CHAPTER – III
CHAPTER – 3

DYNAMICS OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHANGES

Introduction

The preceding chapter has discussed the nature and pattern of migration of the Indo-Nepalese. We have also seen that because of geographical and historical reasons, the Indo-Nepalese of the Tarai had remained outside the dominant ‘Nepali culture’ as well as the state-structure, unlike the early Indo-Aryans of the ancient and medieval periods, who settled in the hills and got assimilated with the local people. However, the Indo-Nepalese have been playing a significant role in Nepali society with multidimensional impacts. The present chapter attempts to examine the role of the Indo-Nepalese and its impact on Nepali society.

There are a number of problems in assessing the impact of the Indo-Nepalese in Nepal. Some of the basic problems need to be stated here. The primary problem is that most of the studies and information on the Indo-Nepalese do not differentiate it from the ‘Indian migrants’. Hence, discerning the role of the Indo-Nepalese become difficult. Secondly, there are not enough information to ascertain the extent of the role and impact of the Indo-Nepalese from the available literature. This chapter, therefore, deals with those areas that directly involved the Indo-Nepalese and tries to find some conjectures.

This chapter is divided into three main parts: first, social impact on cultural values and development. Secondly, economic impact on agriculture, commerce,
industries and its negative impact. Thirdly, political impact on ethno-political demography.

Social Dimensions
The impact of the Indo-Nepalese on Nepali society is studied here under four broad sections – impact on social demography; cultural values; social development; and urbanization.

Social Demography
The large-scale migration of people is bound to induce socio-cultural changes at the place of migration by changing the ethnic complex of that place.¹ The population of Indo-Nepalese was 2.1 million in 1961; 2.4 in 1971; 3.0 in 1981; 4.4 in 1991 and 5.4–6.7 in 2001.² From the population census report 2001 on mother tongue of the Indo-Nepalese, the total population shows 5.4 million. However, from the population census report by Village Development Committees (VDCs) and Municipalities of mother tongue distribution, we have derived a total figure of 6.7 million (see district breakup of the distribution of population by mother tongue of the Indo-Nepalese in Table I below).

Majority of the Indo-Nepalese live in the Nepal Tarai. This had a great impact on the socio-cultural and political context of this region.³ It not only has

² These figures are derived from the censuses data discussed in chapter 2.
resulted in increase in population of the region but the language, religion, culture of the region has also undergone considerable change. Upreti’s study of ‘Indian’ migration to Kathmandu reported:

(T)he process of ethno-demographic change in Kathmandu is not as considerable as the Tarai region, but it can be said that this process is undergoing, steadily. The Indian migrants have added new religio-cultural and linguistic characteristics to the city and it has made ethnic character quite complex.4

However, Upreti points out that because ‘there is no much difference between the two cultures, it has not given rise to any type of social problem as yet’.5 This common convergence of the two cultures is indeed strong feature of migration pattern as we have seen in the context of India and Nepal. People of both the countries easily adapt to the new environment. However, these similarities have been responsible in creating problems for Nepal (see the political impact section on this problem).

Social demography of Nepal has been changing drastically in the last five decades because of internal migration. After the eradication of malaria in the Tarai in the mid-1950s, large-scale migration of hill people to the Tarai region has been the most important impact on demography in the Tarai. In 1991, 52 percent of Nepal’s total population resided in the lowlands (inner Tarai and Tarai) districts.6

Harka Gurung points out:

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4 Upreti, n. 1, p.135.
5 Ibid.
Thus, of the 12.6 million people of highland origin, 3.9 million or 30.8 percent are residing in the lowlands. People of hill origin now constitute 83.1 percent of the inner tarai and 30.9 percent of the tarai population. In contrast, among the 5.8 million people of lowlands origin, only 3.1 percent are reported on the highlands. They constitute a mere 2.2 percent of the hill and 0.9 percent of the mountain population.7

This influx had immense impact on the indigenous people of the lowlands. Arjun Guneratne points out that until late 1950s, 'the Tharus comprised the vast majority of population of the valley; the remainder was made up mostly of other, much smaller, indigenous groups such as the Bote, Kumal and Darai, and immigrants from India such as the Musaher.8 Pointing out the impact of the migration, Guneratne observes that by the 1970s, the Tharus had been reduced to less than 14 percent of the population and one consequence of this migration for the Tharus was that many of them lost land to the immigrants and settlements of hill people.9

Cultural Values

The first consequence of the settlement of the Indo-Nepalese was on the tribal groups of Tarai such as the Tharus, Rajbansis, Gangais, Dhimal, and Dhanukh. With the gradual increased of settlement of the Indo-Nepalese, the tribals were pushed further into the forests. Frederick H. Gaige reports in his study of eleven villages of Bara district that, 'all the Tharus had moved away from the four closest

7 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
to the border, thus evidencing their retreat further into the forest in the face of competitions for land with more sophisticated caste people'.

