

CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Women constitute half of the population of the world; hence their equal participation in any development activities is not only desirable but also essential to speed up the development process. The slogan of development remains in paper only unless women participate equally in sharing the achievements of the developments.

In the development of a nation the women play vital role, however, in male-dominated country like ours, female are considered of low standard and of less value. But in recent years, people have started realizing the importance of women's participation in the economic as well as social development. The socio-economic standard of women greatly enhances the progressive development of a nation. Now, men and women have equally started participating on development activities in many developed countries having faith and relationship as that of "muscles with the nail of the finger" (Bhusal, 2004). This mutual understanding between male and female can bring drastic change in the socio-economic status of a nation.

Women's significance as an indispensable human resource was initiated only with the onset of the international wave of "Women in Development" which took all the South Asian Countries including Nepal in its fold after the UN declaration of 1975-1985 as the UN Decade for women. Prior to this, women had been rendered statistically invisible by development practitioners. Women as the traditional producers and managers of the domestic and subsistence sector were highly undermined, their activities being automatically labeled as "non-monetized", "Non-marketable" and "Non-productive." Such acute statistical bias reflected in national accounting further fed by staunch traditional norms, values and perceptions can be held responsible for the shift in women's status to "non status" (Bhusal, 2004).

Being an agricultural country, Nepal has more than half of the total population of Nepal is engaged in agriculture. Every aspects of life are directly influenced by agriculture and illiteracy. Furthermore, the society is male-oriented. According to the statistical data of the CBS 2011, the total population of the country is 2,64,54,904 in which the male occupies 48.49 percent and female 51.50 percent. The total literacy rate is 65.9 percent in which, the male literacy rate is 75.1 percent and female literacy rate is 57.4 percent.

In Nepal, female headed household was 14.9 percent in 2001, and it became 25.7 percent in 2011. Similarly, female ownership of land in 2001 was 11.7 percent, and it increased to 19.7 percent in 2011 (CBS, 2012). Studies have shown that women can play a major role in Nepalese household and agricultural activities both as labors in the family, farm and in the wage labor not to mention on decision making level.

It has been realized that females are equally qualified and, even more competent than males, however, it has not been internalized by the so-called males. In fact, women should be empowered with education so that they can become competitive and go neck and neck with their male counterparts in all types of jobs and, other levels of work. The existing gap between the status of men and women should be blurred thereby giving them equal chance and opportunities. However, in Nepal, it is mainly the men who negotiate and operate with the outside world, not the women, where major operation is with the household. If development activities are offered or supplied to the rural poor people, it is the men who received and participate in them.

The status of Nepalese women has been deeply affected by various religious and traditional ill customs. Social norms and ill practices have seriously affected the role and status of Nepali women. According to Nepali belief, birth of girl is the birth of bad luck. If a boy is born, the family rejoices, but if a girl is born the family laments. There is a general belief that if a man is not blessed with a son, the door to the heaven will not be opened to him. There is a saying that "let it take time but let a son born" (Ghimire, 2009). No doubt, women's participation in bureaucracy and policies has increased in the past few years. However, only a few of them have reached the position of decision making. The constitutional provision for the allocation of 33 percent of the candidacy for women constitutional assembly by each political party has opened the door of political recognition of women. In Nepal, women's participation in planning and decision-making processes of economic and political aspects is still minimal. Gender bias persists in Nepal; literacy and schooling gaps between men and women are still large. In fact, the interaction of gender biased indicators of welfare, capability, work; participation and earning reflect the centrality of women's education for economic growth.

The economic factors are found as the most important factors, which directly and indirectly affect the decision making process of women in market economy, which tends to raise their strength in decision making power as an important factor. Beside that, convincement of women to the domestic and subsistence sectors automatically implies a low status that lessens their economic decision-making power. Equality between men and

women in such a situation can not be dreamt for, when half of the population is deprived of the basics right of life, it will be impossible to achieve the aim of prosperity and development in Nepal.

Decision making activities are not only limited to the public domain even within the domestic domain, people have to make decisions on a number of activities. The opportunity for people making decisions related to the domestic affairs of their respective families defines the level of their position in influencing the opinion of other household with regard to strategies that may have to be implemented. Some important areas in which households have to make major decisions are related to buying or selling property, borrowing or lending when necessary and, arranging marriages for their children.

Women's main role is confined within the limited territory of agricultural and domestic activities. Although the men tend to consult with the women on many household matters, the final decision will ultimately be made by the men.

