CHAPTER V

THE FAMILY AND COMMUNITY AS ADAPTIVE MECHANISM

The livelihood pattern and its associated activities as an economic strategy that developed consequently in the existing local environment of the Nepali people have their percussions on other social dimensions in terms of their functional and structural levels. Family is one of the important social institutions of the people along with other dimensions such as lineage and caste. The present chapter will highlight some of the important dimensions of the Nepali family as important categories of adaptation. Here it refers to the family-based residential unit called ghar-parivar (household) or ghar-chulo (household hearth).

5.1 Household

A household may be referred as the basic residential unit in which economic production, consumption, and shelter are organized and carried out. In a household there may be persons related or unrelated, who live together in the same dwelling unit, who make common provisions for food or who pool their income for the purpose of purchasing food. The Nepali word ‘ghar-parivar’ is a synonymous term of a household in this context.
A Nepali individual maintains and claims for the rights by virtue of his membership in a patri-lineally descent group, *ghar-pariwar*. All his rights and obligations, however evolve through the mediation of the family to which he is affiliated.

### 5.1.1 Types of Family

Two principal types of family are recognized: nuclear and joint, based on relationship between members in the households. Table 24 gives an idea of the types of Nepali-family found at Kanglatongbi:

#### Table 24

**Types of Family**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Type</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear family</td>
<td>593</td>
<td>55.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint family</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>20.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polygynous family</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incomplete nuclear family</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>7.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incomplete joint family</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>12.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1062</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 24 reveals types of family. Numerically dominating types are nuclear type about 56% and joint family type of about 21%.
5.1.2 Composition of Families

The following tables give an idea about the composition of studied families:

Table 25

Composition of Families

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pattern</th>
<th>No. of households</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nuclear Family</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband and Wife unmarried child(ren)</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>37.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband + wife + unmarried brother child(ren) + and unmarried sister.</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>18.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widow/widower his/her unmarried child(ren)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>4.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced male/female his/her unmarried child(ren)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>3.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Joint Family</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband and wife + unmarried and married child (ren) + unmarried sister + father and mother.</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>20.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head (male, married) + second wife + unmarried and married child (ren) of both wives.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head(male, married with two wives + his married and unmarried child(ren) + widowed mother/father</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head (widow/widower) + his own/adopted married child (ren) and unmarried children.</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>6.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head (male, married) + his unmarried child (ren) + adopted unmarried brother + widowed father.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>3.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head (male) + his married children+ divorced mother + brother and sister (unmarried).</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1062</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table 25 reveals that nuclear family consists of a couple, their unmarried child(ren) of which, husband is the central figure. Nuclear family is found (676 households) to be numerically dominating over the joint family type (386 households).

There is some reason to suppose that the incidence of joint family types might have in higher mode. Informants insist that in a rare instance a son would have separated from the mul-ghar (main-or joint household), before his father’s death. The increasing trends of partition of families may be due to separation from the main family owing to the economical problem of the family member. Perhaps, a greater economic viability of households and the absence of alternatives sources (mainly education oriented white collar jobs opportunities) of income for the young men would have given the family members a greater sanctions to keep the household group intact.

However, the present situation in this regard is that the Nepalis households seldom remain to maintain the join family system.

Fraternally extended families, are exceedingly rare. It may be due to the fact that mode of economy and occupation brought a change in social group structures. The under-current factor may be owed as a measure to the limited space of land available to the people.

### 5.1.3 Size of Households

It has been illustrated that nuclear family are increasingly coming up in the village. It does not mean that there is a loose tie among the members of the household. But the tendency of giving more power of assumption is noticed
among the members. More and more nuclear family types have come into existence not because of the preference that the members have but due to guiding factor of the habitat.

Table 26 gives an idea about the distribution of families by the size of households.

Table 26

The Size of Households

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Grade of members</th>
<th>No. of households</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small</td>
<td>0-4</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>27.12</td>
<td>1049</td>
<td>16.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>5-9</td>
<td>696</td>
<td>65.54</td>
<td>4340</td>
<td>69.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large</td>
<td>10-14</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>6.41</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>10.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Large</td>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>2.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>1062</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>6203</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 26 reveals that only about 1% of the study households consist of members more than 15 members. About 66% of the households consists more than 5 members. The average number of the households is 5.8%. The average household size of Manipur is 5.8, as per 2001 census. As indicated by the informants traditionally average family size consisted of as minimum as 20 members in each households. They opined, the smallest size of households is due to maximum family planning to meet the modern needs. Besides other factors, the important factor of small size of households may be considered due to
adaptive measures. Many of the households have inherited very much fragmented size of land from their ascending generations.