An important cultural impact of the Hindu Indo-Nepalese on the tribal groups of the Tarai is the process of absorbing them into the Hindu caste system. According to Gaige:

Tribal groups in the tarai – the Tharus, Rajbanshis, Tajpurias, Gangais, Meches, and other smaller tribes – are gradually being absorbed into the caste system of their region. Unlike the hill tribals, however, the tribals of tarai are relegated to the very bottom of the hierarchy, even below many of the untouchable castes.

Dor Bahadur Bista is of the view that:

Apart from the most recent migrations, the majority of the Terai people are indigenous. The Tharus, Rajbansi, Koches, Meches, Dhimal, Satar, Danuwar have always been there. Tharus are most numerous among them. None except the Rajbansi and the Maithili people seem to have followed the hierarchic Hindu religion until the migration of the caste Hindus from the southern plains into the area during the nineteenth century.

In a study of the Tarai communities, Hari Bansh Jha also agrees to the adoption of the caste culture by the tribal groups. But differs with Gaige on the status of the tribals in the caste hierarchy. Jha writes that:

Mention might also be made of Tharus, Rajbanshi, Gangai, Tajpuria, Satar, Danuwar and Bantar who pass their life as farmers. But they are no more primitive and tribal now. They have adopted caste culture. Danuvars, for example associate themselves with royal

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10 Gaige, n. 3, p. 61.
11 Gaige further says that 'the surge of population into the peripheral regions and the clearing of forests to provide additional farmland have confronted the tribal people with the need to adjust to a new and essentially hostile society. Relegated as they are to the lowest rungs of the caste ladder, without the experience needed to compete for scarce economic resources, they have generally found the adjustment process confusing and painful.' Ibid, p. 20.
Brahman class. They perform Hindu religious rites and worship Hindu gods and goddesses. Similarly, Rajbanshis claim themselves to be Kshatriyas.\textsuperscript{13}

From the above views, it is evident that socio-cultural changes in the practices of Hindu religion and caste system of the tribal groups of the Tarai have been greatly influenced by the Hindu indo-Nepalese.

In the recent years, especially, in the post-1990 democratic period, socio-cultural changes seem to be emerging on caste, ethnic and religious lines. Changes in these lines have created occasional rift in the society. The most evident social change is in the caste-based groups. A number of caste-based organizations have been formed in the last decade, mostly, with the objective of looking after the welfare of its community. Some of the caste-based organizations in the Tarai are Kurmi Samiti Sevak, Gopal Seva Samiti of the Yadav community, Kuswaha Sangh of the Koiry caste, Dalit groups, Maithil Samaj of the Maithil Brahmin, Kalwar Samaj of the Kalwar caste, Chitragupita Samaj of the Kyashtha caste, Nai Sangh of the barber caste and Brahmarshi Samaj of the Bhumihar caste.\textsuperscript{14} According to Chandra Kishore Jha, the emergence of caste-based organisations has greatly been influenced by the caste-based politics of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh in India.

During interviews with teachers and students at Birjung and Janakpur, some have said that there are some positive roles of the caste-based organizations in the society. The discouragement of social evils such as dowry practices and child

\textsuperscript{13} Hari Bansh Jha, \textit{The Terai Community and National Integration in Nepal} (Kathmandu: Centre for Economic and Technical Studies, 1993), p. 7.

\textsuperscript{14} These names were gathered from many persons at Birjung and Janakpur during the field study. Chandra Kishore Jha provided substantial details about the organizations.
marriage in their communities are seen as positive impact of these organizations. Some people are of the view that these organizations promote women’s education. In general, these caste-based organizations are, however, seen as social divisions.

