, *khet* produces at least two crops a year while *bari* is commonly utilized to produce one crop. The increasing trend, even in Yakhagaun is to convert *bari* into *khet*. If a plot of *bari* can be converted into *khet* every efforts will be made even though the total value of production remains the same.

The average holdings of households based on the amount of total land cultivated indicates that there is significant difference between the hamlets (Table 3.11). The average figure for Ghumaune is 54.2 *ropani*, but the corresponding figure for Yakhagaun is only 42 *ropani*. In addition, more households in Ghumaune have large areas of land (Figure 3.4). If the households are categorized on the basis of per capita land possessed, the difference in land possession in per capita terms is minimal. The average per capita land for Ghumaune is 8.2 *ropani* and corresponding figure for Yakhagaun is 7.9 *ropani*.

Figure 3.4  
Household Distribution by Total Land Cultivated



**Table 3.11**  
**Household Categories by Total Land Cultivated**  
1989

Categories (in <i>ropani</i> )	Ghumaune		Yakhagaun	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Less than 20	3	7.1	4	12.9
21 - 40	9	21.4	12	38.7
41 - 60	15	35.8	10	32.3
61 - 80	9	21.4	3	9.7
81 - 100	3	7.1	1	3.2
101 - 120	2	4.8	1	3.2
More than 120	1	2.4	-	-
Average	54.2	-	42.0	-
<hr/>				
Total	42	100.0	31	100.0

Source: Economic Survey, 1989.

**Table 3.12**  
**Households Categories by Per Capita Land Possession**  
1989

Per capita Categories (in <i>ropani</i> )	Number of Households			
	Ghumaune		Yakhagaun	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Less than 2	1	2.4	1	3.2
2 - 4	4	9.5	4	12.9
4 - 6	7	16.7	6	19.4
6 - 8	8	19.0	10	32.3
8 - 10	12	28.5	5	16.1
10 - 12	5	11.9	1	3.2
12 - 14	2	4.8	1	3.2
14 - 16	1	2.4	1	3.2
Above 16	2	4.8	2	6.5
<hr/>				
Total	42	100.0	31	100.0

Source: Economic Survey, 1989.

The distribution of land holdings is consistent between the hamlets with a majority of households having a per capita land possession of five to ten *ropani* (Table 3.12). The significant difference between hamlets in total land cultivated is equalized by the large size of households there. However, since Ghumaune has more than double the *khet* acreage than Yakhagaun, per capita crop production is significantly higher.

Caste and ethnic data suggest caste groups own not only larger amounts of land but also land of better quality. This is not an uncommon observation. Many studies in Nepal have mentioned this fact (see Regmi, 1978; Caplan, 1970). A recent study in neighboring Pipalbote village (Dahal, 1983a) revealed that an average Brahmin/Chhetri household had 78.3 *ropani* of land and Rai/Limbu household possessed only 46.9 *ropani*. This is consistent with what is observed in Ghumaune and Yakhagaun although the gap between these two groups is not as wide as was found in Pipalbote.

All households but one are owner cultivators. But a considerable number of households also lease land. This is because for many households the total produce from their own acreage is not always sufficient to support household consumption and family expenses. Moreover, the fact that they are tenants does not necessarily mean their economic status is lower. In fact, several households are owner-tenants and their economic status is better than average village households. This is primarily the case in Ghumaune. There are very few 'landlord' households and the term 'landlord' is to be used cautiously. There is only one household with more than 150 *ropani* of



land although one-fourth of total households in Ghumaune lease out land. Many owners lease land because either they lack enough manpower for several reasons or the main household member is out of the village. The following illustrates this:

My husband is a civil servant and is stationed in a small town in western Nepal. Earlier he was stationed in towns in eastern Nepal. He used to come almost every weekend to look after the farm. Because of the distance he can not do it anymore. Our total land is less than 30 *ropani*. Although I am young (aged 29) I have four children to take care. As a female with an absentee husband, I can not cultivate even the limited land we have. Therefore, I have no choice but to lease it out. They take two-thirds of the total produce of the land for themselves but we have no alternative.

A similar account was echoed by another young lady whose husband was a civil servant stationed in another district. The family had three children, her mother in law expired last year and the older generation could not help out. Thus, part of their holdings were leased and they were heavily dependent on their relatives.

#### **Livestock as Integral Element**

Livestock are an indispensable part of rural life. They have both economic and cultural value. Cows, goats, buffalos, oxen, pigs and poultry are the major livestock. In Ghumaune oxen, cows and goats are the primary domestic animals. Cows number by far the largest, followed by goats, oxen and buffalo (Table 3.13). This is also true for stock per household (except for poultry). Cows are raised by all the households, goats and oxen by more than two-thirds of the households (78.6 percent), but buffalos are raised by a little over one-third of the households. Pigs are raised by occupational castes (7.1 percent), while poultry is raised by 19 percent of households.

Table 3.13  
Ghumaune: Distribution of Livestock  
1989

Livestock	Total	Households Raising Livestock		Stocks per Household*
		Number	Percent	
Cows	190	42	100.0	4.5
Buffalo	30	15	35.7	2.0
Oxen	74	33	78.6	2.2
Goats	138	33	78.6	4.2
Pigs	4	3	7.1	1.3
Poultry	80	8	19.0	10.0

Note: \* The denominator for this calculation is the number of households that raise the particular livestock, not the total households.

Source: Economic Survey, 1989.

In Yakhagaun, although cows are kept by 84 percent of the households, and goats by only 58 percent, there are more goats than any other domestic animals (Table 3.14). According to the view of many households in Ghumaune, the prospect of raising goats was better in Yakhagaun than Ghumaune because of Yakhagaun's proximity to the jungle which supplies grass and fodder for goats. Pigs are raised by all the households, as is poultry. Buffalo are raised by a limited number (16.1 percent). However, over half the total households have a pair of oxen.

Table 3.14  
Yakhagaun: Distribution of Livestock  
1989

Livestock	Total	Households Raising Livestock		Stocks per Household
		Number	Percent	
Cows	66	26	83.9	2.5
Buffalo	8	5	16.1	1.6
Oxen	36	18	58.1	2.0
Goats	75	18	58.1	4.2
Pigs	52	31	100.0	1.7
Poultry	129	31	100.0	4.2

Source: Economic Survey, 1989.

Cows and buffalos are used primarily for milk and manure, but in Yakhagaun buffalos are used as meat as well. For milk, cows and buffalos are preferred in Ghumaune. Among Brahmin/Chhetris cows are also associated with ritual purification. Milking cows and/or cow-calf are given to Brahmins who perform funerals, marriages, and other family rituals and is locally known as *godan*. Accordingly, to have at least a cow-calf at home is still essential from a social point of view.

Previously, Yakhas did not normally raise livestock except for pigs and poultry. Over the years, they realized that, by raising cattles households not only get much needed fertilizer but also the fodder and short grass available on their fields could be properly utilized. This motivated them to raise cattle. However, milk production, of primary concern to Brahmin/Chhetris, is not a high priority among Yakhas. One reason for this is different dietary practices along caste and ethnic lines. Milk and local milk products are an integral part of Brahmin/Chhetri meals (for example ghee and *mohi*, a drink made of yogurt). "We have our own *mohi* (used in this context to mean *jand* i.e., drink made of finger millet) as *Khas/Bahun* (Brahmin/Chhetri) have their dairy *mohi*" an elderly resident from Yakhagaun remarked.

Every household must have a pair of oxen. The only exceptions are if: a) the household head (male) works outside the village; b) the household head is female and the children are young; c) the household has limited land which can be worked through labor exchange i.e, *pareli*. If a household has a large amount of land, it may

need more than one pair of oxen. Goats are raised for meat and cash. In the past, goats were mainly taken to local pastures but increasingly they have become stall-fed. Only during the winter season, especially when the schools have winter vacation, are they let out of the stall.

Poultry has become popular. Every household in Yakhagaun has some. Customary taboos against consuming chickens among Brahmin is the reason for few households with poultry in Ghumaune. Nonetheless, the younger households there have been raising them for some years. A local Brahmin school teacher commented that he would not hesitate to raise poultry except that they would destroy vegetables grown in his kitchen garden (*kothebari*) and he had no interest in raising them commercially.

Pigs have ritual importance for ethnic groups and low castes. A piece of pig thigh is an essential gift for many occasions, especially when visiting relatives. As a result, pigs are raised by ethnic groups and lower caste groups. While the adoption of poultry crosses caste and ethnic lines, raising pigs by the high caste groups is questionable at this point.

Over time the livestock population has declined. The expansion of cultivated land has not only left limited land for grazing, it has seriously forced people to stall-fed their livestock most of the time. Several households remarked that they wanted to raise more livestock but could not. This is because i) every possible plot of land has been terraced and utilized for crops over the last few decades; ii) even former fallow lands are no longer available; iii) the introduction of wheat and more recently

*barkhe dhan* (summer rice) has led to land being used year round; iv) there has been much competition to collect fodder from public forests and the distances have increased tremendously; and v) the grass from fallow fields can support very few livestock. To stall-feed more than two cattle plus a pair of oxen is not easy when the households do not have enough land of their own devoted to fodder, tiger grass (*amliso*), and other grasses. During an informal discussion a middle-aged occupational caste household head pointed to several plots of land and remarked:

Those plots of lands used to be either barren or fallow for more than six months a year, previously. Three years ago ..... started planting *amliso* which means we cannot take our cattle there any day of the year. [showing other plots] that was all *chaur* (barren land) seven years ago, now this is full of *amliso* and I heard that the owner (aged 33) earned more than fifteen hundred rupees from *kucho* (a product used as broom) this year and this fodder crop is permanent. So, where can we 'stand' our cattle and goats. We just have to tie them up at the stall and feed them from whatever we can collect.

#### **Sources of Income beyond Crop Production: Towards Multiple Occupations**

With the growth of population crop farming alone has become unable to support the household. However, several opportunities outside agriculture have become available. Earnings from these secondary occupations are now vital to supplement agricultural income. Overall, the share of secondary occupations in the household economy may be minimal, but some of these sources are proving significant for many households. Today, in order to supplement their income from agriculture, households in Ghumaune have on the average 2.2 secondary occupations whereas in Yakhagaun the figure is 1.5 on the average. This, in fact, is indicative of social and economic differences between the hamlets.

The extent of multiple occupations is evident in Ghumaune where more than forty percent of households have three or more secondary sources of income. Some households have up to four sources. While all households have one or more secondary occupations, only one-fourth have just one secondary source of income. In contrast, in Yakhagaun there are fewer outside sources of income (Table 3.15; Figure 3.5). About half the households have only one secondary occupation there and one household does not have any secondary income at all.

**Table 3.15**  
**The Extent of Household Involvement in Secondary Occupations**  
1989

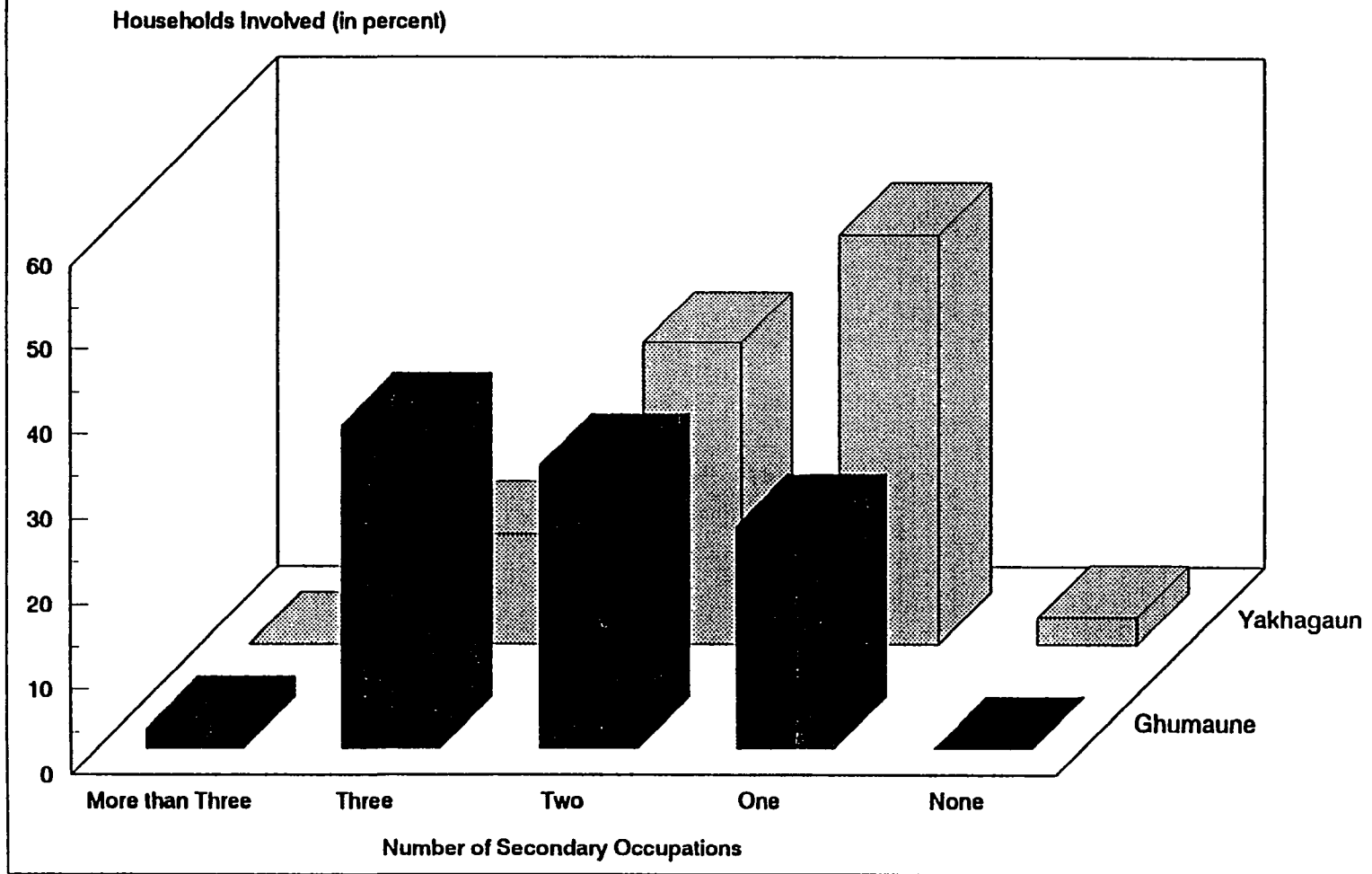
Number of Secondary Occupations	Percentage of Households Involved	
	Ghumaune	Yakhagaun
None	-	3.2
One	26.2	48.4
Two	33.3	35.5
Three	38.1	12.9
More than three	2.4	-
Average	2.2	1.5

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Source: Economic Survey, 1989.

The extent of multiple occupations and the relative affluence of the household is complex and the non-existence of secondary sources of income does not necessarily translate into poverty. For example, a household in Yakhagaun with no secondary sources was better off than the average household. Moreover, the involvement in multiple activities depends upon the socio-economic characteristics of household members, the opportunities available, and the exposure to the external world. In

Figure 3.5  
Household Involvement in Secondary Occupations



general, however, among all the households those with two or more sources of income are relatively better off than the rest.

The process through which households come to have several income sources has basically taken two forms (Figure 3.6). One of these involves diversifying agricultural activities. Cash cropping, horticulture, and the sale of milk and milk products have become important. Tiger grass (*amliso*, *thysanolaena maxima*), is now grown for brooms (*kucho*) and large cardamom is now an important cash crop in the area. The other category of new income involves professional service wage labor, the development of local businesses, and the use of special skills. Many of these latter activities involve leaving the village.

Table 3.16  
The Extent of Occupational Diversity  
1989

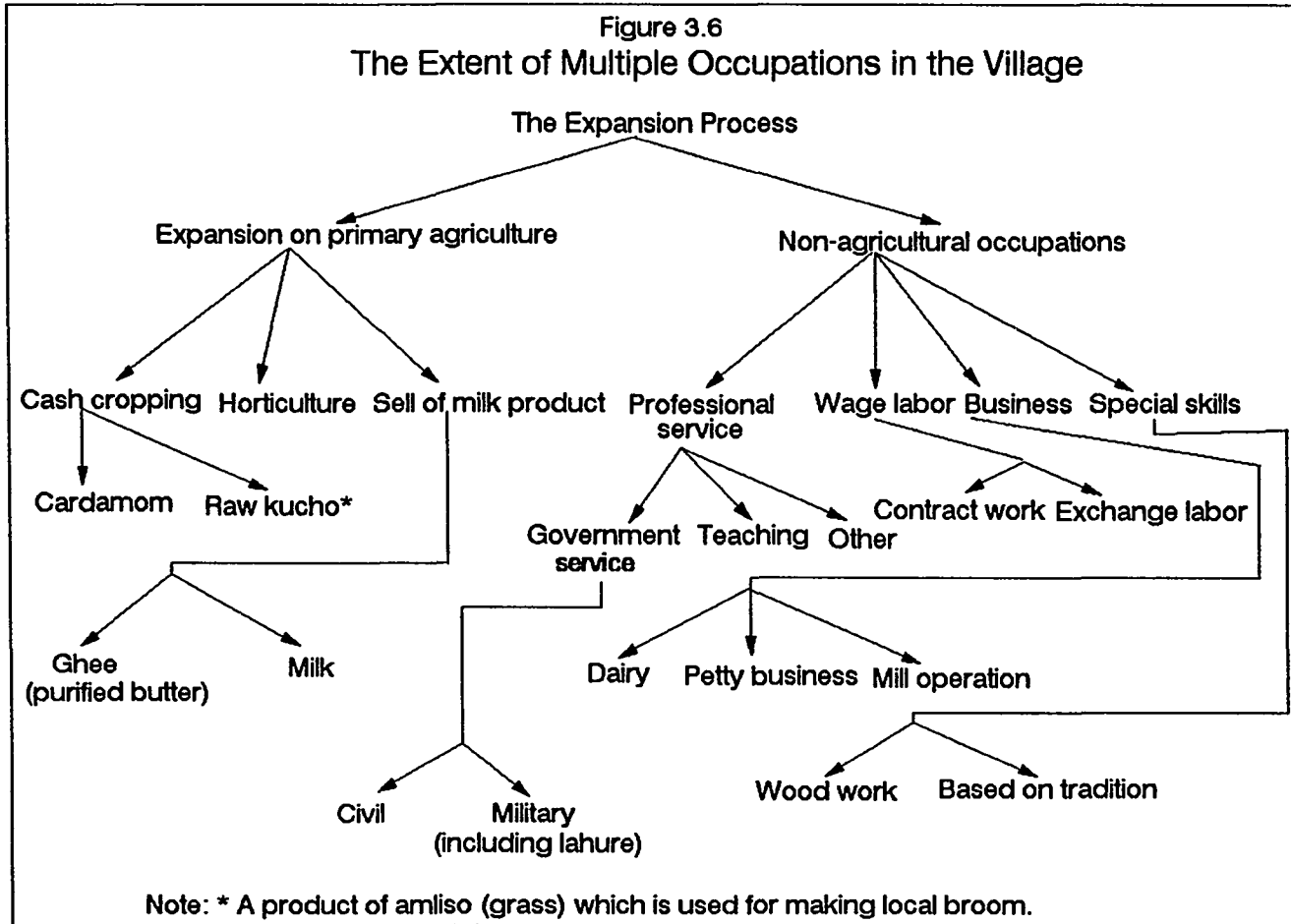
Occupational Categories	Households Involved			
	Ghumaune		Yakhagaun	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Expansion on agriculture:</b>				
Cash crops	1	2.4	3	9.7
Sale of <i>kucho</i>	31	73.8	3	9.7
Horticulture	4	9.5	17	54.8
Selling milk product	22	52.4	1	3.2
<b>Non-agricultural:</b>				
Professional service	19	45.4	5	16.1
Wage labor	6	14.3	17	54.8
Business	7	16.7	3	9.7
Special skills	1	2.4	2	6.4

Note: Because many households are involved in two or more occupations, the total figure in this table outnumbers the total existing households.

Source: Economic Survey, 1989.



Figure 3.6  
The Extent of Multiple Occupations in the Village



All of these are important in the assessment of the current status of the economy in the village. There are marked differences between Ghumaune and Yakhagaun (Table 3.16). Selling *Kucho* is a significant source of income for three-fourths of the total households in Ghumaune. The sale of milk and milk products are next in importance. In Yakhagaun, horticulture, primarily tangerine growing, is carried out by fifty-five percent of households. Then comes tiger grass sales and other cash cropping. Tangerines from Yakhagaun are quite popular in the local market, and recently guavas have become a marketable commodity and a source of cash.

In the non-agricultural sector, professional service ranks first in Ghumaune. It is followed by local business, wage labor and the use of special skills. In Yakhagaun, wage labor is the major nonagricultural occupation followed by professional service and business. Special skills in Ghumaune include traditional tailoring, but in Yakhagaun wood working is dominant in this category.

Up until 20 years ago tiger grass (*kucho*) was used as a local fodder grass. The plant was probably introduced about 1960. Over the years, local merchants began to be interested and farmers began to collect the panicles. Surprisingly it became an important source of cash in the village. Within a span of seven years it has become widespread in Ghumaune, and is now being established in Yakhagaun. Income from this product ranges from less than hundred to almost three thousand rupees per year in some households. Selling tiger grass (*kucho*) supplements household income for most families in Ghumaune. For one household whose land

had remained barren for years, it has become the major source of income. This household whose production from their land provides sufficient food for five months now has an income of Rs. 1200/- from tiger grass (the exchange rate of U S \$ 1.0 was approx. Rs. 26/- in 1989). This is a significant amount of cash because i) their total household income is not more than Rs. 7,000/-; ii) cash is in limited supply in the village, and iii) the household has no other means to earn cash.

Large cardamom is another cash crop although it is not as common as tiger grass. Nonetheless, some households earn considerable income from its sale. New areas are being brought under the cultivation of large cardamom in both the settlements. In 1989 one household in Yakhagaun earned Rs. 1400/- from this product, and one in Ghumaune had sales of Rs. 12,000/-. The average annual income of a middle level household in Ghumaune is between Rs. 25,000/- to Rs. 30,000/- and Yakhagaun between Rs. 15,000/- to Rs. 20,000/-, most of which is in kind, therefore this amount of cash is significant.

Horticulture is an additional occupation. In terms of number of households involved and income earned this is far more important in Yakhagaun than it is in Ghumaune. Tangerines are the main item from Yakhagaun, and guavas and sugarcane are now sold from both the settlements. A decade ago, marketing guava was not considered. One school teacher recalls:

Picking a mature guava by any one was more than welcome a decade ago. For the owner, it was a matter of satisfaction and pride for being able to provide something to the strangers. Over the decades the economy has become highly monetized. Everything is taken to the market. Today if someone picks the guavas the owner gets upset and may even yell at him.

Selling ghee was always an accepted practice in the village although very few households used to do so. However, selling milk was undesirable until a decade ago. The establishment of local dairy has modified this behavior. Today, more than fifty percent of the households in Ghumaune sell milk to the local dairy. So far only one household in Yakhagaun reports selling milk in local dairy. This is directly related to the number of dairy cows/buffalos in the households which in turn reflects traditional practice based on social hierarchy. If households have benefitted from the local dairy, it has diminished the amount of protein consumed. An elderly person had this to say:

It is good that we have a local dairy, so from the milk we produce we get some cash for the purchase of daily *noon [and] tel* (salt, kerosine etc.). On the other hand, it has increasingly taken us away from our generational habit of 'eating' *dahi [and] mohi* (yogurt and its product). It makes me worry about the health of our new generations.

Non-agricultural occupations range from professional services to those based on the traditional social systems (Figure 3.5). Their share depends upon size of the household, job status, number of persons involved and the relative income from agriculture. Professional service is the most preferred and respected occupation among the villagers. It includes civil and military (including *lahure*) government services, teaching and jobs (white and blue collar) in the private sector. Employment in services (except for *lahure*) is a recent phenomenon and has much to do with the establishment of local educational institutions after 1950. Teaching by far is the most important category followed by government service. The average household income of a typical household in Ghumaune is between Rs. 25,000/- and Rs. 30,000/- and in

Yakhagaun between Rs. 15,000/- and Rs. 20,000/-. These non-agricultural activities now provide between 10 and 50 percent of the total household income.

*Lahure* is specific to Yakhagaun mainly because of the British military recruitment policy (to be discussed in the next chapter). To be a *lahure* and a pensioner is very prestigious. A Brahmin household head from Ghumaune (aged 55) had this to say regarding the social position of a pensioner in Yakhagaun: "If Mr. ... had not been a *lahure*, there was no way he could enjoy the current social position like a headman there. He could have ended up like ... 'e' (sound of 'e' added in someone's name to denote a trivial person)."

While professional service has benefitted many households in Ghumaune, so has wage work in Yakhagaun. Commonly there are two types of wage labor. First, there is wage work within the exchange labor system where households pay in cash and/or kind to their fellow laborers. Second, some work as contract workers. Fifteen percent of total households in Ghumaune are involved in wage labor and 5 percent have done contract work including constructing new houses, cowsheds, and terraces. In Yakhagaun most of the wage work is associated with exchange labor. However, about six percent reported that they are involved in contract construction work. In fact, in Ghumaune, one household with 11 ropani of land under tenancy earned more than seven thousand rupees in 1989 from contract work. That is a significant amount in the local context. Having no land of its own, it may be considered as the poorest household i.e., *sukhumbasi* (landless) in traditional sense, but with the opening of other lucrative source of income the notions of *sukhumbasi*

translating into the poorest stratum is increasingly becoming questionable in the village.

In the village, there are three types of businesses: petty business, dairies and rice mills. Two households in Ghumaune have dairies and another has started a rice mill within the last five years. Other households in both the hamlets are involved in petty business. In Yakhagaun this is primarily the production and sale of *jand* and *raxi* (local wine and beer), while in Ghumaune it includes the sale of miscellaneous consumer goods within and outside the village.

### **Population Growth, Economic Change and Coping Strategies**

No existing comparative data on population growth are available for the two hamlets. To establish trends, the study used two methods. First, all births and deaths in the household for the past twenty years were recorded, and second, genealogies were traced. Both the methods suggest a remarkable growth of population over the last few decades.

At the national level the crude birth rate is 38.6 and the crude death rate is 14.2 per thousand (for 1989). The birth and death record for 20 years suggest that birth and death rates for Ghumaune are 22.2 and 5.1 per thousand and in Yakhagaun these rates are 27.4 and 6.3 respectively. This record of two decades is also reflected in the one year record which was kept for December 1, 1988 to November 30, 1989 (Table 3.17). This indicates several things. First, birth and death rates in both hamlets are lower than the national average. Second, mortality is low while fertility still remains high. Third, there is spatial (and ethnic) difference in the levels of both

fertility and mortality where rates are lower for Ghumaune i.e, Brahmin/Chhetri than Yakhagaun i.e., Yakhas.

**Table 3.17**  
**Births and Deaths in the Households**  
**Within the Last 20 Years**

	Ghumaune	Yakhagaun
Total population	293	190
Total live births	130	104
Total deaths	30	24
Infant deaths	4	8
Early childhood death	2	3
Crude birth rate	22.2	27.4
Crude death rate	5.1	6.3
Infant mortality rate	30.8	76.9

Note: Between Dec. 1988 and Nov. 1989, there were seven births in Ghumaune and five births in Yakhagaun which corresponds to a crude birth rate of 23.9 and 26.3 per thousand respectively. The rates in the table above are the average of 20 years.

Source: Field Survey, Births and Deaths Record, 1990.

A comparison between the hamlets suggests that the infant mortality rate in Yakhagaun is higher than in Ghumaune. Similarly, the number of early childhood deaths is also larger in Yakhagaun. This is in keeping with the higher economic and educational status of Ghumaune. It also reflects the ability of Brahmin/Chhetris to manipulate resources historically. However, some earlier studies have reported the opposite. For example, in a recent study based on the National Fertility Survey, 1976 Choe *et al.*, (1989) found that early childhood mortality among Brahmins was higher than among Rai/Limbu. But overall studies at the national level (see, Gubhaju *et al.*, 1987; 1991) have demonstrated a decline in the mortality level and this study conforms with their findings.

Information from genealogies suggests a similar trend. Genealogical information has its limitations and it is not possible to produce specific rates because i) the genealogical approach depends upon 'memory culture,' ii) generations overlap and, iii) the level and depth of information for all people is not consistent. However, since the concern is with overall trends rather than specific rates, the use of genealogies adds to the existing level of understanding of population growth in this area.

The current population in Yakhagaun can be traced to five Dewan i.e., Yakhas (a group of three followed by two) who came to this area five to six generations ago from Chainpur, Sankhuwasabha. While most of the initial families' descendants have remained there, some have left the area. Details on population growth of those who left Yakhagaun, two or more generations ago, were incomplete, making an assessment of population growth there, difficult.

**Table 3.18**  
**Population Growth through Generation**  
(based on selected clan households)

Clans	Total Households	Total People Born Alive by Generations (by sexes)		
		Grand Parents	Parents	Current Heads
Adhikari	6	6 (4 - 2)	5 (4 - 1)	25 (15 - 10)
Bhattarai	16	2 (1 - 1)	9 (5 - 4)	37 (19 - 18)
Subedi	3	5 (4 - 1)	10 (4 - 6)	12 (08 - 04)

- 
- Note:** 1. Figures within the parenthesis are total male and female where the first indicates male and the second indicates female.  
2. The numbers in this table does not include those who died before their first birthday.  
3. This table does not include all clan households covered in this study.

Source: Household Genealogy, 1989.



In Ghumaune different clan groups trace their origin to different places. The Adhikari clan traces their genealogy through a person named Balananda who came from Kaski Pokhara (west) five generation ago (Table 3.18). The Bhattarai clan traces their origin to a person from Bhojpur who came to Ilam six generations ago. The Subedi clan traces their genealogy back six generations to Ratna Nidhi who came from the 'west' and settled in Subedi gaun. Similar stories are told about the nine other clan groups represented in this study.

A detailed discussion and analysis of population growth based on genealogies is beyond the scope of this study and only an example is presented here (Table 3.18). There is consistent data available for three generations. The ratios of one generation to another is different for each clan groups but the overall trend is similar. In each clan there are more households than previously. The ratio of surviving children for current generations to earlier generations has significantly increased. In sum, these data suggest that the number of clan members has grown and growth has been rapid in recent years. Apart from natural increase, migration has also contributed to population growth. This is evident in the fact that over the last 25 years while only four households have left Ghumaune, ten households belong to the first and second generations. In Yakhagzun, the overall growth was mainly limited to natural increase.

### **Coping with Population Growth**

The steady growth of population over the years has several socio-economic ramifications. Increased population has exerted pressure on existing resources and

many socio-economic changes have taken place. These include agricultural intensification, involution, monetization of the economy, and the breaking up of caste and ethnic rigidity. Households have faced two kinds of pressures namely, 'routine pressure' and 'severe pressure.' Routine pressure involves maintaining (and improving) the socio-economic status of the household and reflects seasonal fluctuation in the the crop yield, primarily due to monsoon failure. This pressure is directly related to the household life-cycle, where, with time, new memebers are born, the existing ones mature, marry, and have children. Routine pressure is also connected with the household's attempt to keep pace with overall progress in society. Severe pressure comes about because of natural calamities, chronic failure of the crops, and the illness and/or death of principal earning members.

Table 3.19 summarizes coping strategies over time. These strategies are different across generations. While most of the strategies reflect routine pressure, the last column lists the current strategies adopted to cope with severe pressure and is limited to the current generation. The strategies specified are not exhaustive. Whereas they follow a sequence of time in general, the possibility of an individual household skipping or not adopting the sequence cannot be ruled out. Moreover, these strategies are not mutually exclusive and many households use more than one at a time.

Table 3.19

**Coping Strategies Through the Generations**

Strategies to Sustain and Overcome to			
	Routine Pressure		Severe pressure
Initial Strategies (early settlers)	Middle Strategies (middle generations)	Current Strategies (current generations)	Current Strategies (current generations)
	land clearance	reduce the period under fallow convert <i>bari</i> into <i>khet</i>	sell the produce at market/home
Clear the jungle	fixed agriculture agriculture	wherever possible use more plus new inputs . more <i>goth</i> in their own plots of land	. crops . local crafts e.g. straw mats, bamboo baskets, woven items etc.
Convert jungle into temporary fields	terrace land	. more compost manure . more labor . begin chemical fertilizer	. sell all possible farm produce e.g., fruits, vegetables . sell the cattle, poultry and any other domestic animals though they were not meant for sell
	reduce amount of land and period under fallow	multiple cropping crop diversification reduce the number of of livestock	Utilize inter-household reciprocal relations
	transform <i>bari</i> into <i>khet</i>	take more produces to money market	. borrow grain to pay after harvest

Continued..

Table 3.18 continued.

Initial Strategies (early settlers)	Middle Strategies (middle generations)	Current Strategies (current generations)	Current Strategies (current generations)
	use more public resources for self consumption and for fodder and fuels	introduce cash crops  look for other sources of income/activity  . relaxation of caste regulations  . send household members out of the village to work and/or study . add more economic dimension to mobility . increase propensity to white collar jobs . supplement through petty business	. take loan of cash and/or kind . go to <i>khetala</i> (wage worker) for cash and/ or kind (within the village)  Send household members out of village for wage work  Mortgage/sell other household assets e.g., jewelries, tools, and utensils  When everything else fails and/or done . mortgage the land . sell the land later . consider out migration

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**Coping with Routine Pressure:** Land development is a common strategy throughout. The early settlers focussed on clearing jungle and creating temporary fields. Their successors concentrated on further clearance for fixed agriculture, and the conversion of all possible land into terraces. The period of fallow began to be limited over time and conversion of *bari* (unirrigated land) into *khet* (irrigated land) began. As population pressure increased, households competed for the use of public resources for personal consumption and for their domestic animals.

The transformation of *bari* into *khet* is a current strategy as well. Land to clear for agriculture has become limited but the number of households has increased. The use of common resources such as public forest for fodder, fuel wood, root crops and vegetables has intensified. Community owned *kharka* and *nagi* (natural pastures up in the hills) came under the control of feudal heads and the access to commoners curtailed. When this happened several innovations took place including keeping *goths* (shifting cowshed) on a household's own field as they realized the importance of manuring to maintain the fertility of soils. An elder recalls his childhood days:

During my childhood every winter several of us used to take our cows and buffalos to Hiletar and build temporary huts for two to three months. No one worried about manure and fertilizer. Our cattle were often attacked by wild beasts especially at night. Often the owners used to complain about *goth* there which in turn provided too much manure leading to his crop destruction. During my own life time such a *goth* system become a memory of the past.

Marginal lands also were brought under cultivation. The process was rather slow and it varied from locality to locality and from household to household. Today very few marginal and slope lands remain. These areas are the most vulnerable to

erosion and degradation. When marginal areas are brought under cultivation, more inputs and resources are required, including the use of more manure. More recently, households have started using chemical fertilizer. For example, today chemical fertilizer is commonly used to grow winter wheat. The use of chemical fertilizer is on the rise because livestock numbers have declined. Chemical fertilizer is also being used on crops such as maize, potato and green vegetables in the kitchen gardens (*Kothebari*).

Crop diversification and multiple cropping has become a common strategy. For example, winter wheat has become a common crop within the past 20 years in this area. Summer rice (*Barkhe dhan*) has been introduced in the last ten years. Water logged areas (*seem khet*) are now utilized during summer for rice. At times, there are now strained interhousehold relationships due to competition for limited water. Nevertheless, summer rice growing has helped many households to overcome rice shortages. Similarly, the growing of cauliflowers, cabbages, onions, and garlic has started. This has increased the dietary intake of vegetables and has also reduced household expense.

New cash crops have been introduced and fruits and vegetables have begun to be sold. The large cardamom, is a good example (see Subedi, 1982). By 1989, three households in Yakhagaun and one in Ghumaune sold this product and another household in Ghumaune had converted about 6 *ropani* of *khet* (irrigated land) to its production. Tiger grass became a commercial item all of a sudden. In 1989 ginger was also becoming a cash crop. Population growth reinforced by a

household's high aspirations, eventually leads them to produce for the market. The earlier hesitation about marketing fruits and vegetables is no more and now the economy has been monetized to a very high level. One informant had this comment:

These guavas and many other fruits which used to ripen in the tree, would fall, and go unnoticed or be eaten by pigs and cattle, are all taken to the market for money these days. Today you really have to be careful about whether I am hurting my neighbor by picking up a single *gittho* (here, a local derogatory word to indicate an unripe guava).

Coping strategies are not limited to economic issues as there are socio-cultural ramifications as well. In particular the rigidity of caste regulations was put in jeopardy. Higher castes have been forced to do things which were unthinkable in the past. For example, Brahmins began to plow their own lands and tailoring which was traditionally the specialty of an occupational caste has been started by other castes. The increased use of ready made agricultural implements has forced the black smiths (*kami*) to turn to agriculture. Moreover, *vaishyas* no longer are the only business people.

Expanded external contact and the spread of educational institutions reinforced by lack of land have compelled households to look for other opportunities for cash within and outside the village. Coping strategies primarily based on agriculture have become inadequate over time. Although formerly it was not uncommon for household members to move in and out of the village for part of the year, the number doing this has increased substantially. Educational institutions have opened up new avenues to the young. More and more households have become interested in sending their members outside the village. Educational institutions began to be perceived not only

as sites of learning but also as 'gate passes' for highly valued professional services.

In summary, increasing numbers leave households in order to earn cash to cope with household pressures.

**Coping with Severe Pressure:** Coping with severe pressure is not easy. Some strategies are similar to those for routine pressure, but the magnitude of pressure is so high that some households have neither bargaining capacities nor enough time to manipulate strategies. Usually households in this situation are in debt and have already utilized their regular interhousehold relationships. This forces them to do things which they would have never done otherwise. They may sell their produce immediately after harvest to pay a loan. Every possible item on the farm is sold: crops, fruit, vegetables, and local crafts such as straw mats, and bamboo baskets. If the problem is not solved, the next step is to sell remaining cattle and livestock.

Households hesitate to disclose their poverty. Thus, interhousehold relations are only utilized when attempts to cope through the sale of items fails. There are several steps in which such a household utilizes kinship and neighborhood networks. A household begins by borrowing staples which it intends to pay back immediately after harvest. Borrowing cash follows. The last step involves working for the more affluent household in order to get cash or kind to repay loans. The terms and conditions for all these loans and borrowing depends upon the nature of the relationship between debtor and creditors.

After all these strategies are exhausted, jewelry, agricultural tools and even household utensils are mortgaged or sold. Finally, the land may be mortgaged or



sold. This usually means leaving the village. Expressions such as '*yo thauko bhog pugechha aaba*' which means 'our day to live in this place is over,' are reflective of this critical point. Left with no option the household unwillingly migrates.

Studies elsewhere suggest that peasants have faced similar situations and have responded similarly. Agrawal (1990) has summarized coping strategies for dealing with seasonality and calamity in rural India. She found that patron-client support group organization was one of the crucial means of empowering the vulnerable sections of society (Agrawal, 1990: 395). A study in the Koshi hill areas of Nepal had similar findings and added that in the case of the death or illness of the principal earning member there are serious implications for the households (see, Nabarro *et al.*, 1989). In general the studies have focussed more on what I have called those under severe pressure and say little about the changing strategies over generations and on the routine pressure in general.

