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Impact of Language Shifting on Cultural Identity in Chepang Community in Chitwan, Nepal

Jiva Lal Chalise

Asst. Prof., Faculty of Management, Oxford College of Engineering and Management, Gaidakot, Nawalpur

Email: jeev.chalise@gmail.com

ORCID: 0009-0007-0452-5663

Abstract:

This research explores the complex relationship between language shifting and the cultural and ethnic identity of the Chepang people, one of the indigenous nationalities of Nepal. Traditionally inhabiting the central hilly regions, primarily in Chitwan, Dhading, Makawanpur districts of Bagmati province, and Gorkha district of Gandaki province, the Chepang community has a unique cultural identity, encompassing distinct traditions, beliefs, and renowned hospitality. The primary objective of this study is to examine the multifaceted impact of language shifting on the Chepang people in Chitwan. The research adopts a qualitative research design to analyse the evolving socio-cultural, religious, and economic patterns within the community. Utilising both primary and secondary sources of data, the investigation explores into the changing dynamics of Chepang identity, acknowledging the influences of language shift on their traditional practices. The research not only addresses the identified research gap but also aims to shed light on the broader implications for the Chepang community, considering the intricate web of socio-cultural, religious, and economic factors. As the Chepang people navigate the complexities of language transformation, this study serves as a vital exploration of the challenges and opportunities presented, culminating in a comprehensive understanding of the changing status of the Chepang. The findings not only contribute to the academic discourse but also serve as a valuable resource for policymakers, educators, and community leaders. Understanding the challenges faced by the Chepang people in safeguarding their unique cultural heritage is paramount, especially in the context of ongoing societal transformations that necessitate a recalibration of preservation strategies for indigenous languages and cultures.

Keywords: *chepang community, cultural identity, language shifting, socio-cultural dynamics*