Social tension has been emerging in the Tarai based on caste. Instances of clashes between caste-based groups have been reported occasionally from the Tarai. In a recent newspaper report, a ‘non-Dalit group’ attacked a ‘peaceful rally’ staged by some 500 Dalits at Chandrapur of Pahatharkot (Village Development Committee – 8) in Sarlahi district on June 12, 2005. The report said that some ‘Tamang youths’ attacked the participants of the rally with sticks in which some participants were injured. The rally was organized by Dalit activists to raise ‘caste awareness’ and against ‘caste discrimination’, the report said.

The role of religion in the social life seems to have gained prominence with the increasing religious activities in the Tarai by religious groups in the last few years. A lot of religious organizations such as Vishwa Hindu Mahasangh, Baj Rang Dal, Shiv Sena Nepal, etc. have been working from the Hindu community. There is also Muslims organizations such as the Jamat-e-Islamic Itihad Sangh and others working for the Muslim community.

Religious groups in the Tarai have occasionally triggered social tensions. Although these tensions have not resulted in major communal riots, there have been instances of minor clashes between Hindus and Muslims in the Tarai. One such incident was the tension created in the aftermath of the killing of 12 Nepalese

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15 The Kathmandu Post, 13 June 2005.
by militants in Iraq.\textsuperscript{16} Like other parts of the country, there was tension in the Tarai, as well. The killing sparked ‘anti-Muslim’ riots in Kathmandu when protesters alleged to have carried out by a Hindu group affiliated to the Shiv Sena (India) attacked the Jama mosque on September 1, 2004.\textsuperscript{17} In response to the riots, the Prime Minister, Sher Bahadur Deuba, said that, ‘criminal groups in the country had tried to disturb religious and social harmony on the pretext of protesting the brutal killing of 12 Nepalese in Iraq.’\textsuperscript{18} Although the government strongly criticized the riots, the incident has shown the level of religious intolerance that seems to be increasing in the country.

The ethnic divide in the context of the Indo-Nepalese of the Tarai is seen between the Pahari-Madheshi divide. With the settlement of many Paharis in the Tarai and the government policy of Nepali language as the medium of instruction has made a number of the Tarai people to learn Nepali language. This has been successful in bringing people together in as far as socio-economic issues are concerned. Although there has not been any major conflict between Paharis and the Madhesis, there seems to be a strong covert reservation about each other. One incident that indicates such feelings was the Hrithik Roshan episode of December 2000. The ‘anti-India’ protests in Kathmandu soon spillover to other parts of the country. Riots against ‘Indians’ also turned against the Tarain Indo-Nepalese in Kathmandu. The Madhesis retaliated in some areas in the Tarai. In Rajbiraj of

\textsuperscript{16} The Kathmandu Post, 1 September 2004.
\textsuperscript{17} The Himalayan Times, 4 September 2004.
\textsuperscript{18} The Himalayan Times, 4 September 2004.
Saptari district where the Madhesis attacked the ‘Paharis’ in the riots resulting in police firing where one person was killed and few others injured. Many people in Nepal remember this incident with regret. A number of intellectuals of both the Pahari and Madhesi said that such incident would not repeat. However, the Madhesis consider the incident as a humiliation.

It may be mentioned that there seem to be a silent grievance of the ‘Nepali Madhesis’ against the ‘Indian Madhesis’ for mainly two reasons. First, because the Nepali Madhesis felt that much of the problems in terms of their identity, suspicion of their loyalty towards the State and citizenship problems have been caused by the Indian Madhesis. Secondly, the Nepali Madhesis resent that the Indian Madhesis have occupied most of the job opportunities. This view has been expressed by a number of Nepali Madhesis. The result of a poll survey conducted by the Media Services International in July 2000 also suggests the presence of this perception among the Indo-Nepalese of Tarai.\(^{19}\) According to the survey, 26.8 percent of the Tarai respondents felt that ‘Indians’ were coming to settle in Nepal; 17.3 percent felt that the ‘Indians’ were depriving Nepalese of work opportunities; and 17.8 thought that Nepal’s national originality has been eroding and ‘Indian’ influence has been rising.\(^{20}\)

The popular use of Hindi language in Nepal is yet another influence of the Indo-Nepalese. Hindi is the lingua franca of the Indo-Nepalese and it is often the