In conclusion, rural households face routine as well as severe pressure. A range of strategies are utilized to overcome these pressures. While there is a primary focus on more intensive use of land, other resources and interhousehold relations, mortgaging and selling of personal possessions are also used as coping strategies. When the ultimate resource, land, is mortgaged and sold, people migrate.

#### **Endnotes**

1. The district of Ilam as it exists today was until recently, also known as *char khola* which means an area traversed by four *khola* namely, Jogmai, Mai (Mahamai), Puwamai and Devmai rivers.

2. The area east of Sunkoshi river was once a greater *Kirant* kingdom. From Sunkoshi to Dudhkoshi was known as *Wallo Kirant*, from Dudh Koshi to Arun as *Manjh Kirant*, and from Arun eastward up to the Indian Border was known as *Pallo Kirant*, i.e., the far eastern *Kirant*.
3. The sex ratio is defined as the number of males per 100 females, or,  $P_m/P_f * 100$ , where  $P_m$  represents number of males and  $P_f$  the number of females.
4. Even a blind man who neighbors did not expect to marry, was married to an normal woman of his caste, and had a one year old baby in 1989.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### CASTE, ETHNICITY AND TERRITORIAL MOBILITY

This chapter discusses the forms and extent of rural territorial mobility that has endured for generations in Nepali society with special emphasis on caste (primarily Brahmin/Chhetri) and ethnic (*Kiranti*) groups. It begins with a brief description of caste and ethnicity and is followed by a discussion of a rural typology of territorial mobility. The inherent forms of territorial mobility in rural Nepal are described with the actual analysis following. The discussion takes an indigenous point of view to the topic of people's movement. It is argued that while many of the traditional forms of mobility observed in the rural areas are common to both groups, others are clearly group specific. In addition, the extent to which various forms of mobility are observed within groups, is higher for Brahmin/Chhetris, reflective of their generally higher social and economic status *vis-a-vis* the Kirantis in the community.

#### The Context

Ghumaune and Yakhagaun are parts of the broader areas of mixed Aryan/mongoloid civilization. Historically, the rigid caste system evolved in India probably after the coming of Aryans there around 1500 B. C. The *Rig veda* (c 1400 B.C.) contains the earliest mention of the concept of caste. Details on the basic features of the caste systems are found elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> An already developed caste system came in this area (and throughout Nepal), with the coming of the caste groups from India. Later, the system became modified through socialization with local ethnic groups and the adoption of Hinduism by the local groups.

In the course of time, the Hinduized customs of Aryan immigrants began to dominate, and ethnic groups gradually began to adopt many of the customs and behaviors of the caste groups. As the process of Hinduization continued, the ethnic groups became loosely incorporated into the system. In contrast to the more rigid caste hierarchy in India, Nepal placed these ethnic groups in the middle ranking position, i.e., the *Vaishya*, in the customary hierarchy despite their cultural and social divergence from Aryan ideals. Their occupation, i.e., farming, and their eating and drinking habits were probably the main reason why these local ethnic groups were put into the middle position.

Caste and ethnic relations in this area today are the outcome of a historical process of accommodation between regional ethnic systems and the policies of a centralizing state (also see Levine, 1987). As a result, the present day boundaries between caste and ethnic groups can be quite blurred. Although ethnic groups such as Kiranti (including Yakhas) have adopted many Hinduized customs, they have clearly retained many of their traditional customs and rituals and, significantly, have continued to use their own language. Thus, although caste and ethnicity can be considered as overlapping issues in Nepal, there remains a degree of distinctiveness which effects social interactions and group behaviors.<sup>2</sup>

### **A Background of Ethnic Considerations**

Ethnicity as a factor effecting demographic processes has been an issue for some time and possesses a significant literature. For example, studies have found that the fertility transition in historical Europe followed ethnic and cultural boundaries

(Coale, 1973; van de Walle and Knodel, 1980). Despite wide variations in socioeconomic conditions prevalent throughout southern Europe, a common cultural heritage was determined responsible for the observed fertility transition. Studies suggest further that ethnicity is not a marginal phenomenon in studies of social processes and that there are elements in modern societies which reinforce ethnic continuity. Along these lines, Kobrin and Goldscheider (1978:1) write:

. . . some elements of modern society tend to reinforce ethnic continuity and emphasize ethnic differentiation. The conspicuousness of ethnic communities suggest that ethnic institutions and social networks even as they change, remain major sources of group identification. Indeed, ethnicity varies and changes over time, reflecting variations and changes in the broader society. . . . study of ethnic patterns highlights and reveals in microcosm more general social processes characterizing total societies.

Caste and ethnicity was found to be an important factor influencing infant and child mortality in Nepal, including eastern Nepal, with the Kiranti population having consistently lower child mortality rates than Brahmins (Choe *et al.*, 1989). Thapa (1989), in his analysis of nuptiality pattern in Nepal, found that ethnicity factors had significant effects on the timing of both marriage and first birth, independent of socioeconomic factors.

The fact that demographic processes are interrelated and that rural societies, despite changes over time, have not given up their time honored cultural heritage, suggests the endurance of caste and ethnicity as an important element in Nepali society. Thus, a study of territorial mobility must include considerations of caste and ethnicity to further our current level of understanding. The existing literature on territorial mobility in Nepal fails to provide an understanding of caste and ethnicity as

a factor influencing the movements of rural Nepali, both within and outside of the country. Mobility analysis based on census data (place of birth and of residence) provides no information about the caste and ethnic composition of migrants.

Several ethnographic studies focussing on different parts of Nepal suggest some links between mobility and group association but it remains unknown as to what extent these links are specific to certain caste or ethnic groups. Moreover, in these ethnographic studies, territorial mobility of the groups under study has been a concern peripheral to the focus of the study (Ross, 1981, Dahal *et al.*, 1977). For example, studies on Sherpa and Tamangs documented transhumance where populations wintered at lower elevations with their animals (Furer Heimendorf, 1975) and also travelled for wage work in nearby cities and towns (Fricke, 1986). Similarly, a commonly observed phenomenon in western Nepal is a wider distribution of Thakali from Thakkhola to the market centers of western Nepal primarily for commercial activities and catering services. This may be indicative of contemporary movement of ethnic groups, however, meanings of territorial mobility, the dimension of caste and ethnicity associated with it have remained unexplored thus far. Understanding how territorial mobility is perceived by rural Nepali, therefore is a necessary precursor to determining the role of caste and ethnicity.

### **Rural Typology of Territorial Mobility: Forms and Meanings**

People have moved throughout history. Over time territorial mobility has become part of traditional life-style. Each of the moves acquires its own meanings to the community and to households. Local conceptions reflect this and attempts to

translate conventionally used terms into local language are not necessarily meaningful. Hence, to understand territorial mobility in traditional societies we need first to conceptualize them differently than that in the more developed societies and to identify the forms and their meanings at the level of households.

The conceptualization of territorial mobility is complex. Unlike other demographic processes such as fertility and mortality, it includes both the entrance and exit of people into or from a spatially defined location. Apart from space it involves other dimensions of change as well, such as residence, time, and activity (see Standing, 1984:31-59). The time-space approach has been, thus far, the most commonly used criteria to define migration (e.g., Gould and Prothero, 1975) where the focus is in the duration of absence and the characteristics and distance of the destination (e.g. rural/urban). The time-space approach has, however, proven inadequate because it often does not mesh with indigenous concepts, people's intentions and sociocultural and functional meanings of moves to the participants i.e., the participant's perspectives (also see Singhanetra-Renard, 1982). Moreover, culture specific notions of how people in traditional societies perceive their moves beyond the village have obtained very little attention as a criteria to understand this process thus far.

The discussion of mobility undertaken here is based on the indigenous meanings attached to movements. Rather than classifying moves based on the experience of western societies, where individuals change their place of residence easily, and with conventional western terminologies, an attempt is made to categorize

moves from the perspectives of those involved and for whom changing a place of residence permanently is not done easily.

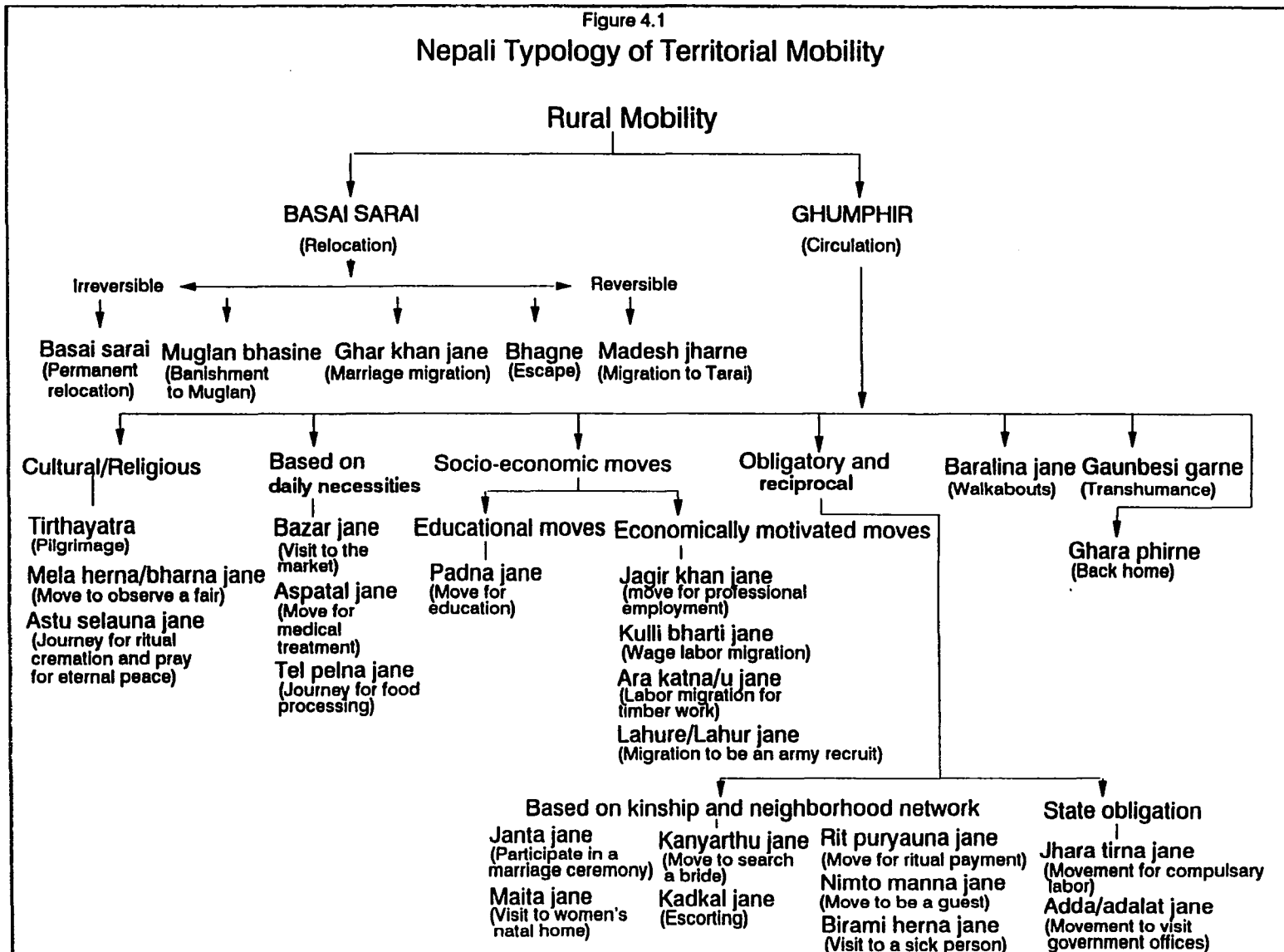
From the villagers point of view, the complex forms and features of village territorial mobility can be captured in two local concepts: *basai sarai* (relocation) and *ghumphir* (short-term mobility). Various common forms of rural mobility fall under one or the other depending upon their position on the continuum. Figure 4.1 (with the English translation in parenthesis) illustrates this.<sup>3</sup> While the former term indicates a complete relocation, the latter includes reversible, short term moves incorporating moves that include an absence of one night or more from the village.

#### ***Basai Sarai***

*Basai sarai* captures those forms of mobility that primarily involve permanent relocation of households and individuals. It involves several dimensions and has several meanings (Table 4.1). For example, while some forms captured by this concept carry a negative connotation especially the *basai sarai* and *muglan bhasine* (social outcasting), some are associated with life cycle events such as *ghar khan jane* (marriage migration). Overall, based on their particular meanings, five specific forms are illustrated by this concept. These categories are arranged on the scale of potential irreversible to reversible from left to right which in turn is based on the reversibility and irreversibility of the moves on the part of the participants and is based on the experience of the past.



Figure 4.1  
Nepali Typology of Territorial Mobility



*Basai sarai* (as a form of movement) can be loosely translated as migration in the western sense. However, its meanings and time-space dimensions are not necessarily analogous. Most often *basai sarai* carries a negative connotation because it means abandoning ties with 'home' and deserting one's rooted history. In its strict sense, it means that the whole household and not the individual leaves a place. It is a concept where a household leaves its home or original place of residence, and relocates itself in another locality irrespective of time, distance and political boundaries. *Basai sarai* is perceived in the framework of economic hardship and exhaustion of all possible coping strategies of households. Its extreme manifestations are summarized in local expressions. For example, an elderly Yakha during focussed group discussion reiterated: *aaja sangrati, bholi bhagrati, [and] parsi dangdang rati*. This translates as today is the first day (of the month), tomorrow is a leaving day, the next is a quiet (but scary) night i.e., the house is deserted and appears as a scary hut. The following excerpt provides the proper context:

When a household is under severe pressure, as a coping strategy, it borrows cash and/or kind from the local affluent. There are terms and conditions attached to it. Over time if the household situation worsened it can not pay its debt. However, on the due date the landlord arrives to collect the capital and interest. Because the household can not pay, it makes several hypocritical excuses and buys time. This continues for some time. One of the excuse made is to say that today is a 'restrictive' day (e.g., first of the month or someone's birthday etc.) and household transactions are customarily prohibited. Thus, the tenant requests the landlord to visit some other 'day.' It is done with an assumption that the landlord would not visit them within the next few days. Within the next few 'days' because every attempt was a failure, the household decides to leave the village i.e., *basai sarai*. In the next visit the landlord finds nothing but an abandoned house. Thus, the expression goes: *aaja sangrati, bholi bhagrati, [and] parsi dangdang rati*.

*Basai sarai* is a serious undertaking. It means abandoning places of deep historical attachment, well established kinship networks, and congenial and casual interhousehold relationships. Most importantly, a complete departure from an area with which there is deep attachment, is very difficult. More recently, transport and communication developments have helped keep those at 'home' and those 'beyond' in closer contact than in the past. However, the negative connotation associated with permanent separation is still strong among rural households. In fact, an elderly man noted that in the past if someone had to curse someone (e.g., his enemy) he/she would say *baas uthos* (may you be forced to leave this village).

In a traditional sense, *basai sarai* is also seen as partially related to supernatural phenomenon and the termination of what is usually called *bhog* (right to occupy land by the household). Many of the senior household members still believe that for a household to own and cultivate certain parcel of land, the *bhog* of land and the *karma* of the householder should correspond. Accordingly, once in a while, it is expected that every piece of cultivated land may change ownership. Viswa's *basai sarai* seven years ago was cited as one example by many households:

About 15 years ago Indra after being unable to extract a good yield, sold Bohori bote *khet* (irrigated land) to Viswa, a cousin. Viswa was known for his humor. His family was hard working. He moved there and raised cattle to provide manuring to the field. He did his best to get good return from this *khet*. To him this plot was extensive. Before coming to this land, his overall farm produce was not sufficient to support his family. Over the years he had been supporting his family through borrowing and local wage work. Thus, he had high hopes to improve his household economy and the quality of land and production there. Unfortunately, despite his hard work, more input and overall effort he could neither procure good yield from Bohori bote, nor recover his household economy. Thus, after a decade of unsuccessful effort, frustration and the failure of everything, he gave up and decided to leave for

another place close to his wife's relatives. He sold it to Barun, one of his cousins, who owns and lives there today. Barun's family is also hard working as was Viswa's family. They worked hard and were able to succeed within a matter of a few years. The yield of rice and wheat went up significantly. Every single passer by was surprised by such a spectacular change. Neighbors express that Viswa had not done less in terms of input and effort to the land before. Today, Barun's household economy has improved significantly. Almost all of those who knew the productivity of this plot before had the same remark: *jaminko/manchheko bhog aaunu parchha bhanthe ho rachha* (the saying that the twirl of the land/man comes, appears true).

And for Viswa who migrated to another village, it was a success story:

He moved to Vardanpur (a distant village), bought some land and continued his hard work. Fortunately, after seven years of hard work it paid off. His economic situation improved, all his debt was paid and he was able to lend money to others. He began to ride horse back to local markets which was like a dream before. He often visited his mother in his previous village. Unfortunately, his personal success was short-lived. He died of cancer in 1988. His eldest son (who is in his late twenties) keeps visiting Namsaling. Every time when the conversation gets into the issue of *basai sarai* he repeats and others agree: *jaminko/manchheko . . . .*

These examples suggest that in traditional societies, apart from explicit economic and social aspects, cultural and supernatural meanings are also an important dimension when people consider leaving a place permanently.

*Muglan bhasine* means a self imposed exile from the community, frequently because of involvement in incest, sexual relations between a high caste male and the low caste female or vice versa, and the criminal action. These are considered inexcusable violations of social regulations. Such people are sent away at times forcefully, a process commonly referred as *dando kataune* (out of sight). This means that they are restricted from the village, and even the country. Often the result is international migration. Such incidents are not widespread. Recently, this concept has been increasingly used to refer to migration of individuals to northeastern India

who run away from the village. The whereabouts of such people is not known and their prospects for return not good. Two cases illustrate this:

Forty years ago, Shiva and his friends went to visit their relatives in India. They spent a night in a merchant's house in Bihbare haat. That night the merchant was murdered. No one knows for certain who was the culprit because my informant who witnessed this incident was too young to know all these details. After the incident of that night Shiva has never been back to the village. I was told that he is settled somewhere in India and was joined by his wife later. Rumors are that occasionally, relatives from the village visit them. If asked whereabouts of him to those who knew say '*Muglan bhasio.*'

A recent example of this form of movement is illustrated in the following case:

Krishna, whose mother had died recently was the eldest of five brothers. Frustrated with his mother's death and father's arrogant nature he decided to leave the village and go somewhere else. One day, he left his *goth* without anybody's notice. He was married then. For five years his whereabouts was unknown until the family received a letter in which he indicated that he had started agro-pastoral work in Manipur (India) and would like his wife to join him there. Thus, he was asking for permission from his father for his wife to join him. The same winter he came back and went with his wife, Maya. He now is in his late forties, is settled and has sons and daughters there. According to his father (who died in April 1990) and rest of the family his possibility of return was bleak. Their short response was: '*Muglan bhasio.*'

The next form of relocation is *ghar khan jane*, or a marriage migration where the bride joins groom's family after their marriage. This is a very common form of territorial movement because marriage, up until now, is a universal phenomenon.

This type involves movement to nearby villages and as far as India. The movers are primarily young women. However, cases of girls under ten moving to their husbands house were not uncommon in the past when early marriage of girls was frequent.

After marriage, the bride customarily shifts to her new 'home' although she continues to maintain cultural ties with her natal home through visits. This is a life cycle event for females. However, it remains traumatic for young brides. This is

exemplified in the following excerpts from a local song, addressed to a daughter/sister who is in tears because she has to leave her family home to join her husband. The song expresses her feelings for her 'home,' parents and relatives. It is important to remember that these people are members of traditional societies where familial ties are very strong. The bride is going to join a household, none of whose members are familiar to her. In addition, she is young and she has to play completely a different role there: *na rou na rou cheli timi, maiti timro ghara hoina; foola jasto timro youvan, aaba timi hamro hoina*. This song tries to console the bride who is in tears and asks her to stop crying because her parental house was not meant to be her real home. She was born to be with others and now that she was 'grown up' (lovely looking) it was the household's responsibility to get her married. It was in the interest of both sides that she be a good housewife and continue the family's prestige and tradition.<sup>4</sup> Local sayings such as *ghar khayeki chhori ra desh khayeko chhoro* (a daughter who has managed a new home ably and a son who has his own experience of the outside world) are the proud expression of the families and clans involved.

The term *bhagne* originally referred to a form of movement related to social misconduct. Thus, it has a similar connotation to *Muglan bhasine*. However, the degree of social misconduct was not as serious as that involved in *Muglan bhasine* and involved such things as marriage without parental consent and/or marriage with relatives. At present *bhagne* includes moves resulting from two contexts. First, there are moves associated with minor social misconduct and second, there are those associated with teenagers (locally called *allare*) some of whom leave the village to see

the world out of curiosity. Individuals involved in both cases are primarily males and while many of them may return, some remain at 'reach' throughout their life. Many end up being security guards (*durban*) or laborers (coolies) in the towns and cities of India.

The term *madesh jharne* refers to movement specific to a direction. Basically it involves the colonization of the forested areas in the Tarai (*madesh*) to improve their economic status. The Tarai is flat and highly productive. In the past this movement was specific to men who went off to farm in the Tarai. Today the term covers multiple functions and purposes. For example, this movement can involve the purchase of agricultural implements, household essentials, visits to relatives and simply seeing the world beyond.

While all forms of *basai sarai* mobility were considered irreversible in the past, some of them are beginning to be considered reversible today. Thus, they have become similar to *ghumphir* movement. The sequential arrangement of subcategories (Fig. 4.1) illustrates this. The difference lies in their historical linkage and the movers commitment to the village. While those categorized under *basai sarai* (and which are perceived as reversible at present) were historically considered irreversible, those under *ghumphir* are always considered reversible. Thus, the latter type of mover has a full commitment to 'home.'

### ***Ghumphir***

The term *ghumphir* is conceptually complex and refers to a variety of types of movement and meanings (Table 4.1). Involved in this concept are not only the moves

with specific purposes but also moves that have the appearance of being much less purposeful and not necessarily associated with a particular 'reach.' The reason behind particular moves are sometimes obscure and other times clear. *Ghumphir* movement includes all kinds of visits made by household members for social, religious, and economic purposes intended to improve household status, strengthen interhousehold and kin relationships, and fulfill customary household obligations. Implicit in this movement is a concern to see the world beyond. This is reflected in local expressions such as *desh nakhayeko manis ra bachcha napayeko aimai pako hudaina* (a man without an experience of the outside world and woman without an experience of labor pain are always immature). In addition, none of the moves involves long-term relocation of the household and/or abandoning of inheritance rights. The maximum duration away from home is open whereas the minimum time is an absence of one night (see chapter II). When used in a limited sense, *ghumphir* means a move to see the world beyond, and to interact with it.

The forms of mobility captured by the concept of *ghumphir* can be categorized further into moves related to i) cultural/religious purposes, ii) the procurement of daily necessities, iii) socioeconomic objectives, iv) obligatory/reciprocal issues, v) *baralina jane* (walkabouts), vi) *gaunbesi garne* (transhumance) and vii) *ghara phirne* (back home). It is important to note that these subcategories are based on collective considerations, including the direction, causes, obligations and overall interpretations of the movement to the individual members of the involved households.



Table 4.1

**Meanings of Territorial Movement for Rural Nepali Households**

Type of Moves	Meanings of Moves to the Households
<i>Basai sarai</i> (relocation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-sell/leave inherited and other properties,</li> <li>-abandon ties with 'home' or place of origin,</li> <li>-the individual or the household could no longer sustain the social and/or economic pressure,</li> <li>-(severest sense) forget one's motherland, a negative connotation,</li> <li>-no longer belong to the community/cluster,</li> <li>-(recently) saw better future opportunities elsewhere.</li> </ul>
<i>Muglan bhasine</i> (relocate to unknown area)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-has most often a negative connotation meaning that the mover may not be seen in the community again,</li> <li>-the mover most probably is a violator of social regulations,</li> <li>-an individual wants to disappear from the community because of extreme frustration,</li> <li>-since the communities are getting less strict in social/religious taboos, its negative connotation is becoming less effective.</li> </ul>
<i>Ghar khan jane</i> (marriage migration)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-you are married and are joining husband's home (move to join to start a real life as an woman, husband's</li> <li>-your commitment now is more with the new 'home' than with the natal 'home,'</li> <li>-follow the traditional pathways which eventually helps you to multiply your clan, win prosperity and help reach <i>swarga</i> (heaven) for you and your ancestors.</li> <li>-a life-cycle event.</li> </ul>
<i>Bhagne</i> (escape)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-bears a meaning similar to <i>Muglan bhasine</i> but the context may be different,</li> <li>-the movement of <i>allare</i> (young and immature i.e., late teenagers and of early twenties) who always look for an opportunity to leave home with an expectation of having good times outside,</li> <li>-couple intending to marry without parental consent or, married with clan relatives.</li> </ul>

Continued ...

Table 4.1 continued ...

<i>Madesh jharne</i> (migration to Tarai)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- (before malaria eradication) not a preferred movement, almost similar to leaving home permanently,</li><li>- (after) to colonize the tarai forested areas,</li><li>- to earn wage labor after crop harvest at home is over and is specific to male,</li><li>- (at present) a common destination specific movement for agricultural business, buying cloths, agricultural implements or building materials etc.,</li><li>- a part of see the world beyond together with a visit to relatives.</li></ul>
<i>Tirtha jane/</i> <i>Tirthayatra</i> (pilgrimage)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- achieve <i>punya</i> (merit) which spiritually helps you to win prosperity for you and your family,</li><li>- pay homage to gods and goddesses,</li><li>- fulfil one of your major religious/cultural responsibilities so that your deceased would have easy access to <i>swarga</i> (heaven),</li><li>- desire for <i>mukti</i> so that one does not have to be born again in this mortal land,</li><li>- an opportunity to confess and ask for forgiveness for one's wrong doings if any, and promise to serve humanity,</li><li>- culturally required life-cycle event (movement) for every household.</li></ul>
<i>Mela herna jane</i> (move to observe a fair)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- observe a religious and/or cultural occasion</li><li>- meet and chat with friends and relatives whom you might not meet otherwise,</li><li>- (can) promote your business,</li><li>- appreciate beauty of nature/life outside home,</li><li>- take time off from household chores,</li><li>- take part in traditional functions such as <i>dhan naach</i> and strengthen one's inter-personal relations,</li><li>- (for some) achieve <i>punya</i> (merit).</li></ul>
<i>Astu selauna jane</i> (moves related to death ritual)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- fulfil a religious task by obeying customary clan regulations,</li><li>- continue the traditional/religious belief,</li><li>- pray for the deceased for eternal peace in heaven,</li><li>- help deceased to go to heaven.</li></ul>
<i>Bazar jane/</i> <i>sauda lina jane</i> (visit to bazaar)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- run out of salt, kerosine, fabric and foodstuffs,</li><li>- sell the farm produce (raw or semi-processed),</li><li>- conduct one's local business.</li></ul>

Continued ...

Table 4.1 continued ...

<i>Aspatal jane</i> (visit to the hospital)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-household member needs medical treatment,</li><li>-local resources (medical) are exhausted.</li></ul>
<i>Padna jane</i> (move for study)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-observe part of one's life-cycle event,</li><li>-enrich yourself through study,</li><li>-be able to perform life cycle rituals by reiterating the holy <i>mantra</i> (verses from <i>Vedas</i> and <i>Puranas</i>),</li><li>-learn teachings from traditional literature and the holy ways of living from a <i>guru</i>,</li><li>-learn the meaning of 'life' and the meaning of 'living.'</li></ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-to learn to read and write needed for survival in contemporary society,</li><li>-to be educated and follow the modern way of life,</li><li>-earn a degree and be eligible to take <i>jagir</i> (a job),</li><li>-be able to earn one's living independently even if one could not share the parental properties,</li><li>-see the world beyond and learn to deal with people from outside with respect,</li><li>-be able to guide and help one's junior family members,</li><li>-(most recently) prepare for one's imminent living.</li></ul>
<i>Jagir khan jane</i> (move for employment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-utilize what you have learnt and show that investment made is worth,</li><li>-earn one's living or if not, help support oneself,</li><li>-acquire social respect and keep up with household prestige,</li><li>-take time off from farming activities,</li><li>-serve the public and humanity,</li><li>-go and see the outside world and share the outside experience with the people in the community.</li></ul>
<i>Kulli bharti jane</i> (wage labor mobility)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-move for wage labor recruitment in construction of roads, quarrying and refinery at British Indian Projects,</li><li>-family strategy of collecting cash to pay taxes and to buy cloths, salt, and kerosine,</li><li>-utilization of the off-season and the physical labor which otherwise would have remained idle,</li></ul>

Continued ...

Table 4.1 continued ...

<i>Aara katna/u jane</i> (move for cutting timber)	-parallels with <i>kulli bharti jane</i> but the task is primarily cutting of timber, -earn supplemental income for the maintenance of household.
<i>Lahur jane</i> (move to be a military recruit)	-go to be a British/Indian military recruit, -demonstrate the bravery of famous Gurkhas, -earn economic and social prestige, -enjoy the world beyond, -earn outside experience, -earn long term economic security of the household.
<i>Janta jane</i> (trip to be part of wedding ceremony)	-share the happy occasion with neighbor/relatives, -accompany relatives during the wedding ritual -give moral support to neighbor/relatives to fulfil his/her obligation as parent or household head, -might be able to observe a new environment and extend your friendship networks,
<i>Maita jane</i> (move to natal home)	-continue women's ties with their natal home, -fulfil ritual/social obligation as a female descendent, -share the days of happiness and sorrow of the family with a sense of belonging together, -take time-off from the busy work as housewife at home, -let the parents know that their daughter has continued to strengthen their family prestige,
<i>Kanyarthu jane</i> (go to ask/look for a suitable bride)	-attempt to extend kinship network, -perform one's customary responsibility bestowed upon by ancestors for the prosperity of clan heredity as head of the household or parent, -open the door for heaven after death, -help kin/siblings to begin real life as <i>grihasthi</i> (householder).
<i>Rit puryauna jane</i> (go for ritual payments)	-customary move for the payments related to life-cycle events and rituals, -show that the participant (mover) is the one who can represent the clan and/or community, -comply with customary regulation of reciprocity.

Continued ...

Table 4.1 continued ...

<i>Nimto manna jane</i> (visit as an invited guest)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-strengthens inter-household relations,</li> <li>-strengthens kinship network and interactions,</li> <li>-enhances reciprocity in times of stress and happiness,</li> <li>-shares the time of joy and sorrow.</li> </ul>
<i>Birami herna jane</i> (visit the sick person)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-to show a sense of belonging and make the unwell feel comfort,</li> <li>-to fulfil an obligation as a part of a kin/neighborhood network.</li> </ul>
<i>Kadkal jane</i> (move as an escort)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-an expression of mutual help as a part of a kin and/or neighborhood network,</li> <li>-help make the journey of a newly married young couple safe,</li> <li>-help the young groom to cope with the new situation without hesitation, as the escort is usually an experienced person.</li> </ul>
<i>Jhara tirna jane</i> (mandatory wage labor move)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-show your belonging in the community in administrative terms,</li> <li>-comply with state and local government regulations.</li> </ul>
<i>Adda/adalat jane</i> (visit to office)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-abide by state regulations,</li> <li>-fulfil the state obligation mandated by state.</li> </ul>
<i>Baralina jane</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-take time off from regular farming chores,</li> <li>-walkabouts for unspecified reasons,</li> <li>-fulfill one's curiosity,</li> <li>-show one's dissatisfaction with household decisions,</li> <li>-to express one's frustration,</li> <li>-an implicit search for employment.</li> </ul>
<i>Gaunbesi garne</i> (transhumance)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-continue one's commitment to the farm land located at various elevations.</li> </ul>
<i>Ghara phirne</i> (back home)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-share the experience from the world beyond with the village,</li> <li>-fulfil one's social obligation as a member of the household and the community as a whole,</li> <li>-realize what is (he/she has got at) 'home' and what is (missed at) beyond,</li> <li>-to maintain village membership and show one's commitment.</li> </ul>

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**Cultural/Religious Movement:** Short term movement primarily motivated by cultural and religious incentives are included in this category. There are three main forms common in the village: *tirthayatra* (pilgrimage), *mela herna/bharna jane* (visit to a fair), and *astu selauna jane* (journey to cremate a piece of skull of the dead body). These forms of movement have existed from time immemorial and are part of customary life.

The most notable among the three is *tirthayatra*, (journey to religious places). In this type of movement couples and individuals visit places and shrines of religious importance within and outside Nepal. *Char dham garnu* (visits to four major Hindu shrines) is considered a highly esteemed religious activity. As defined in the historical-religious texts, there are *tirthas* (holy places) of greater importance and of lesser importance. *Char dhams* belong to the former category. A journey to these locations is meant to bring psychological satisfaction, 'purification,' and a fulfillment of moral obligation to earlier generations. In essence, it is a traditional form of movement which permits a household an opportunity to experience the world outside through religious travel. It is widespread enough that most of the elderly had either already taken this journey or wanted to do so. Expressions such as *pitri garnu jane* (journey to holy place/s in memory of the deceased) carry a similar meaning. This term is specific to *Kiranti* groups, and the territorial extent of such movement is limited compared with *tirthayatra*.

A more culture specific form of *ghumphir* is *mela herna/bharna jane*, a visit to a fair. Fairs are located at the confluence of rivers, noted hills or specific

physical/cultural features. While most regular fairs have historical and religious foundations, in observance today, the foundations for many have become muted. For some a visit to a fair (*mela herna jane*) involves earning merit (*punya*). But for most it is an opportunity to observe the world beyond and meet other people. Cultural performances, such as *dhan naach* (a special dance performed after paddy harvest and named after the crop) are held at some fairs and this is a goal for some attenders. Others simply go for business reasons. Yet others go to take time off agriculture and to appreciate nature. Expressions such as *Beni jharau, tongba naarou* (let's go to Beni, local fair, and enjoy local beer) are illustrative of this. This type of movement is important in maintaining a customary life style and it provides a critical opportunity for young adults to choose their marriage partners through participation in traditional dances.

*Astu selauna jane* is purely a religious move and is related to the death of a family member. After death the body is cremated by the nearest river. However, a piece of skull is removed during cremation. This piece of skull is taken to the river Ganges (the holy river) so that the deceased will achieve salvation. Only males perform this type of movement.

**Movements Based on Obtaining Daily (immediate) Necessities:** Movements based on obtaining daily necessities cover short distances and are brief in duration. Most common are: *bazar jane* (journey to the local haat bazar), *tel pelna jane/ghattatir jane* (journey to process food crops or mustard seed), and *aspatal jane* (visit to the hospital). These are self explanatory and are specific to purposes they serve. In

practice, these forms of mobility are territorially confined to local bazaars and district headquarters. However, the search for medical help at times does take households outside Nepal. In essence, these moves are an integral part of customary survival and vitality of the household members. Until recently, journeys to Siliguri and Darjeeling (India) were common to obtain immediate necessities. Many senior household members have vivid memories of their journeys to buy cloth and kerosine. These journeys used to take days and weeks. Today most of the consumer items and general medical help is available locally, and these moves have been reduced to the absence of one or two days, and depending upon the nature of shopping, have increasingly become localized.

*Bazar jane* is also referred as *sauda lina jane* i.e. purchase of consumer goods. While it includes purchase of basic food stuffs and fabrics, it also involves the sale of farm produce. *Aspatal jane* i.e., visit to the hospital, is basically a contemporary development. Since illness is common and more and more households are looking beyond local shamans for treating their illnesses, movement for medical treatment has become common in recent years. Perhaps the newest forms of mobility are those associated with the processing of food and oilseeds i.e., *tel pelna/ghatta jane*. This movement is tied to seasonal cycles and is common immediately after the harvest of mustard seed and before the main festival season. In general, these movements are extremely localized and of short duration.

**Socioeconomic Movement:** All movement included in this category is 'migration' in conventional western sense because such movement involves an absence of more than



six months. This movement is distinct and most member of the hamlets know who has moved out for these reasons. Two distinct types are commonly observed in the village: i) educational movement and ii) economically motivated movement.

Educational Movement. Movement for education is called *padna jane*. It was primarily confined to males in the past and began when a child was given a holy thread in a ritual of early childhood. In traditional sense, it was limited to learning religious teachings from Sanskritic texts from a *guru*. *Gurukul* used to be the common system of education where the pupil stayed at the *guru*'s residence as long as he remained a student. While the basic purpose was to learn customary teachings and ways of ideal living, it was also a life cycle event.

Customarily, *padna jane* means that a person be able to perform traditional rituals and activities. It was considered as a part of Brahmin/Chhetri's social development, primarily the acquisition of formal knowledge about what it means to be human, the meaning of life, and one's duties and rights. The transmission of moral values to new generations and the maintenance of spiritual purity remains an important dimension of this type of movement. Although learning was the explicit focus, seeing the world beyond was equally important.

Economically Motivated Movement. Mobility is not only limited to learning and transmission of values, because economic motives have become an important part of village movement over time. Most of this movement is new compared with cultural/religious ones. But at times this is more visible than others. It includes: *jagir khan jane* (movement for professional service), *kulli bharti jane* (movement for

wage labor), *ara katna/u jane* (movement for timber cutting work), and *lahure/lahur jane* (movement to join the British/Indian army).

The term *Jagir khan jane* refers to a movement associated with employment in professional service. Since white collar jobs are not available in the village, taking a *jagir* (job) usually means leaving the village. Employment outside agriculture is highly valued. It brings psychological satisfaction to the household, and it is also an opportunity to utilize acquired skills and thus, demonstrate that what was invested in education earlier is valuable. In fact, *padna jane* in the contemporary sense is a prerequisite to *jagir khan jane* because it is through education that the necessary skills needed for employment are acquired.

In practice, this form of movement is specific to men simply because men are more educated than women and Nepal is still a male-dominated society. While it is a way of earning a living beyond agriculture, it is also a way to earn social respect and dignity. Movers, even if they are out of the village, maintain their full commitment to the household. This type of movement is considered a way to obtain outside experience and to share it with the community. However, many of those away were dissatisfied with low salaries and the difficulty of survival amidst skyrocketing prices. Nonetheless, such moves are becoming more and more common given the increasing level of general education.

*Kulli bharti jane*, wage labor movement, involves earning money to pay for household commodities. It became very common during British rule in India when construction work and resource extraction activities were common in the northeastern

hills. This was restricted to men and it disappeared after the 1950s because modern machines began to replace physical labor.

*Ara katma/u jane* is a form of wage labor movement specific to the timber industry. Because it involves hard physical labor it is limited to men. Yakkhas traditionally worked in this industry to earn money. They would spend several months cutting timber and working in mills in the northeastern hills of India. While economic motives are primary, experiencing the outside world is also an important aspect of this form of movement. This is reflected in the local expression: *desh pani herine; mukh pani pherine* (go out for a change of taste and see the world beyond). Today, this type of movement is limited. One former participant had this to say: 'machines have replaced men everywhere.'