5.1.4 Inter-Personal Relationship

Husband and wife: In a family the relation between the logne-suwasni, (husband and wife) is the closest. They co-operate in every sphere of life. A logne (husband) seldom does anything without consulting his suwasni (wife). The logne-suwasni do not talk much to an outsider. But, as it is their custom not to talk to each other much in the presence of other (particularly elders) the relation between logne-suwasni appears to be cold. They do not call each other by name. However, husbands now-a-days call his suwasni by her name. However, if elderly persons are present, the husband still hesitates to call her by name. Even if, it has been found among the recent couples (specially educated) found to be violating the traditionally followed pattern. Thus, the established behavioral pattern is in the process of changes. Many of the wives are the functional head of the households, for the husbands are in armed force services or died, they are rather free from so much of the traditional behavioral norms.

Parent (babu-aama) child (chhora-chhori)- relationship is very affectionate. Children are not usually afraid of mother (aama) but relatively with babu (father). As there is usually no other member in a nuclear family but only aama-babu and children, the father and the mother take care of the children. This system given enough scope for personal context between parents and children and as a result a deep emotional attachment grows between them, than other kins. However, among the nuclear family, the occupation of whose males, is in armed forces, females are unable to control their grown up sons and daughter in bringing within the households norms of behaviour. They do not obey mother in absence of their father.
The relationship between the siblings, *(daju-bhai or daju-bahini)* is quite happy. Generally, the eldest of the siblings holds a superior position and others show respect to him or her. There is no formal obligation on either side and perhaps for that reason there is hardly any conflict between siblings. It is generally seen that if a brother do not visit on a sister on her special invitation, the sister generally uses the term- *(maite-le-hela gareki-chheli)* the neglected kin of parental kins). If the married sister is rather in well-to-do family, such situation is generally not found. The married brother frequently visits the married sister’s family.

However, such case is rather rare, since the immigrants to the village and closest relatives are rather less.

### 5.2 The Nepalis as a Village Level Community of Kanglatongbi

The Nepalis of the village interact with each other and other neighbouring people. They also organize their relationship in economic, socio-political and religious spheres. They respond individually and collectively to the various elements of their cultural and physical environment. The villagers maintain social, economic and ritual relationships among themselves and with outsiders. There is a village level loyalty among the Nepalis. The village organization does not involve only those related with the internal problem of the community but also with other who do not belong to the Kanglatongbi village. The villagers have to organize their activities keeping in view the different types of pressures from the outside world.

The lineage, kinship and caste extend their help in internal solidarity of the people. The village community is not just a random accumulation of individuals but also an overlapping network of social relationship. The Nepali households are inter-related with ties of kinship and affinity which proves
capability in preserving natural resources, social harmony and ritual activities. For such a solidarity, ritual performance in villages temple is worth mentioning (plate 62-65).

Thus the village is an aggregate of different Nepali-households. (chapter-VI). The village level solidarity is strengthened by community ties built around distinct linguistic, religious and cultural identity. Besides, they share many common occasions and attitudes on many areas. As mentioned above, there is a common body of ceremonial and religious belief and practices. These shared dimensions of culture help the villagers to maintain internal harmony and present united front to the outside world. Besides, there are a few distinctly identifiable organizations which are discussed briefly as follows:
Plate 62: A view of Khasi(he-goat) Football Tournament

Plate 63: A view of players and VIPs before starting the play of plate-62

Plate 64: A village temple complex

Plate 65: A man about to bali a he-goat during Durga Puja-2012
5.3 Various Village Level Organisations and Their Activities

A few village level organizations in the village are as follows:

1. Kanglatongbi Gram Panchayat.


4. Kanglatongbi Brothers Sporting Union.

5. Kanglatongbi Bishnu, Durga and Shiva Mandir Committee. And


Kanglatongbi Gram Panchayat: - It is the most important elected body, which is constituted under the Manipur Panchayat Raj Act 1984 and 1994. As per the election held on September 2007, the following individuals are the offices of the village Panchayat:

1. Shri Krishna Bahadur Katwal, 78 years, pradhan,

2. Shri Parsuram Chapagain 58 years up-pradhan,

3. Shri Kul Bahadur Karki , 47 years- member

4. Anil Kumar Pokhrel 43 years-member

5. Kharga Bahadur Limbu 53 years-member

6. Mrs. Amrita Karki- 45 years-member

7. Mrs. R. Akui 38 years-member.

This village Panchayat is the most important body, which interacts with different spheres of Nepali community. Besides, developmental works, the panchayat is acting as an important organ to look after the internal and external
pressures and try to keep peace and harmony of the community. They are found to be concerned with overall responsibilities of the village. The village Panchayat, along with other village elders, settle disputes and similar other cases among the community involving traditional rules and social codes. They try to maintain the justice and equality etc., among the villagers as far as possible.