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20 The rest 36.3 percent of the respondents were of the view that criminal activities has been on the rise because of the open border between Nepal and India, ibid.
first or second language for many Indo-Nepalese.\textsuperscript{21} Since the 1950s, the Indo-Nepalese have played a crucial role in the use of Hindi as a medium of instruction. The Tarai Congress whose aim, among other things, was the recognition of Hindi as a State language led pro-Hindi movements. In 1957, the Tarai Congress organized a ‘Save Hindi’ campaign and formed several ‘Save Hindi Committees’ in the Tarai towns. When the first Parliament was convened in July 1959, Hindi as a language for discussion in Parliament was raised. After a short debate, Hindi was accepted to be use in Parliament discussions.\textsuperscript{22}

In the Tarai, language remains an important political issue. However, in most of the Tarai, one finds a harmonious blend of languages. Today, especially, in the urban cities, Nepali, Hindi and the languages of the region are used interchangeably by almost all the people settled in that region. For instance, in the region dominated by the Bhojpuri speakers, irrespective of the origin, people use Bhojpuri, Nepali and Hindi. So is with Maithili, and Tharu. Many persons interviewed at Birjung and Janakpur agree to this practice.

In a study of the ‘Indian ethnic groups’ of Morang district, Dilli Ram Dahal observes that ‘Hindi language is becoming more commonly spoken. Even the people from the hills communicate in Hindi language in the Eastern Terai.’\textsuperscript{23} Pointing out the popularity of Hindi language in Nepal, H. B. Jha observed that ‘(a)part from the Nepalese-speaking population, the Newars, speaking Tibeto-

\textsuperscript{21} Gaige, n. 3, p. 119.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., pp. 111-123.
Burman language and other ethnic groups in the hill region of Nepal also understand Hindi and use it as a *lingua franca* while communicating with other communities.\(^24\)

Hindi cinema, Hindi TV serials and Hindi songs are also very popular in Nepal. ‘More than this, each year thousands of students receive education through Hindi medium from Indian universities, additionally, a large number of people who go to India for employment also learn Hindi. The impact of all these activities is that the common Nepali people have become quite familiar with the use of Hindi.’\(^25\)

According to Dahal, another cultural influence of the Indo-Nepalese of the Tarai is the practice of dowry system that has become ‘very popular in the Nepal Tarai and the impact of this is increasingly felt upon the middle hills’.\(^26\)

**Social Development**

The Indo-Nepalese have made notable contribution to the social development, particularly in education and health services. From various sources one find that many of the Indo-Nepalese were teachers and doctors.\(^27\)

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\(^{24}\) Jha, n. 14, p. 27.

\(^{25}\) Ibid.

\(^{26}\) Dahal, n. 24, p. 264.

\(^{27}\) According to one source, ‘thousands of Bengali teachers, doctors and engineers... had come to Nepal before there were professionally trained Nepalis to fill these positions. Ninety percent of the first generations of Bengali professionals have since returned; but there remains a community of 500 Bengali Nepalis, the heirs of doctors and teachers attached to generations of Raj Darbars.’ See Rita Manchanda, ‘Whose Nepal-Whose India: Of Diaspora and Transnational Identities’, *India International Centre Quarterly*, vol. 28, no. 2, Monsoon 2001, pp. 54-55.
We also find mention of professionals such as engineers, medical practitioners, teachers, journalists, and government servants among Indo-Nepalese in many sources.\(^\text{28}\) The 'Indian migrants' have contributed to the growth and development of education institutions, hospitals and other such areas.\(^\text{29}\) S.D. Muni has commented, 'the community's impact on the social, cultural and educational life of Nepal has been subtle'.\(^\text{30}\) For past many decades the Indo-Nepalese had played an important role in the social sector.

**Urbanisation**

The process of urbanisation has been seen as essentially related to specialization, industrialization, and consequent economic development.\(^\text{31}\) For the past years, the Indo-Nepalese have been contributing in the growth of urban centres in Nepal. Pitamber Sharma points out that the 'Indian' businessmen had entered into Nepal as traders, middlemen, and brokers with extensive linkages in the major urban centres of northern India and beyond and urban growth in the Tarai evolved as an extension of the Indian urban system.\(^\text{32}\) Urban growth became evident in the Tarai only during the second quarter of the twentieth century when the process of agro-

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29 Upreti, n. 1, p. 134.
32 Ibid., p. 13.
based industrialization initiated in the 1930s in the Eastern Tarai provided 'considerable stimulus to urban growth.'