Tharus are one of the indigenous people of Nepal living in Terai. They are mostly concentrated in Seti, Bheri, Lumbani, Narayani, Koshi and Janakpur zones or, in the western, mid-western and far western of Terai. They have scattered in the northern parts of Uttar Pradesh state in India along the Terai of Nepal. They usually live very close to heavily forested regions. They have their own dialect customs behavior pattern, life style and socio-culture of socio-economic life. Their dressing pattern is different from other ethnic groups of Nepal. A great majority of the *Tharus* are very hard working tenant cultivators. They are always engaged in agriculture. Most of them have been greatly exploited by ruthless *zamindar* and rich landlords. Their agricultural activities keep them isolated from outside world in their own localities.

Tharu marriages are monogamous and patrilocal; most marriages are early and are arranged by parents. They have their own tribal religion and employed their on *Guruwa* or priest. The joint family system is common in the *Tharus* community. They live in one stored huts with bamboo walls, however, in search of fertile land or due to their poverty, they migrate from one place to another, which is shown by their history also.

Socio-economic status of females affects the role of women in society. However, they are capable and potential, their capability and potentiality are not respected if they have low status. As female are less educated, they have low decision making power. These women, who have higher education and sound economic background, have higher chance on decision making. Females are not considered to participate in decision making process in most of the social, economic, religious and other activities.

The economic, demographic and social factors have the strong role in term of decision making power. Women have no leading roles; they are considered as second grade citizens and play sub-ordinate role in the society. They are less comfortable in decision making fields. They have low access to resources which make them dependent and it affects their role in households as well as in society.

In the *Tharus* society, women play important role in decision making. Although the senior male members of a household have the final authority in matters concerning family, property and major household expenditure, they do not dare to impose their on the other household member. Rather all adult members of the household moreover, on certain occasion the senior males of a household, who are supposed to give the final decision just endorse the decision of their females.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In the Nepalese context, women suffer from poverty, illiteracy, unemployment and household burden. Relating to decision making, women's representation is very poor in the whole of south Asia, especially in the countries like Nepal, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan. The status of women is an important factor that affects the social, economic development in a country without women's participation, the goals of development activities can not be fully attained. So, men and women are the pillars of development. Women's activities are generally connected with inside the house, and men's in the outside sphere. The role of men and women are interdependent, but women's overall burden is higher than that of men.

Decision making and benefits are legitimized by the traditional norms. Owing to this, there is a belief that females should confine themselves to such tasks as cooking, washing, taking care of children and should not involved in traditional male activities. But studies in Nepal reveal that women also participate in farm activities besides performing the household tasks. It has been understood to be mainly men's domain while the contributions of women have simply gone unnoticed because social norms define these activities as exclusively male tasks. Women's economic independence and awareness of their rights must be taught and forcibly implemented so those women may be able to exercise their right. Women must enjoy rights equal to men not only in law but also in practice (Thapa, 2002).

Women, especially of the study are involved in agriculture sectors but are not recognized as farmers. Majority of the rural women are involved in selling their domestic products

like milk, fresh vegetable, but are deprived of opportunities to use the money according to their will. Economic activities of women have always been under estimated precisely because household works are not classified under economic activities. This shows that women suffer from hard work and face different difficulties in society. Their status in economic and legal aspects is disappointing. This is mainly because of their less access to decision-making process. So, the study area has more chance to implement such activities.

A key area of current development thrust is enhancing female participation in decision-making process in different spheres of life. Decision making will be one such field, however, before any recommendation will be made to promote participation of women, empirical studies that actually examine the role of women in decision making process in a household be undertaken. This study has attempted to explore and describe Tharu women's role in decision making in Barahathawa Municipality-15 of Saralahi districts.

The study is guided by the following research questions.

1. What is the socio- economic status of Tharu women in study area?
2. What is the role of Tharu women in the decision making process in their household activities?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the present study is to explore and describe the women's participation in household's decision making among Tharu.

The specific objectives of the study area are the following:

1. To assess the situation of Tharu women involved in agriculture and income generation activities in the study area.
2. To explore the role of Tharu women in household decision making in economic, health and education sector.

1.4 Importance of the Study

Nepal has multi-ethnic society. It has cultural variations. A part from this, Nepal has regional variations too. Tharu is one of the most important such as running the whole household, looking after the family members, performing the agricultural activities, looking after the cattle and also performing the social activities.

This study will help to find out the status of women, especially Tharu women as well as their role in household's decision-making power. This study will be important to all those who are interested to know more about them. It will also help the native and the foreign

researchers in the days to come to the further detail study on the same topics or in the similar field. This study will also be very helpful even for the planners, policy makers, NGO/INGOs in relation to the introduction and execution of development activities.

1.5 Organization of the Study

The study had divided into six chapters, which are as follows:

The first chapter provides introduction or role of women in various sectors, statement of the problems, objectives and importance of the study area. The second chapter deals with the literature review from the previous studies. Theories and research reports on the concept regarding the status of women and role of women in decision making, and women's rights in general overview and national context, and also included conceptual frameworks of the study in this chapter.