A few cases settled by the village Panchayat among the Nepalis of Kanglatongbi will give an idea about the modes of settling disputes by the body, Case 1: On 5/4/2009, a divorce case was settled under the chairmanship of Mr. Krishna Bahadur Katwal (Pradhan of the Kanglatongbi Gram Panchayat), Mrs. Khimrani Rai, eldest daughter of Lok Bahadur Limbu had submitted an application to Pradhan of village Panchayat on 4/4/2009. She wanted a divorce from her husband, Mr. Harka Bahadur Rai. Her ground was that her husband was neglecting her too much. He used to beat her without any ground.

The resolution of the meeting reads that, 'with the agreement of Khima Rai and Harka Bahadur Rai, their relationship of husband and wife is dissolved on 5/4/2009. The two years old son of Harka Bahadur Rai will stay with her mother, Krima Rani Rai, up to six years. He ceased his right to his son up to that period.

Case 2: On 16/7/2009, there held a meeting under the Chairmanship of Shri Krishna Bahadur Katwal, Pradhan of Kanglatongbi Gram Panchayat, to judge the fact of an application submitted by Mrs. Lila Maya wife of Lakshimikanta, that on 12/7/2009. Miss Goma Devi daughter of Damar Bahadur Bista, the neighbor of former; had beaten severely Mrs. Lila Maya an old woman in her resident itself.

The decision of the meeting reads that 'misbehavior of Miss Goma Devi upon old woman, Lila Maya has been found to be severely beyond the code of respect and illegal. Miss Goma Devi is asked to request for pardon with Lila
Maya along with the fine of Rs. 501/- in front of the public meeting. The meeting further resolves that if Miss Goma Devi is found to repeat the same action upon neighbor, Lila Maya, she will be fined Rs.1000/- by the Panchayat.

From a few cases among the many of the kind it appears that the village Panchayat is mainly functioning for regulating the village community life through forcing social laws and settling the disputes. Thus it has been found that in spite of many other duties to be performed by the village Panchayat, they engaged for community oriented works also. It has been found that police station is located very near by the village, but at the time of disputes and so, the villages hardly complain to the police but to village Panchayat to settle the problem.

Besides, the issues related with the intra-community conflict, the village Panchayat actively involve in maintaining harmonious and eco-existence among the neighboring villages. It is notable that Kanglatongbi Nepali community has been surrounded by many communities but a kind of peace and harmony is existed, in between Kanglatongbi and neigbouring villages. There is no enimity with these villages.

However, a case of dispute and misunderstanding took place a few years back in between Kanglatongbi Nepali community and neigbouring Thadow Kuki and Kom communities of Luwangsagol village. But, it was positively solved. It was found that all the surrounding village chiefs and the Kanglatongbi village pradhan took active initiatives and brought the tension into normalcy. The following resolutions had been taken accordingly for a inter-villages peace committeeformation.

'Resolved that as per agreement a pig or Rs. 500/- as fine is imposed to Luwangsagol village, for attacking to Kanglatongbi villagers on the night of July 30th 1983 at 9:30 pm, according to the hill customary law. The fine is to be
deposited to the pradhan, Kanglatongbi village panchayat on or before 10th August 1983’.

It is further resolved that ‘in future if either of the villages organizes such a mob-attack on other villages, the village will be imposed a sum of Rs. 5,000/- (Rupees Five thousand) only as fine and should be deposited to the ‘peace committee’ of the surrounding villages of Kanglatongbi’.

After this inter-communities misunderstanding and disputes never occur since then. Thus, the village panchayat is representing the village community in several spheres of lives.

Kanglatongbi Gorkha Welfare Union - is working as a unit of All Manipur Gorkha Welfare Union since 1952, at Kanglatongbi It is the oldest organization of the village. It guides the community in several ways. All the hamlet level organizations work under the guidance of this organization.

Kanglatongbi Mahila Sangathan - Primarily extend its services related with the rights and justice to the woman. If any of the woman is ill-treated they try to give justice to such woman. They co-operate the hamlet level woman organization in many ways.

Kanglatongbi Brothers Sporting Union - is mainly concerned with the games and sports. They assist and guide players (plate 62 and 63).