B.C. Upreti points out that the 'Indian migrants' have played an important role in the urbanization of the Kathmandu valley. Historically, Upreti writes, 'the growth of urban population has been very insignificant in Nepal and migration to the urban centres has been minimal till recently'. Hence, 'it can be said that the Indian business community has played a considerable role in the development of Kathmandu as a major urban center which later attracted local migration from the rural areas into the Kathmandu valley.' Upreti also points out that over the past decades, the middle-class has been gradually emerging. As the 'Indian migrant' community itself constitutes a significant part of this emerging middle class, their role in the growth of middle class in Kathmandu is of important contribution.

To sum up, it is evident that the Indo-Nepalese had played a vital role in social and cultural changes in Nepal. The Indo-Nepalese role in social development and urbanization not only benefited the people of Nepal but also provided the Indo-Nepalese with a social respect. The current social developments such as the caste, ethnic and religious tensions in the Tarai may work against the Indo-Nepalese communities as well as with the other communities. In as far as their impact on social demography and cultural changes is concerned, it can be said

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33 Ibid.
34 Upreti, n.l., pp. 133-34.
35 Ibid.
36 Ibid.
that at times these have raise issues that worked against the Indo-Nepalese such as the Hindi language.

**Economic Impact**

Perhaps the most significant role of the Indo-Nepalese has been in the economic development of Nepal. Communities like the Marwaris, Muslims, Bengalis, traditional middle-caste businessmen and traders and the labour class from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh were the most prominent among the Indo-Nepalese. Here, the role and impact of the Indo-Nepalese in agriculture, industries and commerce are examined.

**Agricultural Development**

After the unification of Nepal, the Shah rulers encouraged the ‘Indian’ people to settle in the Tarai region of Nepal. The Rana rulers continued this policy as well.37 Lower castes and tribal groups moved into the Tarai for clearing the large forest and converting it into cultivable land. For instance, the Santhals, who are known as Satars in Nepal, settled in eastern Tarai during this period.38 Buggeland argues that 'the Santhals were considered excellent land clearers, and were hired to cut the thick jungle which covered most of the area at that time.'39 Dahal also points out

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39 Ibid.
that as the land-holders were 'religious teachers, soldiers, members of the nobility of the royal family, they remained permanently either in the Kathmandu valley or in the hilly regions of Nepal.' Hence, to cultivate their land, 'Indian' landlords and farmers were encouraged to clear forestland and cultivate. Because of absentee landlordism and lack of manpower, the cultivators were mostly Indo-Nepalese and local tribals. Rana and Thapa commented that until recently, many of the cultivators were tenants. It is estimated that as much as 60 to 70 per cent of the land in the Tarai was cultivated under tenancy. By the 1960s, the Tarai's agricultural contribution to Nepal's gross domestic product account for 55 per cent.

From the above discussion one can conjecture that in the agricultural development, the Indo-Nepalese has contributed enormously in land clearance, cultivation and production, increasing Nepal's overall agricultural production.

Commercialization

After agricultural economy of the Tarai had developed, occupational and business caste people also moved into the Tarai from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and from other states of India. Gaige commented:

The first plains caste people to settle in the tarai often were Ahirs, cowherds by occupation, who grazed cattle in the tarai during the dry seasons and gradually turned seasonal hut into permanent dwellings. Other early arrivals were yeoman-farmer groups such as Kurmis and

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40 Dahal, n. 24, p. 58.
similar quasi-caste groups among the Muslims. Lower-caste agricultural people also arrived early, followed by occupational and business-caste people after the agricultural economy had developed beyond the rudimentary stage.\(^{43}\)

After the settlement of the Indo-Nepalese in the Tarai, trade and commerce soon expanded. Evidencing these trends, Gaige's survey of 81 villages of five districts of the Tarai (Jhapa, Mahottari, Dhanusha, Bara, Kapilavastu and Kailali) shows that the number of Indo-Nepalese shopkeepers exceeded the percentage of their population in the general population.\(^{44}\) In Jhapa district, for instance, the Indo-Nepalese accounted for 22 per cent of the population, but 72 per cent shopkeepers were from the Indo-Nepalese. This verifies the high degree to which the Indo-Nepalese has become commercialized.\(^{45}\)