The third chapter focuses on the methodological procedures adopted in the present study. They include rationale for the selection of study area, research design, source and nature of data, universe and sampling, methods of data collection, data analysis and interpretation and the limitation of the present study. Similarly, the fourth chapter focuses on area and people covered by the study. It is divided into three parts. The first part deals with an overview of Saralahi district and the second part deals with a brief introduction on Barahathawa Municipality-15. In the same way, the third part is about the Tharus of Barahathawa Municipality-15 in general.

The fifth chapter of the thesis involves in socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the study area. The sixth chapter is divided into two sections. The first section deals with summary, the second section deals with conclusion of the research.

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CHAPTER - II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section deals the literature regarding the status of women and role of women in decision-making.

2.1 General Overview

Traditionally women's responsibilities have been restricted to the home, cooking, cleaning, child-caring and looking after the house. Women are considered to be weak, vulnerable and dependent on men. There should not be any discrimination between men and women (Gurung 1999). The Interim Constitution of Nepal 2007, states that "No discrimination shall be made against any citizen in the application of general law on groups of religion, race, sex, caste, tribe or ideological conviction or any of these" but in reality this has not been practiced. However, this discrimination exists in high degree in rural settlement compared to urban.

The majority of women live in rural areas, where the choice of livelihood is limited to agriculture work in the farms, which are owned in most cases either by their fathers, husbands, landlords or brothers since the daughter of Nepal are deprived of the inheritance of property right which is the means of owning land. In the rural areas, women have to work in men's land from dawn to dusk for supporting themselves and their family members. This clearly shows how dependent they made for their live hood, or in other words we can say that the right for survival for women is laid on the hearts of women.

'Women have less access to income, wealth and modern avenues of employment' (Thapa 2004). They have to spend them much time in household work very little time is left for activities with potentially higher economy development of the country. Their access to property in their husband households, their less access to income, wealth and employment are the main cause of their low social status. It directly affects their decision making power (Ghimire, 2009).

Women in Nepal, as elsewhere, hold the triple work responsibilities of reproduction, house holding and farm work. However, reproduction is not treated as work and house holding is not considered as productive work by government system. They are also suffering from the discriminatory practices in opportunity for education, personal mobility, which is required among other for skill development and independent decision making.

Gender inequality still exists in Nepalese life where women lag far behind the men in economic, social and political position. Women's traditionally disadvantages status in the areas of education, health and on economic participation has restricted their mobility and divided them the basic needs/tools necessary for political participation.

A girl, in Nepal is not a desired child and so she does not get chance to education, bears a low social and moral values in the society, performs the most arduous jobs throughout her life and, often posses a lower self image than her male counterparts.

2.2 National and International Context

The world is in 21st century and at the same time; it is shrinking into a global village. People are participating in the process of development globally. There is no national as well as international boundary in term of development. But Nepal is a country where darkness is prevailing under the light. There exists bundle of problems which are discouraging people to move forward with freedom. Women's participation in various levels of decision making is an essential prerequisite for the establishment of equally development and peace. Women constitute about 50% of the total population of Nepal but yet their participation in the various level of decision making is negligible. (Ghimire, 2002)

The fact is that women are immensely oppressed and suppressed in our society. They are discriminated in all sectors of decision making and are not considered as main parts of development activities. Though men and women have equal right to live but there is social injustice due to which, women have weak decision making power. The status of women is low which reflects the weak decision making power in house hold as well as in the society. Decision making is an important factor which measures the relative status of household's members. Women are still excluded from the active role of decision making. Men have major role of decision making inside the household as well as outside. Men ask women only for formality and their decision has not prominent part in any activities in household and in the society. Only very few women get opportunity to be leading decision maker.

Mazumdar (1982) writes the Asian women who have been subjected to acute social, economic and political prejudice and oppression in the past and which continues even to this day may be to a lesser degree.

According to her, "the monopolies of economic and political power as well as access to knowledge are the three major instruments by which the present structure of inequality

between and within nations is maintained." (Mazumdar 1989: 65). The majority of the women in the world, especially the Asian women, are excluded from these instruments. Their position is further belittled by the fact that their work is considered as "non-productive". This undervaluation of women's contribution to the economy is closely associated with their inferior social status and also the relative loss of individual freedom and status with the family." (Mazumdar 1982: 69), she also talks of non-socialist countries, where the extension of capitalism has further marginalized the economic and social roles of women. They have been projected as more consumers, worthy of only social welfare services but not as partners with equal say in building a new society. Such welfare policies, no matter how well intentioned, are found to reinforce various forms of exploitation of these women.