Kanglatongbi, Bishnu, Durga and Shiva Mandir Committee - is associated mainly with the socio-religious aspects of the community. It conduct such activities as annual ceremonies and festivals, such as Durga puja, Dipawali, Ramnawami, Krishna Astami, etc. at the village level. All the villagers are the members of this committee. Each of the households contributes a sum of Rs. 125/- annually for such occasion.
There are four temples under the supervision of Mandir committee. Bishnu, Durga and Shiva temples are located at a few furlong distances from Kali Mandir. These temples are initially constructed of wooden wall and thatched roofed since the year 1938. Gradually with great effort, involvements and co-operation among the villagers these temples are constructed by R.C.C. now. They are very beautifully decorated and looking beautiful. Almost all the community level socio-religious activities are performed in these temples collectively. In the Durga-Bishnu and Shiva temples animals and fishes are not sacrificed. All the works and procedures are done according to the Hindu Sanatan traditions. But, at the Kali Mandir animal sacrifices are done.

The villagers believe that there exist multitudes of deities, spirits and ghost that are capable of doing them harm. To get rid themselves of disease or other hardships, either actual or potential, the villagers must propitiate these supernatural beings with blood sacrifices and various other food offerings. At least few he goats and ducks have to be sacrificed at each of the two most important annual village festivals and rituals, such as dasain (Durga puja), and sansari puja (ritual of epidemics and diseases). Besides, certain pairs of pigeons (freed), fishes, milk, small quantities of grain, usually ‘rice’ are other frequent offerings.

The socio-religious elements of the Nepalis of Kanglatongbi (64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, and 75) are significant to this habitat as far as they influence the ecological behavior of these people. An example is the social attitude towards rice. This food is regarded as the most prestigious and, for this reason, must be served at all important festivals occasions and it is frequent offerings in the temples and households festivals and rituals.

Religious beliefs can be seen influencing animal husbandry practices and food habits. The Nepalis reverence for cattle is very significant. In the temple under the supervision of Mandir committee cows are worshipped in annual festivals in tiwar (Dipawali) in the temple. Besides, the Nepalis use cow dung
(gober) during ritual offerings. The Nepalis of the village regard the dung and urine of cow as possessing powerful purificatory properties. Hence, used the dung and urine in ritual occasions. Nepalis refuse to kill cows and eat their meat.

Among the other activities of the Mandir committee include the conduction of marriage ceremonies in the temple and the bratabanda (sacred thread) ceremonies etc. The Mandir committee is functioning since 1938. The executive members are constituted for a term of three years. These members are selected or elected in the general meeting of the villagers. A man or woman of each household of the village is the member of the committee.
Plate 66: A view of bali as in Plate 65

Plate 67: A view of worship of Tulasi plant during thuli-aka-dashi

Plate 68: A view of kul-puja of a lineage collectively

Plate 69: A view of community sansari puja
(deities of epidemics)-2012
The following persons are the executive members of the Mandir committee for the year 2009-2011.

1. Krishna Prasad Kaphle (Head pujari)
2. K.K. Chhetry (I.A.S) President
3. (i) Parsuram Chhapagain–Vice President
   (ii) Krishna Prasad Dabadi–Vice President
4. Shiva Basnet–General Secretary.
5. Pramananda Singh(U.P)–Joint secretary

Besides, there are about 21 active members and about 1023 members.

To hold a position of a committee, is a matter of important status among the people. Thus, the community temple at Kanglatongbi is considered a sacred place. Gradually it is getting increasing popularity and significance among the Nepali community of the State.

To sum up, in this sphere the role of temple committee in generating and solidifying the villagers through religious performances is very significant one.

Kanglatongbi Kirtan Mandali - was established in the year 1973. Its main function is to organize kirtan during Hindu festivals and rituals like Ramnawami, Krishna Nawami etc.

Besides they perform Kirtan in households if they are invited on special occasions, like Satyanarayan puja, purans etc. It is found that such collective gathering have given them a number of chances to extend community ties in one
hand and on the other preserving their religious beliefs, etc. *saptahic* (weekly), *kirtan* which is also conducted regularly on Sunday each week.

Thus, it has been found that each organization of the village is primarily insisting towards the interest of the people. There are no such organizations based on castes or lineages-line in the village. Therefore, the community or group level interactions are found to be existed in the village. Thus, the village level community inter-actions and activities may be considered as part of habitational adaptation of a migrant population.
Plate 70: A view of Ram Katha Mahayagya held-2011

Plate 71: A view of Purana held-2012

Plate 72: A view of participation of Meitei-pung-tal team in an inaugural function of a cultural building at Kanglatongbi Vijaynagar organised by a local club-2011

Plate 73: Participation of Naga dance on the ocassion of plate 72
Plate 74: Nepali dance on the occasion of Plate-72

Plate 75: A view of community level naming ritual at village temple-2011

Plate 76: A view of engagement marriage

Plate 77: A view of inter-caste elopement marriage