Dahal's study also reports that Biratnagar, one of the largest city and industrial centre of Nepal, out of estimated 1168 shops, 986 or 84.42 per cent were owned by the Indo-Nepalese and Indian nationals.\(^{46}\) The 'Indians ethnic groups' included the Marwaris, Muslims, Bengalis and Biharis. Commenting on the skills in running-business of the Marwaris, Dahal writes, 'they are considered to be the most efficient of businessmen not only in the Nepal Tarai but in the whole of Nepal', while Muslim were considered to be the most efficient workers in tailoring and repairing works.\(^{47}\)

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\(^{43}\) Ibid., pp. 61-62.
\(^{44}\) Gaige, n. 3, pp. 32-33.
\(^{45}\) Ibid.
\(^{46}\) Dahal, n. 24, p. 177
\(^{47}\) Ibid.
In trade also the Indo-Nepalese had played an important role. Gaige’s survey shows that the Indo-Nepalese were well represented in trade. In Mahottari-Dhanusha, Bara, Kapilabastu districts, the Indo-Nepalese dominate the trading class, while in Jhapa and Kailali, they were in significant number.\(^48\) According to Gaige, this evidence:

...indicates that the plains people, particularly the plains Hindus, hold a dominant commercial position throughout the region. Most of them were businessmen when they migrated to the tarai. They were looking for new business opportunities, and it appears that many of them maintain marriage and business ties with extended family and caste members in the Indian villages and towns which they or their family migrated, sometimes as long as three or four generations ago.\(^49\)

Dahal’s study of Morang district also shows that the Indo-Nepalese and Indian nationals were predominantly involved in overseas trade. For instance, out of an estimated 205 businessmen involved in overseas trade, 95 percent were the Indo-Nepalese and Indian nationals, mostly from the Marwari community.\(^50\)

**Industrialization**

The Indo-Nepalese also played a leading role in the industrialization of Nepal. Before 1930s, there was no heavy or light industry in Nepal but only some small-scale cottage industries to meet the local demands.\(^51\) Some ‘Indian’ businessmen were instrumental in establishing some of the first industries in Nepal. Radha Kissen Chamaria, a Marwari businessman, established the first jute mill in

\(^{48}\) Gaige, n. 3, p. 34.
\(^{49}\) Ibid.
\(^{50}\) Dahal, n. 24, p. 177.
Biratnagar in 1936. Some businessmen from India also moved into the Nepal Tarai and set-up industries and factories that have paved the way for further growth of industries in Nepal.

Dahal’s survey shows that out of the total 17 types of industries in Morang districts in 1976, 13 types of industries were owned by Marwari community alone. The other Indo-Nepalese groups who also owned industries were Saha Teli, Mandal, Haluwai, Muslim, Kamat, Yadav, Bhagat, Rajput, Batar, Mahoto, Rouniyar, etc. However, except the Saha Teli group, other groups own very few industries. The Saha Teli group holds the second highest number of industries only next to the Marwaris.

Apart from establishing industries, the bulk of the industrial workers were also from the Indo-Nepalese community. Dahal’s survey of industrial workers in Biratnagar in 1976 estimated 7025 workers in 20 sample industries. Out of which, 4642 or 66.5 percent were the Indo-Nepalese and ‘Indian migrant’ labourers. According to the study, the Indo-Nepalese and ‘Indian’ labourers were employed because of their technical skills. While 65 percent of the Indo-Nepalese workers and Indian workers were categorized as highly skilled workers, 81 percent as skilled workers, 53.9 percent as semi-skilled workers and 36.6 percent as unskilled

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52 Ibid., n. 24, pp. 211-12; Gaige, n. 3, p. 37.
53 Ibid.
54 Some of the major industries were brick and tile factories, steel factories, bidi factories, textile industries, Nylon cloth industries, soap factories, biscuit factories, cotton industries, metal craft industries, sugar mill, jute mills, etc. Dahal, n. 24, pp. 214-220.
55 Ibid.
56 Ibid., p. 233.
57 Ibid.
workers. By the 1960s, 88 percent of Nepal’s industrial investment was in the
Tarai with almost 100 percent of the country’s industrial labour force.\textsuperscript{58}

