

# **Aid Governmentality and Shifting Dispositions: A Case Study of Tamang Community in Sindupalchok, Nepal**

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## **Abstract:**

The possibility of developmental interventions to become a powerful medium in intentionally and unintentionally shifting individual and collective dispositions of its subjects has been increasingly studied in diverse capacities. The present study based on a research conducted on Tamang communities of two rural municipalities of Sindupalchok, draws on Michel Foucault's concept of governmentality and Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus to bring similar understanding to the discourse and practices of developmental interventions in relation to shifting identities among developmental subjects. The study illustrates that aid industry's conceptualization and reconceptualization of Janajati within the backdrop of neoliberal governance, has amalgamated with the Tamangs' centuries old discontent with the ruling class and its apparatus and practices. Simultaneously, these discourses and narratives relating to Tamangs as Janajati and the pertinent need of their inclusion in mainstream politico-economic arenas have been assimilated not only into Tamang's practice of everyday life but also into the individual and collective Tamang consciousness. This in turn has informed their respective identity, precisely their ethnic identity which has led not only to the emergence of often conflicting sense of self among individuals but also a contradictory collective 'common sense' regarding Tamangs and 'others'. This has consequently, helped the competitive element embedded in various castes come to the fore. These are manifested in almost a passive aggressive or subdued conflict among the various castes in the municipalities which relates and informs the larger ethnic or identity movement nationally and internationally. By showing how development, while striving for freedom and equality, not only produces opportunities to solidify or institutionalize existing inequalities but also creates spaces for unprecedented changes in the community and beyond, this study contributes to the growing literature on identity, particularly ethnic identity and development.