The term *lahure* means 'a foreign military recruit.' This type of movement developed as a result of British recruitment policy in the early nineteenth century. The British recruited mercenaries from a few, select ethnic groups, namely the Gurungs and Magars from the western hills and Kirantis from the eastern hills. Caste groups, for a variety of unclear reasons were deliberately excluded. Although the appropriateness of *lahure* has remained controversial, being recruited has continued to be considered a status symbol among participants and their family. A pensioner is a highly respected personality in the community.

**Obligatory and Reciprocal Moves:** The most profound movements are obligatory and reciprocal ones. While all those included in this category are obligatory, not all of them are reciprocal. Thus, there are moves based on: i) kinship and neighborhood

networks and ii) state obligation. Kin and neighborhood network movements involve the sense of belonging to and being attached to a place while state obligation is often a 'coerced' move. The former is ancient but the latter is a development of modern statehood. *Jhara tirna jane* (movement related to compulsory labor) and *adda/adalat jane* (movement to visit government offices) are state regulated obligatory moves. Reciprocal movements include: *janta jane* (to participate in a marriage ceremony), *maita jane* (a visit to natal home), *kanyarthu jane* (movement to seek a bride), *kadkal jane* (the escorting of a newly married young couple to the bride's parents' home), *rit puryauna jane* (movement for ritual payments), *nimto manna jane* (movement to be a guest) and *birami herna jane* (a visit to a sick person).

In general, these moves are crucial for the co-existence of households and to preserve congenial kinship and interhousehold relationships in the rural communities. Most importantly, these are reciprocal movements and they keep family and neighbors in close contact with each other. All of these are short-term movements of which the absence ranges between several days and weeks. They are crucial in cementing community relations (Table 4.1). Some of them are specific to men such as *janta jane*, *kanyarthu jane*, and *kadkal jane*, others such as *nimto manna jane* and *birami herna jane* are often confined to household heads or the senior member of the household. Moreover, *maita jane* is specific to married women.

There is also movement mandated by the political and administrative regulations. Such movement occurs infrequently but it requires the participation of all households. To fulfill state obligations household members have to participate in

forced labor works occasionally. The resulting movement is locally termed *jhara tirna jane*. Another form of movement termed *adda jane*, is rather indirect but is in fact part of a state obligation whereby households may have to visit government offices in order to pay revenue or to transact other official business such as keeping government records up to date, applying for a citizenship certificate, etc. While the former is primarily specific to men because of the physical labor involved, the latter is restricted mainly to the head of the household. State regulations require that households visit several government offices for one or the other reasons one or more time each year.

The term *baralina jane* refers to a form of 'walkabout' where the participants may not necessarily move with a specific purpose. This is a form of mobility comparable to 'liliu' in the Solomon Islands (see Frazer, 1985). 'Liliu' means to walkabout or wander around. There are two types of *baralina jane*. The first involves young men who are unencumbered and have no household responsibilities and commitments. Some of this movement involves defiance of family, some occurs because of personal and family incidents, and some happens through sheer curiosity. At times it is also a pastime. The second type includes movement, primarily of males, who with or without any purpose go out to see the world beyond and eventually return home.

The term *gaun besi garne* is a common expression. Literally it means moving back and forth between homesteads and fields, which generally are located at a considerable distance. Essentially it is a continuation of transhumance which is a

traditional activity in Nepal's higher hill regions. Transhumance is very common in the western hills where during the winter season households move to lower valleys (often several days walk) with their livestock, and go to higher areas in the summer to take advantage of seasonal pastures. Until recently, many households within the study area kept livestock in the pastures at higher hills, which were called *kharka*. This practice has virtually ceased, and what remains is a movement between *gaun* and *besi* (settlement and wetlands in lowlying basins). It is common for some members of households to spend one month or so at the *besi* during winter.

*Ghara phirne* is a form of *ghumphir* which refers to the return of absent family members to fulfil their obligations as a member of the village household and its kinship network. Participation in annual festivals and traditional ceremonies are opportunities to reinforce their continued commitment to the village. This is comparable to what Conway (1988: 148-149) calls 'back home' among Caribbean peoples.

In addition, there are several short-term movements among family that are so much part of daily life that they are taken for granted. This type of movement includes *chhori herna jane* (a visit to married daughter), *cheli lina/puryauna Jane* (movement to receive/send off daughter or sister), *bhiksha dina jane* (movement to participate in a life-cycle ritual of a male relative), *sida puryauna jane* (to go to express condolences), *saghauna jane* (to go to help relatives) and many others which often involve an absence of more than a day or two. These moves are flexible and are delineated by family relationships. Distance is irrelevant in these types of

movement and the duration of absence most often is defined by the closeness of the family relationship.

Territorial mobility or movement among Nepali is deeply rooted in the past. The magnitude, frequencies of occurrence, and their relative importance, however, have not remained the same over time. A careful examination of the forms of movement described in the preceding section reveals that there are definite caste and ethnic dimensions. There are three types of movement: i) movement specific to caste groups; ii) movement specific to Kiranti ethnic groups; and iii) movement common to both. This distinction is more apparent in terms of movement described by term *ghumphir* than *basai sarai*.

Movement specific to caste groups are basically the outcome of Hindu customs, which the Brahmin/Chhetri (being the major group) have been following for centuries. Movement has enabled them to obtain broader knowledge and experience of the outside world, and has helped them maintain their life style. Forms of movement explicitly associated with caste groups (primarily Brahmin/Chhetri) include *tirthayatra*, *astu selauna jane*, *kanyarthu jane*, and *kadkal jane*. These movements are specific to Brahmin/Chhetri because they are directly related to the traditional practice of high caste people and are primarily illustrative of their high regard for pilgrimage, strong belief of acquiring *punya*, and the importance given to the customary texts, their teachings and honorable behaviors.

The types of movement primarily observed by Kiranti ethnic groups are described by the terms *rit puryauna jane*, *ara katna jane*, and *lahur jane*. Movement

associated with pilgrimage is not common among Yakhas. Yakhas do, however, have a specific forms of movement associated with ritual payments called *rit puryauna jane*, which is an expression of kin and neighborhood networks. The word *rit* can loosely be translated as custom, indicating that this form of movement is indeed traditional and group specific. *Ara katna jane* is associated with the specific skill of cutting of timber, furniture making and other forms of carpentry for which they have attained considerable notoriety.

*Lahur jane* describes the movement associated with the recruitment of Yakhas into the British and Indian army. During the Anglo-Nepal war (1814-16) British commanders were highly impressed by the courage of the 'Gurkha.' The treaty of Sugauli (1816) which end the war permitted the British East India Company to freely recruit and enlist 'Gurkha' in their army. From the beginning, 'Gurkha' mercenaries were recruited from a few, select ethnic groups, namely the Gurungs and Magars from the western hills and the Kirantis (Rai, Limbu, and Yakha) from the eastern hills. 'Gurkha' recruits were restricted to Kiranti ethnic groups (in eastern Nepal) and *lahur jane* became a form of movement specific to them.

While several forms of movement are specific to caste and/or ethnicity, most are common to all groups. For example, all forms of irreversible/reversible movement included in *basai sarai* are not influenced by caste or ethnicity (Figure 4.1). Many forms of movement captured under *ghumphir* are common to all. While some forms are connected with cultural activities such as *mela herna jane*, many are associated with immediate necessities which include *bazar jane*, *aspatal jane*, and *tel*



*pelna jane*. In addition, *kulli bharti jane* was also a common activity. Finally, except for *rit puryauna jane* all obligatory and reciprocal movements, *baralina jane*, *gaun besi garne*, and *ghar phirne* are carried out irrespective of caste and ethnicity.

### Changes in Rural Mobility

The various complex forms of movement observed in the contemporary village have evolved through the centuries. Several new forms have emerged, while others have disappeared. Over time, some types of movement terms have captured new meanings whereas many have persisted and extended significantly. Contemporary village movement and expressions such as *desh khai shesh hunu* (experienced through seeing the world beyond), *kaman jane ra barsa basne din gaye* (the days of going to plantation estates in India and spending years there are over) are examples of the diverse aspects of mobility. Short term movements have intensified and they are becoming multi-dimensional and complex. Indra's case is one example:

Indra, single, aged 27, moved to help Mani's farm household from a distant village. After being with Mani for seven years as yet another son, Mani arranged his marriage with Ganga in a remote village in January 1989. When Ganga joined him after marriage, she got sick after two months. Because it was a typical case of illness, shamans were called. As suggested by shamans a promise (*bhokal garnu*) was made to visit a shrine and worship gods/goddess there. She felt better after a few days and it was time to fulfill the promise. The couple left for *tirhayatra* to Gajurmukhi (a local religious place). It began primarily with cultural/ religious concern, but in practice, the trip included a visit to his parents, a trip to district headquarter. Most importantly, it also resulted into a trip to Ganga's family home i.e *maita jane* since she met her father in a local bazar. After a week Indra returned home, Ganga came back the following week. She was accompanied by her brother who came to send her off, stayed one night and left the next morning.

The current complex status of movement has had four phases of evolution (Table 4.2). Based on national historical events these phases are: i) before 1815 A.D.; ii) 1815 A.D. to 1950 A.D.; iii) 1950 A.D. to 1980 A.D.; and iv) post 1980 A.D.

The year 1815 is significant in the history of Nepal and for rural mobility for two reasons. Firstly, in 1815 A.D. the treaty of Sugauli was signed between Nepal and the British in India. Secondly, the treaty allowed the open recruitment of 'Gurkhas' for the British (Indian) army from within the country. This led young males from ethnic groups to join the British-Indian (later separate British and Indian) army to be posted to serve all over the world.

Another important historical era begins with 1950 when the country was open to the outside world and a century of family rule by the Ranas abolished as Nepal moved toward democracy. This resulted in the openings of numerous educational institutions and the beginning of access to education by commoners. The country launched the malaria eradication program in the Tarai during the mid the 1950s and this had a profound impact on the emergence and extent of *madesh jharne*. The vast forest lands of the Tarai were converted into fertile agricultural lands and resulted in numerous frontier settlements, both government sponsored and spontaneous, during 1960s and 1970s.

At the same time, movement to other parts of Nepal and to India and beyond was still common in the village. But by the 1970s, Nepali's popular destinations in India such as Assam, Bengal, Manipur, Mizoram were already preoccupied with

Table 4.2  
Nepali Territorial Mobility Over Time

Types of Moves	Before 1815	1815-1950 <i>BASAI SARAI</i>	1950-1980	1980 -
<b>Irreversible</b>				
<i>Basai sarai</i>	W	R	R	R
<i>Muglan bhasine</i>	R r	R r	D	D
<i>Ghar khan jane</i>	W f	W f	W f	W f
<b>Irreversible/reversible</b>				
<i>Bhagne</i>	R r	R r	R r	D
<i>Madesh jharne</i>			E W	C
		<i>GHUMPHIR</i>		
<b>Reversible</b>				
<b>Cultural/religious</b>				
<i>Tirthayatra</i>	[W r]	[W r]	[W r]	[W r]
<i>Mela herna jane</i>	W o	W o	W o	W o
<i>Astu selauna jane</i>	[W i]	[W i]	[W i]	[W i]
<b>Based on immediate necessities</b>				
<i>Bazar/sauda lina jane</i>		E r	C f	W f
<i>Aspatal jane</i>			E	C i
<i>Tel pelna jane</i>				E
<b>Socioeconomic moves</b>				
<i>Padna jane</i>	[R r]	[C r]	W f	W f
<i>Jagir khan jane</i>			[R r]	W r
<i>Kulli bharti jane</i>		W f	D	
<i>Ara katna/u jane</i>		(W f)	(C)	(D)
<i>Lahur jane</i>	(E)	(C r)	(W r)	(W r)
<b>Obligatory and reciprocal moves</b>				
<i>Janta jane</i>	W f	W f	W f	W f
<i>Maita jane</i>	W f	W f	W f	W f
<i>Kanyarthu jane</i>	[W f]	[W f]	[W f]	[W r]
<i>Rit puryauna jane</i>	(W i)	(W i)	(W i)	(W i)
<i>Nimto manna jane</i>	W f	W f	W f	W f
<i>Birami herna jane</i>	W i	W i	W i	W i
<i>Kadkal jane</i>	[W i]	[W i]	[C i]	[D]
<i>Jhara tirna jane</i>	E	C	C	C
<i>Adda jane</i>			E	W o/i
<i>Baralina jane</i>	R o	W f	W f	W f
<i>Gaubesi garne</i>		W f	W f	W f

Characteristics:      Extent:      Caste/ethnicity  
W = widespread;      r = very rare      [ ] = caste specific  
R = rare      f = frequent      ( ) = ethnic specific  
C = continuing      o = occasional  
D = disappearing      i = incident specific  
E = emerging

Note: Characteristics and intensity of moves indicated without bracket or the parenthesis means common to both the groups and for that matter common to all.

political turmoil, which created tension and insecurity for foreigners. The perseverance of "sons of the soil" (Weiner, 1978) movement in these areas further limited the employment opportunities to outsiders there. This had a twofold impact. One, a movement to these areas was risky and the chances of getting employment there became less likely. Two, many Nepali who lived in India for generations were evicted and sent back to Nepal. These incidences seriously limited further moves of Nepalis to this part of India.

By 1980, most of the Tarai was occupied either by the hill in-migrants or by immigrants from India. Thus, the prospect for going to the *Madesh* (Tarai) for agricultural land was very much limited at least in eastern Nepal. This resulted in a new phase of movement (see Subedi, 1988).

#### ***Basai Sarai* Over the Years**

Throughout history, *basai sarai* has remained a distinct category of movement among Nepali. During the early settlement period and the period of political expansion (i.e. before 1815) it was wide spread and was considered a normal process as the family grew and matured. Although the splitting up of families is a part of the household life cycle, it was further reinforced by the zeal of the rulers of the time to colonize new areas. The chief and/or his agents designated areas to colonize and develop. "... *Basti basai khanu* (utilize the land by settling people)" was the common term for decrees to that effect. Households were encouraged to cut down trees and develop settlements in new areas. This system of movement remained important until the early nineteenth century. Until then the term *basai sarai* did not connote a

movement because of severe economic hardship but as an adventure trip. After land became in a short supply and households turned to permanent agriculture, they gradually developed their attachment to land and place. *Basai sarai* as a movement to frontier areas became less common. Gradually, prospective movers became skeptical about prospects elsewhere and *basai sarai* began to be perceived as a difficult decision.

Although *Muglan bhasine* has always existed, it was rather a limited phenomenon. It was probably more common during British rule in India when wage work in road construction and resource extraction was readily available. However, since the 1950s it has become less common for several reasons. First, formerly strict societal regulations have been relaxed and some social misconduct does not necessarily lead to permanent banishment to *Muglan* (India). Second, the use of Gurkha troops to quell uprisings in tribal areas in India has made it dangerous for members of Gurkha ethnic groups to go to these areas. Third, the opening up of the Tarai provided an alternate destination. As a result, instances of *Muglan bhasine* are extremely limited at present.

The type of movement called *ghar khan jane*, a life cycle event, continues and has become more common given the growth of population. As long as marriage remains universal and social values unaltered, this type of movement will be an integral part of life in the village.

The form of movement termed *bhagne*, which was a result of minor social misconduct has almost disappeared because of relaxation of social regulations.

However, as a means of fulfilling curiosity many people have gone off for a while. Over the years this type of movement has become more and more reversible. This is partly associated with limited agricultural opportunities in the Northeastern parts of India (see Subedi, forthcoming) and partly with societal change involving an easing of social regulations. Today it is mainly considered as a way to see the world beyond before one is not yet firmly tied to social and household responsibilities.

The term *Madesh jharne* does not refer to a traditional form of mobility and emerged primarily after the malaria eradication program began. In the early years of the 1900s, when malaria was rampant in the Tarai, it was considered an undesirable form of movement. But its meaning has changed over the decades and it is now considered as a more desirable form of mobility than ever before. It continues to date but the pace has slowed down. In the 1950s and 1960s this type of movement was considered irreversible with the assumption that the fertile soils and huge production compared with that of the Hills and Mountains made life easier. However, in the 1980s there were increasing instances of people returning, a turn around, because of the cash crop potential of hill areas, especially in the Ilam and Panchthar areas. Thus, moving back and forth between the Tarai and the Hills has become a common venture for many.

### ***Ghumphir* Over the Years**

Mobility patterns captured under the concept of *ghumphir* have evolved over time. While many have remained unchanged, others have proven dynamic. Table 4.2 provides an idea of how some of the forms that were rare in the past have become

more widespread or, conversely have begun to disappear and, addresses the extent of occurrence for each form of movement. In general, the spatial dimension of all forms of *ghumphir* has been unchanged, while the temporal dimension and the meanings have been modified and extended. For example, the destinations for cultural/religious forms of movement have been the same. Thus, households have been regularly involved with *tirthayatra*, *astu selauna jane*, and *mela herna jane* movement. However, the amount of time required for such moves has changed significantly. In addition, social, family and business activities have become integral parts of this type of movement.

In fact, while modern transport facilities have reduced the amount of time involved they have encouraged people to participate in this type of activity repetitively. One informant commented that when they first went to Barahakshetra (a major religious destination located within Nepal) thirty years ago, they had carried everything they needed for at least fifteen days on their back. The journey took twelve days and there were 22 individuals participating. Because of the preparation needed, most community members knew of their journey beforehand. "Today, he comments: all you need is money, you can take the journey [by bus] to the same place and be at home in three days." Furthermore, people no longer need to travel in large groups. However, while less time is being spent on *mela herna jane*, this activity has now broadened to include conducting business, shopping, and meeting friends.

The introduction and ever increasing use of consumer items has not only led to the emergence but also to the increase in the frequency of movement such as *bazar jane* in the community. Further, the establishment of clinics or hospitals at district headquarters and increasing awareness of public health, has given rise to a new type of movement termed *aspatal jane*. Moreover, with the introduction of modern technology, the processing of foodstuffs and oilseeds which used to be done at home is taking household members away. This is called *tel pelna/ghattatira jane*. Increasingly these moves have become more widespread and part of household survival strategies.

An examination of changes in mobility over time also suggests that previously caste-specific patterns are becoming incorporated more and more into Kiranti ethnic group behavior. *Padna jane*, specific to caste groups in the past, and which has become common to both groups, is one example. Over the years its domain has not only extended to include ethnic groups, but also its meaning and spatial extent has diversified. Its meaning is not limited to the social development of Brahmin/Chhetri (especially Brahmins) groups today, but has been extended to include any movement for formal education and technical training.

*Padna jane* captured new meaning after the establishment of grade schools during the first quarter of the twentieth century. *Padnu* (to study) began to be equated with attending formal educational institutions and earning degrees. Since sending household members out for higher education meant to see the world beyond and learning to deal with people at large and to guide the rest of the family, it became



an important part of household duty. While the meaning of 'study' extended from the learning of *vedic* verses to a degree oriented education, it also began to bridge the gap between caste and ethnic groups. Male domination gradually gave way to include females. While formal education became a necessary precursor for white collar jobs, taking such a job meant leaving farming and the village. Many parents quite often thought of this as a means of reducing manpower in agriculture and avoiding further fragmentation of land. This economic dimension was further reinforced by decreasing or at least stationary household resources as population grew. Moreover, since a university degree has become the main criteria for professional employment, it also has reinforced *jagir khana jane*. As a result, *jagir khana jane* became diversified and common to all, irrespective of caste, gender and distance.

The high demand of manpower in construction in northeastern India during British rule was the pull factor involved in *kulli bharti jane*. The push factor was the need for cash to pay for land and the house/building tax (*dhuri kar*). This form of mobility slowed when construction work declined although the push factors persisted. As a result, no one below fifty currently has participated in *kulli bharti* while few of the elderly who had such experience are still alive. *Ara katna jane* is a somewhat similar case although it has not completely disappeared. In 1989, at least seven percent of the households in Yakhagaun were involved in such movement. The wide use of modern machines plus the lack of proximity are considered related to the reduction of *ara katna jane*.

*Lahur jane* has always attracted young men as a means of earning prestige and money. Today, however, the prospects are gloomy given the British curtailment of their forces. One senior informant, perhaps unaware of the fact that fewer are being recruited than before, and that nowadays almost all recruits are relatives of former Gurkha officers or recruits, stated:

They [the British Recruiting Officers] used to search for the physically strong 'boys' in the past, and we did not have much difficulty then. Nowadays, they prefer educated ones and our 'boys' are not educated. Thus, our [local Yakha boys] chances of getting recruited are severely limited.

Obligatory and reciprocal moves are those through which households express their emotional attachment to kin and neighbors for the purpose of reinforcing the co-existence of households and neighborhoods. Thus, they have continued throughout the existence of society. The increasing monetization of the economy has put pressure on these moves because money is being used to replace many collective works of mutual interdependence during festivities and rituals. Thus far the impact is very small. Apparently, the households have cut short previous elaborate rituals. The duration of the stay of relatives and guests has been limited. While most of obligatory and reciprocal moves have persisted, they are not devoid of minor adjustments. Adjustments most often have resulted from overall social and economic changes in the society. *Kadkal jane*, for example, is no longer a necessity given the absence of child marriage. Nevertheless, the practice of escorting the newly married couple has not completely disappeared. *Kanyarthu jane*, characteristically widespread, has become limited to its explicit purpose. While occupations have multiplied (see chapter III), interactions have increased. These frequent interactions

and informal meetings increasingly result in discussions about possible suitable marriage partners for their relatives. As a result, the forms of movement such as *kanyarthu jane* is becoming less frequent. *Maita jane* has remained widespread, but its frequency according to many female respondents, has increased whereas the duration of absence has decreased.

The increasing complexity of state regulations over the years have not only led to the coercion of households for mandatory works, but the so called 'people's participation' in local development has further compelled them to work on development projects outside the village. As a result, *jhara tirna jane* and *adda jane* are becoming more common than in the past. In particular, *adda jane* is becoming more widespread and will continue to do so given the extension of government and the increasing political and legal sensibility among rural people.

*Baralina jane*, rare prior to a system of permanent fixed agricultural settlements and when most land was forested, has continued to be common. Neither its temporal dimension nor its male dominance has changed over time. Its common spatial reach to North and Northeast India and Nepal Tarai has remained steady. However, a recent example of a Chet Bahadur (aged 21) who reached Kashmir and is working on a family farm suggests that its spatial extent may have widened. Moreover, even though *baralina jane* may prove rewarding, the common aversion associated with it has not gone away thus far.

More recently among youths, *baralina jane* is considered a precursor to other relatively long term moves with specified objectives. There have been several

examples of young adults leaving the village for a variety of unclear reasons. Some of their movement may well have specific purposes but these are less relevant than wandering around. Moreover, if the movement turns out to serve other purposes it is referred to by the immediate purpose it serves. Otherwise it would be considered a variant of *baralina jane*. This is indicative that along with the continuation of long standing forms, new meanings have been incorporated and the forms have become popular.

Although crop diversification and multiple cropping has proliferated, all of these are still dependent on the natural cycle of the monsoon. Since the agricultural cycle has not changed, the meaning of *gaun besi garne* has remained unchanged. Population growth with its expanded job opportunities beyond agriculture, further facilitated by transport and communication links, has helped keep close contact between those who stay and those who are away from home. As a result, while the number of those absent has increased, *ghara phirne* has become more widespread than ever before.

It is evident that rural mobility has progressed and changed as the result of several historical events. While some events have initiated particular movements others have either modified, and/or given a new meaning to the existing ones. For example, while the Anglo-Nepal war (1814-16) initiated and expanded movement such as *lahur jane*, the dawn of democracy in 1950s with subsequent emphasis on formal education gave a new meaning to *padna jane*. Again, British colonization in India had an impact on the emergence and development of movement such as *kulli bharti*

and *ara katna jane*. Similarly, the malaria eradication campaign in the mid 1950s had the effect of making *Madesh jharne* a preferable and widespread form of mobility. In addition, it also changed the external flow of people within the country. More importantly, the democratic movement in many ways has helped overcome the gender and caste barriers in many forms of movement. The interplay of historical events, external influences, and internal changes in societal demographic processes (detail in chapter VII) has changed the meaning of some mobility forms (e.g. *kadkal jane*), although the practice has continued. The age characteristics of some forms of movements have also changed. For example the average age for *ghar khan jane* has increased. While many forms of movement reflect premeditation among movers, some do not. Overall, whether premeditated or not, mobility has remained an integral part of rural life.

### **The Extent of Rural Mobility**

An understanding of the typology of rural mobility in traditional societies is incomplete without an analysis of the extent to which households participate in each category of movement. For this, a comparison of caste and ethnic groups is essential given that Nepali society is characterized by the coexistence of several caste and ethnic groups. Caste and ethnic groups in this area have occupied environmentally similar areas and have pursued similar occupations. While there are group specific moves, the reflection of caste and ethnicity is more prominent in the extent (frequency) of participation in different categories of movement (Table 4.3). Moreover, caste and ethnic difference is primarily reflected in the reversible forms of

mobility. Therefore, caste and ethnic comparison is essentially limited to the forms of mobility conceived under *ghumphir*.

Table 4.3

***Ghumphir* per de jure Household Based on Caste and Ethnic Groups**

(Between Dec. 15, 1988 - June 15, 1989)

Categories of <i>Ghumphir</i>	Brahmin/Chhetri			Yakha (Kiranti)		
	Moves No.	Moves Percent	Moves per Household	Moves No.	Moves Percent	Moves per Household
Cultural/ Religious	11	2.4	0.3	3	1.9	0.1
Immediate Necessities	26	5.8	0.6	7	4.6	0.2
Socio- Economic	37	8.2	0.9	7	4.6	0.2
Obligatory/ Reciprocal	209	46.3	5.0	106	68.8	3.4
a.	167	37.0	4.0	44	28.6	1.4
b.	42	9.3	1.0	62	40.2	2.0
<i>Baralina jane</i>	21	4.7	0.5	6	3.9	0.2
<i>Ghara phirne</i>	126	27.9	3.0	16	10.4	0.5
Unspecified	21	4.7	0.5	9	5.8	0.3
<b>Total moves</b>	<b>451</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>10.7</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>4.9</b>

Note: This table includes moves of the members of the studied household only and the inward moves of the visitors are excluded. If such moves are included the total figure doubles approximately. This is the record for six months only.

a. Based on kinship and neighborhood network,

b. State and administrative obligation.

Source: Mobility Register (Dec. 15, 1988 - June 15, 1989).

The overall understanding of mobility among Brahmin/Chhetri and Yakha reflect that the patterns of moves are consistent for both the groups. The percentage distribution of participation frequency reflects this. It is consistent because for both the groups, moves within the obligatory and reciprocal categories constitute the most frequently observed moves. This is followed by recurrent moves of *ghar phirne* which includes some forms of transhumance and frequent visits back home (back and forth) of *de jure* members of households who are away from home for more than six months. The cultural/religious category proved to be the least frequent form of movement.

While the pattern of movements is consistent, the magnitude is distinctive. Caste groups outnumber ethnic groups in terms of moves per household. In fact, the overall average move per household is more than twice as large for caste groups. This applies to all forms of movement except those resulting from state and administrative obligations. The explanation for this, however lies solely in the timing of the field study, as the political unit i.e., *ward*, where the Yakha lived was required to go twice for compulsory state regulated labor work within the study period. Otherwise, the overall work requirement is divided equally among all *wards*.

### **Some Interpretations**

The differences in the frequency of movement data need to be interpreted within their historical contexts, and with due consideration given to the current social and economic indicators which differentiate caste and ethnic households. If history is any indication, Brahmin/Chhetri groups are likely to shift their location more often

than members of the ethnic groups (see chapter VI). According to their oral tradition, Brahmins have their origin in Kannauj (North India) in the seventh century. Historical records show that these groups came from north and northwest India during the eleventh and twelfth century and gradually migrated to the east (in and around present study area). Currently they are evenly distributed throughout the country. Kirantis, on the other hand, are considered by some historians to be aboriginal of the hills of Nepal. They are highly concentrated in the eastern hills, and are said to have migrated to Namsaling from Chainpur (Sankhuwasabha, Nepal) more than six generations ago. Despite some evidence of their recent dispersal to the Tarai, it is still safe to say that compared with the caste groups their dispersal has been limited. The tendency of Kiranti dwellings to cluster around the village core makes it socially more difficult for individual households to isolate from the hamlet. This is in contrast to Brahmin/Chhetri settlements, which tend to be less nucleated with individual households dispersed and close to land holdings.

The higher mobility among Brahmin/Chhetri groups is closely associated with current social and economic indicators (Table 4.4). The size of the average Brahmin/Chhetri household is large than that of the Yakha. Similarly, the sex ratio is higher for the Brahmin/Chhetri group than for the Yakha group. It is clear that in both groups males are more mobile than females.<sup>5</sup> In addition, observation suggests that the larger the size of the household the higher is the frequency of mobility (especially circulation). Except for age at marriage, all numerical figures show



Yakhas to be lower. Age at marriage, however, does not seem to have much impact on the extent of territorial mobility.<sup>6</sup>

The percentage of population born outside the village can be taken as the areal extent of the social (marriage) field. If a wider marriage field is an indication of greater mobility only 23 percent of the Yakha female population was born outside the village, while the corresponding figure was 40 percent among Brahmin/Chhetris. In fact, 7 percent of Brahmin/Chhetri women were born outside of the district, while no Yakha woman was native to another district.

Table 4.4

**Social and Economic Indicators among Caste and Ethnic Groups**

Indicators	Brahmin/Chhetri	Yakha (Kiranti)
Household size	7.0	6.1
Percentage of male population	51.9	50.0
Percentage of economically active population*	56.7	53.7
Percentage literate	82.4	57.3
Percentage with high school education**	24.3	5.9
Land per capita (in ropani)	7.9	6.9
Land per household (in ropani)	54.4	42.0
Percentage of households who are engaged in service/teaching	38.1	25.8
Mean age at marriage	17.5	21.2
Percentage born outside the cluster	28.3	14.8

Note: \* Included here are individuals aged 15 to 60.

\*\* Those who have completed 10 year school education or more.

Source: Household Census 1989,  
Economic Survey 1989.

The most important difference between the groups appears in the social indicators pertaining to education. Literacy among the Brahmin/Chhetri far exceeds that of the Yakhas (Table 4.4). This is most obvious in the case of high school completion. One-fourth of the caste groups population has completed school education, whereas only 6 percent of Yakhas have been able to do so. Closely related to education is the percentage of households that are at least partially supported by government employment and teaching. The gap between the two groups in this comparison provides a clear indication that caste groups are involved more in government service (employment) and teaching than the ethnic groups. Such involvement in general means a separation of the work place from home which in turn indicates higher mobility.

It is important to note that Brahmin/Chhetri groups have traditionally been aware of the value of education. When formal education was initiated in Nepal, the caste groups were the ones who immediately responded by sending their children to schools. As a result, they were able to capitalize on the opportunities requiring formal schooling. Many caste group children left the village for further study, after which some secured service/teaching positions in new areas or in the village itself. This ultimately resulted in the difference between caste and ethnic groups in percentage of households supported from off-farm work. It also perpetuated the position of economic and social superiority enjoyed by the Brahmin/Chhetris.

Yakhas have been slow to respond to changes in Nepali society. In almost all areas they followed the caste groups, lagging far behind in the realization of benefits.

As the adage goes *aghi aune bhariya ko roji bisauni* (the first to arrive gets the best place to rest), the caste groups proved able to adjust earlier to the changing national scene. Though ethnic groups are adapting more rapidly today, the pace is still rather slow, a situation not different from what is reported elsewhere in South Asia. Baker (1990: 58), for example, points out in an Indian context "...but at grassroots level social change is acutely slow."

As individuals stay away and interact with 'home' a chain effect develops. Those staying away for some years extend their kin and/or neighborhood network as some of them marry at *para* (beyond home). This, in turn, forces them into frequent interactions to maintain close linkages within the home network, which means an increase in movement.

Economically, the livelihood of caste and ethnic groups is based on the year round cultivation of their occupied land. The quality of arable land used by each settlement is similar as are the prevalent ecological conditions. However, most Yakhas are poor compared with Brahmin/Chhetri. Land possession is perhaps the single most important economic indicator. The amount of land per household is lower for Yakhas than for Brahmin/Chhetri. One might argue that having less land to cultivate would lessen agriculture based ties to home, resulting in more mobility. However, that does not seem to be the case. The counter argument is that for Yakhas to produce more from less land they must intensify, thereby leaving less time for movement. This has not proven satisfactory either, since Brahmin/Chhetri farmers

produce a greater variety of crops, and use more intensive multiple cropping and inter-cropping systems than do their Yakha counterparts.

The Yakha are less mobile probably because: a) they cannot afford to go away because the crops that they produce are at best barely sufficient for their daily consumption and yield no surplus for cash sale, b) they do not feel a sense of economic security to the point that they can leave their families to search for work (an act which invariably carries the risk of failure), and c) *ara katna jane* which was the avenue for many Yakhas to travel has been severely limited in recent years and has not been superseded by other options. More over, Yakhas are more fun loving and spend more time and resources in festivals and elaborative rituals. One Yakha comments:

Our way of celebrating life-cycle rituals and festivals are, unlike Brahmin/Chhetri groups, more expensive and elaborate. No celebrations are complete without items such as *jand*, *raxi* (local alcoholic beverage comparable to beer and whisky) and pork, preparation of which takes several days. Again, a visit to relatives during festivals is costly on both sides because of specific requirements.

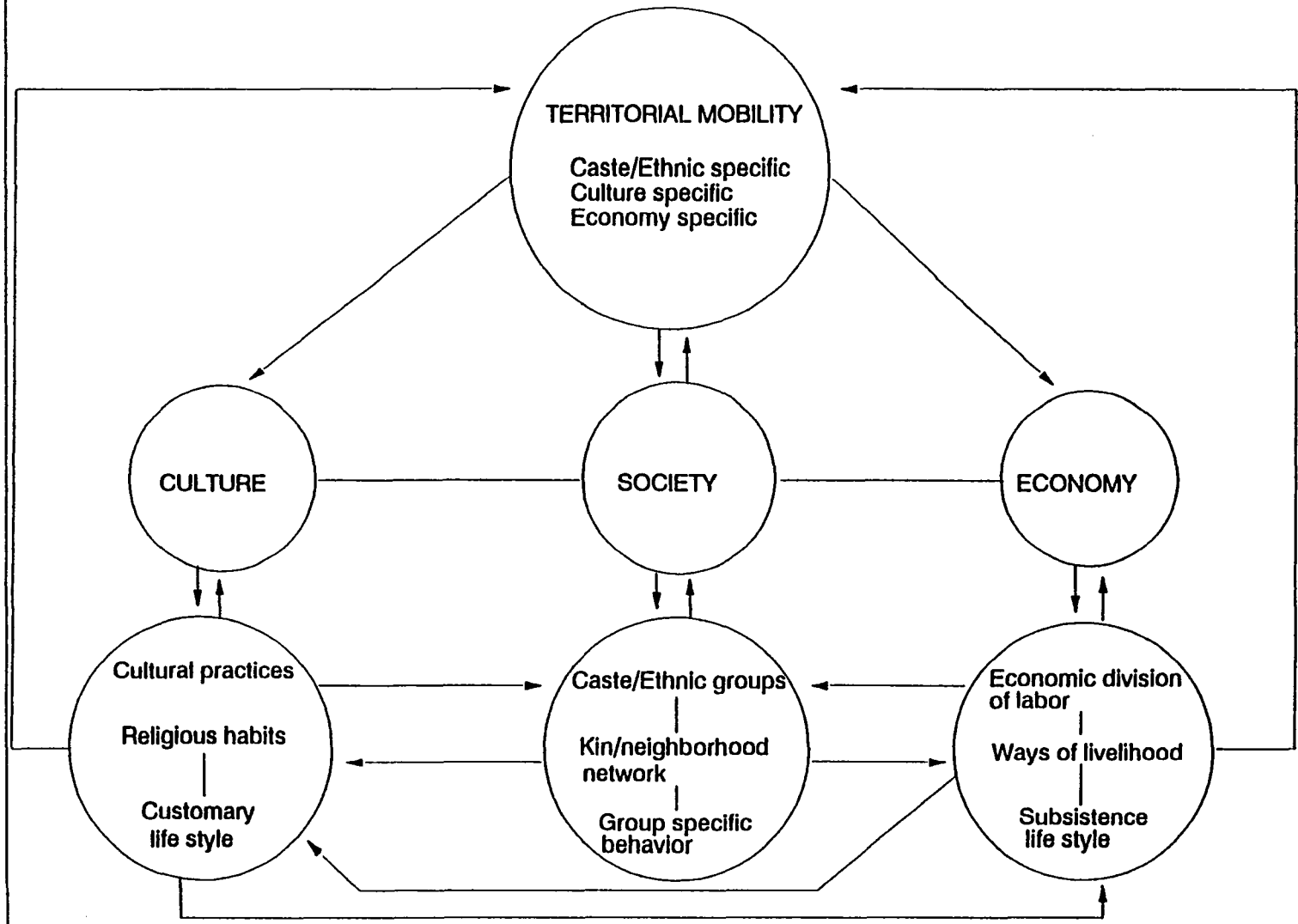
All this suggests that Yakhas are less mobile compared to Brahmin/Chhetris. However this indication of greater mobility among caste groups is not limited to the present time. Such evidence exists in the historical records and is also referred elsewhere, especially in the context of caste distributions in North India. Sopher (1986:8) notes that "caste distributions are themselves, in part, the consequence of long standing patterns of circulation."

## **The Conceptual Model**

Caste and ethnicity is a societal reality within the area and territorial mobility reflects this. The mechanism of caste/ethnicity works independently as well as in combination with other aspects of society (Figure 4.2). Caste/ethnicity as an integral part of society induces specific forms of mobility. By virtue of belonging to a certain caste/ethnic group, a household is more likely to participate in certain forms of mobility rather than others. Many kin/neighborhood networks and group obligations/behaviors can not be maintained without temporarily leaving the place of residence. There are also moves specific to economic livelihood and lifestyle without which neither the procurement of daily necessities nor the long term household economy is secured. It is also true that cultural practices, religion, and traditional lifestyle based on long standing societal values forces the household to participate more in culture specific forms of mobility.

On the other hand, the three central components of Figure 4.2, i. e., culture, society, and economy, are clearly interdependent. The interaction between them is complex (Figure 4.2): one factor influences and/or reinforces another and, in turn is reinforced by other factors individually or collectively. In the mobility context, caste and ethnicity affect the cultural and economic sphere of society giving rise to territorial mobility while, on the other hand, territorial mobility is also an outcome of a mutual interaction process. Territorial mobility, in turn reinforces the economy, enhances the socio-cultural lifestyles and helps to continue/improve societal networks. In doing so, mobility exerts continuing pressure on traditional lifestyles. The overall

Figure 4.2  
Caste and Ethnicity in Territorial Mobility



process is interactive, resulting in different forms and frequencies of movement both within the settlements and individual households.

### **Conclusion**

Territorial mobility in traditional societies is more complex. It is more flexible, ambiguous and some times more confusing than movement in developed societies. Therefore, to further our understanding of mobility, it must be conceived differently than through the use of conventional categories. The rural typologies described in this chapter are one way to do this and they imply several things. First, mobility in traditional societies may reflect parallels with standard classifications of migration and circulation. But the concepts (e.g. *basai sarai* and *ghumphir*) are not necessarily analogous. More importantly, the indigenous categorizations reflect that mobility is based on collective considerations of time, space, place attachments, meanings and individual life cycles. As a result, the spatio-temporal dimensions are more complex than is usually recognized.