**Negative Impacts**

The dominant role of the Indo-Nepalese and ‘Indian migrants’ in the field of
industries, business, service sector, labour force had over the years produced
growth of resentment among other Nepali communities.\textsuperscript{59} However, it should be
mentioned here that the nature of complaints of the local people have been against
the Indian migrants, though such resentment were also been directed against the
Indo-Nepalese who are also viewed by other Nepali people as ‘Indians’.\textsuperscript{60}

Sectors where the Indo-Nepalese and Indian migrants are predominantly
present such as business and labour force, is viewed as a barrier to the growth of
local force and the entrepreneurial class.\textsuperscript{61} This resentment of the other
communities has, from time to time, created social tensions and insecurity among
Paharis and the Indo-Nepalese.\textsuperscript{62} However, according to Upreti, the clash of
interest has been in those areas where small section of the Nepalese society is
involved. Upreti argues that, ‘Indian migrants’ have not been a source of any major

\textsuperscript{59} See Dahal, n. 24, Muni, n. 31; Upreti, n. 1; Gaige, n. 3.
\textsuperscript{60} See Chapter I for the difference between ‘Indian migrants’ and ‘Indo-Nepalese’ and the confusion
created by identity.
\textsuperscript{61} Upreti, n. 1; p. 137; Muni, n. 31, p. 85.
\textsuperscript{62} See Dahal, n. 24.
tension in the Nepalese society. And to avoid major conflicts, the ‘Indian migrants’ have followed a submissive attitude.63

**Political Impacts**

Political impact of the Indo-Nepalese has been of multidimensional. Here, their impact on the ethno-political demography and ‘Nepalisation’ is examined.

**Ethno-Political Demography**

Perhaps the most complex consequence of the Indo-Nepalese is on political and ethno-demography of Nepal. Some of these were manifested in the form of ethnic and regional issues, at times questioning Nepal’s national identity and integration. To understand these consequences, we have analyzed Nepal’s nation-building process and its projection of national identity. The questions of national integration and identity have been of serious concern among Nepali intelligentsia for quite sometime. The debate over these issues has been directly related to the Indo-Nepalese. However, these issues are not peculiar of Nepal alone. In all the South Asian countries, the question of national integration and identity has been very complex. Lok Raj Baral comments on these questions thus:

> The porous inter-state boundaries and indistinct national identities have provided impetus to the dynamics of ethnicity in South Asia. Inheriting the same socio-cultural and political history and tradition, most contemporary South Asian states share similar problems of national integration because many ethnic groups are distributed through two or more states.64

63 Upreti, n. 1, p. 137.
The impact of Indo-Nepalese on Nepal’s identity has to be understood from how Nepal views its relations with India. Many Nepalese feel that Nepal’s ties with India are too numerous, and therefore, ‘they fear that Nepal could be assimilated into the greater Indian economic, cultural, and political sphere and might lost its national identity. In order to forestall this possibility, from their point of view, Indian influence in all aspect of Nepalese life must be reduced’.65 During King Mahendra’s Panchayat period, efforts to define Nepal’s identity were made in terms of the differences between Nepalese and Indian culture.66

This ‘identity crisis’ of Nepal on the one hand and the Indo-Nepalese’s cultural affinity and economic ties with India on the other have been the most important impact in so far as Nepal’s identity is concerned. While Nepali leaders want to achieve national integration of all the regions, they ‘tend to view one of the most important of these regions, the tarai, as an extension of the Indian economy and the Indian culture’.67 This has also created problems for national integration ‘because many hill people have difficulty making the distinction between plains people who are Nepalese citizens and those who are Indian citizens, and some anti-Indian sentiment is automatically transferred to the tarai population’.68

65 Gaige, n. 3, p. 201.
66 Ibid.
68 Ibid.
This perception persists among the hill people even today. The Hrithik Roshan episode is a clear example of such realities. Tapan Kumar Bose comments on the implications of the anti-India riots on the Indo-Nepalese thus:

No one knows when and how, but at some point during the riots, the anger against India transformed into mob attacks against Indians and 'Indian-looking' people of Tarai region ... what began as a reassertion of national pride turned into communal violence which deepened the divide between the pahade hill people and the madhesi plains-people.

