

# Multiculturalism in nepal

Countries



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Nepal is a country consisting of multi-lingual, multi-religious and multi-ethnic society. The Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN) noted 59 distinct cultural groups as Janajati. (NEFIN: 2005). They are found in different ecological regions, 18 groups in the mountain, 23 groups in the Hill, 7 groups in the inner Terai and 11 groups in the Terai. The Central Bureau of Statistic (CBS) could record only 41 Janajati groups with their population size and the population size of other 17 groups is not available (Dahal, 2001).

The 1992 census identified 29 castes in the Terai, 29 in the Hill and only 2 in the Mountain as their origin (K. C, 1995). The 2001 census listed 103 groups, technically only 100 groups are identified and 3 groups have not been identified yet (Dahal, 2001). In 2011 census listed 130 ethnic group 125 only identified 5 groups are not identified (NPHC 2011) Nepal is a country of multicultural, multireligious, Multilanguage, multicasts backward, low castes dalits and ethnic groups.

The traditional socio-cultural practices in Nepalese society have developed in a rigid hierarchical structured by caste. Among the different casts of Nepal Tharu is also an indigenous ethnic cast who has lived in the lowlands of Nepal for centuries. Tharu is a tribe who is living in the southern part of Nepal ie. Terai region of Nepal. Their origion is not clear. According to the myths and oral tradition, the Rana Tharu claimed to be of Rajput origin and have migrated from the Thar Desert to Nepal's Far-western Terai region. Tharu people farther east claim to be descendants of the Sakya and Koliya people living in Kapilvastu. The word Tharu is thought to be derived from Sthair meaning follower of the Theravada Buddhisim. The Tharus are recognized as an official nationality by the government of Nepal.

Tharu Families worked under the system of bonded Labour known as Kamaiya which existed in Nepal Since the 18th century following the unification of Nepal when members of the rulling elite families of Terai received landgrants in those region and were entitled to collect revenue from those who cultivated the land. In 1854, Junga Bahadur Rana , the then Nepalese Prime minister enforced Muliki Ain 1910 which classied both Hindu and non hindu casts based on their habits offoodand Drinks. Similarly ancient King Jayasthiti Malla had also divided the people on the basis of the work. The Tharu people were categorized under Baishya or Paani Chalne Masinya Matwali together with several other Alcohol drinking ethnic minorities.

Tharu are the indigenous groups of Nepal. They are actually the official tribe of Nepal. Mostly found in Terai region of Nepal . Tharus are rich inculture, tradition, rites and and rituals which they perform from birth to death. They follow the Hinduism and worship different hindu festivals. Tharu are mostly live to make an own big community. They have a great feeling of brother hood, cooperation and love. They never leave the support, care of the people of their society. They are more loyal and concern about their culture. Most of the Tharu in our country follow Hinduism.

They celebrate many festivals with lots of Joy. Most of the Tharu of Nepal are engaged in Agriculture. They mostly live in rural areas but with thedevelopment of the country, they began to live in urban area. In this modern age, Tharu are engaged in every activities. Binod Chaudhary is the Nepal's top most businessman who also comes from Tharu Community has done incredible work in Nepal indicates that Tharu people are marching forward in development with other Caste.

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According to census 2011, about 6.6 % of the people fall into the Tharu Baishya or Paani Chalne Masinya Matwali together with several other Alcohol drinking ethnic minorities categories including Tharu, Chaudhari, Majhi, Thandar ect. Such types of caste are found all over the Nepal in the Terai region including east to west. The origin of caste system is believed to be India. The caste stratification of the Indian society has its origin in the 'Chaturnabarna' system. According to Chaturnabarna system, the Hindu society was divided into mainly four Varna namely the Brahmins, the Kshetriyas, the Vaishya and the Shudras.

The Varna system, which was prevalent during the Vedic period, was mainly based on the division of the labor and occupation. The caste system has its origin in the Varna system. The present caste system can be said to be degenerated from the original Varna system (Rao; 1999). During the later part of the fourteenth century, King Jayasthiti Malla promised the caste system. He divided the existing caste system into four castes based on occupation.

In the beginning of modern period of Nepalese history, King Prithvi Narayan Shah said that Nepal is common garden of all four Varnas and thirty-six castes. This shows that the races of diverse origin have inhabited the land of Nepal. Similarly, in 1910 B. S., King Surendra Shah classified the caste as Paani Chalne Masinya Matwali.