She also highlights upon the fact that in Asia, women constitute the single largest group engaged in agriculture and food production. Some Asian traditions even claim that women discovered agriculture. Yet very few of them control the basic asset-land; although they participate actively in the labor process, they are often excluded from the decision making process.

Further, women in agriculture attach highest priority to food crops, as it becomes their responsibility to feed their families. Therefore, their greater control on agriculture decisions could be made instrumental in reducing the areas under food crops.

She concludes, saying that constraints of family, illiteracy and all traditional barriers and attitudes prevent women's ability to influence vital decision making. She suggests forming grass root level organizations responsive to the needs of the poor, local women. Along with this is needed a new approach to study the social organizations, i.e. families and household in a clearer perspective. Better knowledge of women both in the past and present can bring a lot of changes to these perceptions.

‘Among the women of south-Asian countries, the women of India and Nepal had different social problems on their way for gaining freedom. Indian and Nepalese women had to gain freedom, at first from social evils like sati system, child marriage, polygamy and prohibition of widow remarriage before gaining political freedom’ (Thapa 2004). In this regard Indian government and reformists (individuals as well as organizations) had taken up steps towards eradicating the social evils earlier than in Nepal. In Nepal steps towards abolishing sati system and rising marriageable age of girls were taken only in the present century.

Similarly, steps towards providing education to girls were taken in Nepal later than in India. Even those steps which had been taken in Nepal towards removing the social evils were not successful; only the steps towards abolishing sati system were successful in Nepal. Child marriage and polygamy were not wiped out by the reformative steps which had been taken towards this direction. Many others social evils and economic dependency which were harmful to the freedom of Nepalese women were not abolished till 1960.

The movement for women's status all over the world has emphasizes the role of education. It is believed that education will bring about the education in the inequalities between sexes and uplift women's subjugated position of the society. In general, educated women have a higher status in the society and the family size become smaller as the education level of the mother rises. In fact, women's education is low in Nepal, and the lowest in SAARC countries that is adult female illiteracy is 88% for Nepal compared to India 71%, Pakistan 81%, Bangladesh 78% (World Bank, 1995, cited in Ghimire, 2002)

The movement to secure equal rights for women has developed historically along major fronts; political, social, educational and economic. Women in development concept broadly came into existent when this term was first coined in the early 1970's by a women committee of Washington DC. The importance of women's contribution in achieving the national and economic objectives is first articulated at the oriented Nation's International women's year conference in Mexico City in 1975. Since then there has been a considerable increase of interests on women issue around the world. Women's role have been stressed repeatedly in National and International forums throughout the United national Organization for women from 1975-1985.

Mahatma Gandhi said, "Educated a man and you will have a person educated; but educated a women and you will have a whole family educated."

However, women's health problems cannot be resolved unless the perception of her sexuality undergoes a fundamental charge. Further, until it is the third party or the male member who decide on her reproductive capacity, there seems little possibility of resolving the health problems faced by these women.

Where education is concerned, one billion women, in the third world countries cannot read and write and in some countries as much as 90 percent of the female population is illiterate. Besides, the female dropout rates increase as they move up the educational ladder from primary to secondary education. Their educational status enhances their inferiority complex in the competitive world – a complex which starts from home where

they are given a low priority in household expenditure and other equally important matters.

Finally, she concludes on a questioning note "can we afford to trace any path of development without pooling the untapped resources of women?" She emphasizes upon women as an indispensable human resources and the necessity to mobilize them for any significant and balanced development of a nation.

The Beijing conference on women 1995 has emphasized different aspects related to the problems of women and pass plate form of action addressing twelve different critical area of concern as poverty, education and training, health, decision making power, armed conflict, the girl child, economy environment violence, human rights, media and advancement of women. But they are still facing the problems of deprivation. They are deprived from their rights and responsibilities. Even their husband and family members are not ready to hear their voice.

UNESCO (1996) attested to the empowerment of the various actors involved. At the present time, far too few women possess this attribute. Education facilitates empowerment which is essential for the participation of women in all aspects of the development. The increased of women in decision making is probably the domain where urgent action is most required. Women are particularly poorly represented in parliaments where they can take part in the decision making at national and international levels. Women in development countries make up less than 10 percent of elected representative. Some would argue in favor of an equal but clearly specific management style and the espousal of certain values; other would deny any difference, insisting that access to decision making depends on emulation of male behavior. However, despite this divergence of opinion, both sides would agree that truly able women leaders have an obligation to assist other competent women.