The Indo-Nepalese also has their identity problems. Because of their 'transnational' identity, 'neither Nepal's history nor Nepal's hill culture satisfy their identity needs, because they have not been associated with either'. This transnational identity of the Indo-Nepalese and Nepal's own identity problems have added the complexities of Nepal's national identity.

Nepalisation

The Indo-Nepalese are viewed by many as 'Indian citizens in disguise,' more loyal to Indian than to Nepal. The Nepali government feared that the Indo-Nepalese would enhance India's influence in Nepal. And also because the Indo-Nepalese have been disassociated from Nepali history and Nepali hill culture, the Nepali hill elite began a progress to 'Nepalised' the Indo-Nepalese and the plain tribals with

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69 In December 2000, Hrithik Roshan, an Indian actor, was reported in some media of making 'derogatory' remarks against Nepal and Nepalis, which has triggered a huge anti-India protests in Nepal. See Tapan Kumar Bose, 'Nepali Nationalism and the Nation-State', Himal, 14(2) February 2001, pp. 15-19; Pratyosh Onda, 'The Paradox of the Nepali Mindset: Hate India, Love India', Himal, 14(2) February 2001, pp. 12-14.
70 Ibid.
72 Ibid.
the aim to achieve national integration. Hence, to 'integrate' the Indo-Nepalese, Nepali language was introduced in schools and mass migrations of hill people into the Tarai were viewed as to achieve national integration or 'Nepalisation'.

According to the Task Force on Migration:

The Tarai region has now become the focal point of socio-cultural interface due to migration. Migration of people from the other regions has changed the ethnic and religious composition of tarai and inner tarai. During the period 1952/54-1971, the rate of increase of the people with Nepali as mother tongue was greater as compared to Maithili and Bhojpuri in eastern tarai and Awadhi in central and western tarai. 73

The report further said:

Migration of hill population has enhanced pan-Nepal values in the tarai...The segment of population affected by the Nepali communication media like Radio Nepal and Nepali newspapers has considerably increased... The election of candidates of hill social groups from some tarai districts indicate some process of political integration. 74

Other scholars support this view. For instance, Dahal has argued that:

Dramatic changes have occurred with, the so-called, Madhesi groups while in contact with Parbatiyas over the last 30-40 years. Changes are noticed in terms of language, culture and religious values. There is little 'resistance' but more accommodation in each other's cultural values. 75

He further points out that 'the Nepali language has become the lingua franca among them and they speak the Nepali language like the hill people. This has become possible because of migration of hill people in the Nepal tarai over the

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74 Ibid., pp. 24-25.
year. However, other scholars have a different view on the integration of Nepal. Hari Bansh Jha is of the view that the migration of population from the hill to the Tarai has raised, ethnic and political issues. Thus, affecting the process of national integration.

Hill migration to the Tarai, aimed to achieve national integration has been resulting counter-productive, as appropriate safeguards for the Tarai people were not taken. The problem of national integration has become all the more difficult now than the in the past. As some scholars have pointed out the limits of integration through migration seem quite visible today. Hence, the suggestion of the scholars that hill people migration alone is not enough for fully integrating the nation unless proper representation and participation in the nation building process stands all the more relevant because the minorities felt alienated from the process and perceive the policies as been imposed on them.

Conclusion
To conclude this chapter, impacts of the Indo-Nepalese on Nepali society have both positive and negative aspects. On the positive side, the role of Indo-Nepalese have been a catalyst in the socio-economic development. Their role in education, health and economic development has been the most important contribution. While on the negative side, in so far as economic impact is concerned, because of their dominant position in the field, there have been grievances directed towards the

76 Ibid.
77 Jha, n. 14, p. 46.
Indo-Nepalese businessmen, skilled workers and cheap labours. However, the negative impacts are also a result of the Indian migrants. Another impact of the Indo-Nepalese has been on the narrowly defined Nepali national identity. It is also seen that the current societal trends are disturbing and unhealthy for the Indo-Nepalese of Tarai with the increasing caste, religious and ethnic divisions. This might cause more social divisions and hamper development process, as it takes a more violent nature.
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Population by Mother Tongue of the Indo-Nepalese by District

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