Second, while traditional societies do have forms of mobility that have the appearance of premeditation, there are many forms which are undertaken with little or no planning. Thus, attempts to unravel specific motives can be difficult and misleading because moves are not always purposeful and objective. This observation is consistent with studies elsewhere, especially with island societies in To'ambaita (Frazer, 1985) and Australia (Young and Doohan, 1989). Third, mobility not only reflects economic tangibility but it also reflects long standing social and cultural realities in the society. Thus, while many of the forms of mobility are observed

irrespective of caste and ethnic affiliations, there are some which are specific to each of the groups. More importantly, the extent of participation clearly shows the societal significance of caste and ethnicity. Fourth, as commonly accepted, mobility is dominant among specific age groups. However, for some forms of mobility, gender and seniority is more important than age. Moreover, many of these moves are based on perseverance of social regulations.

Social regulations related to caste have faced severe pressure over the years and virtually all strict regulations (related to caste) are in jeopardy. Today three major processes are in constant operation. These are: i) progressive Hinduization of ethnic groups; ii) the expansion of socio-economic, political and external influences to all households and to all groups; and iii) the increasing visibility of economically motivated movement rather than socio-cultural movement (refer to Fig.1.1). This may superficially provide an impression that traditional mobility has been discontinued and that the influence of caste/ethnicity has diminished. However, the breakdown of certain features does not mean that caste identities have been lost. Changes in society, especially in inter-caste relations, over time, tend to be organizational rather than structural (Ainapur, 1986) without damaging the main frame of reference, which continues to be caste (Choudhary, 1987; also Channa, 1979)). Thus, the long standing dominance of traditions including caste and ethnicity have continued to have profound influence in the pattern of mobility. The studies on caste issues with similar circumstances have substantiated this. For example, Choudhary's study in north India (1987) found that even if on the surface caste and



ethnicity were weakening, the core was still throbbing and, time and again, it was stimulated by political, economic and social forces. The dominance of upper castes in political and economic life is a clear indication of this phenomena.

Caste and ethnic differences in migration may have been narrowing elsewhere as evident in some studies(see, Sandefur and Jeon, 1991). They are not marginal issues in these societies and to argue that caste is giving way to class (see, Sharma and Dak, 1985) will be a premature assessment. Moreover, territorial mobility based on customary life style has remained integral to caste as well as ethnic groups. It is a means of coping with changing circumstances, especially with the changing meanings of 'home' and 'reach'. The meaning of 'home' and 'reach' and the issue of mobility and immobility will be pursued in the following chapter.

#### Endnotes

1. Caste was primarily responsible for the division of labor and for the services including those rendered by different occupational castes to one another on a reciprocal basis in the past (see, Srinivas, 1962; Baker, 1990). Hierarchically, from the highest to the lowest, four divisions of caste groups are *Brahmins*, *Kshatriyas*, *Vaishyas*, and *Shudras*. *Brahmins* were responsible for the *Vedic* verses to be reiterated for performing life cycle and other ritual and ceremonial functions. *Kshatriyas* were responsible for the security of groups and the community as a whole from outside enemies. *Vaishyas* were accountable for business, trade, commerce, and all the related activities of this nature including agriculture. *Shudras*, the fourth in the hierarchy, provided services to the rest of the society. These services include tailoring, jewelry making, agricultural equipment and weapon construction, and all types of leather work. *Shudras* are also considered untouchable which means food and drinks touched by them are not acceptable to upper castes.
2. For convenience I have used the term ethnic group/s to refer to Yakhas and caste groups for Brahmin/Chhetris throughout this dissertation but some sociologists may not agree with this terminology.

3. These categories may not be exhaustive given that some forms of movement take place once in several years plus the limited time span of field work for this study. The spatial variation are expected depending upon the location of certain area, i.e., whether it is close to international border or the interior or inhabited by caste groups or ethnic groups or even whether the area belongs to the broader ecological region of Mountain, Hill or Tarai. But certainly these categories exhibit the major forms of local mobility. Although locational factors are more important in determining the extent of mobility, the meanings of endured forms of mobility remains the same irrespective of location of an area.
4. In rare cases the groom joins his wife's family. This happens when the bride's parents do not have a son and want their son-in-law to look after their possessions and inherit them after their death. The concept used for such a move is *ghar jwai basna jane* (move to live at wife's natal home). This is not seen as a preferred form of move on the part of male community. This usually happens when the groom comes from a poor family.
5. Males being more mobile than females is a common feature of South Asia, unlike some of the countries of Latin America and Southeast Asia.
6. Even if we consider the percentage of male population and the percentage born outside the hamlet as random variations because of the small size of the population studied, there are other indicators that cannot be said to be the result of random variation.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### MOBILITY, IMMOBILITY, AND THE MEANING OF PLACE

As mobile as the people of Ghumaune and Yakhagaun appear to be, they are equally tied to their place. The attachment and identity associated with 'home' and the continuing mobility of people 'beyond' demonstrates a paradox of mobility and immobility. Over the years, while people have developed close affection to their place, they have also developed linkages and socio-cultural and economic networks with outside communities through mobility. The land they occupy today is their ancestral property which has been cultivated by members of the same clan for generations. The meaning of land (in which they live) for them is not limited as a capital resource but it is also considered as a symbol of their ancestry and history.

For nine out of ten households in Ghumaune and Yakhagaun, land has been inherited. Permanent change of residence is not common but *ghumphir* is a common way of life. This ambiguity of mobility and immobility is well verbalized in metaphors used in conversations. For example, in an informal discussion at a local ritual feast on June 1989, C. Prasad (age 57), had this comment:

Okay ..., our forefathers have told us *hidau dulau, kila damla nachhodoun* (make as many moves as you can but do not leave one's pole and string i.e. home). Our generation is just continuing this. [Pointing to the surroundings] This whole area where we live today is left to us by our forefathers as a trust to utilize and pass on to the next generation. In doing so we are to keep in mind that we do not disturb the balance on 'mother earth.'

This metaphor of *kila damla* is fascinating. The basic term *kila damla* means the rope and pole used to tie cattle in their shed. During the day, cattle are released from the shed and taken for grazing and/or for water. They are taken back to the

sheds by the members of the household just before dusk. In some cases they are allowed to return by themselves. Then they are tied to the stall with *kila damla*. Human mobility is analogous to the symbolic expression of *kila damla*. It is very common for individual members of the household to leave the village, make journeys or visit places of interest and significance, but it is also common for them to return to their 'home' after the endeavor is over. Thus there is mobility and there is also rootedness.

There is mobility within the rootedness. To articulate these societies as very mobile is as illusory as to enunciate through an observation of a shed during the day when there are no cattle. But to state that these societies are always fixed to their place and "unreflectively secure and comfortable in a particular locality" (c.f. Tuan, 1980:5), locality in this case being home, is also illusory as to observe the sheds in the evening (night) and remark that cattle are always tied to their stall. Each of these articulations depict partial understanding of a rural society.

#### **Allegiance to 'Home'**

Mobility is one component of life closely linked with rootedness, the other constituent of life. This means a concern to remain closely affiliated with home community with continual participation in the process of mobility. This paradox of mobility and rootedness can only be understood in the context of villagers' allegiance to 'home' as it is expressed in their rootedness, attachment, and identity associated with locality.

## **The Rootedness and Place People**

Unlike many developed societies, individuals in agricultural societies have strong feelings about their home and are closely attached to it. Steele (1981) makes a valuable distinction between two kinds of people namely, 'place people' and 'non-place people.' Those who feel that place ties are important belong to the former category whereas those who have weaker ties with place and focus on their own activities and relationships belong to the latter category. Individuals in Ghumaune and Yakhagaun are 'place people.' They have strong ties to their home and consider home as accessory to their overall survival.

Rootedness is an indicator in which human personality merges with its milieu. The fact that individuals and households in Namsaling are the descendants of 'rooted' people is a manifestation of long standing practice of being rooted in place. More importantly, rootedness as defined by the criterion of residential stability can be measured in generations and even centuries in Ghumaune and Yakhagaun. People's rootedness is expressed in their pride of being there for generations. In many instances, the number of generations of residence is intimately linked to the influence of the household in social and community decisions. The higher the number of generations lived in a particular community, the more say people have in the local affairs.

Rootedness is not only a temporal phenomenon expressed in terms of the depth of generations lived in an area. It is also a psychological phenomenon. People can

be considered rooted even though their roots cannot be traced to centuries. Thus,

Tuan (1980:5) in the context of Americans argued:

Rootedness, however, is also a psychological state of being. To acquire a sense of extended time and genealogical depth, it may be necessary only to live in a house that one's grandfather had built. . . . to feel rooted, . . . may not need to have lived in the same locality for many generations. Rootedness as a mood or feeling is theirs if only their lives seem pleasantly humdrum and timeless . . .

Households in Namsaling display their rootedness in terms of both the temporal dimension and a psychological state of being. An examination of number of generations of residence there illustrates this. While more than 60 percent of the household have been resident for more than 6 generations, those resident there for three or less comprise only nineteen percent of the households (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1

**Number of Generations Lived in Ghumaune and Yakhagaun (combined)**

Generations Lived	Number of Households	Percentage
Six and above	44	60.3
Five	13	17.8
Four	2	2.7
Three	3	4.1
Two	6	8.2
One	5	6.9
-----		
Total Households	73	100.0

Source: Genealogical Survey, 1989/90.

There is a slight variation between Ghumaune and Yakhagaun and households with less than three generations of residence are primarily from Ghumaune.

However, these few households which belong to the first and second generations were

linked to the ones who were there for several generations through kin relations. Moreover, they all have been able to establish their intimate attachment to the place they live.

Attachment to 'home' is not limited to *de facto* residence. Those residing at 'reach' have strong feelings of attachment to 'home.' The Reach Survey (see chapter II) suggested that 79 percent of those away from Namsaling had either land and/or other possessions at home. Every four out of five had their parents and/or immediate family at home, and all had their relatives at home (or at a previous destination). All of them felt close to 'home' and their strong attachment to 'home' was further reinforced by their personal and family possessions, continuing linkages and kinship networks in the village.

Traditional societies such as these are place bound. This place bound temperament of internal logic of society has tremendous impact in making the households tied to their land even if they are temporarily away from home. These aspects need further attention and much of it have remained unexplored as yet. Not surprisingly a South Asian scholar comments: "... the meaning of place and the awareness of landscape in contemporary Indian [South Asian] life are, however, themes that remain to be explored (Sopher, 1986:8)."

Reliance on a place is not only physical but also social. While physical experience through long habitation is important, the consciousness of place is equally affected by the social experience of extended occupation. This cultural relativity of sense of place and landscape appreciation are integral elements in understanding the

mobility and immobility of people in these societies. This is not an isolated case and studies elsewhere in places with similar socio-economic conditions substantiate this. For example, studies in north India corroborate that the prevailing social order has obliged the utmost dependence on one's own group and, hence, on one's own place (see Sopher 1986:2).

Among settled agriculturists, to be attached to a place is, in essence, a necessity. Place attachment is strongest to 'home' and/or native place. People develop binding relationships with place. With long habitation every element of 'home' evokes a feeling of being at home, and this sentiment is an integral part of social life. There is, practically, no meaning of life at all without such an attachment to 'place.' One informant (Shashi, age 66) had this comment:

We, the *kisan* i.e., peasants, need something to which we can assert as 'ours.' We have been attuned to the rhythms of nature of this place for we are born here, brought up here and played in its dust. We see it as a place where our ancestors lived their life and have left it for us. By being here for our life we have developed *maya* (an emotional feeling that binds individuals together) here and consider it as if we are tied to this place. We strongly feel that we belong to this community and this community belongs to us.

This is an expression inherent to human personality in the village and is shared by all the household heads in both Ghumaune and Yakhagaun. These expressions are not specific to an area and occupation. This assertion is consistent and has been echoed in studies elsewhere (see Sime 1985). In fact, Hay (1990) cites:

. . . . qualities of human nature such as a need to 'belong' in a place (Sime, 1985:283), and to 'create' a place (Tuan, 1980:6), motivate people both to develop and to express their self-identity (p.381).



## **Place as an Identity**

Place is not only a dwelling space but also an expression of identity. Place attachment and a sense of belongingness is important and is equally expressed in their daily conversation and in an encounter with the outsider. In an encounter with an outsider it is customary for the household members to ask question such as "where is your home place? [and] who are you?" These inquiries are directly concerned with one's belongingness and identity. This is also indicative that place affiliation and the identity associated with it are of primary significance, and an individual's personal attributes such as name, position, and occupation are secondary matters.

A tendency to associate newcomers (new settler) with their previous place is a common practice. Daily conversations reflect this. For example, a first generation household in Ghumaune is identified as Bhojpure simply because he had moved there from Bhojpur (a place that lies west of Ilam). Such an identification in daily conversation is not considered uncomplimentary and was commonly used in the past. The Bhattarai clan in Ghumaune is one example. This clan is divided into two divisions, primarily based on their ancestors place of origin. In the early 1700s one of the three brothers all of whom used to live in Sindhuli (Sindhupalchok?) decided to move further east to Gamnang. Thus, the descendants of those who stayed in Sindhuli are considered Sindhule and those of Gamnang as Gamnange. The Bhattarai clan in Ghumaune consider themselves as Gamnange.

Loss of a place to live is virtually analogous to losing one's identity. This loss leads to a sense of being adrift, which in turn results in considering migrating

elsewhere. In the village context, the worst situation imaginable is to be a *sukhumbasi* (landless). Materially, this means losing one's economic base and sinking to the poorest stratum of society. Among the residents of Ghumaune and Yakhagaun *sukhumbasi* means loss of direction in life, loss of identity, and a sense of belonging to "nowhere." Despite occupational diversification and monetization of economy today, land and attachment to it is the most highly regarded element of social life.

Individual identity associated with 'home' is not only rooted on the fact of place of origin, a place where a person is brought up, and from where subsistence is obtained, but also with the fact that people have spiritual attachment to place. This spiritual attachment brings strong affection to ancestral land. Many households consider ancestral land as a place where the spirit of their clan deities (*kuldev*) live. This is reflected in the periodic gathering of clan members and worshipping of *kuldev* at a traditionally selected places. Activities such as this brings people closer to their ancestral place and whether they are at 'home' or away, it makes them proud bearers of their clan identity and history.

Place as an identity is not only taken seriously by those who stay at home but also by those at 'reach.' The 'Reach' Survey (chapter II Table 2.1) asked a question about whether people prefer to be identified as a person of 'reach' or as a person of 'home' (earlier residence). An overwhelming majority i.e, 79 percent, responded that they would identify themselves as a person of home.<sup>1</sup> An examination suggests that

the basis of this identity was primarily related to their personal and familial relationships and the attributes associated with 'home' and 'reach.'

First of all, these movers had strong familial, social and emotional attachment to 'home.' Secondly, for many, the 'reach' was simply a 'station' for a temporary stay and not necessarily a destination. For them movement to the 'reach' was neither premeditated nor specific to their ultimate destination. Thirdly, while they were attuned to the in-built social network in the village, things were not easy at 'reach.' Infiltration into the already existing network at 'reach' was very difficult. Moreover, securing mutual trust with new friends and neighbors was never easy. Thus, the adjustment process was more difficult than usually thought. This is especially true for migrant households who had enjoyed higher social status at 'home.' Fourthly, (related to the third) the kind of cordial relationship enjoyed among cohorts at 'home' was missing at 'reach.'

The 'Reach' Survey also found that not everyone preferred to be identified as a person of 'home.' At least 20 percent preferred to be identified with 'reach.' While this demonstrates divergent views of their identity, a careful analysis of the context in which movers identify themselves as a person at 'reach' suggests that even this contrary identity has much to do with attachment, linkages and networks with 'home.' It is only those who had neighbors from the same home village, and those who had a tendency to shift their residence frequently, preferred their identity be associated with 'reach.' Mr. Raj (aged 47) who has been living in Jhapa, Tarai for seventeen years and prefers to be identified as a person of 'reach' is a case in point.

He came to Jhapa 17 years ago. During this period he has shifted his residence three times. He does not have any land or possession at 'home.' He has good reasons to prefer 'reach' to home. Accordingly his reasons are: i) most of his current neighbors are extensions of neighborhood network from 'home;' ii) customary way of life and conducts are not different from 'home;' iii) the pattern of agriculture is similar and conceivably easier at reach than 'home' and iv) finally, he has been able to obtain social respect akin to what he had enjoyed at 'home.'

This illustrates that while a majority have place identity associated with 'home,' the 'reach' based place identity is not mutually exclusive and has much to do with the attributes of 'home' and its neighborhood.

### **'Ghara' and 'Para': The Rural World View**

Rural people in Ghumaune and Yakhagaun view the 'lived world' (earth) as dichotomous, consisting of 'a place they live' and 'a place other people live' or which they believe is occupied by other people. This rural world view of lived space is captured in two concepts. These two concepts are *ghara* (home) and *para* (beyond).<sup>2</sup> These concepts and their significance are very important in understanding and interpreting the process of rural mobility.

### ***Ghara* and Its Meanings to the Rural People**

It is difficult to precisely define the meaning of *ghara* and its ramification to the traditional households. The common feeling is that *ghara* is something beyond measure or definition. Some excerpts from my field note (1989/90) exemplifies the complexity and difficulty of expressing the meaning of *ghara*:

*Ghara is ghara, neither there is anything to compare nor there is a replacement for it.*

*Ghara* is everything, what it does not include: parents, family, relatives, neighbors, possession, surroundings and what not.

What to say, probably a place where we were born, brought up (nurtured), have lived, ate, played, and learnt the way we are today.

(Don't know how to say) *pita purkha le arjeko thalo* i.e., a place occupied and secure by our forefathers, in which we discern our belongingness.

Personally, *ghara* is where I was born and have everything including material possession to emotional attachment through family, relatives, neighborhood network, my past memories and most importantly where I can share all my feelings and concerns with friends.

These expressions suggest that *ghara* is neither limited to physical structure nor a physical space in which to gain a livelihood. It captures broader networks, intimate relations with the land and environment, and a place of rooted memory. Relph (1976: 39) points out similar assertions when he states home as the foundation of identity as individuals and as members of a community, the dwelling - place of being. Home is not just a house to live in and not something that can be anywhere and can be exchanged, but an irreplaceable center of significance.

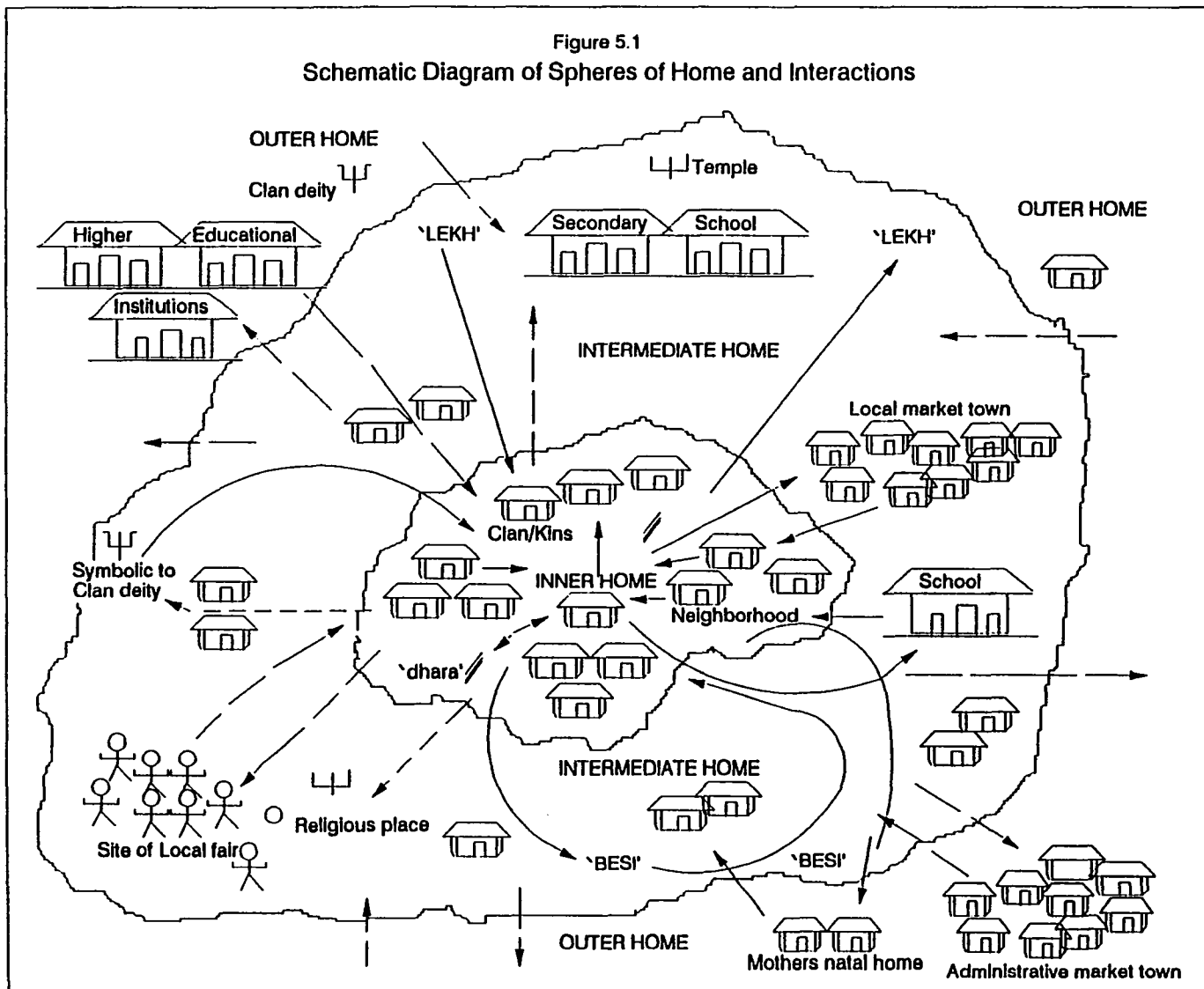
Territorially, *ghara* is the place in which households (including their surroundings and networks) live. It carries the meaning of ancestral territory. Captured by this concept is the totality of natural, cultural, emotional and aesthetic aspects of the surroundings. In common village sayings *ghara* is a 'place to live,' '*para*' is a 'place to experience.' Thus, for rural people life involves being part of global humanity and people expect to participate in both realms. In essence, the person living at home is not complete without the experience of the outside world.

*Ghara* i.e., the home territory, as a physical entity has several spheres with boundaries rather blurry at times. Implicit in village expressions are three spheres of *ghara* (Figure 5.1). These include: i) inner home, ii) intermediate home, and iii) outer home. The boundaries of each of the spheres are not necessarily clear-cut and limited to physical constructs. Rather they are a mental construct. Thus, overlapping is not uncommon. However, boundaries exist and often they are defined by prominent features such as stream, hill top, jungle and settlement hamlets.

The core of *ghara* is **inner home**. It incorporates everything within and around physical dwellings, environs and immediate neighborhood. This is characterized by most frequent contact among households. This contact includes informal inter-household interactions and transactions and borrowing of the essential consumer items such as salt and kerosine. Most often, households share the same source of drinking water i.e., *dhara*. It is within this boundary that the exchange of agricultural produce such as vegetables and fruit takes place. It is where neighbor help each other with daily domestic chores.

The **intermediate home** is the sphere which consists of areas covered in between what is commonly referred to as *lekh* [and] *besi* and *gaun* [and] *besi*. *Lekh* is the upper limit of household agricultural occupance and therefore, is located at higher elevation. This includes customary *kharkas* and *nagis* (pasture lands). In the past household members used to move to *lekh* with their domestic animals for summer, and down to *besi*, the low lying fertile land during winter. This transhumance has been reduced to a large extent especially towards *lekh*. However,

Figure 5.1  
Schematic Diagram of Spheres of Home and Interactions



the movement down to *besi* with herds during winter is still a common element of the annual agricultural cycle.

Along with the land in and around inner home, nine out of ten households have land in *besi* usually in the vicinity of local streams. Many of them have permanent structures (buildings) there, some of which are used for second homes. Thus, it is considered an integral part of home. It is not only the physical distance and agricultural utility that makes it integral part of home, but psychological considerations are also important to bound the limit of intermediate home. One informant remarks:

As I approach here [*besi*], from my journey beyond, somehow I feel as if my home is pulling me. I also feel out of external fear even though it is dark (night time). I know that I still have some distance to cover. However, the distance and ups and down become muted as soon as I step here.

This is not a unique feeling and is shared by everyone in the village. This means that *lekh* and/or *besi* is considered as part and parcel of home despite its location beyond the immediate neighborhood. The local market place, elementary school, and local *tirtha* (religious place) are some of the selected facilities and structures within this sphere. Physical interaction and contact is regular but not as frequent as in the case of inner home.

Beyond intermediate home is **outer home**. It is considered outer because it is not a sphere integral to economic security as it relates to the subsistence and crop production from land. However, this is an area in which economic and social transactions take place and at times is characterized by an extended kinship network. The common economic transactions include buying and selling of domestic animals



especially cows and oxen, and borrowing and lending of cash and/or kind. Social transactions include interactions related to schooling, kinship, and marriage. Interactions between inner home and outer home may be infrequent, nonetheless this sphere is an important part of overall social life in the village. More importantly, while this area may be physically remote and sheer economic survival is not necessarily associated with it, it is considered as significant part of their world of *ghara* for social development and extended family relations.

While the precise boundaries of 'home,' may be different for each small settlements and/or clan, there is strong sentiment for 'home' as an ancestral territory. Affection for land is not only a result of land's immediate capacity as a provider of subsistence and a dwelling place but also it is revered for its connection with ancestors. The esteem of land as ancestral property is an important character of traditional societies as has been pointed out elsewhere. For example, Murton (1987) in his study of Maori in New Zealand finds strong attachment with their territory. The homeland is treated in such a way that the place (especially the land) is compared with a mother who nurtures her child and takes care of everything. This is also parallel to what Regenwanu (1980) pointed out with reference to ni-Vanuatu:

Land is to the ni-Vanuatu what a mother is to her child. It is in relation to the land that he "situates" himself, and thanks to land that he retains his spiritual strength. Ni-Vanuatu can never divorce themselves from their land (cited in Bonnemaison, 1985: 60).

There is powerful emotional attachment to homeland among movers from Ghumaune and Yakhagaun. But economic security associated with *ghara* is also a critical factor, especially for males. This is crucial given inheritance customs. Male

descendants are entitled to a share of their father's possessions including land and belongings. The majority of those stationed elsewhere, and who were interviewed as part of 'reach' survey (see chapter II), indicated that they wanted their share of parental property. This was true even among those who thought that returning and becoming a farmer was impossible at present. The losing of their right to ancestral land was viewed as very risky. By not abandoning their share of ancestral property they keep their options open in case something unusual happens. In fact, Dhruva (aged 36) who was away from home for more than 15 years and who holds a government position today remarks:

You never know of this position and life. If I got dismissed or something unusual happens to me, where do my wife and children go? How are they going to survive? What do they eat? At least, they can go to our home and can share with whatever amount of possession our families have there.

Although, the new generation have been involved in government service, teaching, and other white collar jobs, they lack a sense of security. This is specially true given the current political changes and subsequent instability. According to a civil servant 'decisions at times are made in haste and without proper an analysis of its long term impact.

For those who are used to a stable livelihood, the insecurity inherent in any outside employment is also an important concern. A great difference is seen between being on your own and being under the control of others. To accept a job means to be in the latter category and serve at the pleasure of the employer. For many people of traditional societies it is something which they are not used to. As a result it is understandable why they do not want to abandon ties with land and with 'home.'

An important attribute of *ghara* is its in-built family network of kin and neighbors which in turn keeps the individuals and households closely attached to home. These networks date back generations. These networks are based on clans and households, and are far superior and convenient to those that can be developed elsewhere i.e, beyond 'home.' According to the experience of Puran (aged 56), while an individual is nothing but an entity and an outsider in any social network at 'reach,' at 'home' he is integral to the community as an offspring, relative, neighbor, intimate friend and so on.

Sense of 'home' among Ghumaune and Yakhagaun residents is not only related to immediate family and clans but also in other contexts such as society, culture and community neighborhood. The sense of 'home' transfers through generations. It is stronger among those who are tied to their current place through their ancestral land (the case of Ghumaune and Yakhagaun). These people have developed deeper feelings about home through long residential experience along with constant physical interaction with surroundings and seasons. This experience is so consistent to people in traditional societies that similar concerns are expressed elsewhere. For example, a recent study in New Zealand points out that people through repeated experience in a small region have become intimately familiar with their surroundings, and developed an insider feelings (Hay, 1990: 384). Such feelings may not be realized as long as they are 'home.' Nonetheless, it is certainly realized when people leave the community at least for some months, if not longer.

To own a house at a particular place and to be at 'home' are two different things. Madhav aged 41, who came to the Tarai from Namsaling works as a school teacher. He now owns a house in the Tarai, has continued his teaching position and has at least ten years of lived experience there. He had this comment:

I have my job here. I do have small plot of land where I grow vegetables and fruits. I also have cow for milk and oxen to till the land. My immediate family is here with me. I don't have high ambitions either. Thus, I may have everything to carry on subsistence life style in a material sense and for the outsider. But somehow it is hard for me to be at home and I feel that I have a 'house' but not 'home.' My real home is where I was born, brought up and still have my parents and the ancestral community.

This suggests the fact that for these agriculturists 'home' in essence is a safe haven and there is no comparison to it. 'Home' means economic security, a place of emotional attachment, a sacred place, an ancestral territory, a source of culture, a place to remember and a place to sustain for not only the current generation but the future generations.

### ***Para* and Its Meaning to the People**

Literally *para* means places beyond. In the view of local people it is the broad spectrum of land which extends beyond the daily experienced landscape and environment. The outer physical extension of *para* is limitless and any space beyond 'home' is *para*. In the rural world view, *ghara* is one world and *para* the another. While *ghara* is a place to live, *para* is the sphere to visit and experience. It is a realm in which to learn critical skills, acquire knowledge and expand the horizon of 'reach.' The accumulated knowledge and wisdom will benefit the local community in return.

The conventional wisdom of the village suggests that *para* is not a preferred place to live for long periods. But this does not demean its importance to the people. In fact, *para* is equally revered for its role in improving social and economic aspects of customary life at 'home.' It is through the experience obtained at *para* that the households keep pace with the changing world outside. Metaphors such as *kuwako bhyaguto* (frog in a pond) is a customary expression used to demean people who do not have the experience of the world outside. It means that a frog in a pond does not know whether there is world outside the pond and even if it does, what does it look like? Likewise is the person who has no experience of the world outside.

While those who make routine moves outside are highly appreciated, there is a sense of indifference to those who mostly stay 'home.' Many local sayings exemplify this. Popular among them is *gharai ghar bhani rahane gharako 'kiro' kahalauchha; banai ban bhani dhai rahane 'veer' kahalauchha*. This translates as "the one who always limits himself within the spheres of home is an 'insect' and the one who takes time off and visits places beyond regularly is considered courageous." The terms *kiro* and *veer* in the above saying are used to mean two extremes. While the former is associated with stay- at- home persons and is often belittling, the latter is associated with a constant mover and is highly honorific term.

Local expressions also illustrate gender differences on who stays 'home' and who ought to move. Men are more likely to move than women. Thus, the 'heroes' (*veer*) are essentially men. Social structure allows men to move more frequently than women. As a result, the task of seeing the world beyond is predominantly conceived

as a male task. Local sayings such as *gharaki le gharai garnu; marda le chahardai garnu* (women i.e. housewife, concentrate more on household chores while the male i.e., the able, continue to see the world beyond) is an explicit example of the customary division of labor. However, this does not necessarily mean women do not go see the world 'beyond.' Movements for religious and cultural reasons in particular, are carried out equally by both men and women.

In traditional societies, *para* is closely linked with socio-cultural life. To visit places of religious and traditional significance is an indispensable element of the social and cultural obligation of a household. The fact that these places are located beyond 'home' means movement is imperative. The importance placed on visits to holy places such as *char dham*, and the worshipping of *kuldev* (clan god), and journeys to observe traditional fairs further justify the significance of *para* for the rural households.

Apart from *para* being integral to socio-cultural life, in contemporary use it has been expanded to include economic space. Today, for many *para* is the place where they are employed and carry on their business. As a result, capital cities, regional towns, fertile plains in the Tarai, and foreign countries function as activity spaces for the rural people. Those endeavors include professional services, teaching, foreign military service, as well as agriculture and petty business. Many households regularly supplemented their income with funds remitted from *para*. However, few people in *para* receive anything of substance in return. But, nonetheless remittances reinforce and pull many villagers to *para*. The movement of people beyond the limits

of 'home' throughout human history is an illustration that people are not afraid of the places beyond and have valued the importance of *para*. This way they have not only adjusted to the changing world outside but also they have been able to improve their socio-economic status over the years.

The contemporary experience of Namsaling suggests that today *para* is not only perceived as a place to experience for a short period, but also as a possible place for a second home. Ever increasing external contact, improved educational status, and the rapid growth of population have collectively modified people's perception of *para* as places of mere cultural significance. This is further reinforced by limited local opportunities. It is likely that these transient second homes may turn into a place for permanent relocation in the future. However, access to such opportunities is not common to all and are primarily limited to the educated and the rich.

### **Does Allegiance to *Ghara* Translate into Immobility?**

Rootedness, attachment to home, and identity associated with 'home' (for both the stayers and the movers) indicates that there is a strong allegiance to 'home.' This paradox of allegiance to 'home' and frequent moves between 'home' and 'reach' is clearly expressed in local proverbs such as *ghumi phiri Rumjatar* and *chuche dhurgo uhi tungo*. Both these proverbs contain the meaning of moving to several places but ultimately coming back 'home.' Local sayings are full of similar expressions. One of them, reiterated in Yakhagaun during the focussed group discussion (1989) is *aakha chhaunjel desh khanu; daat chhaunjel haddi chapaunu*. This translates as "person can chew bones only while the person has [strong] teeth; similarly as long as

one has eyes (i.e, not aged) one ought to visit all possible places outside." The prevalent idea is that a person should move around before they get too old.

While people have moved throughout history, and local expressions suggest mobility within fixity, traditional people most often, are deemed tied to 'home.' This notion of immobility is further complicated by many ethnographic studies which indicate little or negligible mobility among traditional societies (see, Skeldon, 1990). This provides an impression that allegiance to home means little or no mobility. This view is further complicated by existing studies on migration (at the expense of mobility). These studies are primarily based on national census and survey statistics which do not record any moves with an absence of less than six months. Thus, the short-term seasonal type of movements which characterizes these societies has remained unaccounted for in these studies. Moreover, the available information is cross-sectional and is unable to capture the life-cycle activities of individuals whose mobility most often goes unrecorded.

While conceptual and methodological intricacies complicate interpretation of mobility, the impression of allegiance to 'home' and the little mobility depicted in the census based studies have clearly camouflaged the highly mobile character of these societies. The apparent allegiance to 'home' does not translate into immobility. Several logical explanations based on local sources substantiate this fact. Some of these include, indigenous typologies, local sayings, customary obligations and individual life histories.



### **Indigenous Typologies**

The previous chapter (chapter IV) established that the people of Ghumaune and Yakhagaun have indigenous typologies of mobility. The fact that these societies do have inbuilt types of mobility many of which are not analogous to western terminologies in meanings and significance, implies that these people have been mobile throughout their history. The prevalent rural world view captured by two local concepts of *ghara* and *para* (discussed earlier) further reinforces this assertion. The consideration of *para* as a place to experience and a 'reach' is a lucid manifestation of interaction of these communities between 'home' and 'reach.' This is an apt demonstration that individuals in these hamlets are not confined to 'home' and are not afraid of world outside.

### **Local Proverbs and Sayings**

The strength of mobility in these societies is demonstrated in daily conversation, local sayings, expressions, and proverbs. These proverbs and sayings not only reveal societal traits, but they also express pride and self satisfaction in people being able to participate in activities in both *ghara* and *para*. *Desh khai shesh hunu* which roughly translates as, "highly experienced through adequate moves at *para*," is a succinct example. While experience from the world outside is highly valued, a common belief that progress in life can not be achieved by being at 'home' all the time further reinforces these assertions. Adages used in regular conversations exemplify this. For example, a very celebrated maxim is *kerako chhoro ra manchheko chhoro ekai thauma sapranna*. Its literal translation is "the offsprings of a

banana plant and of human beings do not flourish if they remain limited to a single locale." The saying *gharama matrai basneko manda buddhi hunchha* i.e., "he who always stays 'home' will have low intelligence," has the same connotation. The underlying theme in both is that one has to visit and see places beyond one's own locality in order to succeed. This in turn means mobility within fixity.

### **Customary Obligations**

Inheritance of parental land and other possessions is customary. Inheritance not only brings a livelihood, but it also bequests obligations to both the ancestors and descendants. Fulfillment of many of these obligations involves movement beyond 'home.' Visiting *tirtha* and worshipping in the memory of ancestors, pilgrimage, sending siblings out for study, visiting fairs, involvement in off-farm activities to supplement household income all involve movement of members of the households and in turn are standard expressions of customary household obligations. Such obligations are so integral to society that without their observance there would be no social existence for humans.

Individual and household obligations are not limited to the family and clan but they extend to the community and to the state. Many of them are made mandatory through state regulations. Movement beyond 'home' becomes imperative to fulfill many of these obligations. History reflects this. Households, from the middle of the nineteenth century until the 1950s were under obligation to pay a multitude of levies and taxes. They had to pay taxes to the local headman during festivals and social occasions. Tenants were required to provide customary gifts and presents to their

landlords. People even had to pay the *sherma* (taxes based on the size of the homestead) and *saunefagu* (taxes based on each roof) taxes (Regmi, 1978: 70). Cash was (still is) in short supply and is highly valued. While some payments could be made in kind and labor, had to must be paid in cash. As a result, movement to earn cash to pay taxes was not uncommon in the past.

Households were also obliged to supply unpaid labor and services to the *raja* (the king), *birta* owners (lands granted by the state to the individuals on a tax free basis), *jagirdars* (government employee), and landlords. *Rakam* (a kind of forced labor) was regularly demanded to transport military and government supplies, and manage check posts. *Jhara* (forced labor) was used for the construction and repair of roads, bridges, irrigation channels, and many other public utilities. Household compliance with these obligations often involved an absence of several days.

### **Individual Life Histories**

An examination of individual life cycle events provides an excellent illustration of human mobility even though they seem tied to their 'home.' Excerpts from life history of Kusum Prasad (Ghumaune) is one illustration (Table 5.2). During his life, he made several moves both short and long term. But he always kept his commitment to the village and never severed ties with home (Figure 5.2). While he participated in several forms of moves based on his stage of life cycle, he remained committed to the village.