United Nations (2006) mentioned about the women in power and decision-making. The Beijing platform for action emphasizes the goal or equal participation by women and men in political decision-making. It calls on government to monitor and evaluate progress in the representation of women at all levels in the public and private sectors through the collection, analysis and dissemination of quantitative and qualitative data. Increasing women's representation in political, office is now a widely held development goal. Occupation data from labor force surveys have also been used to analyze gender disparities in access to decision making position. The proportion of women in occupation

that usually involved decision making, such as legislators, senior official and managers, can provide an indication of gender differentials in access to decision making.

The United Nations has defined the status of women in the context of their access to knowledge, economic resource and political power and their personal autonomy in the process of decision making. Women from different cast/ethnic groups have different social status in their respective communities and women from the ethnic groups seem to possess better status than the women from Hindu caste group. The dominant Hindu culture and the patriarchal value system of the country has influenced the status of women as their subordinate.

Although there is imbalance in status between men and women, as in the most of the developing countries, women in Nepal are also engaged in domestic chore along with the social and economic activities required for survival. Despite their important roles undertaken for social and economic life capacity and potential, women have more disadvantage than male partners due to an inadequate access to exposure, technology, credit and environment.

The fourth Worldwide Women's Conference organized by UNO in 1995 in Beijing is the historical milestone of women's empowerment and their rights. From 5th – 9th June in 2000 A.D. organized the 3rd conference regarding women which is also known as Beijing +5. To ensure the layout of Beijing +5 and to improve the hindrances and face the present challenges National women commission in 8th March 2002 was established in the chairmanship of Mrs. Durga Pokharel.

Age is an important factor determining the working load of women. Aged women have to work more than young girls. Among men and women of some age group, women have to work much more than men.

The Nepalese women's' health is in miserable condition in the sense that they are quite neglected from their very childhood stage. The cultural norms, economic condition and preferential attitude of parents towards the boys are in the center of the ill/poor health of women. (Luitel, 1992).

In the Nepalese society the status and position of women depend on their economic condition. Women play significant role in the development of the nation. In the past women were considered a second grade citizen in most of the countries including Nepal. The status of Nepalese women is very poor. They have very less access to health, security and other basic needs of life.

Women have low degree of opportunities for their education and have hardly any access for employment. There is lack of women participation in decision making from house to the executive levels. There is no positive attitude towards women's health and they do not get appropriate nutrition even in the period of pregnancy (UNICEF, 1996) women get marriage early and are considered as child bearing machines (Sherpa and Rai, 1996) due to early age delivery there is high maternal mortality rate in Nepal (515 per 1000,000 live birth (CBS, 1991). Higher rate of maternal and child mortality shows the lower social status of women. Women have lack of economic power and also have lack of decision making role over their fertility too (Acharya, 1995).

Decision-making is also influenced by ethnicity. We find variation in different communities; women decision making power is relatively high in *Rai*, *Gurung* and *Matawali* communities than in Brahmin and *Chhetri*. It has been found that the weaker the Hindu value, the stronger is power in both use and decision patterns. In other two groups women decide what to do and who is to go where (Acharya and Bennett, 1983).

According to her, the women of Nepal are so dependent to men, if the partners of members deny to give shelter to them, it is a question of basic survivals. This system has made women so helpless, houseless, and depend that without men they will not survive. So, in this inhuman system the right of survival is laid on the hearts of men.

During the Rana regime (1846-1951) Nepalese women were socially, politically, economically and religiously handicapped. But in this period, the women of other countries, especially of western countries; had achieved greater freedom in many fields. In Nepal, however the disparity between men and women in all fields was considerable. The social position of women was regrettable. Politically, they were nowhere. Religiously, their position was like that of a *Sudra*. (*Sudra* is the lowest of four Hindu caste, other being Brahman, *Kshatriya* and *Vaisya*; *Sudra* is also treated in Hindu society as untouchable).

Economically, they were deprived of poverty right. Even the working, women did not get equal wages as men for the same manual labor. Only the widow mother who would have sons would be economically in a little better position than other women. She would control over the property of her deceased husband and she could deny their due share of her sons. But it was only a legal provision which was not generally practiced.

There were many ethnic of religious groups in Nepal; therefore, all women of these groups had no similar social status during the period. But the differences were not so

considerable. Socially and religiously, the status of the women of same ethnic or religious groups could be a little better or little worse than the women of other ethnic or religious groups but, politically, economically and legally all women of all the groups were at the same level (Ghimire, 2002).