Figure 5.2  
 Movement in Life Cycle  
 (Example of an Elderly Male)  
 1908-1990

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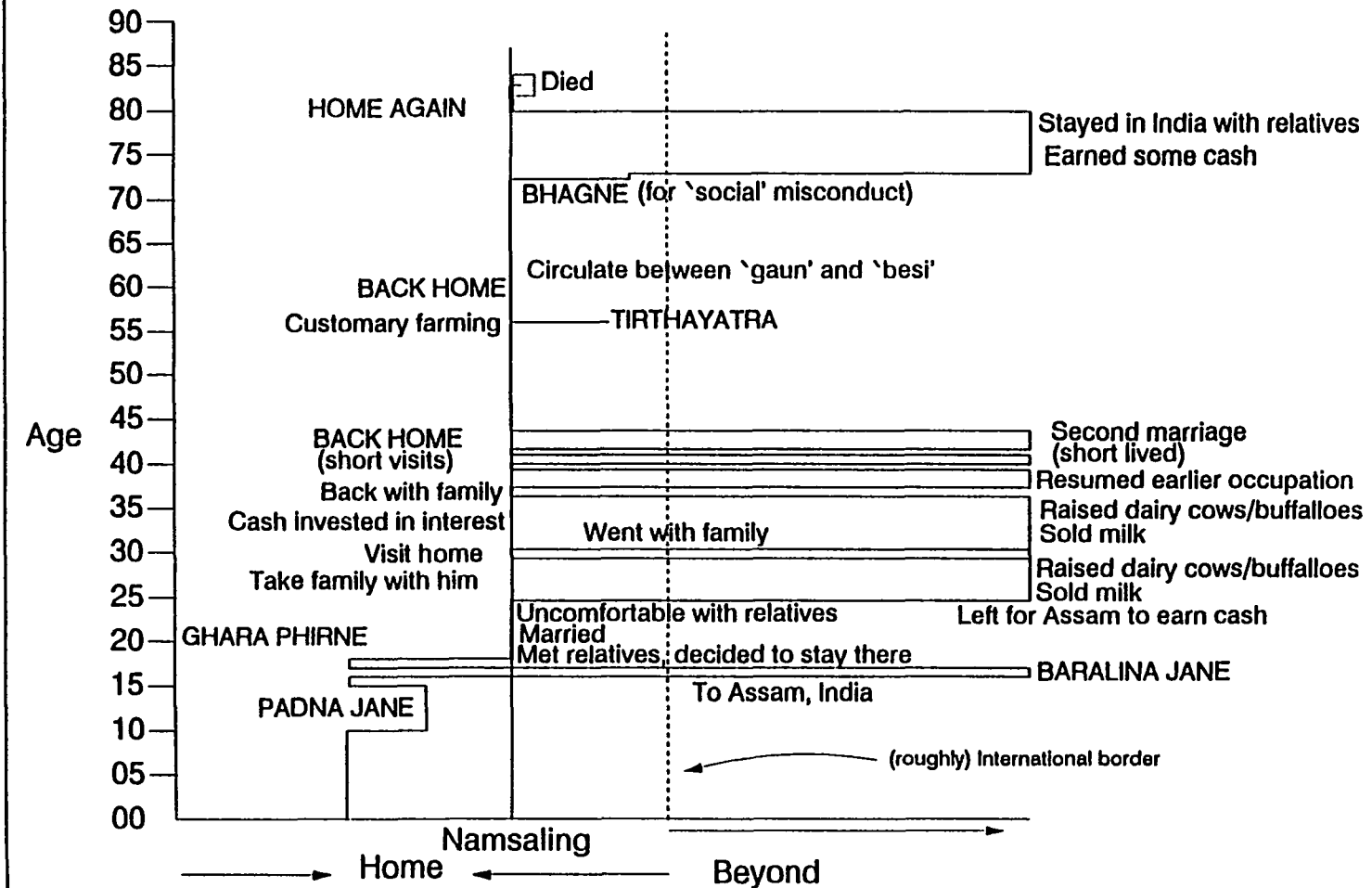


Table 5.2

**Movement between Home and Beyond in the Lifecycle  
(For Kusum Prasad)**

Born - 1908.

Age 10-15: Informal education in the neighboring village (*padna jane*).

Age 15: Curious to see outside, left for Assam, India, (*baralina jane*) stayed one year there with relatives.

Age 16: Mother died at home, came back, obliged to stay there (*ghara phirne*).

Age 17: Left home with no specific destination in mind, met with relative in a nearby village, relatives persuaded to live there, lived for six years, married.

Age 24: Left for 'somewhere' in India, reached Assam, raised cattle, sold milk and earned cash.

Age 30: Back to the village, family joined him to India again.

Age 36: Family back home (*ghara phirne*), invested money for stable income for family, left for India alone to resume previous occupation.

Age 38: Short visit to the village.

Age 39: Back to the village, bought land for family and left for India.

Age 40: Second marriage, short lived, second wife and child died within a year.

Age 41: Back to 'home' to join family.

Age 57: Visited some religious places (*tirhayatra*)

Age 71: Fire disaster in the village, him a suspect, left the village (*bhagne*), spent some weeks in Jhapa, went to India, previous clients helped him there.

Age 78: Back to 'home' again, earlier concern was over.

Age 81: Shifted his house from *gaun* to *besi*, died.

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Source: Life History Survey, 1989.

Kusum's frequent movement to several locations during his life cycle stages are clear manifestations that people in Namsaling do in fact move during their life despite their allegiance to 'home.' For Kusum, the places visited or worked in for years remained part of the world to experience and to earn, but not a place to live for longer to relocate to permanently. Thus, the moves made during his life cycle, some of which include an absence of more than six years, indicates that 'reaches' are places to learn and to earn. They have long been utilized to earn cash in order to improve household economy at home.

Therefore, mobility is an indispensable part of a successful households management and is typical of rural life. The life history of an individual as the head of the household exhibits movements to various locations with or without premeditation as a normal part of life. While people maintain their place in the village and are in fact rooted people, during their life cycle they experience life at several places. More specifically, the life cycle histories articulate three main points in this context. First, household members do participate in mobility both short and long term, during their stages of life-cycle and it is an essential element of life in the village. While some forms of movement may be optional, many are mandatory. Second, personal and familial events result in people deciding to leave 'home.' Life cycle events such as marriage, or death of a family member often result into mobility for some member of the household. Third, there are specific forms of mobility observed at specific phases of an individual life cycle. As individuals move through the phases of life they are assumed to participate in specific forms of movement notwithstanding the particular movement may or may not be for long duration. All of these collectively suggest that people in these societies are mobile even though they do not relocate permanently and that allegiance to 'home' does not translate into immobility.

### **Reach, Linkages and Family Ties**

Contrary to the commonly used term 'destination' this study uses the concept of 'reach' to identify places visited or resided in as a part of involvement in the mobility process. Traditionally visits to places beyond home were of short duration

and were also indicative of a particular stage of individual life. The widespread circulation that characterizes these societies and their identity associated with home reflects this. This makes it logical to use Buttimer's (1980) phrase, 'horizons of reach' to refer to all the places visited.

Traditional belief confirms this assertion. Accordingly, human beings are transients and they undergo 8.4 million phases in the cycle of births and rebirths. A place is meant for temporary residence in any cycle. A particular place is not a destination, it is only a station. Consequently, humans ought to be destined to eternal peace in 'heaven' and be free from cycle of births and rebirths.

'Reach' as an appropriate expression is further justified by the apparent intention of movers to return. The 'reach' survey reported that most of those surveyed expressed their intention to return to the community after completion of their mission. This was more so for people who belong to the following categories: i) those who have their land and other possessions in the village, ii) those who find it difficult to afford and adopt in the urban (new) environment; iii) those who have left their immediate family and relatives in the village, and iv) those who seem to have great affection to rural life style (a personal characteristic). For them the point of reference for meaning of each everything happening at 'reach' was 'home.'

Because 'reach' is considered as a 'station,' the Reach Survey suggests that majority of people did not intend to abandon the village. Intention as a reliable indicator of future action, and in this context, intention to return to the community, may have some limitations. It is argued that: i) intention to return to village may not

materialize; ii) there are public and private views about 'home' which at times are different (see Macpherson, 1985); and iii) people change through time. However, a careful analysis of the contemporary context of those at 'reach' suggests that their intentions are genuine and many of them might return to the village. First, if history is any indication, most people who left the village in the past have returned to the village. Second, most of those surveyed have their land and other possessions in the villages and they do not want to abandon them. Third, while many have left their wives and children, most also have their parents and relatives in the village. Fourth, family and kinship ties to the village are usually stronger than realized. Fifth, more importantly, earnings at 'reach' are not sufficient to support families. These circumstances taken together indicate that they intend returning 'home.'

Shiva (aged 33) is a case of a person stationed outside 'home.' He is one of many who expressed an intention to return to the village. He is a government employee and has been stationed at Ilam bazar for the last five years. His wife lives in Yakhagaun with her three children. The family is engaged in cultivation of their land. Shiva visits home every fortnight. Because his income is inadequate he can not afford to buy land and/or a house at 'reach.' He brings his savings 'home' and invests them in education of his children and agricultural implements. The cash is more valuable in the village than in his work place. When asked if he wants to live at 'reach' or wants to live in the village, he remarks: "Where else do you think I can live? That's my home [Yakhagaun] and I will go back when I retire or quit the job. I don't have anything here at work. "



### **The Multi-Locality of Home**

The increasing separation of activity space and 'home' has resulted in the development of a transient residence at 'reach.' While a few people do shift their residence permanently, many remain linked to 'home' and one or more 'reach.' An individual may be linked to 'home' and a 'reach' at one point but 'home' and 'reach' for the household are in reality multi-local. The extended family system allows members to be involved in more than one 'reach' at the same time. People remain part of the village, but whereas the relative distance between 'home' and 'reach' requires them to have another hearth at 'reach.' Thus, people are immersed in a multiple residential system where 'home' is where parents and/or relatives live and where 'reach' is their activity space/s. People do not want to abandon either space for the lack of similar opportunities and commitments at one or the other place. While this is a common phenomenon among short term movers, permanent movers also maintain contact with their village.

Today, the multi-locality residence has become common for many households in Ghumaune and Yakhagaun. It is a collective household strategy which allows members to participate in the activities at 'reach' without abandoning their membership in the village. Yakhagaun and Ghumaune exemplify this multi-locality system of residence, which has been noted elsewhere in the literature. In India, Srinivas (1966) in his study of social change used the term 'satellite' to refer to the urban households of a joint family in a village located at a considerable distance from

their urban residence. Epstein (1973) reports similar arrangements in Mysore villages in South India. She referred to them as 'shared family' in which members of a household are geographically dispersed but have maintained a high level of contact with home. Similarly, concepts such as 'shadow households' are also used in the literature to indicate the multilocality of the household (see Caces *et al.*, 1985).

Geertz (1963:36) also reported the widespread practice of involvement in 'multi-culture,' where the Indonesian urban immigrants were enmeshed in their original regional (village) culture as well as the metropolitan culture of the cities. In addition, Guglar's study (1969) of urban dwellers in Africa suggests that even those who seem fully committed to urban way of life had maintained close links with their rural homes, an involvement which he calls a 'dual system.' Likewise, Ryan (1985) discussed the extensive endurance of what is referred as 'bi-locality' among Toaripi who are involved in activities in Port Moresby despite the increasing socio-economic differentiation between the village and the towns of Papua New Guinea.

While the multi-locality form of residence reported in the studies of Africa, Pacific Islands and South and Southeast Asia correspond to the experience of Namsaling in general, there are some conceptual and substantive differences. These differences make multi-locality in Namsaling more relevant than otherwise. First, studies from Africa, Southeast Asia and Pacific Islands are concerned with migration i.e., long-term change of residence whereas this study of Ghumaune and Yakhagaun covers both migration and circulation. Second, the mode of mobility discussed elsewhere is rural to urban while in Namsaling it is primarily rural to rural. There is

rural to urban mobility. However, it is very recent and primarily after the 1980s. Third, Namsaling was never under western colonial rule. While colonialism was responsible for the development of major port cities and centers of resource extraction in most of South and South East Asia, Africa and Pacific Islands (of which the studies are cited) this did not happen in Nepal. Thus, the sudden rural exodus as experienced in colonized countries did not occur in Nepal, perhaps because the socio-economic differentiation between cities and villages was not as acute as in those areas. This distinction means that movers from Namsaling are not necessarily in a position to abandon the village and remain totally committed to 'reach.'

Multi-locality has become a common practice not only for those whose members circulate frequently but also for those households whose members have developed a new household at 'reach' and show very little inclination to return. However, the experience of Namsaling suggests that even successful households faced with this paradox of returning home or staying permanently at 'reach' do not abandon their possibility of return. This is especially true if the mover has had land and/or other possession at home. Khil Bahadur (aged 54; stationed in Dhulabari, Jhapa) illustrates this:

About 22 years ago he left Yakhagaun to an unknown location. His relatives in Dhulabari lured and insisted him to stay there. Ever since he is involved in farming there with his relatives. He seems to be content with his current job and location. However he has not abandoned Yakhagaun. In response to his preference to home or the current reach he insisted that for him it was not an either/or situation. He would like to be part of both locale. 'Reach' for him has an advantage of: i) better physical facilities (e.g. roads) than the village, ii) better future opportunities, iii) more productive. 'Home' on the other hand: i) is his birth place; ii) has all his clans and conventions; iii) has his native language which he has been desperately missing over the years, and iv) has

inherited land. None of them he wants to abandon. In his own words "this [multi-locality] is fine for me. I do not want to deprive my children from better opportunities here whereas I do not want to abandon my ties and possession with the village as well."

While Khil Bahadur has no complaint about multi-locality residences and is happy with it, there are examples in which households are involved in this system rather reluctantly. Personally some would prefer to stay at 'home' but because of concern about their children they were compelled to physically remain at 'reach' most of the time. Bal Kumar (aged 40), a school teacher, is typical of this:

He appreciated to live in the village where he was born and brought up. After graduation from local high school he went out for higher education for several years. He came back to the village after completion of college education. He wanted to work in the local school but then, the school could not pay even the minimum salary for his level of education. Because he had spend many years in study, from the village point of view, it was not desirable for him to join conventional agriculture. Thus, he had no choice but leave the village in search of suitable job. There was ample scope for job opportunities in Jhapa (Tarai) by then. Thus, he joined a high school in Jhapa and brought his wife and children with him later. It has been more than 12 years since he first came here. He never considered his current residence and 'home' as mutually exclusive. All along he remained in close contact with 'home.' His children grew up there at 'reach.' Regarding his place of preference he remarks: "I can't be totally cut-off from the village where all my ancestry, parental belongings, and convention is there. However, I am compelled to live here for my job and my children. Thus, I always visit the village whenever I have a vacation and/or festivals, rituals and family business. This keeps myself entangled in between."

Khil Bahadur and Bal Kumar are lucid examples of the contemporary mobility paradox in which households are involved in more than one residence. Involvement in more than one locality is real and keeping in close contact between members in respective localities is critical as well. The ties may weaken for the second generation. However, the movers from Ghumaune and Yakhagaun are involved into

multi-locality and the 'reaches' are not considered to be mutually exclusive homes but rather extensions of what is locally considered *moolghar* (principal home). This extension is kept alive through multiple forms of linkages over the years.

### **The Common Forms of Linkages**

Linkages keep 'home' and 'reach' in close contact and reinforce family and kinship ties. They are integral part of extended living and are taken seriously at both ends. As commonly observed elsewhere, the common forms of linkages found in Ghumaune and Yakhagaun are visiting, remittances, exchange of letters and gifts. Viewed from the frequency of interaction and the strength of ties, a distinction is made between two types of movers. First, there are those who are part of the village family and have maintained their membership in the village. Second, there are those who have their permanent residence at the new location but have not yet abandoned ties with the village. Apparently, the linkages and ties of the former are stronger with the village than the latter. For both groups the forms and features of linkages are similar but frequencies and commitments are vastly different.

**Visiting Home:** Visiting keeps movers and stayers close to each other and is a very common form of linkage in Namsaling. A local saying "*aayo gayo maya moha, aayena gayena ko h-o ko h-o*" is an example of its importance to keep interaction between 'home' and 'reach' alive. This loosely translates as: 'if you visit, we feel that you belong to us; if you do not visit (come), you are [considered] a stranger.'

Every one away from Namsaling for more than six months visited home for some time.<sup>3</sup> This is a reflection of powerful linkages that connect 'home' and 'reach'

and is consistent with other studies. For example, van Bergeijk (1986) in her study of domestic servants in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, found that almost all domestic servants visited home after they came to Yogyakarta. Similarly, Papanek's study (1975) of visiting patterns of migrants in low income jobs in Jakarta found that two-thirds went home at least once a year.

The visiting patterns, frequencies and specific occasions of visits are varied. The variation occurs due to distance between places, duration of absence from home, and individual characteristics such as affordability, type of professional employment e.g. civil, police, and military. It is generally believed that the higher the distance the lesser is the frequency of visit ( see, Lee, 1966). However, this study found that distance was important as long as the two places are within a walking distance of a day or less. Beyond a days walk the relationship between travel distance and visiting frequency was not clear and other considerations were equally influential. The frequency of visit for those stationed in two days distance was not conclusively different from those stationed in a three or more days journey.

Individual characteristics, duration of stay at 'reach,' household position (head or principal earning member), sibling order, and the degree of attachment to 'home' are important factors to determine the frequency of visit to 'home.' Long term movers had longer intervals between visits 'home.' Also, those serving in the army have specific conditions which must be met before they can petition for a leave to visit 'home.'

There are common elements but there are also a differences in the pattern of visiting 'home' between the two groups. The three most common intervals of visits are monthly, bi-annual, and annual (Table 5.3). The latter two are standard intervals and are dominant in both the groups. However, those with strong ties to village households also visit on a monthly and/or bi-monthly basis. A strong commitment to 'home' is found among those who visit most often. However, this does not mean that others have a lesser commitment to 'home.' Distance and types of professional employment also play an important role. For example, a *lahure* stationed either in Hongkong or Britain or Brunei by regulation can visit home once in three years. But their visit may be as long as six months and their commitment to 'home' is not less than those who visit frequently.

**Table 5.3**  
**Frequency of Visiting Home**  
(among movers from Namsaling)

Time Interval	Percentage	
	Those who are integral part of village family*	Those who have shifted residence**
Once a month	25.7	-
5 to 6 times a year	2.9	-
3 to 4 times a year	5.7	7.1
Twice a year	28.5	42.9
Once a year	22.9	42.9
Once in 3 Year	5.7	-
Seldom	-	7.1
Does not apply#	8.6	-
-----		
Total	100.0	100.0

Note: # includes tied movers

Source: \* Household Census, 1989; \*\* Reach Survey, 1990.

Visits are not random. They are often regulated and limited to critical occasions due to distance, affordability, and personal factors. There are specific occasions for which people return and their arrival is expected by those at 'home.' For example, in Namsaling the festival season of *Dashain* and *Tihar* (during Sept/October) and the agricultural season are times of visit. Data from Ghumaune and Yakhagaun suggests that three person out of five visit during festivals, whereas about one-third visit during agricultural seasons (Table 5.4). Celebrating festivals with family and/or clan members is important in village life. A visit 'home' at this time not only helps fulfil family obligations, but also establishes a social position which otherwise could not have achieved staying at 'home.' Most importantly, such visits are an opportunity to meet and share ideas with all those stationed at various 'reach.' Many important family decisions are made at these occasions.

**Table 5.4**  
**Occasions of Visits to Home among the Movers**

Occasions	Percentage of Movers
No Specific Time	17.2
During Annual Festivals Only	40.0
Mostly During Agricultural Seasons	11.4
Festivals and Agricultural Seasons	20.0
Others	11.4
Total	100.0

Note: This table is based on the performance of 35 individual movers for the last three years. The information was collected from those staying at home in the village.

Source: Field Survey, 1989.



Among the movers from Namsaling less than one-third (31.4 percent) returned home during peak agricultural seasons. This is contrary to some studies in Africa and Southeast Asia where a majority return during agricultural season (see, Adepoju, 1974; Hugo, 1975; Mantra, 1978). In Namsaling there are two reasons why so few return. First, a majority of absentees from Namsaling had their parents and/or older siblings at 'home' and there was no shortage of manpower. Thus, it was not critical for them to return during the planting and harvesting season. Those who return at this time attend schools which close during the rainy season. Whether they would come back for transplanting of rice during July or harvesting during November if there was no vacation remains to be explored further. Second, this area was never colonized and unlike colonized areas mining, construction industries and resource extraction did not develop to provide employment during agricultural off season. Existence of such opportunities would have resulted the depletion of agricultural manpower and thus necessitated the return 'home' for agricultural season.

Festival seasons and agricultural seasons are not discrete events. One out of five absent persons visited 'home' during both occasions. While visiting is generally perceived as the responsibility of the absent person and is still dominated by the one at 'reach,' it is a two way process and a visit to family at 'reach' was also reported. Most often these visits were associated with other intentions for which the local saying is, *Pashupatinath ko jatra sidrako byapar* i.e., "to kill two birds with one stone." As long as complementary interests between 'home' and 'reach' persist and

the fulfilling of obligations of reciprocity on both sides hold, interactions such as visiting remains critical to preserve the multi-locality residence.

**Remittances, Letters, and Gifts:** Multi-locality residence associated with 'home' and 'reach' is kept alive by other forms of linkages such as remittances, letters, and gifts (Table 5.5). The remittance of funds from abroad has attracted the most attention in the literature (see, Stahl and Arnold, 1986; Connell, 1981; Oberai and Singh, 1981). The irony of these studies is that they focus on amount and pattern of use at 'home' and overlook its meaning in keeping both the places and peoples together.

Table 5.5

**Linkages and the Extent of Participation**

Forms of Linkages	Movers Participation (in percentage)
A. Remittance (both directions)	11.5
B. Send Letters	5.7
C. Send Gifts	2.9
D. Combination of A and C	17.1
F. Combination of A, B, and C	45.7
G. Combination of B and C	17.1
<hr/>	
Total	100.0

Source: Household Census, 1989.

From the standpoint of village, remittances have at least four meanings. First, they are compensation for the loss of manpower due to one's absence and symbolic to their attachment to 'home.' Second, they are an opportunity for the mover to fulfill family financial obligations. In an agricultural context the fulfilling of such

responsibility is highly valued and most welcome. Third, remittances strengthen the degree of relationship with the members of the household who have remained at 'home.'. It is an indication that the absent persons care for the members at home. Fourth, and more importantly, remittances it means the keeping of options open to return home to settle should the situation arise. In other words, remitting money back home can facilitate a person's re-entry to 'home.'

With the exception of students, all movers from Namsaling do remit cash home. Such people's lower socio-economic condition and rural background make it imperative to economize and send a portion of cash earnings home (see also Oberai and Singh, 1981). The proportion however, is different for various groups of movers. The detailed discussion on amount sent and use of remittances at home is beyond the scope of this study. However, a distinction is made between *lahure* (foreign military recruit) and those employed within the country. Because *lahure* are well paid by village standards, they remit a large amount while the overall amount by others is modest.

The utilization of remittances is varied and primarily depends upon the overall economic status of the household. Various uses of remitted money were observed in Namsaling. These include: the purchase of fabrics and food stuffs, purchase of land, construction and improvement of houses, and investment in local business. While Sarita (aged 27) bought about ten *ropani* of land seven years ago with money send by her husband, Mahadev, who is a primary school teacher, Hira Bahadur bought furniture and replaced his thatched roof with corrugated zinc sheets through cash sent

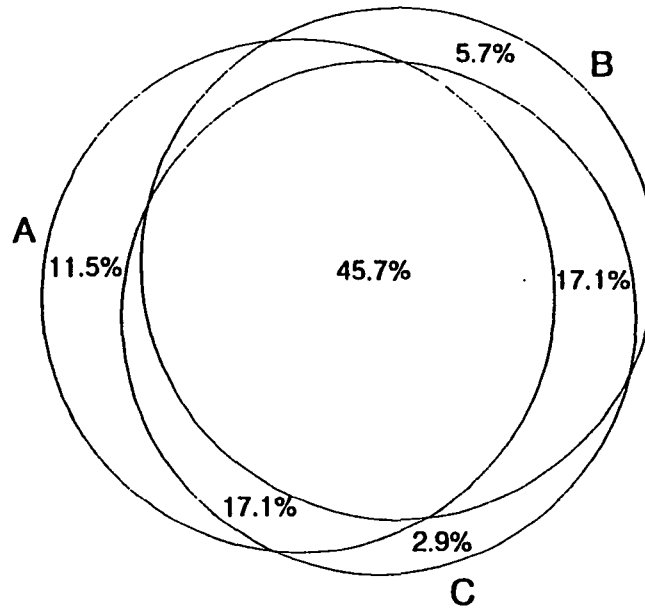
by his son who works for a private company in Dhankuta. Likewise, Jamuna invested money sent by her husband, Keshav (aged 37), a high school teacher, to establish a rice mill in the village five years ago. This shows that the use of remittance is not limited to consumption and consumer items but it has gone far beyond to investments in land, buildings and commercial ventures.

Sending letters and verbal messages are common and are powerful mode of linkage to keep families apprised of household and community events at both ends. In addition, gifts are also sent 'home' whenever people or their neighbors visit home. More than two third regularly correspond with home and four out of five send gifts (Table 5.5). To bring gifts home especially for parents and children is a customary practice although no one expects such gifts. These gifts include clothes, dresses, toys, stationery, first-aid medicine, and at times, household supplies such as sugar and soaps. It is often observed that gifts open conversations, and are other talk of the day, between neighbors and relatives during social gatherings. This is especially true among women. The following excerpt is an example.

Ghumaune, July 5, 1989, There was a *bratavandha* (the thread giving ceremony) at Kabi Raj's house. Neighbors and relatives were present on this occasion. Everyone was busy helping and/or observing the function. At one section, a group of senior housewives were making leaf-plates. Meanwhile Sita joins the group. She was wearing a new sari. "You have a nice sari, sister in law. When did you buy it?" asked Sarita. "My son sent it to me from Kathmandu last month with ..." Sita replied.

Linkages are critical to keep people at both 'home' and 'reach' in touch and each form has its own significance. However, it is the multiple not the single connections that dominate village interaction (Figure 5.3). Four out of five use

Figure 5.3  
Linkages and the Extent of Participation



A = Remittance (both directions)    B = Send Letters    C = Send Gifts

Note: All the movers from Namsaling visited home.  
Therefore the extent of visiting is excluded in this diagram.

multiple connections while only one out of five uses single connections. While letters are more frequent, gifts and remittances are mostly bi-annual or annual episodes. Those who send remittances normally send letters and gifts also. Students who receive money from home and write regularly do bring home gifts. It is important to keep in close touch with the village and single connections are not sufficient. Thus, multiple connections are essential and they are strategies to keep household members in close contact between 'home' and 'reach.' In the absence of household members from 'home' these linkages help maintain strong family and community ties. Although the economic aspect of these linkages is considerable, their importance in the social and emotional sense are vital to these communities where family ties are strong and sense of attachment to home is paramount.

### Conclusion

In Namsaling, while people are highly mobile, they are equally tied to their 'home.' The metaphoric expression, '*hidnu dulnu kila damla na chhodnu*' (discussed in the earlier section of this chapter) clearly justifies this. *Hidnu dulnu* i.e., *ghumphir* (mobility) is critical because of the relevance of '*para*' (beyond) in social and cultural development as well as for keeping households apprised of the outside world. On the other hand, *kila damla* (rootedness) is based on the historical, ritual, and cultural meaning of *ghara* i.e., 'home.' Moreover, the sense of security associated with 'home' through the inheritance of land and other possessions is further reinforced by ancestral history. This paradox has long led families into a system of multi-locality residences. Allegiance to *ghara* does not translate into immobility. Moreover, the

complementary interests between 'home' and 'reach' and their persistence has further reinforced the multi-local system among members of the households.

While the practice of informal inter-household relations, the simplicity of village living and the presence of family and relatives in the village has always been appreciated, the opportunities at 'reach,' are also critical for the overall development of 'home.' This, in turn leads to interaction between 'home' and 'reach.' Several forms of linkages such as visiting, remittance, letters, and gifts, singly or in combination keep the system alive. While these linkages are essential components of extended living they are also means of fulfilling some of people's customary obligations to the village. While the socio-economic differentiation between *ghara* and *para* may have been widening over the years, in Namsaling there has been a stable interaction and complementarity. These findings are consistent with Conway's (1988) reported comparable findings on international circulation of Caribbean people. Similar endurance of such linkages in the face of socio-economic differentiation between 'home' and 'reach' has been reported elsewhere especially among urban migrants in Port Moresby (see Ryan, 1985). Several historical events and processes over the years have reinforced the paradox of mobility, immobility and the meaning of place. Movement and its expression in historical events and genealogies will be addressed in the following chapter.

### Endnotes

1. This result is based on the 'reach' survey of fourteen household heads all of whom come from Ghumaune and Yakhagaun. All except one are distributed in the rural and urban areas within the country. The only exception is a *lahure* stationed in

Hongkong who was in the village on vacation during this field study. The rest are located in Tarai, small urban centers, and Kathmandu. Their occupations include agriculture, civil and professional services, and students.

2. The word *para* is sometimes used as *paradesh* also, while *para* is beyond and *desh* roughly means the country.
3. Man Bahadur was an exception who after leaving home in 1964 never come back neither wrote a letter for more than 25 years. For years his whereabouts was not known. But in 1988 the family received a letter from him indicating that he was in Northeast India and wants to return home. The letter also mentioned that he was ill and would like someone from the family to visit him. Subsequently, his brother visited him. Further details of his health was not available.



## CHAPTER SIX

### HISTORY, MOBILITY, AND INTERGENERATIONAL CHANGE

Human territorial mobility is as old as human history. It is also an expression of the social, economic and political situation of a society. Understanding the pattern of territorial mobility through successive generations, and its socio-economic and politico-cultural context is a complex process. While details on the current generation are imperative, particulars of previous generations and their concurrent context of movement is critical.

An attempt is made in this chapter to describe the direction and socio-economic context of movement of clan members from western Nepal into Namsaling. It is believed that by tracing the place of origin of the residents in Ghumaune and Yakhagaun back through time, the general direction of their movement along the Hills of Nepal is captured. Likewise, it is suggested that this movement set in its historical and concurrent political context reveals much about contemporary society.

In rural agricultural societies, the socio-cultural processes that have influenced mobility have endured. An examination of customary and contemporary life styles of individuals and households in these societies suggests that mobility has continued to be an essential component of life from historical times. Because socio-cultural processes are so integral to life in the village, mobility related to these processes is often overlooked and thus, taken for granted. As a result, this type of movement has become less visible. The impact of economic processes, on the contrary, is distinct and mobility related to economic concerns is clearly noticeable. Moreover, a focus

on economic concerns leads to an impression of mobility as a recent occurrence. In other words, the idea that mobility is primarily concerned with economic motives i.e, need for cash, and that the need for cash and a search for a more comfortable life is a recent phenomenon dominates the literature.

Although mobility is part of tradition, this does not mean that the processes at work have remained the same throughout history. Societies transform through time and human mobility reflects this. Documentation of territorial shifts of clan members over time helps reconstruct history and unravel internal and external processes of transformation. Likewise, details on immediate internal and external complexities of mobility can be obtained through life histories of household heads. Thus, the best way to understand the process and endurance of mobility in the traditional societies of which Ghumaune and Yakhagaun are examples, is to link longitudinal details from clan genealogies with life histories of contemporary generations.

While genealogy is the documentation of historical context, individual life-histories illustrate the lifecycle activities of individuals in their different roles as a member of the household (e.g., Racule, 1985). When information obtained from these two sources are combined they not only reveal details of rural mobility, historical and contemporary, but also the social, political, and economic context in which mobility occurs.

### **Tracing Historical Mobility through Genealogies**

One way to uncover the continuity of mobility and the various processes at work is to trace the genealogy of a clan. However, merely finding out the names and

numbers of individuals and their marriage partners in respective generations provides no clue to the mobility of the clan members and their family. What is needed are the details of the residential shifts of each generation at different stages of life.

Clan genealogies are rarely used to illuminate the patterns of mobility in history. In fact, an examination of the literature on genealogy suggests that its use is primarily limited to providing a way of fixing the position of the individual being studied in the kinship system, and explaining the origin of different types of kinship nomenclature and lineage system (see earlier study by Evans-Pritchard, 1940). Likewise, genealogies have also been used as a tool to analyze social structure (Barnes, 1967) and are crucial to decipher accurate accounts of biological relationships. The Tokelau study is a succinct example of this (Huntsman, Hooper and Ward, 1986). Genealogies are hardly used to analyze a wider range of demographic processes than the usual investigation of linguistic nature.

Several settlement studies have used clan genealogy to explain the territorial evolution of functionally segmented settlements in North India (see, Singh, 1977, Singh, 1968). However, genealogy as a source to analyze the process and pattern of mobility has had very limited attention. Lauro (1979) pioneered its use to analyze the demography of a Thai village more than a decade ago and Singhanetra-Renard's (1982) used genealogical details to analyze the pattern of Northern Thai mobility. More importantly, a study of mobility in Fiji, found that genealogical details were very helpful to assess the impact of structural elements on mobility (Chung, 1987).

## **The Collection of Genealogies**

In this study, genealogies are used to understand generational change in territorial mobility and its link with social, economic, and political changes in the society. The collecting process is tedious, time-consuming and at times, frustrating because keeping records on previous generations and their occupations is not commonly kept in Ghumaune and Yakhagaun. However, this does not mean genealogical details are not utilized in rituals and social functions. They are widely used in rituals such as *shradda* (annual ritual in tribute of deceased parents and/or immediate clans) and in the arrangements of marriage. Every attempt is made to avoid the marriage between those who may have been genetically related.<sup>1</sup> Likewise, the names of all the deceased up to six generations are essential to commemorate *shradda*.

In recent years, attempts have been made to trace and record the *Vamsawali* (genealogy) of some clan groups. This is more common among caste groups. The main concern of these attempts is to find out the names of ancestors and how many generations have passed between the current household and the farthest records available. The location of previous generations is not a crucial part of the inquiry. Similarly, all these details thus far come from oral tradition. The details neither provide pattern of mobility nor the context in which specific activities have taken place in the past.

In a society where most members are not comfortable about articulating their parent's and/or husbands name, collection of genealogies is a very challenging task.

The most common way of identifying individuals is by their birth order in conjunction with locality.<sup>2</sup> This is especially so among Kiranti ethnic groups. Also, the collection and use of genealogy in this study is limited by the knowledge of informants. While a few household heads and senior members were well informed about their clan histories, many had little or no idea about their ancestry. A few senior members also knew clan history of their relatives and neighbors. Thus, they were the primary informant in the process. A group approach was an effective way to collect genealogy. The advantage of having four or more senior people participating in the discussion is that, not only does the discussion become more lively, but particulars related to one clan in turn arouse similar details on other clans.

#### **Clan Mobility in History**

The Bhattarai clan is selected to illustrate historical mobility of Nepali along the hills. It is the dominant clan group in Ghumaune, and the details obtained for this clan are more reliable and cover longer span of time than many others. For this clan the details traced (including place of residence) were reliable up to fifteen generations which covers more than two centuries and thus is sufficient to unravel an understanding of the process of mobility and its intergenerational change, spatial as well as temporal. Beyond this, details become less clear. Eventually, it links with a legend indicating that their ancestor was the son of *Brahma*. *Brahma* is believed to be the creator of beings and is one of the trinity of Hindu gods.

Historical evidence reasonably links this clan (and many others) to a place called Kanyakubja, known as Kannauj today, in North India in the seventh century.

This statement is further supported by at least two common practices in the village. Firstly, all the Brahmins in this area consider themselves as *Kanyakubja Brahmin* which means the ancestors of Brahmins were once settled in Kanyakubja. There are stories passed on through oral tradition to this effect. Secondly, the practice of identifying incoming individuals with their place of origin is a convention in this area (see chapter III). This clearly suggests Bhattarai clan's association with Kanyakubja during historical times.

Because Kanyakubja is the place to which ancestral residence of the Bhattarai clan is linked, a brief account of the incidents that resulted into movement of caste groups towards the north and north east is relevant. Historical records suggest that Kanyakubja was a center of political, economic, and social activities during the sixth and seventh century A.D in North India.<sup>3</sup> Several dynasties ruled this area. However, Harsha Vardan of the Vardan dynasty became famous because of his social reforms in the early seventh century. He did not have an heir and when he died in 647 A.D., Arjuna, one of his ministers, ascended the throne. During that time a Chinese delegation led by Wang Huan Tse (Qing?) came there. Arjun strongly objected to the delegation. This incident enraged China. China, with the assistance of Nepal, declared war with Kannauj. Kannauj was defeated. Arjun was imprisoned and taken to China. This incident resulted in chaos and instability in Kannauj for several years. As a result, many inhabitants from *Kanyakubja* moved into the northern hills. This continued for several years as the successive dynasties of Varman, Ayudh, Pratihara and others governed this area (for details, see Sharma,

1982). The Bhattarai clan was probably one of many clan groups to leave Kannauj during the period.

The fragmentary evidence in various historical accounts after the seventh century does not always correspond. It is likely that these Brahmins settled in the Northwestern hills of India for some generations before they entered Nepal.<sup>4</sup> The entry of many caste groups from north India across the Mahakali river (western border of contemporary Nepal) to Nepal during the eleventh and twelfth century A.D. has been documented (see, Kansakar, 1974). It coincides with the Muslim invasion in North India and because of the invasion, caste groups attempted to escape. It is probable that these immigrants were the descendants of the group who left Kannauj.

The Bhattarai clan consider themselves as Brahmins from Kanyakubjya. Their tradition that they are Kanyakubjya Brahmins and the historical evidence of instability in Kannauj followed by Muslim invasions indicates that they are one of many clans who entered Nepal around eleventh and twelfth century. In all the likelihood, they must have continued their move towards the eastern hills.

This clan can accurately trace their movements back fifteen generations to Lamjung. The precise interpretation of history and complexity of the movement process is difficult. However, figure 6.1 illustrates the diffusion of the Bhattarai clan through space and time which in turn reflects the more general diffusion of caste groups along the hills of Nepal. The diffusion takes place in a sequence of time frames. In each time frame there is a complex of processes within which the movement is a reflection of one or more processes. Within each period a

combination of processes operate with one or more dominant. But the dominant process is not necessarily the same throughout history eventhough most of them have continued over time.

Figure 6.1 is unique and needs explanation. Its essence is such that several processes and contexts are collectively illustrated through time and over space. While it narrates history, the portrayal of the direction of mobility is integral to it. More importantly, the figures within each triangle are illustrative of the demography of genealogy, whereas the particulars on the margins elucidate the social, economic, and political context within which mobility has occurred. This in turn, is a reflection of the whole process as it relates to the history of a clan.

While this figure is indicative of the processes at work, it should not be taken as a comprehensive explanation of mobility for all ethnic groups in contemporary Nepal. This is primarily representative of caste groups. The history of mobility for other ethnic groups such as Kirant is brief. Likewise, the fact that the figure shows the movement of successive generations towards the east should not mean that the whole clan group or the whole settlement moved. Only one out of the total male descendants (figure within triangle) of that generation moved. The rest are likely to have lived at a place for several generations.<sup>5</sup> How long the "stayers" lived in the given 'station' is beyond the scope of this study. Nonetheless, the national decennial censuses records that many of their offspring are still living in these locations today.

Viswa Nath's (# 1, Figure 6.1) clan, who have lived in Ghumaune for several generations has been traced back fourteen generations to Lamjung. This clan has





resided at nine distinct 'stepping stations' in coming from Lamjung. While upto four generations have been spent at some 'stations' (e.g. # 8-11 and 1-4, Fig. 6.1), there are 'stations' where not even a single generation spent their full span of life (# 11, Fig. 6.1). An informed elderly person from Jhapa had this account about his forefather who lived around the seventeenth century:

Rishiswor, son of Shiveswor, was born in Nuwakot. During his early years, he came to Kathmandu for an adventure. He had an opportunity to serve the royalty of which he later became an advisor. He was awarded Sindhu (Sindhukot ?) as *birta* to acknowledge his distinguished service to the royalty. In his later years, he moved to his *birta* and settled there. All of his descendants are said to have lived there for at least three generations before Nandikeshor (# 8 Fig. 6.1) moved to Okhaldhunga in 1757 A.D.<sup>6</sup>

Nandikeshor's movement to Gamnang, Okhaldhunga, in 1757 A.D. is closely tied to the practice of the *birta* system where he was awarded Gamnang as his *birta*. The *birta* system played an important role in shaping the pattern of mobility in the past. The essence of *birta* was clearly stated in the owners document as '*rasti rasai basti basai kharu*' which loosely translates as 'to open up (utilize) the area and to develop settlements.' It is a system of land grants initiated by the rulers and was common during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. *Birta* lands were primarily new lands. The parcels were often large and their produce sufficient for several families. Thus, it was common for the owner to encourage relatives and others to settle there and develop the area for him.

Persons awarded *birta* were the foundation of the state's social and political fabric of administration. These land grants were usually awarded to priests and religious leaders (Brahmins), members of the nobility and chiefly class (Chhetri) and

soldiers. *Birta* ownership was symbolic of higher social and economic status, while for the rulers, it was a means to extend political control of territory. Thus, it became instrumental in promoting mobility.

Thus far clan movement was in an eastward direction along the middle hills. There were several reasons for this. First, the area south of the middle hills was densely forested and was malarial, then a deadly disease. Second, the area north of the middle hills was mountainous. The terrain was rough and rocky and was frequently covered with snow. Third, since the caste groups came from the west and had escaped from the Muslim invasion, they could not imagine going back there. Fourth, these caste groups had better agricultural skills than the locals and there was ample scope for agriculture towards east.

After being at Okhaldhunga for two generations, a clan member moved further east (e.g., Bhojpur) and came into contact with *Kirants* (local ethnic group). *Kirants* were considerably receptive to new comers. Thus, the adjustment was relatively easy and quick. Arable land was abundant and colonization was not difficult. Moreover, these immigrants had better agricultural skills and were enterprising compared with the locals.

By the second half of the eighteenth century Nepal was consolidated into a single nation. The nation was politically stable and there was reasonable security of life. The population grew and the central government in Kathmandu expanded its administrative and political activities. The government sent several administrative personnel to these newly consolidated areas to supervise law and order. Agents sent

from the center were normally members of the Brahmin/Chhetri group. They came with their families, relatives, friends and clients. In a short span of time, *parbatiya* (Indo-Aryan) culture emerged as dominant in the hills and the lifeways of local ethnic groups were submerged.

After 1500 A.D. upto nowadays the pattern of territorial mobility has remained consistent. People shifted their place of residence at many times (Fig. 6.1), clans colonized an area and lived there for some generations. Some clan members continued to stay there, but some adventurous member would move to look for a 'better' place elsewhere. This was a normal pattern of life in history and today's diversity of caste and ethnic composition throughout the hills of Nepal is illustrative of this. Elsewhere, studies of the evolution of Rajput clan settlement in North India suggests similar findings (see, Singh, 1977)

### **Some Interpretations**

The Bhattarai clan has continued to spread over space and through time. The number of generations the clan remained at each location varied. Individual factors had much to do with movement the shifting of stations but more important was the concurrent local ecology and socio-political circumstances. Clan historical mobility is the outcome of the interplay of various processes. Different generations responded to different sets of contextual factors. As circumstances changed over time, individuals responded to each new situation. While these processes are not mutually exclusive, at each point in time one factor emerges as dominant. Overall, the historical mobility of the Bhattari clan can be interpreted in terms of four main processes. They include: i)

mobility as a survival strategy, ii) mobility as an ecological process, iii) mobility as an outcome of national political processes and, iv) other processes and personal factors.

**Mobility as a Survival Strategy:** One interpretation of mobility is that it was a strategy to ensure the survival of the group, its lifestyle, and economic life. An examination of the mobility history of clans suggests that these concerns usually developed in progressive order.

Mobility as a survival strategy has attracted much attention in the study of aboriginals (e.g., Young and Doohan, 1989), and nomadic society (Stenning 1957). Mobility in agricultural societies is also interpreted likewise (see, Breman, 1985; Mukerji 1985). The movement of caste groups from Kannauj through the hills of Nepal reveals survival as a primary rationale. It was a survival strategy for clans and their lifestyles. History suggests that intergroup hostilities and territorial encroachment was common in the past. Many people were forced to move and find a secure place. Individual behavior was motivated primarily by a collective concern of group survival because the security of the group from external enemies was the prime concern. Consequently, historical shifts in residence were closely tied to the survival and security of groups and clans.

Mobility that occurred before the rise of the house of Gorkha (i.e. upto 1700s) can be interpreted as primarily inspired by a strategy for survival. It is during this period that the ancestors of the Bhattarai clan left Kannauj, entered western Nepal and settled there. They felt insecure when Kannauj was involved in war and subsequent

turmoil. Although the departure from Kannauj was probably concerned with survival, after entering western Nepal during the eleventh and twelfth century the main concern was with preserving a customary lifestyle. This period was characterized by the Muslim invasion in north India. Not only were the lives of Hindus (primarily Brahmins and Rajputs) threatened, but also their customary lifestyle and beliefs were endangered. For those who did not conform with the norms of the invaders, the only option was to leave. A concern for personal survival and for the survival of customary lifestyle consequently led them to the western hills of Nepal.

In the western hills, these groups came into contact with *Khas*. *Khas* language and culture were similar to that of these immigrants, but the *Khas* did not follow caste rules strictly. According to the *Manu Smriti* (the code of Hindu behavior) *Khas* rulers were to be treated as low caste because of their neglect of caste rules. The immigrants on the other hand were orthodox Brahmins and could provide priestly services and elevate the caste status of the *Khas*. The total population of the *Khas* kingdom was small, and only a fraction of the potential agricultural land was cultivated. Thus, the trade off was easy. The immigrants provided priestly services and elevated the *Khas* to the status of Chhetri, second to Brahmin but powerful. In exchange, the rulers provided land to settle and cultivate.

As external threats disappeared, the domestic survival of the clans and households became important. Economic pursuit emerged as an important consideration of life. Possession of large amount of land now translated into a secure future. Consequently, clearing more forest land and moving to colonize better land

became important. However, the spatial extent of colonization was often limited compared with the long distance movements of the past.

Mobility as a 'survival strategy' among traditional societies explains why people left their place of origin. However, it does not explain the direction of flow and characteristics of a target area. Thus, an understanding of mobility is incomplete. For this reason it is imperative to consider other processes at work.

**Ecological Processes and Mobility:** Ecological factors at both the origin and destination are important in determining the pattern and direction of mobility. Among agriculturists, the search for an environmentally similar territory is a prime concern in any decision to move. It was imperative for clans and groups to move to places where they could continue their long standing agricultural and pastoral practices. The preferred locations were areas: i) suitable for farming, ii) close to the source of water and ii) with similiar ecological conditions. The movement of caste groups (illustrated by the Bhattarai clan) towards the eastern hills confirms these considerations.

While economic models such as income differentials between two places or employment opportunities (e.g., Todaro, 1969) or even the social and kinship network ( e.g., Mitchell, 1985) are commonly referred as explanatory variables of mobility, none of these are relevant in the context of clan mobility in Namsaling during the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Earning a livelihood beyond agriculture was extremely limited and movement was aimed at localities suitable for growing staple crops and raising cattle. Thus, the movement of clans toward the eastern hills was

natural given the similar ecological conditions. In addition, the fact that the eastern hills are wetter than the western hills further reinforced their agricultural suitability.

While a personal and lifestyle survival was relevant in interpreting clan mobility from Kannauj and from north India to the western hills, subsequent movements were clearly influenced by ecological considerations. Movement was considered necessary when the resources in the immediate environment were exhausted and the system of farming was unable to cope with the increasing demand of the family. Similarly, when population grew to a level that the available land was unable to support, movement to another place was important for family members. Moreover, extensive forest lands were still available and agricultural colonization and expansion of settlement to new areas was not difficult.

**Mobility as an Outcome of National Political Processes:** Caste groups were instrumental in the successful territorial expansion of Gorkha rulers during the eighteenth and nineteenth century. They became integral to the consolidation of principalities within and beyond the Karnali and Gandaki regions. The status of several principalities collectively known as *Baisi* (Karnali Region) and *Choubisi* (Gandaki Region) were often in dispute and their integration into the Nepali kingdom often in doubt.

The movement of several caste groups was tied to the advances and retreats of the Nepali rulers in the western hills. If military invasion was a precursor, permanent occupancy was indispensable to continue subsequent control of the subjugated territory. Subsequent development of permanent settlement in the conquered



territory was a vital strategy of nation building. Implementation of this strategy led to the movement of households into newly occupied territory. The attempt to control newly occupied areas was one factor in eastward movement during the nineteenth century. Likewise, many households, frustrated by the chronic conflict between principalities, also moved towards the eastern hills. History also suggests that as early as the seventeenth century, some rulers had encouraged their citizens to advance further east and expand their territory. The Sen dynasty (*Choubisi*) of Palpa, for example, extended its control as far as the eastern Tarai (Regmi, 1979).

By the eighteenth century, Gorkha rulers had already begun their campaign of territorial expansion to Kathmandu valley and further east. Whereas this attempt to consolidate power and unify the principalities into a single state was, in fact, driven by personal political ambition, it was also needed to protect Nepali territory from British imperialism in India. Accordingly, by the 1770s, Prithvi Narayan Shah, an astute Gorkha ruler, extended his territorial control to Kathmandu valley. Kathmandu was made the capital of the kingdom of Nepal. This change of capital, and subsequent shift of political and economic power, resulted in a permanent movement of the ruling class and many caste groups to Kathmandu. The territorial expansion and consolidation of power continued and further movement towards Kathmandu and to the east became prominent. Likewise, many young adults were encouraged to join the royal army and were subsequently stationed at strategic locations in the east.

The extension of governmental control was further reinforced by the *birta* scheme, a system of land grants (discussed earlier). This system was a part of the

central government's plan of broader territorial control in the subjugated territory. The granting of *birta* proved instrumental in encouraging mobility towards new areas to the east and southeast of Kathmandu during the seventeenth and eighteenth century. The extension of the Bhattarai clan to Sindhu and Gamnang (Figure 6.1) through a scheme of land grants is a clear example of the whole process of mobility through land occupation and colonization.

While *birta* were instrumental for clan mobility during the eighteenth century, Gorkha recruitment surfaced as an important outlet for many other ethnic groups. Thousands of young men joined the British army and served all over the British Empire. Recruitment emerged prominently after the treaty of Sugauli (1816) was signed by British India and Nepal. The treaty formally allowed British recruiting officers to recruit 'Gurkhas' for the British Indian army. This type of movement for recruitment increased tremendously over the years. During both World Wars, young men were forced to join the British Indian army by Rana rulers. These are the 'Gurkhas' who are world famous for their bravery. However, for some unclear reasons, recruitment for the British army was limited to ethnic groups such as Gurung, Magar and Kirants, whereas recruitment for the Indian army was essentially open to all. There was a considerable 'demonstration effect' of returning *lahure* among young boys. The clothes, the language, and modern items such as wrist watches, and transistor radios of returning *lahure* are very tempting to youths. Overall the army recruitment involved an important section of young men.

Also, during the nineteenth century, because of continued territorial expansion, the government was in a desperate need of a labor force and cash. A sizable manpower base was essential to maintain the military strength. There was also an urgent need to extend the administrative machinery throughout the country. A considerable labor force was also essential to transport military equipment and administrative accessories to the assigned districts. Likewise, cash was necessary to buy military and other equipment from outside the country.

Warfare was costly and the government needed revenue to meet administrative costs. This endeavor to recruit man power and raise revenue was further complicated by the small size of the population. Hence, the government introduced a head tax and the *jhara* system. The *jhara* system involved work in which households were required to provide unpaid labor for government initiated programs. It was mandatory and at times extended for several days.

In the long run, the head tax and *jhara* systems hurt the unprivileged sections of society, making it difficult for them to comply with the state regulations. Ordinary households were forced to send people away for a certain part of the year to earn cash to pay the taxes. Moves such as *kulli bhari jane* and *ara katna jane* are illustrative of this (chapter IV). Many households were forced to mortgage their land to chiefs and feudal heads. Ultimately, frustrated with hardship and impoverishment, some households chose, rather unwillingly, to leave the community. Sayings such as '*aaj sangrati, bholi bhagrati; parsi dangdang rati*' (discussed in chapter IV ) are indicative of these complexities. This saying conveys the meaning that there is a limit to which

one can delay paying your debts. When the limit is over one has to submit. One way to submit is to flee. History reflects this kind of induced mobility (see Regmi, 1978).

**Other Processes Leading to Mobility:** Politics, ecology, and personal and group survival strategies were not the only processes involved in the eastward mobility of clan groups. Many subsidiary mechanisms reinforced the process. Often natural disasters, or disease epidemics resulted in the sudden death of several household members. These incidences often forced households to leave their community. The mobility history of clans and life stories of many household heads in Ghumaune and Yakhagaun suggest that natural disasters and disease epidemics were important. For example, the coming of the Pokhrel clan to Ghumaune was attributed to this factor. This type of cause is not uncommon in traditional societies. For example, in his study of Majangir mobility in Ethiopia, Stauder (1971) reported that the death of family members was important in their decision to move to other place. Similar examples are available in South Asia (see Breman, 1985, Agarwal, 1990).

Uncertainties surround exactly what stimulated the Bhattarai clan to move from Phalikot to Ilam Danda and then to Namsaling. However, given the common practice of awarding chieftainships, it is likely that one of the clan member was awarded a chieftainship and/or administrative position in Phalikot and later in Ilam. This is based on the clan's contemporary social status in the village as well as the political and administrative history of eastern Nepal. First, they are still regarded as *mukhiya* (loosely a local chief) today, a position designated by the rulers in the past. Second,

up until recently, they appropriated land and collected revenue from several settlements and clients (locally known as *raiti*) in and around Namsaling. At least one elderly person had a vivid memory of a court case between the clan and a local Magar chief about the conflicting claim of control over some *raiti* (This was later settled out of court). Third, after their arrival in Ilam, the clan has always maintained a close contact with administrative personnel sent from Kathmandu. This indicates that the clan's arrival and dominance in Ilam Danda was related to their link with the central administration in Kathmandu.

The coming of the Bhattarai clan to Namsaling also was linked to their association with regional rulers. According to Viswa Nath, his great grandfather came from Ilam Danda to settle in Ghumaune. He had *raiti* for which he looked after the land appropriation and collection of revenue. He also owned land in and around Ghumaune.

In addition to the Bhattarai clan and the general explanation of mobility thus far, a few clans also related their arrival to personal ambitions and curiosity. Ram Hari (47) had this to say about the coming of the Adhikari clan in Ghumaune:

Seven generations ago, Balananda, a young person, happened to be in Ghumaune, from (Gh)Hunga in Kaski Pokhara (?). It is said that he had come thus far as an adventure trip to see the world beyond (*desh khan hideka*). No one knew where he was headed. In Ghumaune, he stayed with the Bhattarai family as a *gothalo* (literally, one who looks after domestic cattle). Bhattarai was a dominant clan in Ghumaune then. Later, Balananda married a Bhattarai girl. He lived there for several years. After a while he decided to visit his family back home. Unfortunately he died there. After his untimely death his wife decided to live closer to her natal place. They had two sons named Brahma Lal and Ganga Dhar [The genealogy of Adhikari clan there clearly links them with these two names].

This indicates that mobility in the past was the result of combination of survival, ecological, political, as well as personal factors and circumstances beyond personal control. While the general circumstances may appear comparable over time and across clans, the specifics are not necessarily the same. Moreover, the dominance of one factor over the other depends upon the period under consideration and concurrent spatio-ecological processes at work.

### **Contemporary Mobility Traced through Life Stories**

Discussion in this chapter thus far, has focused on a history of clan mobility set within a national context. This establishes the dynamics of mobility in the past. However, understanding the complexity of mobility is incomplete without outlining the context within which contemporary mobility is anchored. For this, the life stories of the contemporary generation become an indispensable instrument. Excerpts from the life histories of household heads and/or elders illustrate this.

The following excerpts from the life story of Viswa Nath, who is seventy eight, illuminates several facets of contemporary mobility. The Bhattarai clan was selected to illustrate historical clan mobility. It is therefore, useful that the life story of someone from the same clan be selected to describe concurrent mobility. In addition, Viswa Nath has lived more than seven decades in this community and his family is representative of both local and national mobility contexts.

Born in 1912 he began living in a *kharka* (open pasture, usually located in the higher hills) from his early childhood. It was located at least a day's walk from his home. At age 10 he had an opportunity to study Sanskrit locally. His father died when he was fifteen. His study discontinued by this incident. After three years he resumed his study. His education was mainly focused on

astrology for which he moved to several places between the ages of 18 and 21. First, he went to Lapsibote where he spent one and a half years in *Guru's* home. He, then moved to Soyang to another *Guru* for the next few months. He frequently visited home in between. Finally, he went to Sukia Pokhari (India) where he had a chance to study with Pt. Giridhari, a widely known astrologer. He could only stay there for six months due to familial problems at home. For a long time, his mother had wanted to undertake a pilgrimage to *Chardham* (Four Hindu places of pilgrimage in India) including Banaras, Rameswaram, Jagannath puri, and Badri [and] Kedar. Thus, he took her on this pilgrimage.

He had five brothers and all were living together with their mother. He was the fourth son in the sibling order. His oldest brother was involved in an 'undesirable' episode during the early 1930s. Thus, when Viswa Nath was 22, all of them decided to separate. They divided their parental property among the five brothers. Now he had to be more responsible for many details than ever before. He had to handle a case against Magars (local feudal heads) about the proprietorship of several *raiti* (clients) for which he had to visit Rana Durbar in Kathmandu to settle the case. He also visited Banaras as a pilgrim at the insistence of relatives.

As head of the household he could still enjoy the legacy of his clan's chieftainship. His family was entirely involved in agricultural activities. The parcels of *khet* (irrigated land) and *bari* (unirrigated land), although not large, were fertile enough to support his household. Because consumer items and fabrics had to be purchased, some of the produce had to be taken to market. Overall, the practices were simple. He had to live with his farm produce and he did manage his household successfully.

He was an active social worker from his early years. He was involved in the people's drive for democracy and to do away with the Rana aristocracy. He was instrumental in establishing a local school (1951 A.D.). He was equally a religious person. While he had already visited several religious places, he went to the river Ganges (India) for *astu selauna* (a ritual related with the death of a relative) in memory of his third brother who died in his early forties. He went for pilgrimage to Kathmandu and many other places in the country. He served at several political positions in the village and in the district. He continued his involvement in local politics until age 63 when he finally retired.

Between the ages 24 and 44 he had six daughters and four sons. All his sons and two youngest daughters were able to obtain school education in various capacities. When he was 48, his sons started leaving the village for further study at Ilam bazar. At age 54 his second son left the village for the Tarai in

search of a job. Later, he was joined by his wife and children. Since then he has been living there as a school teacher. At age 58 his third son went to Kathmandu for higher education and/or training as a school teacher. He came back after two years i.e., after graduation. But in the village he was unable to obtain a job with adequate salary for his training. As a result, he also went to the Tarai where he obtained a job as a teacher with a reasonable salary. His wife and children joined him later. Currently, like his second brother, he lives in the Tarai with his family, has his own house and land along with his responsibility as a high school teacher.

As for his (Viswa Nath) eldest and youngest sons, both of them are in the village. Both of them work in the local school. In the mean time, they also manage their agricultural land. By his late 60s, all his familial responsibilities have been taken over by his sons. His eldest son is now in charge of what used to be his domain. The others, as mentioned above, have their own households with direct or indirect support from parental property. Because of his age and poor health he is not active anymore. He stays home all the time. Sometimes, he visits his sons and relatives in the Tarai. He enjoys talk about the past and sharing his days of success and failure.

When asked about the growth and dispersal of his sons and family he had this comment: "My father had altogether seven children; two daughters and five sons. I have ten children, let alone the children of my brothers. My four sons have altogether fifteen children to date. If all of them were here, there is no way that this [my] land would be enough even to feed these off spring let alone their education and other expenses. Time has changed and, unlike in our days, agriculture alone can not support the family. Thus, what they are doing is fine. With the increase of feeding mouths, several problems occur. Any one who wants to successfully cope with this must have more than one occupation. That is exactly what they [his sons] have been doing now. They have their job and they also have their land. For all of them, wherever they are now, this is home, as long as I am alive."

This life story reveals several facets of contemporary mobility and the context within which mobility has occurred. One obvious factor is in the direction of movement. Thus far, the direction of movement has remained west to east along the hills. Once the Tarai which was densely forested in the past, was opened for settlement, mobility followed a north to south trend. This also indicates that movement is not merely into areas of frontier settlement (see, Shrestha, 1990;



Shrestha and Conway, 1985) but involves a search for better opportunities, farming as well as non-farming. Moreover, it is interesting that while the movers (in the above life story) have left the community for employment opportunities and non-farm activities, they have continued to be tied to their traditional occupations.

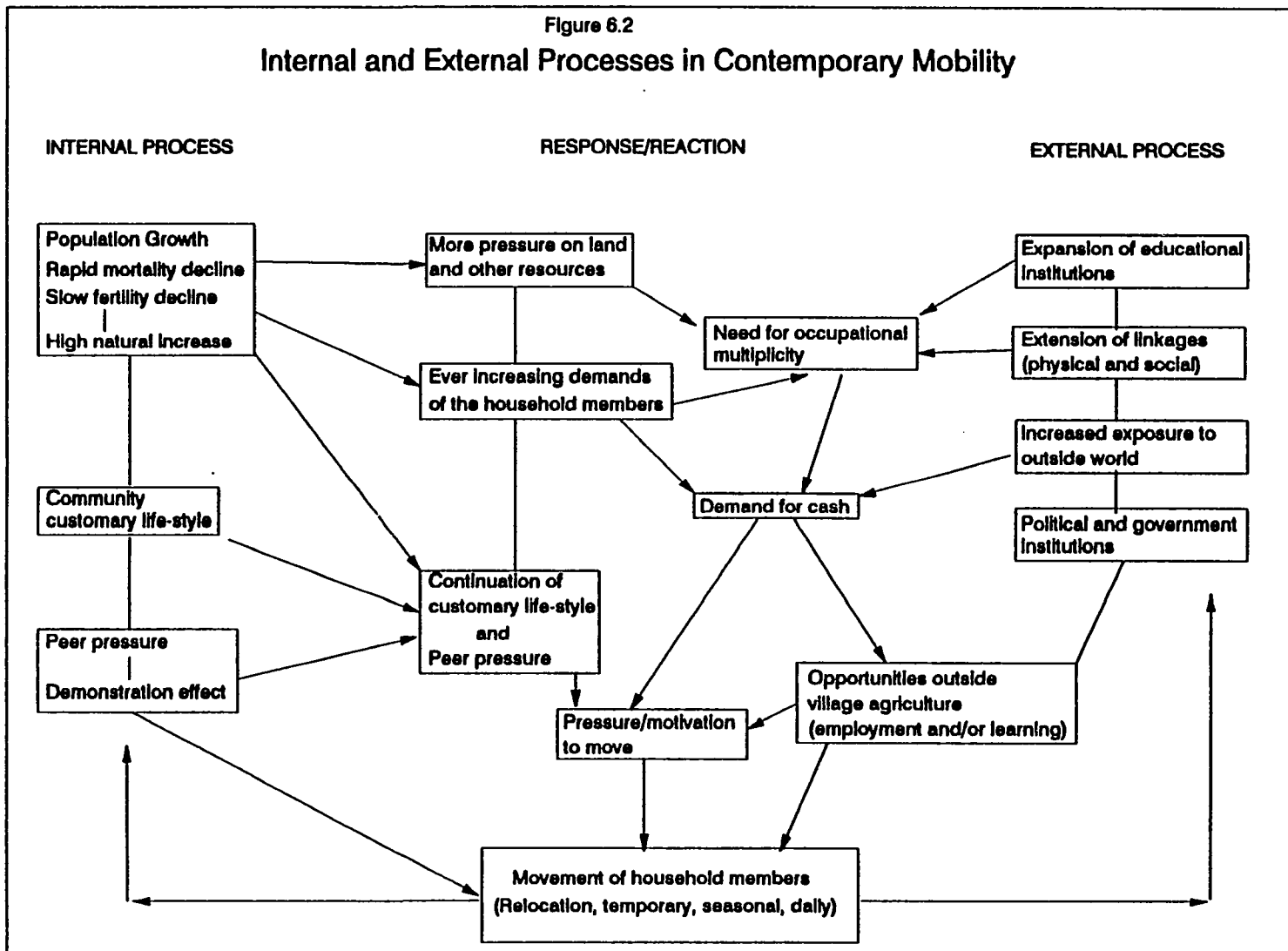
### **Internal and External Processes in Contemporary Mobility**

Contemporary mobility depicted through life histories is a reaction and/or response to several internal and external processes that work through the households and the community as a whole. While some of these processes are comparable to the past, contemporary mobility is facilitated by many external factors. After all, contemporary mobility is not necessarily driven by the search for agricultural land. Other considerations have become equally important. Figure 6.2 shows how the internal and external processes interact at several levels and are linked together. Territorial mobility is the major response or reaction to the combined interplay of these processes and levels. While internal processes such as population growth, community customary life style, and peer pressure have induced mobility, the influence of external processes such as the expansion of modern education, extension of physical and social linkages, exposure to the outside world, development of political institutions, and opportunities outside agriculture are also critical.

All of these processes are interrelated. As a result, the role of internal and external factors at times is not clear cut. The impact of internal processes such as increasing size is directly related to the changing resource ratio of the household.

Figure 6.2

### Internal and External Processes in Contemporary Mobility



However, the impact of external processes is at times indirect but equally powerful in inducing mobility.

**Growth of Population:** Population in this area has grown significantly as mortality has gone down and fertility has remained high. Medical and public health facilities have improved. Likewise, public awareness of sanitation has also improved. Though population growth in Namsaling is not a recent phenomenon, the pace of increase was never this rapid in the past. For example Viswa Nath, whose household size was two in 1936, had a household of twelve members in 1956, two decades later. The same family in 1990 has four separate households and a total population of twenty five (patrilineal only). This is a succinct example of rapid growth of population.

A prevalent argument is that mobility (especially outmigration) is induced by population growth. However, the links between population pressure and outmigration have both positive and negative dimensions. Most often the literature on Nepal is dominated by doleful impacts and a pessimistic outlook (Thapa, 1989; Shrestha, 1990; Conway and Shrestha, 1981; see also Blaikie *et al.*, 1982). Population growth is equated with an increasing man-land ratio and an increase of pressure on the limited resources available, leading to the progressive impoverishment of the family. Thus, it is interpreted as negatively pushing individual members to leave the community.

Population growth leading to positive mobility is often less reflected in the literature. Population pressure does not always led to increased poverty. Raghu, an elderly person who was born in 1924 is one of several examples from Namsaling.

Raghu was *de facto* head of the household at the age of fifteen after his mother's untimely death. Although his father was alive, he was ailing. At 14

he was married. He had two sisters to look after. Because of his father's ailment his household was already in debt. The size of land was less than one fifth of what he owns today of which the only *khet* he had was mortgaged to one of his senior clan member.

He and his wife worked hard. In addition to working in the field, his wife also did a petty business of buying raw produce in the village that could be processed and taken to the local bazar. She carried it to weekly market centers and paid the loan back. The little amount of 'profit,' notwithstanding their own labor, met their daily necessities and fabrics.

Their hard life continued. After twenty years, he was able to pay his debt. Between 1943 and 1955 he had five children (one died in infancy). He continued to farm although there were ups and downs. He was able to send three of his four sons to school. While they went to school, they also helped with domestic work after school. Finally his hard work paid off. He began to save some money which he invested to purchase land. Today his household is considered as a middle level household in the village standard.

Today, all of his children are married and have their own families. The first two are in the village. With them (he and his wife) is the family of the eldest son. The two younger ones are employed outside the village. They are also joined by their wives and children.

He and his wife are in their late sixties. Both of them are still active. However, they no longer control the household. While they enjoy the company of their two sons who have stayed in the village, the remaining two also visit them quite often. Those who have left the village have moved under the condition of neither poverty nor plenty. It is his speculation that these two will probably establish their second home elsewhere.

This account is one demonstration that the linkage between population growth and mobility is not always negative. This can be further seen in Viswa Nath's life story where two of his sons have moved not because of poverty but for opportunities. A parallel can be drawn between this finding and Hagerstrand's pioneering work in the Asby parish (Hagerstrand, 1963). In Asby the rising scarcity of land was paralleled by the opportunity of large-scale emigration to the eastern seaboard of the United States. In turn, this meant more 'room' for the rural 'stayers behind' who

ultimately improved their local situation, just as leaving for the United States improved the socioeconomic position of many of those who emigrated.

**Customary Living and Peer Pressure:** While population pressure from within the household induces mobility for many, some people move to fulfill customary obligations. In some groups mobility is necessary to continue cultural norms (discussed in chapter IV). While households display aspects of a modern lifestyle, they have clearly retained their customary lifeways. Households in Namsaling thus far have continued to follow customs, many of which clearly involve mobility. Thus the village lifestyle displays features of both customary and contemporary living. Learning traditional (Sanskrit) texts and being able to perform ritual performances, was critical and customary for members of the upper caste and that they had to move to several 'reaches' to obtain the required skills. Today, this convention continues and has taken a form of movement for formal education.

A detailed analysis of mobility in the village also illustrates its relationships to peer pressure and the demonstration effect. Evidence suggests that teenagers who are unencumbered with responsibilities are more susceptible to such pressures. Iswar's (aged 33) context of mobility during his teenage years is a succinct example:

Iswar left home at age 19 and went to work with a road construction project at Tumlingtar. After working there for one month, he developed a friendship with his fellow workers when they decided to go to Assam, India. He had heard stories about people making a fortune by going to Assam and working in construction. Thus, he left for Assam and ended up working as a *gothalo* (one who looks after cattle) at Lakhimpur. Having worked there for a year, he felt that the wage and the treatment he was getting was unfair. He left there and reached Sadia where he was hired as a *kulli* (coolie) in a local sugar mill. This was not satisfactory either. He thought of home and made up his mind to return. On his way back, he accidentally encountered his former landlord in

Odalguri, Assam. With his insistence, Iswar went to help cultivate the land of his former landlord again. Everything went well for a year or so. Suddenly he suffered from fever which continued for weeks. The cause of the fever was not known and he was so home sick that he left there without collecting his back wages. By then he was not sure if he could make it. Fortunately, he arrived home. Everybody was disappointed with his poor health. He was provided immediate medical attention. It was diagnosed that the disease was malaria and was treated accordingly. Finally, he recovered after several months and began his regular life. After three years, he went back to Lakhimpur to collect his due. The landlord was surprised to see him but he did pay his due. It was the cash which was the main resource to construct the house where he currently lives.

Asked why he left the village, he comments: "At this age many of my friends of childhood had left the village. While some went for higher education, some had left the village for unknown reasons. A few had also joined the military. When Hari Bahadur, with whom I studied in the local school, became a *lahure*, I really felt like going out and doing something. Every one in the village said that when he comes back he will have seen several places and bring a big sum of money. Having studied together in the school and being of the same age, I thought I must go out, see the world and earn money. Thus, I left home and went through good and bad experiences in India. When I think of it today, I have no regret for it."

Experiences such as this are not unique and individuals do feel peer pressure.

For a long time, the sophisticated life-style of *lahure* when they return home has fascinated almost every young person. This, in turn, became a driving force for many to leave the village and attempt to earn their living outside village. While some succeed others do not.

**The Expansion of Modern Education:** The expansion of modern educational institutions and mobility are interrelated. Ghumaune and Yakhagaun do reflect the role of education in mobility. The expansion of modern education meant at least three things. First, contrary to the conventional view, study today does not always translate into learning Sanskritic texts. Likewise, the *Guru's* home was not the only

place to learn to read and write. Second, irrespective of caste, class and gender, every one was entitled to education. Third, education was basic to contemporary life and interhousehold transactions.

The transition was not easy for ordinary people. It took several years for them to realize the significance of education. Their initial resistance was soon overcome by the consideration that education can be a means to earn a living. While meeting the cost of education was a problem for some, for many, being poor did not always make much difference in sending children to school. A local household head had this comment:

When children are in good standing in school, it is hard for us to say no for their desire to continue their studies. When we think of the household economic situation, we never feel like being able to set aside a certain amount of money for children's education. I had never envisaged I would be able to educate three of my children upto high school. I do not know how? but I managed. At present, two of them have graduated from university. I may be able to afford it today but back then it was almost unthinkable. I feel that when you have to do it you have to do it and you afford it. Some how time takes care of itself.

Education became closely tied to mobility over the years. It continues to add to social status. Over the course of time, it has become an economic asset as well. It is equated with the possibility of employment and of being able to support a family. Consequently, the endeavor for higher education led individuals to places with better instructional facilities beyond the village, which in turn translated into mobility. Moreover, taking a 'suitable' job after graduation meant leaving the village and farming.

The linkage between education and mobility is also tied to the common perception of the ultimate aim of education among villagers. For many, coming back to plow the land after years spent in education is socially undesirable. Ordinary people have a very simple logic. Accordingly, one does not need to spend years of time, energy and resources if one chooses farming as a primary occupation. Individual members could be better off if they involved themselves in farming from their early days. This does not mean they demean their occupation. It means that they would like to see some of their family members involved in occupations other than agriculture.

While there is social pressure for educated persons to enter non-agricultural work, looking for a job is also an economic necessity. Consequently, education not only translates into mobility, it has helped the village in several ways. It has exposed people to modern means and ways of life which in turn, has advanced people's aspirations. Likewise, over time many single peoples have married at 'reach' and have started families there. The implications are that the more educated are more likely to move than the less educated ones. This is consistent with findings elsewhere. For example, Kobrin and Goldscheider (1978:238) point out children of more educated parents are most likely to move out of the cluster and intergenerational group specific continuity is strongly affected by educational variations among communities.

**Need for Multiple Occupations:** With the growth of population and an increased man-land ratio, the need to have multiple occupations became imperative. The



chances of colonizing marginal land became remote and the productivity of land began to decline from overuse. Contact with the external world through education and the development of transport facilities and communications, exposed many people to opportunities outside the village. There was also an increasing demand for cash. Eventually, involvement in multiple occupations became indispensable to earn cash and to supplement the household economy.

The holding of multiple occupations can be rationalized on several grounds. First, there is an economic need not met by the immediate household resources. Thus, it is imperative for people to look beyond traditional agriculture to supplement farm income. An excerpt from an informal discussion with Shakti (low caste, aged 51) confirms this:

I have a family of six. I own less than 20 *ropani* of land, most of which is *bari* (unirrigated). I cannot support my family from this land only and I have to look beyond agriculture. By profession I am a tailor and have been doing my caste based occupation i.e., tailoring. I have my regular clients for whom I provide my service. Some of them pay me cash while others in kind. Of course I have my own land to cultivate. On some occasions I also play musical instruments as is expected of my social status. It does not support me much but it is better than nothing. My family also works as wage laborers in the village.

Second, today, many people in the village are qualified for non-farm employment and they do want to join professional service. Third, unlike in the past, there are opportunities to work outside of agriculture. Modern modes of transport and communication plus social networks have facilitated this process. Fourth, the overall household agricultural enterprise at present, does not necessarily deteriorate from the absence of one or two members. Consequently, involvement in multiple

occupations is not only a necessity and symbolic self satisfaction, but it is a preferred way of life. Likewise, it is an important component of higher social status in the village.

The example of Ghumaune and Yakhagaun suggests that none of the households are solely dependent on farming. Given limited employment opportunities in the village, it is not unusual for people to leave the village in search of work to help supplement the household economy.

**Opportunities Outside Agriculture and Outside Village:** Today there are opportunities outside agriculture and outside the village which were not available in the past. These avenues of outside employment became accessible to people only after 1951 when the country was opened to the outside world. The opening up corresponded with the establishment of educational institutions in the villages which further reinforced the opportunities beyond agriculture. Today, more than fifty percent of the people who have moved from Namsaling are associated with the civil service, teaching and other professions such as business, wage workers, and *lahure*.

While teaching and the civil service are the leading outside opportunities for Ghumaune, Yakhagaun enjoys the *lahure* system (discussed earlier) as an additional avenue. While *lahure* may not be significant in terms of number of individuals recruited, it is the most desired form of employment. Facilities on the job are good (by village standards), benefits such as pensions, outside exposure, community facilities after retirement, are long term and serve not only the household but at times

to the entire village. The fact that all of the *lahure* and their families are economically better off in Yakhagaun is self evident.

Employment such as wage labor, civil service, military service and other professional jobs is not the only opportunity. Educational opportunities outside the village have enormous implications on mobility. In fact, educational opportunities such as schooling and other formal and informal training is a precursor to employment. In the mobility context, the fact that these opportunities exist, and exist beyond the village and beyond agriculture, and the fact that rural people know that they exist, means they act as a catalyst for mobility.

Mobility is an outcome of the combined interplay of all of these contexts discussed above. Single factor explanations are incomplete and do not reveal the complexities of the process. Linkages such as roads and other transport and communication facilities together with the social and kin network have further reinforced the process of mobility. Village exposure to the outside world has increased. Participation in political institutions such as different hierarchies of committees/panchayats and government establishments means involvement in the mobility process. Thus, territorial mobility whether it is due to a need for multiple occupations, demand for cash, or because of the opportunities available and further reinforced through facilitating factors (e.g., transport, communication, and social network), the ultimate result is the movement of people.

## **Conclusion**

The intention of this chapter has been both substantive and methodological. While it focussed on enhancing the understanding of historical mobility, the examination of internal and external contexts related to contemporary mobility has also been addressed. Unlike conventional studies, clan genealogies and life histories are integral to the examination and understanding of mobility processes. While the understanding of historical mobility primarily comes from clan genealogy, life history excerpts from individuals have proven critical to explore the processes and context of contemporary mobility. The thrust of the argument is that clan genealogies decipher the ecological, social, and political processes of group movement over time and life histories detail more immediate external and internal complexities. Linking these two sources not only reveals rural mobility over time, it also reflects the impact of concurrent social, economic and political as well as a national context on the process of mobility.