However, this pathetic condition of Nepalese women had received sympathy from Nepalese humanists who wanted to see the change in their lot. But that sympathy could not unveil itself in the public because of lack of mass media like newspaper, public meetings and radio. When the chance provided that silent telling came out in the form of 'the public opinion' immediately after the Gorkhapatra in 1901 with the passing of the time more mass media like newspaper, magazines, began their publication and as mass media increased, public opinion for the betterment of the Nepalese women's condition was also started pleading more strongly. The pleading for the betterment of the Nepalese women's condition picked up greater momentum when other means of mass media such as the political parties and women's organizations were formed in Nepal. They started pleading for their rightful places in the society through the public meetings and other types of mass media. All those supports and public opinion expressed and extended for the betterment of women's condition in Nepal not only pressurized the government and conservative people to take liberal attitude and steps for the development of Nepalese women's conscious of their rights.

Nepalese society, being patriarchal, people still does not see women politicians as their leaders, no matter how capable they are. They tend to see them through the prism of social roles as sister, wife and daughter-in-law etc. (Thapa, 2004).

Nepali women are daughters, wives, and mothers, but are not recognized as individuals with their own identity, despite the fact that they are as human as men society has relegated women to the lowest rank and to a submissive role, confined to the home and farm and their responsibilities there due to their maternal function. They are discouraged and prevented to take part in public life. (Singh, 2004) women's economic dependence on men, mainly stemming from the fact that men earn cash incomes, contributes to their social status. The few women who earn a salary are often held in higher esteem than women who do not (Gurung, 1999).

Women in Nepal, as elsewhere, hold the triple work responsibilities of reproduction, house holding and farm work. However, reproduction is not treated as work and house holding is not considered as productive work by government system. Women also suffer from discriminatory practices in opportunities for education, personal mobility which is

required among to her for skill development and independent decision making (UNDP, 1995).

According to the report of population census 2001, in Nepal, women constitute more than 50% of the total population in the country (CBS, 2001) the infant and maternal mortality rates are also highest in Nepal among the countries of south Asia. The adult literacy rate of 40% (female less than 1/3 of that) is one of the lowest in South Asia (CBS, 1995). Although women comprise half of the population of the country and have always been involved in national development, they are still marginalized from the opportunities such as economic resources, e.g. property, income, employment as well as other resources. Illiteracy unhealthiness, poverty and conservative social taboos have been the fate of Nepalese women in general.

It is sure that women are capable and they have efficiency of making important and effective decisions if they are given a chance. As they are the providers of basic household needs, they can bear the closest association with it.

The decision making power is surrounded by various factors. In Nepal, women constitute more than half of the total population with poor status. More females are engaged in household activities without decision making power. They have to follow their male partners in must of the cases. A perusal of the available literature also makes it clear that there is a persisting controversy regarding women's input in decision making process.

Equality in society cannot be achieved either through slogan, demands, and conflicts or through wishes and blessing along. Experience has also shown that laws and regulations are not adequate. What is indeed required is a climate of public opinion where feeling of quality emanates from the hearts of all. Women are bounded by socio-cultural norms. Even parents discriminate against the girl child. This is because of lack of knowledge, awareness and education.

So, if the nation wants to gain something from women, their first duty should be to given equal opportunity of education, health, empowerment etc control of family by the use of family planning measures and drastic change will come in the nation automatically in every field like economic developments status of women, women's decision-making power etc.

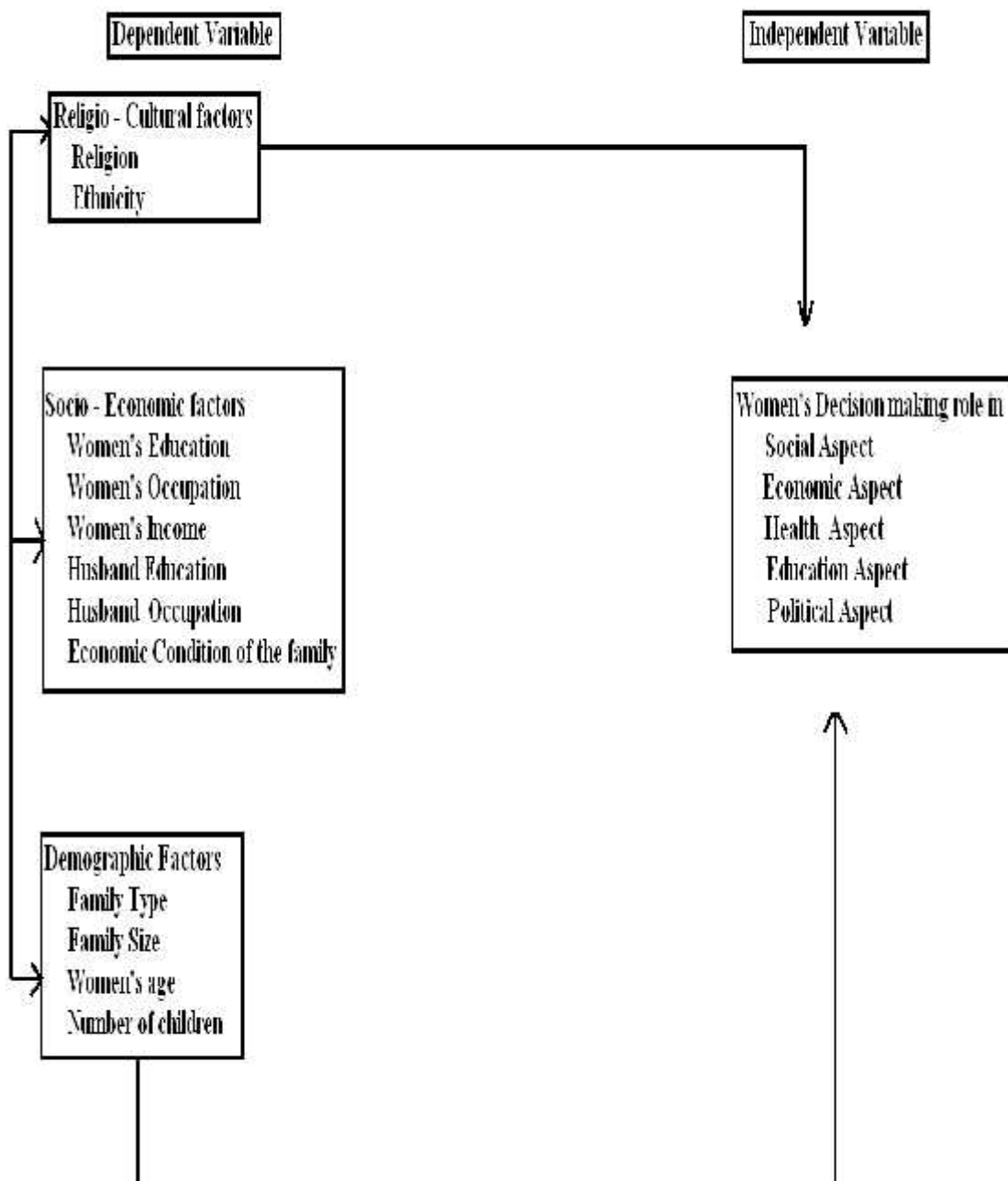
2.3 Conceptual Framework

Based on the review of the available literature, an attempt has been made to develop a conceptual framework for the present study by identifying possible factors affecting the

decision making power of Tharu women. The framework includes caste/ethnicity, economic status, and social status of women.

The reviews of some of the relevant studies suggest some factors that affect women's decision making power at household. These are social, economic, educational, and health factors which in turn, affects the decision making power. In view of the findings of the past research studies as mentioned above as well as the social, educational, economic and health characteristics of the community under study, a conceptual framework will be developed to see the level of household decision making power of Tharu women.

Conceptual Framework For Analysis of Women's Decision Making Role



CHAPTER - III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides the details of the procedure adapted for the present research study. It includes the national for selection of particular Municipality as a case, describes the research design and summarizes the operational definition and operational measures of selected variables. It will be also provide the details of the nature and source of data, universe and sampling procedures, techniques of data collection, and analysis and limitations of the present study.

3.1 Rationale for the Selection of Study Area

As mentioned earlier main objectives of the present study is to describe the decision making power of Tharu women at micro level. For this purpose, Barahathawa Municipality-15 Pipara Bhita of Saralahi district has been selected as a case for the study. The Municipality is selected for the following reasons:

- a. This area is populated by the Tharu community and it may be representative to study the role of Tharu women.
- b. There are no Rural Development studies about women in decision-making process even in Tharu women. Therefore selected this area.
- c. The study area accessible for me as I am a permanent resident of Barahathawa Municipality-15 Pipara Bhita.

3.2 Research Design

This study is exclusively descriptive and analytical.

3.3. Source and Nature of Data

In this study, both primary and secondary data are used. The primary data are collected from the study area. During the field work, primary data are collected from the sample respondents and key informants. The secondary data are taken from the published and unpublished literature such as books, journals, articles, research reports and other different sources.

3.4 Universe and Sampling

There are 410 households in ward number 15 of Barahathawa Municipality Pipara Bhitia. Among them, 80 households are Tharu. At Least 50 the Tharu households are selected for this study.

3.5 Methods of Data Collection

In order to obtain necessary and reliable data for this study I have used rational methods usually adopted by such as direct, participation, observation and structured interview schedule.

3.5.1 Semi-structured Interview

Structured interview schedule is prepared on the basis of research objectives before going to field for data. On the basis of that schedule, interview is performed with the respondent of sampled household to collect the required information. Various information about Tharu women in household decision-making process is collected.