Over time, mobility reflects a household's shifting concern from mere survival to more of a concern for the utilization of all possible external opportunities. The overall process reveals a consistency in terms of patterns, directions, and a concern for similar and/or better resources. However, the national and local context within which the process has operated over generations has been different. Households have continuously faced internal and external forces, some of which lead people on move. Socio-cultural factors are more durable and mobility out of these concerns has long endured. Branching off, fulfilling household obligations, a concern to see the world

outside, curiosity, and adventure trips have historically remained integral to the social development of people. These factors and concerns are so much part of life that they are often taken for granted and their impacts on mobility overlooked.

Economic factors are more visible and thus, often command more scholarly attention. Their impact is well perceived and addressed. A detailed examination suggests that mobility reflects the impact of both economic and socio-cultural processes. Territorial mobility has become more complex over time. Most social factors and motivations which often lead people on the move have continued, while the avenues of mobility have also extended and diversified over the years. With expanded opportunities outside agriculture and increased interactions between the village and the outside world, rural mobility has not only become more visible but also more complex. Exploring the genealogy of clans and reconstructing the life histories of people not only reveal the changing patterns and contexts of rural mobility over time, but they also bring a better understanding of the process and its continuity as people react to the changing social, economic, political, and ecological circumstances in society.

### Endnotes

1. While cross cousin marriage is common among many ethnic groups in Nepal, marriage between genetically related individuals are forbidden among clan members in Ghumaune.
2. For example if one's domicile is on the hill top it common for him to be called as *Dandaghare* (*Danda* = hill/hillock, *Ghare* = one who has house, in this case). If the householder/household member is eldest male descendants, he is usually called as *Dandaghare Jetho* (*Jetho* = eldest male descendant).

3. Kanyakubja is made of two words i.e., Kanya and Kubja which roughly translates as 'paralyzed girls.' Prior to this it was known as Mahodaya. It is said that during the reign of king Kushanava, when his daughters refused to marry with (W)Bayu (the god of wind), they were paralyzed because of the curse from the god. In memory of this incidence the king later named the place as Kanyakubja meaning 'the virgin girls paralyzed.'
4. Given the considerable gap on their specific whereabouts, it is difficult to infer conclusively on whether they came to western Nepal directly or settled the northwestern hills of India for some generations before they entered Nepal.
5. While this figure is a clear depiction of the mobility of dominant caste groups, the movement of local ethnic groups (aboriginal ?) are not traced far back at least in spatial terms (including direction). Therefore, this figure should be taken as indicative of the process but not a complete explanation of mobility of the several ethnic groups in the region.
6. Rishishor had three sons. One of them was Laxmi Das. Laxmi Das lived in his parental place so did his son Bali Das. Deva Hari, Bali Das's son, followed his father's footstep. He had five sons. Nandikeshor was one of the five. He received Gamnang, Okhaldhunga as Birta from Hem Karna Sen in 1814 B.S.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### TERRITORIAL MOBILITY, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE IN WIDER CONTEXT

In the world of scholarship, novel insights generally follow from the appearance of quite different frames of philosophical reference. If those that exist in the third world could be identified and assessed for the meaning and significance for the movement of its people, then the broader study of people's mobility might be transformed to new and exciting levels of understanding (Chapman, 1988:14).

This chapter considers the wider context of continuity and change in population mobility in traditional society. It begins with an attempt to place this study in the context of contemporary developments in population geography and is followed by reexamination of key issues in continuity and change as experienced from inside a rural Nepali community. There is also a brief discussion of the language of those who move. The final section deals with the theoretical and policy implications of this study.

Ever since the publication of Ravenstein's law of migration (1889), studies on the territorial mobility of people proliferated. Although subsequent inquiries have unraveled the complexities of human movement, a comprehensive and coherent theory of migration combining conceptual levels and different methodologies is far from realized (Woods, 1986a, 1986b; Salt, 1986). From the issue of definition (e.g., who is a migrant?) to the appropriate methodology to understand the movement process, there is no single position acceptable within the field. This lack of consensus is further complicated by the vastly different cultural and social circumstances within which mobility takes place. Thus, most of the critical findings and contributions have

become fragmented within diverse perspectives. Over the years, research on population mobility has displayed higher levels of complexity, but unfortunately the real understanding and articulation of human mobility still poses a formidable challenge to scholarly inquiry.

Population geographers, one of several groups involved in the study of population dynamics, have long sought to capture and comprehend the processes and mechanisms of human mobility. They have made significant contributions to the field over the years. However, most of their epistemology is based on the western intellectual tradition and there is an absence in the literature of perspectives from inside local cultures to which movers belong.

### **Population Geography, Humanistic Approach, and Studies on Territorial Mobility**

Population geography, from its emergence in the 1940s as a separate field of inquiry, has traversed several milestones. From its overwhelming emphasis on the study of the distribution of population (Trewartha, 1953) through a consideration of man-environmental interactions (Zelinsky, 1966) to a processual concern (Hagerstrand, 1975; Jones, 1990), population geography has reflected the changing profile of society's concerns and overall developments in the social sciences. More recent studies in population geography have tried to accommodate ongoing theoretical and methodological advances within the broad field of geography, as well as in such related disciplines as formal demography.



By nature, population geography bridges the gap between population studies in general and the mainstream of human geography. This concern with intellectual linkages is considered one of the main strengths of population geography.

Paradoxically, the strength of this bridging notion has led to limited contributions to the broad field of population science and to human geography in general. Thus, the field of population geography has always confronted the risk of not being satisfactory to either the discipline of human geography or the broader field of population studies.

Human geography is generally perceived as a distinct specialty that employs a spatial perspective to examine the social and cultural aspects of society set within their environmental contexts. This has made geography distinct from many other social sciences, which tend to treat different topics in isolation (Woods, 1991). Over the years, some human geographers have been critical of this pluralism, as reflected in reports assessing the status of the field. Pacione (1986:1) agrees that such plurality may promote progress in human geography, but is critical of the failure of population geographers to define a precise area of interest and expertise, because ultimately this has resulted in limited contribution to the broad field of population studies.

Subsequently, some British geographers and those working in that tradition have argued that the focus of the field should be redefined. For example, Woods (1984) asserted that population geography should focus mainly on demographic measurement, emphasizing its spatial component, while many others feel that such an effort would take it away from the mainstream of human geography (Findlay, 1991), of which it is a sub-field.

Broad philosophical developments in the social sciences have tremendous impact on disciplinary fields, being immediate for some and very distant on others. While contemporary population geography reflects the impact of empiricism and positivism, some human geographers have criticized its inability to address issues of structuralism and humanism. It is argued that population geography is not only painfully slow to respond to the theoretical and methodological developments within human geography in general but also lags behind theoretical and methodological developments in neighboring disciplines. Accordingly, population geographers are more reluctant and less adventurous to experiment with humanism, behavioralism, and structuralism than one might expect (Woods, 1986b). Some British scholars, like Findlay and Graham (1991:150), echo this criticism with great fervor:

There are many philosophical and methodological debates within contemporary human geography which have given rise to a variety of schools of thought. In contrast, population geography is singularly free from such debate. Whether this is taken as a strength or a weakness, the contrast remains. Debates about gender, humanism, realism and postmodernism, which are so much part of human geography at the present time, have only the faintest of echoes in population geography. A tacit methodological unity prevails so that few even bother to ask what contribution population geography is making to geography as a whole (its academic context) or to society more generally (its wider context).

and

. . . there is little evidence of population geographers being innovative, for example, either in adopting humanistic perspectives or in investigating structuration theory in their work, as has occurred in other parts of human geography in the 1980s (p. 155).

This reluctance of population geography to embrace advances in both the parental discipline and the social sciences has resulted into its isolation from

mainstream geography. Similarly, its primary emphasis on demographic elements and its closeness to prevailing debates within demography has steered some scholars to argue that over the years population geography has become closer to demography than to geography (for example, Findlay and Graham 1991:160). This is debatable, for emphases in population geography are also related to its research frontiers, which are limitless as well as to the training and disciplinary orientation of its practitioners. As with any disciplinary specialty, there are starkly different orientations between those who place themselves at the core of human geography and those pioneers who work at the interface of other disciplines.

Similarly, the controversy about whether population geographers are innovative or indifferent to philosophical debates, theoretical innovations, and methodological advances within the parent discipline revolves around the nature of the genre. Is one arguing for a narrow definition (spatial demography) or a broader one (political arithmetic; see, Chapman and Dowdle, 1991). This debate is not unusual in a sub-field which is, at times, too narrowly defined and, in others, overly broad. The international scene about the position of population geography can be gauged from various reflective essays in a recent publication by the International Geographical Union (Noin, 1991) and in a synthetic publication about the status of geography in America (Gaile and Willmott, 1989). Although population geographers may not have been as innovative as many might have wished, their studies of population movement show them to have made progress in understanding its complex and dynamic processes.

In a recent publication, Findlay (1992, 1993) admits that even though the fundamental structure of population geography remains the same, today its practitioners are more comfortable with and confident about demographic issues and that there is greater concern to achieve explanation than ever before. More importantly, the seeds of innovation can be observed in studies of third world populations which lie within the broader framework of political arithmetic.<sup>1</sup> As early as the 1950s, studies of African population by British scholars (e.g. Prothero 1957), no matter how descriptive and driven by policy considerations, raised questions about mobility that were at variance with prevailing scholarly positions (Chapman, 1988). In North America, population geography is a weaker and less conscious part of the parent discipline than in Europe. Even so, Zelinsky's (1971) quest for a theory of mobility transition, Mabogunje's (1970) systems approach to rural-urban migration, and McGee's (1982, see also, McGee and McTaggart, 1967) early works on ethnic pluralism and rural-urban interchange are symptomatic of innovative cells, whose practitioners certainly were not antithetical to theory. In addition, Forbes' (1981) concern with rural-urban interdependencies in Sulawesi is an example of structuralism, while Bonnemaison's (1985) metaphors of movement clearly reveal a concern with humanist philosophy.

It is important to note that these and other innovative works lie at the interface of disciplinary sub-fields or of cognate fields. More specifically, Zelinsky's mobility transition is at the meeting point of human geography and demography; Mabogunje's systems approach at the convergence of social, economic, and population geography;

McGee's rural-urban linkages at the interface of population and urban geography; Forbes' explanation of rural-urban interdependencies reveals a conjunction of population and social geography; while Bonnemaïson is certainly working at the interface of cultural and population geography. Similarly, Brown (1990) and Brown and Sanders (1981) have put forth a development paradigm of migration which is concerned more with elements of the process than with its patterns. Not only are most studies of third world population found at the interfaces of convergent scholarly activity, but also they have made a significant contribution to both population geography and population studies.

The study of Tannese mobility by the French geographer Joel Bonnemaïson (1981; 1985) is a superb example of how a humanist philosophy, well established in cultural geography, can be brought to the attention of population geographers through field enquiries of rural societies. Bonnemaïson interprets the mobility endemic to Tannese societies through the identification of symbolism present in local epistemologies. Mobility is distilled in the paradoxical metaphors of the tree and the canoe, where the tree symbolizes rootedness to a place, and the canoe mobility between 'home' and 'reach.' Moreover, the identification of this symbolism by Bonnemaïson (1981) not only reflects the paradox of mobility and immobility among Tannese people but also reflects his intellectual "journey around the territory," a shift from a standard man-land analysis to more of a geo-cultural approach.

Whether one works within the broader framework of population studies or restricts oneself to a limited sphere like spatial demography, scholars now firmly

realize that different groups may respond differently to demographic processes according to their cultural frameworks. In a recent publication, for instance, Jones (1990) argued for the need to see how various individuals and groups respond in their movement behavior to what are undoubtedly common structural causes of social and spatial inequality. In a plea for more theory in case studies, he commented: "What we certainly need are theorized case studies of migration - in other words, empirical investigations that are theoretically well informed (Jones 1990:228)."

Even if we take the extreme view that population geography has remained indifferent to the philosophical and methodological debates in human geography, future studies certainly will acknowledge these concerns, because a retreat from intellectual advances in the parent discipline and the social sciences is no solution. At the same time, it is essential that population geographers enhance the substantive identity of their specialty. Attempting to incorporate the intellectual ferment present in parent and neighboring disciplines certainly will help to advance the mainstream of human geography, as well as widen its linkages to other disciplines with similar concerns and approaches. Moreover, more needs to be done conceptually to bridge microlevel studies with those at the macroscale, as well as more synthetic attempts made to generalize about complex reality (see also White *et al.*, 1989).

Unfortunately, most mobility research thus far is based on an epistemology developed out of the western intellectual tradition. This partly reflects the overall trend of western scholarship, where people usually are treated in a mechanistic way and where 'developmentalism' (the theory of linear progress) is one of the priorities.

Because such studies of territorial mobility provide the traditional perspective of the detached outsider, it is beyond their purpose to allow a deeper, comprehensive understanding from the viewpoint of an insider. Gradually, studies based on developmentalism have faced a crisis as more and more doubt has been cast on the transcultural nature of concepts based on western experience (Pieterse, 1991). This is especially so for the assumption that "economic factors are equally important everywhere and that the relationship between economics and politics is perceived similarly everywhere" (Ibid:19), since it overlooks crucial cultural differences across societies. As Murphy (1991: 32) points out in a different context, 'questions of meaning and understanding have too frequently been marginalized in the literature on society and space.'

Amidst these concerns, this study is an acknowledgement of and a respect for all approaches within population geography, with a special emphasis towards the potential contribution of a humanist philosophy. This inquiry took an interpretive stance where understanding the meanings of human behavior is given more prominence than normative positions. It is an approach to people's mobility that is holistic and integrative, but with a particular concern for the historical, the cultural, the ethnic, and the social dimensions. Such research is considered, to use Pocock's (1988: 2) phrase, as "a voyage of exploration" and seeks to illuminate it from the participant's own perspective. It is also contextual, because mobility is seen as integral to local culture and 'home,' and further that this social reality cannot be isolated from its natural settings. Accordingly, meanings associated with territorial

mobility among traditional societies are the highlight of this study, as demonstrated through the indepth investigation of a limited population with a comparatively small area. A focus on rural societies of South Asia, particularly ones that are more traditional, is assumed to provide a view from inside such society and to offer alternative conceptions. In addition, an interpretive standpoint and the perspective of a member of that society is believed to foster the current level of understanding about territorial mobility. In this way, mobility research is brought closer to contemporary developments in human geography, without taking it away from mainstream concerns of population geography. It also brings more humanity into focus and incorporates the idea of what Cloke et al., (1991: 57) have called 'the peopling of human geography.'

### **Continuity, Change, or Else?**

Territorial mobility is an essential component of rural individuals and households that, throughout their lifetimes, manifests the cultural, economic, social, and ethnic groupings of society. While both a rural typology (chapter IV) and world views (chapter V) indicate mobility in terms of separations in time, space, activity, and place, they also express those rural actions as a collective consideration of meanings, social groupings, and life-cycle stages among individuals and for households. Mobility is shown to be closely linked to "territoriality," for sense of possession of a given space and the urge to protect it [for details on territoriality, see Sack, 1986; Malmberg, 1980], is found to be very strong amongst people of traditional societies.



The consideration of an affective bond between people and place, which Tuan (1974) has discussed at length, is important in the context of mobility. That bond is far stronger in traditional societies and consequently more relevant for rural than industrialized populations. A sense of territoriality imbues mobility with deep meaning. There is a sense of security associated with 'home,' which is integral to a decision to move or to stay, especially when a household membership is on the verge of deciding whether to leave forever. In traditional societies, moving away from a place which has been occupied for generations does not come easily. Thus it is no surprise that in eastern Nepal, the term *basai sarai*, loosely translated as leaving a place permanently, often carries with it a negative connotation.<sup>2</sup>

The theoretical context of this research is set within a broader question of whether human mobility is deeply rooted throughout human history or is a recent phenomenon. In other words, is there a continuity or discontinuity in that behavior summarized in the term human mobility? This study demonstrates that the answer is complex, neither exclusively one nor the other; that there is continuity and also change. Many forms of mobility have endured, some have been modified, and over the years some have dissipated just as other new ones have emerged.

Territorial mobility is deeply rooted in a society's past and many long-standing forms have meanings reflective of the development and vitality of customary life. Intricate relationships are evident as households and individuals shift over space through time, for territorial mobility is an integral part of social and cultural system. Mobility is also indicative of how people respond to the sequence of life. As

households extend, as family members grow, marry, and have children, some establish their own households. In the process of branching off, many remain close to the original household but some choose a new location. When land colonization was easy and fixed agriculture at its dawn, this branching process frequently led households to choose new and often distant locations. Also from time immemorial, satisfying customary household obligations, carrying on kinship networks, participating in rituals or festivals, and visiting places of cultural and religious significance are key social considerations that relate to mobility. To leave 'home' in the quest for cash for survival, for maintenance, and for an improvement in household status is not a contemporary phenomenon and, for centuries, has quite often driven people away from their cultural hearth.

Thus territorial mobility in rural areas of Nepal is not a recent occurrence and is an inherent part of social and cultural life - a finding that is consistent with research in other third world societies. Based on a study of shattered households in north Indian villages, Breman (1988:26) maintains that

Migration was inherent to the pre-colonial system . . . [it] was not restricted to calamitous times of continual food shortages, war, or other ecological or social economic disasters. Thus, peasants did not migrate under exceptional circumstances only.

In Africa, Mabogunje (1989) demonstrated that households in west Africa have been redistributing temporarily and permanently, voluntarily and under pressure, from time immemorial. Among Pacific Islanders, McCall and Connell (1991) argue that movement was an inherent part of the social and cultural system of island communities and that oceanic peoples have always shifted about as family groups.

Only when unusual circumstances like natural disasters result in movement, does such action become infrequent or discontinuous.

Territorial mobility based primarily on monetary and economic considerations has commanded considerable attention in contemporary literature. A common fallacy is that a basic purpose must lie behind any move, and further, that that purpose is driven by economic considerations. In much research, economic elements are taken out of social context and the fact that individuals are members of both a household and a community essentially ignored. Emphasis on economic mechanisms camouflages the fact that spatial, environmental, or cultural conditions also illuminate the process of human mobility and, in turn, are tied to the economic condition of households.

Among individual movers, especially in traditional societies, economic concerns cannot be considered as events isolated from the social and the cultural. In fact, many of these economic forces are extensions of social and cultural obligations held as members of a household and a community. The head or senior member of a household who goes away to find work and fulfill obligations to sustain the household economy is reflecting social considerations as much as economic ones. Deeper social concerns often surround explicitly economic considerations, so that the whole process of human mobility must acknowledge the broader societal and cultural context rather than be seen as an isolated demographic event.

In short, the impression of mobility as a recent phenomenon is flawed. The roots of human movement can be traced back to the beginnings of a society's conduct

and most contemporary forms are extensions of long-standing behavior and practise. Detailed studies of traditional societies in African states and Pacific island communities clearly demonstrate this just as much as they do in South Asia (Mabogunje, 1972; Frazer, 1985; Skeldon, 1992; also implicitly in the Southeast Asian studies of Kato, 1982).

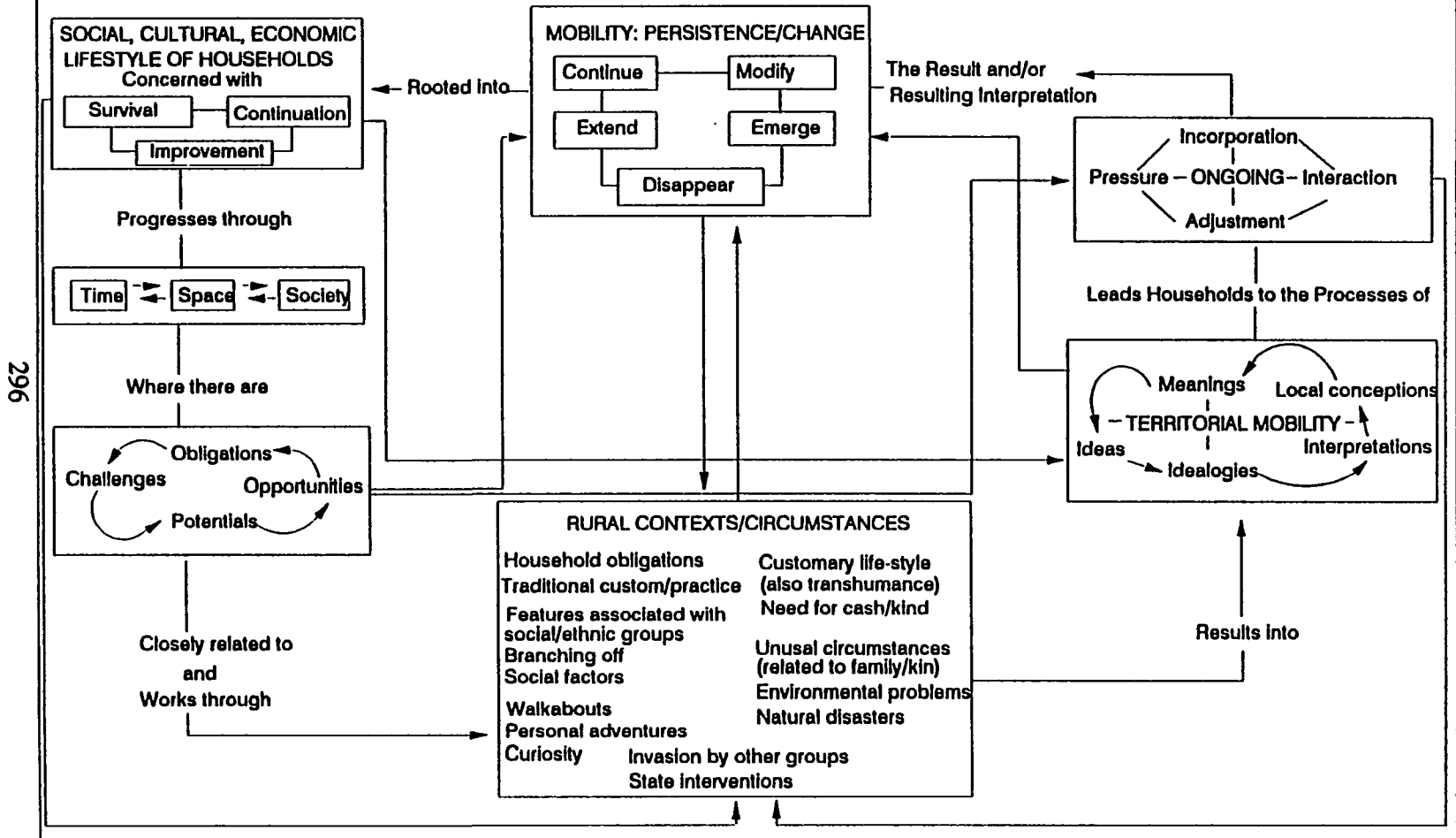
### **A Simplified Model**

Figure 7.1 is a simplified model which provides an integrated view of the process of human territorial mobility, its persistence and change. It applies to all levels of investigation, the individual, the household, and the community. Examined from the standpoint of the household (chapter IV), this model demonstrates the contexts and interactions within which mobility, continuing as a process, operates through several associated elements. At root is the social, the cultural, and the economic lifestyles of households. From historic times, households have been concerned with their very survival, continuation of customary lifestyles, and improvements in living standards. There is an ongoing societal concern with household survival that incorporates physical elements as well as the social and cultural. There is also a strong drive to continue what has been inherited and to pass on traditions to the new generation. Moreover, every effort is made to enhance existing lifeways and standards of livelihood.

These concerns work through the broader contexts of time, space, and society (Fig.7.1:left-hand panel), influencing both household and community lifestyle independently as well as collectively. So highly interrelated are time, space, and

Figure 7.1

### Continuity and Change in Territorial Mobility



society that it is difficult to isolate the exclusive influence of each on people's mobility. All kinds of external territorial influences, including greater contact with outside worlds, impinge upon the household through time. Similarly, the broader context of time is reflected in changes in individual and household lifecycles, responsibilities associated with changes in the status of household members, and the ongoing seasonality of work. The influence of society, felt internally, is expressed in several ways, most visibly in changing distributions of people on land resources from one generation to another. Various cultural beliefs, meanings of 'home,' and the security associated with 'home' have important implications for mobility. So do societal obligations, ethnic compositions, and kin networks - all integral to society. Space translates into distance, cost, and all the physical and territorial constraints that function as intervening opportunities or facilitating influences. Space also functions as a symbolic junction between the interaction of time and society.

The challenges that households face to their lifestyles work through the broader contexts of time, space, and society. Individuals and households also have obligations to fulfill, just as people become aware of opportunities elsewhere. The exposure of villagers to the outside world and their consequent knowledge of opportunities there help rural households incorporate 'new' opportunities into an existing familial niche. As outside possibilities are explored, so involvement in this interactive process intensifies. Such challenges, potentials, obligations, and opportunities work through the rural context to which they are closely related (Fig. 7.1: bottom middle panel). Some of the circumstances of mobility are associated with

common lifestyles and personal dispositions, others based on aspirations of material gain, unusual circumstances, and state interventions. Whereas, for some, curiosity to see the world beyond might be instrumental for inducing mobility, for others personal adventure and random journeys are responsible.

As the economic, social, and cultural concerns of households operate within a rural setting and against the constant background of time, space, and society, so household members participate in several forms of territorial mobility. While these forms are a simple index of the underlying processes of life, far more important is to distill their essence and meanings. To do this, interpretive judgement is critical, which most often reflects the preconceived ideas and ideology of either participant or analyst. Implicitly or explicitly, the ideology of the research worker dictates the manner in which the relationship between societal tradition and contemporary mobility is conceived, with the result that there are diverse interpretations of movement behavior in the literature (chapter I). Local conceptions of mobility and their sociocultural meanings, which in turn may be related to group cosmologies, have not received adequate attention.

No matter how the outside analyst conceives of or interprets mobility, household members involved in this process remained linked with their own and other places. Visiting, letters, remittances, and gifts mean that 'home' and 'reach' are intimately connected (chapter V). As this interaction continues and more extensive linkages develop between places and people, adjustments in lifestyles and in daily working habits become imperative. Over the course of time, fresh opportunities

and/or new 'reach' are uncovered that in turn widen the scope and arena of mobility. *Lahure* system is a telling example. Once the adult men of Kiranti ethnic groups in Namsaling found themselves eligible for military recruitment by British and Indian authorities, they incorporated this potential employment into their range of existing opportunities and possible 'reaches.' This widened their scope of 'reach' (chapter IV), which both expanded the curiosity of and exerted previously unknown pressures on eligible household members to enlist. The ongoing process of interaction, incorporation, adjustment, and persuasion manifests itself in the diverse purposes of territorial mobility as well as in the range of meanings and their subsequent interpretation.

Traditional households such as in Ghumaune and Yakhagaun do not passively accept and incorporate external and internal influences; they also withstand, manipulate, and modify them. The process of mobility is subject to the same kinds of pressures and over time exhibits parallel responses of resistance, enhancement, and reinforcement. In this ongoing process of modification, coupled with overall societal changes, many forms of territorial mobility not only persist in their basic features but also become critically more important. At the same time, new forms emerge whereas some existing ones diminish and finally disappear (Fig. 7.1: top middle panel).

Against this context of fluidity and change from one generation to another, the greater continuity in the forms and extent of mobility commands surprisingly little scholarly attention. Most studies of population movement are confined to the analysis of objective factors, especially the economic or the social, which are more visible and



thus simpler for research workers to assess. Subjective elements like curiosity, moral obligation, walkabouts, and group sentiment are not part of the analysis. If both the objective and subjective elements of a place and its people are included in research design, then not only does the continuity of territorial mobility become more apparent but also our understanding of its meaning for traditional societies begins to enter the scholarly consciousness.

In addition, it is important to realize that what is observed of the actions of people in traditional rural societies is not usually captured during a short encounter with a stranger or in responses to a formal and structured questionnaire. The fact that continuities in people's movement have gone unnoticed does not prove that they are an uncommon feature of traditional societies. This parallels the argument of Skeldon (1990:131) in a recent study, who urges colleagues to go beyond 'the confinement of purely objective factors,' and to incorporate the more subjective elements involved in the process of mobility.

Just as persistence and change in territorial mobility can be demonstrated at the broader level, so it can be exemplified through specific forms experienced over the years in Ghumaune and Yakhagaun, the two hamlets studied. In the past *padna jane*, a customary form of mobility for learning educational skills, was limited to Ghumaune and to a specific 'reach,' but nowadays is common in both hamlets. Not only has it expanded in terms of distance involved and level of participation, but also it has become significant both socially and economically. Over the years, this form of mobility has become so widespread that it now accounts for most village absentees.

Whereas *maita jane*, *janta jane*, and *gaunbesi garne* (Figure 4.1) have continued their original form and extent, the more religious orientation of *mela herna jane* has been modified to become a cultural opportunity for informal social gatherings. For some participants *mela herna jane* still carries a religious orientation, but for many it serves the purpose of promoting local business and extending connections between households.

Likewise, specific forms of mobility like *bhagne* and *kadkal jane* are less relevant in today's world. Strict societal prohibitions have become relaxed and those accused of minor misconduct do not need to leave the community, which was the context of *bhagne*. Similarly, escorting the newly married couple to the bride's natal home is no longer required, since child marriage has disappeared.

The situation of *lahur jane*, whose dominance among Kiranti groups reflected the infiltration of British administration in India, is more complex. Its prominence in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries resulted from the demand for labor in the British army meshing with the huge reserve of youth in the village. At the cursory level, the emergence of *lahur jane* may be interpreted as a radically new type of movement, but closer inspection of local practise suggests it to be an adjustment and modification of preexisting patterns. Traditional households always keep open the range of choices and are eager to widen their range of productive possibilities, given the uncertainties of a rural environment (see also Brookfield, 1975). When opportunities for military service became available, households accepted this opportunity as an additional niche in the resource endowment of the household. Thus

*lahur jane* became a simple modification of those traditional patterns of movement that improved the household economy by incorporating new possibilities into the existing system. In studies of wage labor recruitment, similar circumstances have been interpreted through the arithmetic of labor supply and demand. As Skeldon (1990:137) notes: "The demand of labour of all types was instrumental in modifying and intensifying pre-colonial patterns of circulation and it did so to the perceived benefit of both supply and demand communities."

Similarly, the advent of modern technology meant that *ara katna jane*, a form of wage-labor mobility associated with timber working, became less profitable and almost disappeared, but was balanced by the emergence of new forms to utilize modern technology - such as visiting the hospital (*aspatal jane*), or rice or oil processing plants (*tel pelna/ghatta jane*). The central concern in all this emergence, reinforcement, modification, extension, and disappearance of the mobility behavior is the survival, the continuation, and the improvement of social, cultural, and economic livelihoods as the households of rural society strove to meet new social and economic necessities. As these concerns are articulated through time, space, and society, so the process of movement continues.

In short, the continuity of population movement through time in traditional society becomes apparent when examined as an interaction between contextual sociocultural processes and the obligations and opportunities of collective households, both within and beyond home. 'Home' is an emblem of identity and attachment, to which the process of movement is clearly interrelated, as it intersects with both the

internal and external dimensions of change. When the actor is seen to be acting as a member of a collective household rather than as an independent adult, then the process of movement is understood to be deeply rooted in custom. Interactions between 'home' and 'reach' continuously expand the experience of the household, which keeps pace with the outside world through the mobility behavior of its membership.

Contemporary forms of movement are clearly linked to the customary ones, as evident when mobility is analyzed on the basis of how traditional societies function and their perceptions of territorial separation from 'home.' Such historical continuity becomes even more obvious when 'home' and 'reach' are considered not as mutually exclusive identities, but as two points along the continuum of residence and activity space within which households are continuously involved. Being at 'reach' does not translate into abandoning 'home,' for movement makes it possible to participate more fully in the social, the cultural, and the familial realms of society. As interactions between 'home' and 'reach' continue and intensify, so commitment to 'home' endures and is strengthened. It is through such interactions that outside opportunities are explored and new activity spaces, or niche, incorporated into the existing resource system. At times, these additions reinforce existing forms, at others they stimulate new directions to movement.

### **The Language of Those Who Move**

Despite a huge literature on human territorial mobility, little attention has been paid to an interpretive analysis based of the language and experience of people who

enter or leave particular places. Most studies, based on conventional statistics, reflect the experience of a place in terms of the arithmetic of the inward and outward mobility of individuals. Yet place specific statistics of population often are in contradiction to the experience of people living there. Similarly, while some features of territorial mobility are common across societies, as in this study the experience of traditional societies does not necessarily replicate that of western societies. For mobility is a phenomenon rooted in tradition and in customary practice, routinely reinforced as households respond to the challenges, constraints, and obligations of rural living, but far more than an exclusively economic activity. For members of a traditional society solely dependent upon agriculture, a separation from 'home' carries different meanings from those societies where land-based ties are comparatively weaker.

For traditional societies, propositions about human mobility need to acknowledge their historical and cultural context, and thus be conceived differently from those referring to more developed societies (Prothero, 1987). From the standpoint of western scholarship, an indigenous typology of mobility may appear unbounded, because at times categories are ambiguous or flexible, there is no clear fit with those derived from western experience, nor are the time-space boundaries well defined for many forms of mobility. Eliciting traditional sources of wisdom is critical to understanding how rural societies function, much of which can only be obtained by including the subjective dimension in research designs and capturing local expressions, sayings, and proverbs that relate to mobility. On the other hand,

attempts to translate conventional terms into indigenous languages to obtain cross-national data is of limited value (Prothero 1985). This strategy is more likely to result in misunderstanding, deny local meanings, and work against an insider's representation of the movement process.

The language of those who move can offer several insights to the literature on mobility. First, village involvement in territorial mobility is so profound that traditional societies can no longer be depicted as isolated from and ignorant of the outside world. Second, mobility cannot be considered as a one way connection between two points, as a start and finish relationship between places of origin and of destination. Conventional bimodal categories of mobility, such as permanent/impermanent and rural/urban, provide simplified indices of complex reality but convey the mistaken impression of each being mutually exclusive from the other. They camouflage the fact that people can be involved simultaneously in 'home' and 'reach,' in a system of living in two places. Although rural movers maintain their footholds in the village, many of their 'reaches' are in fact extensions of 'home' and the functions of that mobility are to participate fully in the cultural, economic, and social life of the local community rather than to abandon it.

Third, mobility in traditional society reflects its ethnic and social groupings, so that some forms of movement are specific to certain groups while many are common to all. The roots of this commonality and differentiation can be traced in history, but the ongoing interaction of households with the world 'beyond' means that several forms of mobility are continually redefined and new meanings incorporated.

Likewise, the specific meaning and significance of mobility often varies from one social group to another.

Fourth, among people of traditional societies, there is deep respect and sentiment for 'home,' where people's occupancy of a place and their beliefs about it are attributed to the ancestors. Accordingly, one's abandonment of 'home' does not come easily, even though a particular departure may bring more immediate gains than losses. But the measurement of loss and gain in movement, as in any kind of human behavior, is an intricate task. As Shils (1978: 426) points out: ". . . economic advantage and disadvantage can be calculated, but can the cultural gains and losses of the main parties, their subsidiary parts, and the ideal of universal humanity be calculated?"

Fifth, some forms of movement can be undertaken with little premeditation. *Baralina jane*, random journeys or walkabouts, is a succinct example, but not an isolated case for Ghumaune and Yakhagaun. Similarly, Frazer (1985) reports that among the To'ambaita of Solomon Islands, *liliula* was neither purposeful nor goal-oriented. To these villagers, the simple act of wandering around was far more significant than some underlying reason.

The interpretation of human mobility as either continuity or discontinuity is related not only to the ideology, scale of investigation, and general methodology of the scholar but also to how it is human nature to characterize social reality into discrete compartments. Tuan (1984: 245-247) provides four reasons why elements or processes come to be perceived or understood in terms of the separateness of

continuity or discontinuity. First, eyes and hands with which human beings are equipped enable them to perceive reality not only as consisting of interlocked patterns but also of separate, three-dimensional objects. As Tuan (1984: 246) mentions, "being out of context and appreciating things cut off from their familiar settings are a uniquely developed human capacity and a common human experience."

The second reason results from the fact that, in social life, human beings are both individuals and members of a group. This suggests that people find reassurance in seeing their own group as a superorganism for a collection of individuals. Thirdly, all people want to be connected with others, as reflected in social life, but also like to feel that they are linked to the powers of nature. Finally, the experience of the accidental in life's routines, which could have been avoided with some precautions, encourages human beings to apprehend reality as either continuous or discontinuous phenomena. In the context of continuity and discontinuity in mobility studies, it is not an overstatement to suggest that the debate about continuity or discontinuity reflects nothing more than the habit of human nature to fit historical and social reality into continuous or discrete categories.

Many features of rural life, one of which is the practice of mobility, do not confirm objective or for that matter measurable criteria. Likewise, the complexity of traditional customs and practices and their relationships to mobility are difficult to discern by outsiders, especially when they are expected to refer to some preexisting model in the literature. In such situations, explanation can only be interpretive and derive from inherent understanding. There is great richness in the indigenous terms



and phrases used in the language of those who move. Not surprisingly, in a keynote address at a conference on planning for population change, Chapman (1988) urges that research on 'third world mobility' needs to be done far more by members of their own community and should be dominated less by outsiders.

### **Policy Implications**

Policy implications are a complicated issue in studies such as this that do not cover a large area or a sizable population. Two basic questions are involved. First, can the findings from such a case study be taken to represent a wider population and broader area, and can it be generalized? Second, can an understanding of those meanings associated with the phenomenon of territorial mobility be translated into public policies? The answers to these two questions are complex and the debate, despite a considerable literature, is far from concluded.

#### **Is Generalization Possible?**

The possibility of a small area or population being 'representative' or 'typical' has been answered convincingly over the past few years. Third world research has established that small-area studies can be pursued to evolve theory, test methodologies, and refine understanding rather than simply being viewed as anecdotal or descriptive illustration. On this basis, conclusions about a small area can be generalized to other places with similar contextual circumstances and are derived "from an astute mix of intuition and a detailed awareness of the inner workings of a piece of social reality (Chapman, 1981:86-87)." Logical extension and the power of

theoretical reasoning is an integral element in generalization from small area research studies, which is premised upon the universality of theoretical propositions. As Mitchell (1983: 198) notes:

The inference about the **logical** [his emphasis] relationship between the two characteristics is not based upon the representativeness of the sample and therefore upon its typicality, but rather upon the plausibility or upon the logicity of the nexus between the two characteristics.

Despite the enormous potential of small-area studies to refine theory, there has been less success than might have been expected, but this relates more to poor research design than to an inherent weakness of the genre. Many empirical studies are not conceptually well-informed and their potential contribution to theory consequently is dissipated. As Stoecker (1991: 108) points out:

. . . redefining the case study as a research frame with structural and historical boundaries, an integral theory component, involved rather than distanced researcher, and multiple methods which include collaborative methods, provides different standards from which to judge the adequacy of our work.

### **Can Findings of Interpretive Study be Translated into Public Policies?**

A second question faced by scholars is that interpretive understanding is difficult to relate to the requirements of planners, forecasters, and policy makers. Of course, the results of such studies may not be directly transferable to the broad policy goals of the nation state, but certainly can help at the regional and local levels. More importantly, it is at these local and regional levels that most decisions are made about utility services and social and educational provisions for the public. Planners and policy makers at some point must be able to answer who moves, where, for how long, and what is the link of this process with customary lifeways. Data on

population change and migration trends are needed routinely, and in as much detail as possible, to design, implement, and monitor whether set objectives have been accomplished. Secondly, territorial mobility is closely related to both the seasonality of one's environment and the lifecycle of collective households and their particular memberships. Over time, this is expressed in the changes in household composition and in patterns of consumption. In turn, such dynamics have a direct impact upon government provisions of social and economic services, mainly the establishment of schools, health clinics, transport facilities, and income-generating activities.

**Need for a Change in Focus:** Often, planners and policy makers complain that people on the move do not respond to their initiatives in ways they had expected. Likewise, they claim to be dissatisfied with existing distributions of population. Part of this complex problem is substantive - the policy instruments- and part conceptual. Normally, public policies are based solely on statistics organized by areal unit, which means these data depict the synthetic character of a place but do not incorporate the experience of people for whom such policies and programs are designed. The critical problem for planners is that the contradictions between the experience of people and what is suggested by statistical profiles is common rather than rare.

The territorial mobility of people is intimately related to locational decisions about social provisions and income generating activities. In the same way, people's movements are influenced by the existing location of social and economic facilities. Thus mobility affects the demand for essential services, housing, health services, and retail stores at 'home' or at 'reach,' which fluctuates because of frequent change in

the *de facto* population. The number, location, and types of essential service facilities are equally affected by the movements of people (Young and Doohan, 1989). The ever increasing amount of mobility, in both size and distance, and the longer durations of absence have both immediate and lasting implications for policy. In the words of a leading population expert,

The need to be concerned with the distribution and re-distribution of population is greater now than it ever was. There are more people involved and the problems which their numbers present in relation to available resources are formidable (Prothero, 1985:18).

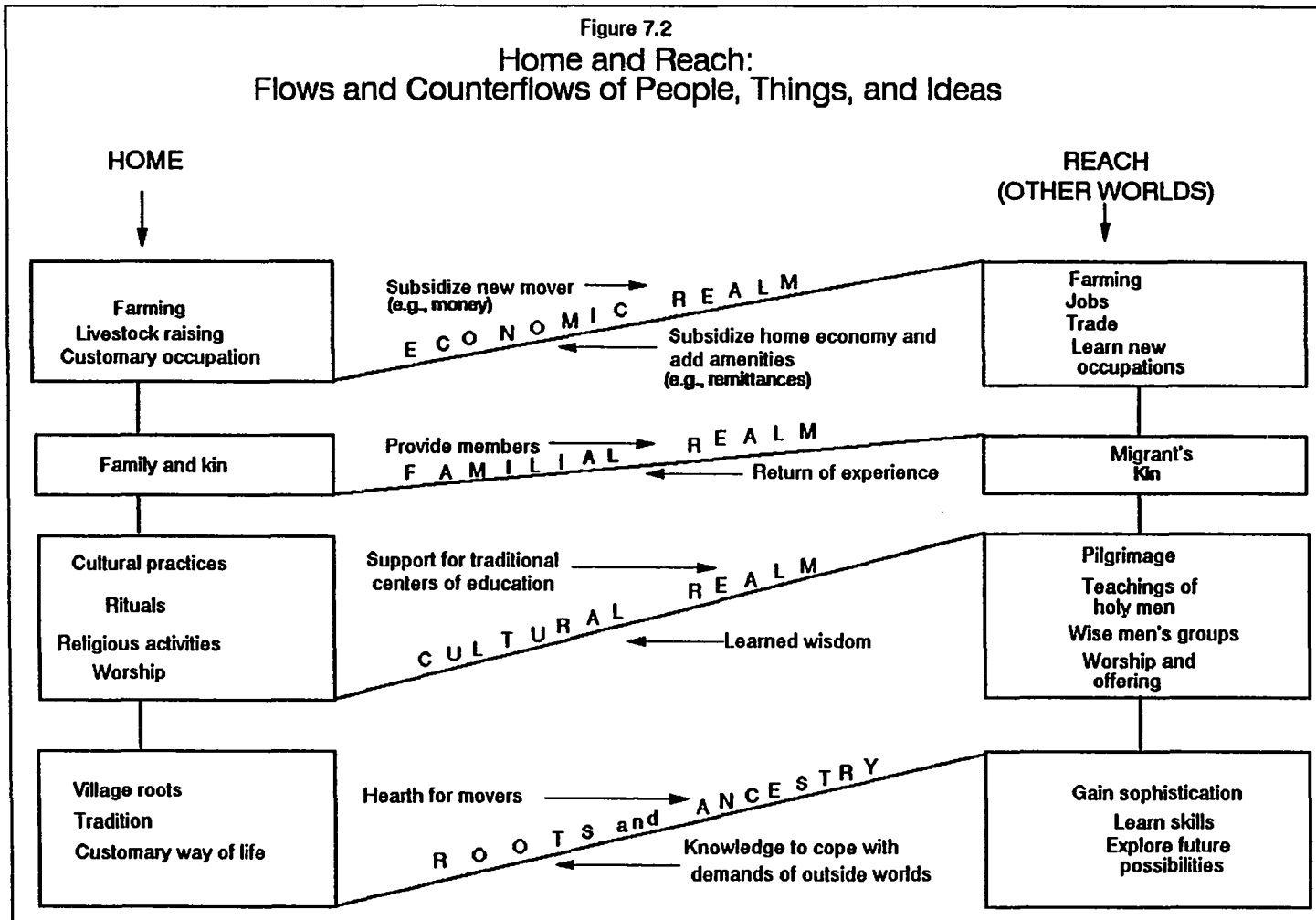
The conceptual problem lies in the fact that policy maker's view 'home' and 'reach' as two separate entities rather than an integrated whole. Similarly, the dominance of urban-oriented referents of location in the existing literature implies that policy decisions and instruments flow from towns and cities to rural 'home.' Essentially overlooked is the integratedness of 'home,' where movers have their foothold, and 'reach,' which is a place to experience. This lack of realization is not related to the presence or absence of policy instruments to highlight the integratedness of 'home' and 'reach,' but rather to the dominant ways in which the use of those instruments are conceived (Chapman, personal communication). The prevailing image of an instrument, such as a road, is that it drains people from the village into urban centers, despite the fact that it carries traffic in both directions. The problem is not the instrument (the road), but the fact that planners and policy makers conceive of villages and towns as discrete entities, rather than as 'home' and 'reach' connected within an interactional system. Similarly, they consider mobility as a one way, start -

and - finish act between unrelated points of origin and of destination instead of a key means of linking together points on a socioeconomic landscape.

Figure 7.2 highlights how 'home' and 'reach' may be viewed as entities within an interactional system. Flows and counterflows of people, things, and ideas along with several realms of 'home' and 'reach,' reinforce this connectivity and further enhance integratedness. In the economic realm, households try to utilize all resource possibilities. While movers may be subsidized at a 'reach' in the early stages, later it is the 'reach' which assists the local economy and adds amenities to 'home.' Similarly, in the familial realm, those at 'home' and at 'reach' are most often members of the same collective household and at times pool resources for the common good of the family.

The cultural realm is equally interactive. Just as cultural practices, rituals, and religious activities at 'home' need instructional, spiritual, and moral support from 'reach,' so do traditional centers of instruction, worship, and pilgrimage rely on 'home.' From it comes the necessary constituencies - pilgrims, pupils, offerings - for cultural centers to exist at 'reach.' Even more critical, 'home' is where one's roots and ancestry provides an emotional anchor for movers, whereas 'reach' provides updated knowledge for 'home' to be able to cope with the demands of outside worlds. Sophistication gained and skills learnt at 'reach' help stimulate tradition and reinvigorate customary ways of life. Both dimensions are essential, strengthen each other, and reinforce the integratedness of 'home' and 'reach.'

Figure 7.2  
Home and Reach:  
Flows and Counterflows of People, Things, and Ideas



If planners and policy makers lack a longitudinal and processual view of territorial mobility and conceive of it 'as a mechanistic sequence of fixed cross-sections' (Chapman, personal communication), they can hardly appreciate people's movement as interaction over a life span. While young people want to see and explore the world beyond for themselves, aging often is paralleled by a gradual retreat to 'home,' but only a processual approach to mobility can reveal this. From this lack of realization derives the position that young people move to urban centers and most often do not return; consequently some kind of mechanism is needed to check the rural exodus, close cities, and/or deny entry to certain regions.

A critical need is to change the conceptual stance and realize that policy instruments such as transport and communication not only link 'home' and 'reach,' but also facilitate and function as two-way relationships. They both permit people to travel from the village and to return to it. Nor are people's attitudes towards 'home' and 'reach' static or constant during a lifetime. When movement is conceived as an integral part of life and when 'home and 'reach' are seen as parts of an integrated whole rather than as mutually exclusive entities, then a more appropriate policy would be to make territorial mobility as simple and as easy as possible between village and town, rather than to restrict or to forbid entry and exit. Hence, as Chapman (personal communication, 1993) points out, a successful policy would try to integrate a social landscape in every conceivable manner.

**Mobility, Change, and Social Provisions:** Interaction between 'home' and 'reach' induces behavioral and social change within individual households and the wider

community. Implementation of policies related to public awareness, such as public health, family planning, and agricultural extension can be reinforced as rural movers balance obligations and demands at 'home' with the potentials and opportunities at 'reach.' Changes filter through movers in both directions, irrespective of whether these are favorable or unfavorable. While recognizing this unhelpful dimension, Mabogunje (1972: 113) points out that the mobility process was "instrumental in spreading those values which are vital for the stimulation of development in many parts of West Africa."

Public policies can also be assisted by awareness that the movements of people are linked to their social groupings and to their memberships of certain castes or ethnic groups. At the local level, differential mobility experience based on social and economic attributes can help determine both priority areas and target groups when public policies are being translated into action. If territorial mobility has been a way of life since time immemorial, then planners and policy makers need to identify the connections between customary behavior and the nature of improvements thought necessary in society. Understanding these linkages can be vital for the successful implementation of public policies.

A fundamental problem in developing countries lies in disparities of population concentration, one agent of which is territorial mobility through the relocation of various kinds of skills and the subsequent impact on the social life of families and of communities. Given the roots of territorial mobility in tradition and custom, planners and decision makers should go beyond mainstream policies of family planning,



immigration and emigration policies. A deep understanding of the sociocultural and economic contexts within which movement occurs could help policy makers overcome the myth, projected by models of the western experience, that "peasantry is immobile and that migration on a large scale really began with industrialization and urbanization (Skeldon, 1990:1)." The current literature is full of negative images about population movement. It is frequently argued that people have always moved under severe economic pressure and that their situation even gets worse at their destination. If planners would acknowledge that territorial mobility is a part of life and can confer social and economic benefits, then they could harness the interlinkages between communal lifeways, economic and social needs to design more effective public policies.

Understanding indigenous viewpoints of territorial mobility in a rural Asian society, along with the dimension of caste and ethnicity, does not in itself ensure their continued existence and viability. But at least it discloses the other intellectual and territorial side of life often taken for granted, if not completely ignored. As Tuan (1976:274) observes, its contribution lies in disclosing a reality unknown to authorities confined within their own conceptual frameworks. In turn, its recognition would enhance the formulation, distribution, and provisions of social services to help uplift rural communities and lead to more practical policies of population and overall development.

### **Endnotes**

- 1. Since the literature on population geography is vast, discussions and examples here are limited to population mobility.**
- 2. The term territorial mobility is preferred to 'migration' or 'movement' because of the importance of a strong attachment to place among peoples in traditional societies.**

**APPENDIX A  
CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN POPULATION MOVEMENT  
HOUSEHOLD SURVEY**

**Background** Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 District \_\_\_\_\_ VILLAGE \_\_\_\_\_ Village/Hamlet \_\_\_\_\_  
 HH Number \_\_\_\_\_ HH Head \_\_\_\_\_ Caste/Ethnicity \_\_\_\_\_  
 Age \_\_\_\_\_ Respondent's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Generations Lived \_\_\_\_\_

**Household Description**

How many of you are there in this household who live together and share the same kitchen? \_\_\_\_\_

SN Name of the Members (In Order)	Relationship with HH Head	M/F	Birth Date	Birth Place	Sibling Order	Age
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						
11						

(Please use the backside of this form, if the space is inadequate)

[Individual information continued....]

SN	Education Status	Occupation Prim Secon	Marital Status	Current M. Status	Age at Marriage	Natal Home	P/A
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							
11							
12							
13							

[If Absent i.e. out of the village]

SN	Departure Date	Destination	Distance	Objective	Reason	Absent Duration
----	----------------	-------------	----------	-----------	--------	-----------------

[If absent for more than a year] Does s/he visit home?

SN	Yes	No
	___	___
	___	___
	___	___
	___	___

[If visits home]

SN	Frequency of Visiting Home	Visiting Occasions	Remittance	Linkage			Frequency of Linkages
				Gifts	Letter	Other	

How many *ropani* of land does your household possess? [please include land you actually own, leased, and cultivate as tenant]

Types of land	Total	Official Quality			
		<i>Abbal</i> I	<i>Doyam</i> II	<i>Sim</i> III	<i>Chahar</i> IV

*Khet*

*Bari* (plowable)

*Pakho* (unplowable)

What are your other sources of income ? What is their approximate share in your total annual income/expenditure (in percentage)?

Other Sources of Income	Approx. share in total household income
-------------------------	---

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4
- 5

[Thank You for Your Cooperation]

**APPENDIX B  
CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN POPULATION MOVEMENT  
PROSPECTIVE MOBILITY REGISTER**

Village Cluster \_\_\_\_\_ HH No \_\_\_\_\_ Beginning Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name of the Household Head \_\_\_\_\_ M/F \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Sibling Order \_\_\_\_\_

ID*	Date of Departure	Place	Reach Internal/ Foreign	Distance from Home	Date of Return	Absent Period	Primary Goal	Cause	Mode of Transport	Local terms for such Moves	Remarks
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[Thank you for your cooperation]

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\* Each individual of the household will be assigned a six digit code which indicates village, household number, membership number and gender.

**APPENDIX C  
CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN POPULATION MOVEMENT  
ECONOMIC SURVEY**

Village \_\_\_\_\_ Household No. \_\_\_\_ Name of Household Head \_\_\_\_\_

1. How many members are there in your household? Total -- Male \_\_ Female \_\_
2. How did you acquire ownership of this household?  
 Inherited \_\_ Bought \_\_ Donated (gift) \_\_ Self acquired \_\_  
 Others (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
3. What kind of house (building type) do you have? *Pacca* \_\_ *Kaccha* \_\_  
 If *pacca* how many stories: One \_\_ Two \_\_ Three \_\_  
 If *kaccha*, is it *Chime* \_\_ *Jhupro* \_\_ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
4. Do you or any member of your family own land? Yes \_\_ No \_\_  
 If yes, how many plots? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Please list the amount of land your household owns today according to methods of acquisition:

Method of Acquisition	Owner	Tenant	Irrigated	Non-irrigated	Distance from home
					<i>Bari Pakho</i>

Inherited

Bought

Donated (gift)

Other (please specify)

6. Could you provide an inventory of the transactions of land and other possessions after you become head of the household?

**BOUGHT**

Year	Amount and type of land	Source of fund	Relationships between two parties
------	-------------------------	----------------	-----------------------------------

**SOLD**

Year	Amount and type of land	Reason for sale	Relationships between two parties
------	-------------------------	-----------------	-----------------------------------

7. Have you leased (granted or taken) any parcel of land? (Please include lease/s that are not officially registered) Yes \_\_ , No \_\_ .

8. If yes, please provide the following details:

Type of land and Amount	Type of Contract Oral	Written	Payment Cash/kind	Amount	Total annual production from leased land	Remarks
----------------------------	--------------------------	---------	----------------------	--------	---	---------

9. Do you (your household) own private forest? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_.

If yes, total area in (*ropani*) \_\_\_\_\_.

10. What is the source of fuelwood for your household?

Private forest \_\_\_ Nearby public forest \_\_\_ Own farm \_\_\_ Other (specify)

11. Where do you get fodder and grass for the cattle and goats?

Own farm \_\_\_ Private forest -- Nearby public forest \_\_\_ Other (specify)

12. Please provide the details of last year's crops and their productions from your land.

Crops	Land Type	Seed amount	Total labor	Production	Amount for Sale
	<i>khet bari</i>			<i>muri pathi</i>	<i>muri pathi</i> Price

Paddy

Summer

Winter

Maize

Wheat

Millet

Beans

*Mas* (Urad)

Soyabean

*Masyang*

Potato

Cardamom

Oilseed

Fruits

Tangerines

Sugarcane

Guavas

Vegetables

Others (specify)

13. Do you apply compost (domestic) and/or chemical fertilizer? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_.

If yes, please give the details:

Crops	Quantity of domestic manure used (in load, 1 load equals approx. 20 kg.)	Chemical fertilizer (in kg)
-------	---	--------------------------------

Paddy

Summer

Winter

Maize

Wheat

Millet

Oilseed

Potato

Fruits

Vegetables

14. Have you taken agricultural or other kinds of loans? If yes, please give details:

Name of institution or individual	Total Year amount	Purpose	Interest rate	Relationship (if applicable)
--------------------------------------	----------------------	---------	------------------	---------------------------------

15. Is any of your family members involved in non-agricultural activities?

Yes  No . If yes, (if multiple sources please mark all relevant choices)

Professional service  Business  *Lahure*  Wage labor (local)

Pension  Contract labor  Other (specify)

16. Please provide details on your income from off-farm employment last year:

Type of employment	Place of employment	Payment type	Total income
--------------------	---------------------	--------------	--------------

17. Please provide details on your farm produce taken to the market last year:

Items/produce	Quantity	Price (total)
---------------	----------	---------------

Crops

—

—

Cattle

Goats

Poultry

Eggs

Fruits

—

Vegetables

—

Other (specify)

18. Please provide your item wise household expenditure of last year? Please answer whichever column is suitable for the item.

Items	Amount of cash spend (in Rupees)				
	Daily	Monthly	Annual	Occasional	Emergency

Food items

Cloths

Shoes

Tuition fee

School supplies

Taxes

Medicine

Maintenance



Agricultural  
 implements  
 Salt  
 Kerosine  
 Mustard oil  
 Soaps  
 Tea  
 Sugar  
 Spices  
 Tobacco  
 Matches  
 Drinks  
 Meat  
 Vegetables  
 Festivals  
 Rituals  
 Donations  
 Miscellaneous

19. Can I get an inventory of cattles in your household?

Description	Total Number	Total sold last year
-------------	--------------	----------------------

Cow

Oxen

Cow calves

Buffalo

Goats

Pigs

Poultry

Other (specify)

20. How was your agricultural production last year?

Much better than usual \_\_\_ Better than average \_\_\_ As usual \_\_\_

Not so good \_\_\_ Worse than average years \_\_\_ Other (specify)

21. In terms of household consumption, how was your agricultural production last year?

Sufficient for the whole year \_\_\_ Insufficient for the whole year \_\_\_.

22. If your farm production was insufficient, for how many months? \_\_\_ months.

23. How did you manage during those months? (If more than one sources were utilized, please rank 1, 2, 3... accordingly)

Borrowing \_\_\_ Loan in cash \_\_\_ Wage labor \_\_\_ Help from relatives \_\_\_

Sale of household items \_\_\_ Other (specify)

24. How would you characterize your economic condition within last 10 years after you became head of the household? As usual \_\_\_ Improving \_\_\_ Improved significantly \_\_\_ Declining \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_.

25. Do you hire laborers for your farm work? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_. If yes, for how many days and how many in total (annual) \_\_\_ \_\_\_.

26. How do you pay the laborer? Cash \_\_\_ Kind \_\_\_. Please specify rate and/or quantity per person per day \_\_\_ \_\_\_.

27. Within last 10 years have you introduced new technology and/or crops in your farm? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_. If yes, please list the technology and the date of introduction:

a.

b.

c.

d.

[Thank you for your cooperation]

APPENDIX D  
 CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN POPULATION MOVEMENT  
 LIFE-HISTORY MATRIX SURVEY

Village Hamlet \_\_\_\_\_ HH No. \_\_\_\_\_ Name of the Respondent \_\_\_\_\_ ID # \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Household Position (Head/ Others) \_\_\_\_\_ Sibling Order \_\_\_\_\_

Age	Year	Education	Occupation	Mobility	Marital	Demographic	Family	Health	Buy/sell	Personal	Related	Remarks
			I II III	Details	Status	Events	Events	Status	of Land	Achieve- ments	Personal Events	
				P* D* R*								

---

P\* stands for Place Moved; D\* stands for Duration; R\* stands for reasons of Mobility

**APPENDIX E**  
**CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN POPULATION MOVEMENT**  
**REACH SURVEY**

Name of the Respondent \_\_\_\_\_ Home Village \_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_  
 Education \_\_\_\_\_ Current Place of Residence: \_\_\_\_\_ Rural/ Urban \_\_\_\_\_  
 [Your response to the following questions will be remain confidential. We appreciate your time and help]

1. How many brothers and sisters are there in your family? Brothers \_\_\_\_, Sisters \_\_\_\_.
2. What is your sibling order? \_\_\_\_\_.
3. What level of education were you able to achieve at your home village?  
 Literate \_\_\_\_ Primary \_\_\_\_ Secondary \_\_\_\_ College \_\_\_\_  
 Occupational skills \_\_\_\_\_
4. When did you come to this place first? Year \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_.
5. What was your family/marital status then?  
 Single \_\_\_\_ Married \_\_\_\_ Married with Children ---.
6. What is your current marital status?  
 Single \_\_\_\_ Married \_\_\_\_ Married with Children ---.
7. If you are married, where does your spouse come from?  
 Current Place of Residence \_\_\_\_ Home Village \_\_\_\_ Neighboring Village \_\_\_\_  
 Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_.
8. What was your academic qualification when you decided to live here?  
 Literate Only \_\_\_\_ Primary Level \_\_\_\_ Secondary Level \_\_\_\_ S.L. C. \_\_\_\_  
 I. A. or Equivalent \_\_\_\_ B. A. or Equivalent and above \_\_\_\_  
 Special Occupational Skills \_\_\_\_ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_.
9. If you were married, when you decided to live here did you bring your family with you? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_
10. What is your occupation now? If you are involved in more than one occupation, please rank them as 1, 2, 3, ... according to the importance.  
 Agriculture \_\_\_\_ Local Business \_\_\_\_ Teaching \_\_\_\_ *Lahure* \_\_\_\_  
 Government Service (Gazetted or Non-Gazetted) \_\_\_\_ Student \_\_\_\_  
 Others (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_.
11. Why did you decided to live here? Please rank them according to the importance.  
 Bought land \_\_\_\_ Began business \_\_\_\_ Relatives were here \_\_\_\_ For study \_\_\_\_  
 Got a job here \_\_\_\_ More facilities available here (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_.
12. Did you decide to live here because of the lack of facilities/opportunities in your home village? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_.
13. If the answer to Q. N. 12 is yes, which of the following is the main factor? Please rank according to the importance.  
 Land inherited was insufficient \_\_\_\_ Lack of health, education and transport facilities in the village \_\_\_\_ Low productivity of land \_\_\_\_ Relatives left the village \_\_\_\_ Lack of employment opportunities in the village \_\_\_\_ Other (please specify) ---.
14. Among the push factors from the village and the pull factors at this place which one

- do think has influenced your decision most?  
 Factors related to the village \_\_\_ Factors related to the current residence \_\_\_  
 Both \_\_\_.
15. In your decision to live here, who was the principal actor?  
 Completely yours \_\_\_ Mainly yours \_\_\_ Family decision \_\_\_ Others (please specify) \_\_\_
16. What is your current economic situation compared with the one in the previous village? Better here \_\_\_ Same \_\_\_ Not good here \_\_\_ Currently the same but future opportunities are better here \_\_\_ Others (please specify) \_\_\_.
17. Do you have land or other possessions at home village? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_.  
 If yes, please specify the amount Land \_\_\_ Other possessions \_\_\_
18. If your answer to Q. N. 17 is yes, who is taking care of your possessions in the village currently? \_\_\_.
19. If you do not have any possessions in the village why is it so?  
 Sold everything and migrated \_\_\_ Because of being landless \_\_\_ Thought inappropriate to ask for a share of limited land given when your own brothers are cultivating them \_\_\_ Undecided whether to ask for the share of inherited properties \_\_\_ Can earn more than can be obtained from the share of parental properties \_\_\_ Others (please specify) \_\_\_.
20. How regularly do you visit your home village? Regularly \_\_\_ Occasionally \_\_\_ Seldom \_\_\_ Others (please specify) \_\_\_.
21. If you visit your home village, could you specify the frequency (in months) and the occasions of visit? \_\_\_
22. Given you have a long association with this place do you feel like the person of this place or a person closely associated with your home village?  
 Urbanite \_\_\_ Person well adapted to the current place \_\_\_ Person closely associated with home village because of familial, social and emotional sentiments \_\_\_ Other ((your opinion) \_\_\_
23. Why do you feel like the way you answered Q.N. 22? Can you give your opinion on this? ---
24. How do you maintain linkages with home i.e., previous village?  
 Regular visiting \_\_\_ Families and friends visit us \_\_\_ Remittance to home \_\_\_ Correspondence through letters \_\_\_ Other (please specify) \_\_\_
25. When and what aspects of home village you miss most while you are at reach? Please list according to the significance.
- |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|
| a. | b. | c. |
| d. | e. | e. |
| f. | g. |    |
26. Overall do you prefer this place to home village? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
27. Why do you think you prefer reach or home?
- |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|
| a. | b. | c. |
| d. | e. | f. |
28. Do you intend to return home (now or in the near future)?  
 Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Other (please specify) \_\_\_

29. What are the contexts which lead your intention to stay here or to return home?  
Please list according to their importance.
- |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|
| a. | b. | c. |
| d. | e. | f. |
30. How do you introduce yourself to your new friends in terms of where do you belong to (live)?  
Home (previous) village \_\_\_ Current residence \_\_\_ Other (please specify) \_\_\_
31. What are the circumstances behind your answer to Q.N. 30? Why not the other way around? \_\_\_\_\_
32. In your opinion what are your responsibilities (if any) to your home village? Please list them.
- |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|
| a. | b. | c. |
| d. | e. | f. |
33. In terms of interaction at reach whom do you interact most?  
The locals \_\_\_ Those from the village \_\_\_
34. Could you comment on your personal experience of leaving the village and trying to adjust here at reach.

Thank you for your cooperation.

## GLOSSARY

<i>Aagan</i>	courtyard (cleared and levelled)
<i>Aakha chhaunjel desh khanu;</i> <i>daat chhaunjel haddi chapaunu</i>	chew bones while you have teeth, see the world while your eyes have sights
<i>aaja sangrati, bholi bhagrati,</i> <i>[and] parsi dangdang rati</i>	today is the first day (of the month), tomorrow is a leaving day, the next is a desertion from home
<i>Aayo gayo maya moha,</i> <i>aayena gayena ko h-o ko h-o</i>	if you visit, we feel you belong to us; if you do not visit (come), you may be [considered] a stranger
<i>Adda/adalat jane</i>	movement to visit government offices
<i>Aghi aune bhariya ko roji bisauni</i>	the first to arrive gets the best place to rest
<i>Allare</i>	young, not tied by household responsibility
<i>Amliso</i>	tiger grass
<i>Ansha</i>	share, division
<i>Aara katna/u jane</i>	wage labor migration specific to timber works
<i>Artha</i>	desire for material gain
<i>Ashrams</i>	stages of life-cycle in the traditional system
<i>Aspatal jane</i>	movement for medical treatment
<i>Astu selauna jane</i>	a form of cultural/religious movement/journey
<i>Baas uhos</i>	to be forced to leave the village
<i>Baralina jane</i>	walkabouts
<i>Bari</i>	unirrigated land
<i>Barkhe dhan</i>	summer rice
<i>Basai sarai</i>	relocation
<i>Bazar jane/sauda lina jane</i>	movement to the market centers
<i>Beni jharau, tongba naarou</i>	let's enjoy the local fair
<i>Besi</i>	low-lying basin
<i>Bhagne</i>	escape, run away
<i>Bhokal garnu</i>	to make a promise [of offerings to gods/goddesses]
<i>Bhiksha dina jane</i>	(movement to participate in a thread (holy) giving rituals
<i>Bhog</i>	right to occupy (land)
<i>Bhus pitho</i>	ingredients of cattle food
<i>Birami herna jane</i>	move to visit a sick person
<i>Birta</i>	land granted by the state on a tax free basis.
<i>Brahma</i>	the creator, one of the trinities of Hindu gods
<i>Brahmacharyashram</i>	celibate pupil
<i>Bratavandha</i>	the thread giving ceremony for upper caste boys
<i>Chamal</i>	rice
<i>Char dham garnu</i>	visits to four major Hindu shrines
<i>Chaur</i>	barren field
<i>Cheli lina/puryauna Jane</i>	movement to receive/send off daughter or sister
<i>Chhori herna jane</i>	a visit to the (married) daughter
<i>Chime</i>	one-story hut whose walls are made of bamboo and straw)
<i>Choya</i>	local cordage out of splitted bamboo
<i>Chuche dhungo uhi tungo</i>	mean move to several places but return to the origin

<i>Dahi [and] mohi</i>	yogurt and its product
<i>Damai</i>	tailor
<i>Damlo</i>	sennit or string
<i>Dando kataune</i>	sent (forcefully) out of the village
<i>Dashain</i>	biggest festival of the Hindus
<i>Desh khai shesh hunu</i>	experienced through high mobility
<i>Desh khan hideka</i>	<i>adventure trips</i>
<i>Desh nakhayeko manis ra bachcha napayeko aimai pako hudaina</i>	men without an experience of outside world and women without an experience of labor pain are always immature go out for a change, to kill two birds with one stone surname of Yakha ethnic group
<i>Desh pani herine; mukh pani pherine</i>	
<i>Dewan</i>	raw rice
<i>Dhan</i>	a traditional dance named after the paddy
<i>Dhan naach</i>	to do righteous duties
<i>Dharma</i>	perform religious duties
<i>Dharma garnu</i>	local spring and/or well
<i>Dhara/pandhero</i>	land, the mother
<i>Dharti mata</i>	tax based on the building structure based on household.
<i>Dhuri kar</i>	a kind of bamboo basket
<i>Doko</i>	security guard
<i>Durban</i>	
<i>Gaule</i>	country people
<i>Gaun</i>	village
<i>Gaunbesi garne</i>	transhumance, movement between home and fields
<i>Gauntira</i>	toward the village
<i>Gauntira ko halkhabar ke chha?</i>	what's the news of the village?
<i>Ghar katara</i>	homesteads
<i>Ghar khan jane</i>	marriage migration
<i>Ghar khayeki chhori ra desh khayeko chhoro</i>	a daughter who has managed new home ably and a son who has his own experience of outside world
<i>Ghara</i>	home
<i>Gharama matrai basneko manda buddhi hunchha</i>	he who limits oneself within 'home' will have a limited intelligence
<i>Ghara phirne</i>	back home
<i>Gharai ghar bhani rahane gharako 'kiro' kahalauchha; banai ban bhani dhai rahane 'veer' kahalauchha</i>	one who always limits oneself within home is an 'insect' of house and the one who takes time off and visits the world outside quite often is considered a 'courageous'
<i>Gharaki le gharai garnu; marda le chahardai garnu</i>	women concentrate more on household chores while the male continue to see the world beyond
<i>Ghum</i>	local umbrella
<i>Ghumi phiri Rumjatar</i>	move to several places but return to the origin
<i>Ghumphir</i>	short-term mobility, circulation
<i>Godan</i>	giving cow/s (to a Brahmin) to earn merit



<i>Goth</i>	temporary cowshed
<i>Gothalo</i>	who looks after the domestic cattle
<i>Grihashthashram</i>	the householder (life cycle stage)
<i>Grihashthi</i>	the householder
<i>Gurkhas</i>	soldiers in the British army originating from Gorkha i.e., Nepal
<i>Guru</i>	a teacher, a learned man
<i>Gurukul</i>	a traditional system of education
<i>Gwali</i>	cowshed
<i>Hidau dulau, kila damla nachhodoun</i>	move frequently but don't abandon home
<i>Jagir</i>	a job
<i>Jagirdar</i>	a government employee
<i>Jagir khan jane</i>	movement for professional service
<i>Jaminko/manchheko bhog aaunu</i>	
<i>parchha bhanthe ho rachha</i>	saying that the turn of the land/man comes, is true
<i>Jand</i>	drink made of fermented finger millet
<i>Janta jane</i>	to participate in a marriage ceremony
<i>Jetho/jethi</i>	first male/female
<i>Jhara</i>	a kind of forced labor
<i>Jhara tirna jane</i>	movement related to compulsory labor
<i>Jhum</i>	shifting cultivation
<i>Jungala muluk</i>	a densely forested area
<i>Kadkal jane</i>	movement as an escort
<i>Kadkudo</i>	storage of fuelwood
<i>Kaha basne?, ko hunu bho?</i>	where do you live? who are you?
<i>Kama</i>	to fulfil one's physical, and emotional desires
<i>Kaman jane ra barsa basne din gaye</i>	movement to [plantation] estates are not beneficial any more
<i>Kami</i>	the smiths
<i>Kanya daan</i>	offering a virgin girl to a suitable groom
<i>Kanyakubja Brahmin</i>	Brahmin from Kannauj
<i>Kanyarthu jane</i>	movement to seek a bride
<i>Karma</i>	fate, predestination
<i>Kera jhai ganjinu,</i>	
<i>dubo jhai maulaunu'</i>	as a kin, you flourish and remain intact as banana tree (bunch), and prosper <i>dubo</i> (a ground grass)
<i>Kerako chhoro ra manchheko chhoro</i>	the offsprings of a banana tree and human beings do not
<i>ekai thauma sapranna</i>	flourish adequately at single locale
<i>Khar</i>	thatch or straw
<i>Kharka [and] nagi</i>	traditional pasture lands in the higher elevations
<i>Khas/Bahun</i>	Chhetri/Brahmin
<i>Khet</i>	irrigated land
<i>Khetala</i>	laborers
<i>Khetipati</i>	agriculture
<i>khola</i>	river
<i>Khor</i>	sheds for goats, pigs, or poultry
<i>Khoria phadne</i>	slash and burn farming

<i>Kila damla</i>	pole [and] string
<i>Kiranti</i>	one of many ethnic groups in Nepal
<i>Kiro</i>	insect, belittling
<i>Kisan</i>	peasants
<i>Kothebari</i>	kitchen garden
<i>Kucho</i>	broom made of <i>amliso</i>
<i>Kuldev</i>	clan deity
<i>Kulli bharti jane</i>	wage labor migration
<i>Kuwako bhyaguto</i>	frog of a pond
<i>Lahure</i>	a British or Indian army recruit (Nepali)
<i>Lahure/lahur jane</i>	movement to join the British/Indian army
<i>Lapche</i>	an ethnic group
<i>Lekh</i>	higher hills
<i>Limbuan</i>	the kingdom of Limbus
<i>Madesh</i>	the Tarai
<i>Madesh jharne</i>	Move to Tarai
<i>Mana</i>	a unit of measurement; one meal
<i>Maipar</i>	across the Mai river
<i>Maita jane</i>	movement to women's natal home
<i>Marda parda, bhar/abhar ka sathi</i>	friends in need and friends indeed.
<i>Mantra</i>	verses from <i>Vedas</i> and <i>Puranas</i>
<i>Maru khaera muri</i>	
<i>ubjaune bela</i>	a very crucial period of farming
<i>Maya</i>	an abstract emotional feeling
<i>Mela herna/bharna jane</i>	visit to a fair
<i>Mohi</i>	a drink made of yogurt, tenant
<i>Moksha</i>	saivation by release from the wheel of eternal rebirths
<i>Moolghar</i>	main home
<i>Muglan bhasine</i>	movement out of social outcasting
<i>Mukhiya</i>	a local chief
<i>Mukai</i>	<i>same as</i> moksha
<i>Muri</i>	160 <i>mana</i> ,
<i>Na rou na rou cheli timi,</i>	
<i>maiti timro ghara hoina;</i>	
<i>foola jasto timro youvan,</i>	
<i>aaba timi hamro hoina</i>	a local song that tries to console a bride
<i>Nimto manna jane</i>	move as an invited person
<i>Noon [and] tel</i>	salt, kerosine etc.
<i>Padho guno ke kaam,</i>	
<i>halo joto khayoo maam</i>	what is the use of schooling, [forget it] cultivate your land,
<i>Pahaad</i>	produce crops and lead your life
<i>Padna jane</i>	hills
<i>Pakho</i>	movement for education, learning
<i>Pallo-Kirant</i>	slope land
<i>Para</i>	far eastern Kirant
	beyond home

<i>Pareli/parma</i>	a system of labor exchange
<i>Pashupatinath ko jatra sidrako byapar</i>	to kill two birds with one stone
<i>Pira</i>	a local petite mat made of maize or paddy straw
<i>Pita purkha le arjeko thalo</i>	ancestral territory
<i>Pitri garna jane</i>	journey to holy place/s
<i>Punya</i>	merit
<i>Purkha</i>	forefathers, ancestors
<i>Radi</i>	woolen blanket
<i>Raiti</i>	client
<i>Raja</i>	the king
<i>Rakam</i>	a kind of forced labor
<i>Rasti rasai basti basai khanu</i>	to utilize by opening up and developing settlements
<i>Raxi</i>	local wine
<i>Rig veda</i>	oldest of the <i>Vedas</i> (c. 1400 B.C.)
<i>Rit</i>	custom
<i>Rit puryauna jane</i>	move for ritual payments
<i>Ropani</i>	unit of land measurement (0.051 hectare)
<i>Saghauna jane</i>	movement to help relatives
<i>Sahar</i>	towns and cities
<i>Sanyashashram</i>	the renouncer
<i>Saunefagu</i>	taxes based on each roof
<i>Sauta</i>	co-wife
<i>Seem khet</i>	<i>irrigated land, quality land</i>
<i>Shradda</i>	annual ritual in tribute of the deceased person
<i>Sherma</i>	taxes based on the size of the homestead
<i>Sida puryauna jane</i>	to go to express condolence
<i>Sikuwa</i>	porch
<i>Sukhumbasi</i>	landless person
<i>Swarga</i>	the heaven
<i>Tar</i>	flat land
<i>Tel pelna jane/ghattatir jane</i>	a form of local movement
<i>Tihar</i>	one of the two biggest festivals of the Hindus
<i>Tirtha</i>	holy places
<i>Tirthayatra</i>	pilgrimage
<i>Thangro</i>	bamboo made storage, usually at the courtyard
<i>Ukhan tukka</i>	proverbs
<i>Uttama kheti, madhyama byapar, adhama jagir</i>	farming is superior [job], business is medium and service [white/blue collar job] is the inferior
<i>Vaishyas</i>	third group in the <i>varna</i> hierarchy
<i>Vamsawali</i>	genealogy
<i>Vanaprasthashram</i>	forest hermitage
<i>Veer</i>	courageous, honorific
<i>Ward</i>	political sub-division of the Village Development Committee

*Yakha*  
*Yo thauko bhog pugechha aaba*

one of three groups who belong to Kiranti group  
our days to live in this place is over

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