3.5.2 Observation

Observation is one of the important techniques to collect various types of data at natural level. Observation method will be used to collect the observable information such as women's participation in day-to-day activities, their role in household activities, their relationship with family. The decision making process in the household will be observed to find out the women's role in the household decision-making. The data will be collected through observations will be cross-checked with the information collected through semi-structured interview.

3.6 Data Analysis and Interpretations

The data collected from the field study are edited and coded in tabular form. They are analyzed and interpreted presenting in figure as far as possible and necessary, simple statistical tools like average and percentage are also used during the analysis.

The entire procedure for this data generation and its analysis is related to the formation of structured interview schedule. It is comprised of the all-relevant interview schedule concerning the decision making in household health, training are included. Therefore, the interview schedule has been designed in household affairs such as economic sector, social sector, education, health related issues. Therefore, the interview schedule has been designed in such a manner so as to give an overall picture of the relative status to the female in term of household decision making of the selected households within this study area.

7 Limitation of the Study

The study is conducted as a case study of a village for the partial fulfillment of the master level degree requirement in Rural Development. Therefore, it is not feasible for detailed intensive research due to the lack of sufficient resource with in such short period of time. The Study is narrowed down in the study area of concerned to only household decision-making.

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CHAPTER - IV

THE PEOPLE AND STUDY AREA

This chapter presents a brief introduction of the study area, Barahathawa Municipality-15 Pipara Bhita of Saralahi district. The first section presents an overview of Saralahi district. The second section deals with a brief introduction of Barahathawa Municipality-15 Pipara Bhita while the third section is about the Tharu of Barahathawa Municipality-15 in general.

4.1 Saralahi District: An Overview

Saralahi district lies on the mid-western part of Nepal which is one of the district of Janakpur Zone. It is located in the west of Rautahat district of Narayani zone and the east of Mahotari of Janakpur zone. Likewise Sindhuli are in the north and (Bihar) India in south. The total area of the Saralahi district is about 1259 square kilometres. (DDC Saralahi, 2021). Saralahi district lies in inner Terai, which has tropical to sub-tropical climate. The maximum temperature of the district is recorded in summer which reaches up 39°C and minimum in winter is upto 2°C. The rainfall is usually occurs during the rainy season in 1390mm upto 2063 (DDC Saralahi 2021).

Saralahi is inhabited by diverse ethnic group. The major languages in Maithali, Bhojpuri are Nepali and *Tharus*. Hinduism is the main religion of all caste / ethnic groups. The main economic bases of this district are agriculture, livestock, trade, service and traditional occupation.

Bagamati and *Lakhandai* are the main rivers of the district. There are twelve municipalities and 8 rural municipalities in Saralahi. Ghorahi (The district headquarter, Malagawa municipality), Barahathawa, Harion and Lalbandi are the main town of Saralahi where the most of infrastructure facilities are available. According to the 2011 Census the total population of Saralahi district is 769,729 among them 389,756 are males and 379,973 are females. The total number of household is 132,844 (CBS, 2012).

4.2 Barahathawa Municipality-15: A Brief Introduction

Barahathawa Municipality-15 is one of the total 18 wards of Saralahi district. The Barahathawa is located in the eastern part of Saralahi valley, which is about 107.05 km east-south from district headquarter, Barahathawa. It is surrounded by Haripur municipality from east, Gadhimai municipality from west, Basabariya rural municipality and Dhankaul rural municipality from south and Bagamati municipality north. Agriculture is the main source of income for this Municipality which has tropical to sub-

tropical warm climate. This area is geographically very inaccessible, telephone and electricity facilities are exact introduced. In this Municipality health post, post office and more secondary schools are available. There are no any other institutions as such in this Municipality.

According to the Census 2011, the total population of the Municipality is 69,822. The main ethnic groups residing in this Municipality are *Brahmin, Chhetri, Magar, Tharus, Dalit, Yadav, Mahato, Pasaman, Chamar, Tamang, Sahani* etc.

The Ward-wise population by households and sex is presented in the Table No. 1

Table No. 1

The distribution of ward wise population by household and sex

Ward No.	Number of HHs	Total Pop ⁿ	Male	Female
1	330	1560	745	815
2	410	2420	1135	1285
3	275	1351	603	748
4	335	1581	745	836
5	306	1634	736	898
6	360	1599	766	833
7	364	1588	734	854
8	301	1294	596	698
9	251	698	248	450
Total	2932	13725	6308	7417

Source: CBS, 2012

Table 1 shows that Ward No. 2 and 9 occupies highest and lowest number of population respectively. Similarly, the highest and lowest number of household are in Ward No. 2 and 9 respectively.

The population of this Municipality is heterogeneous in terms of caste/ ethnicity. The population distribution of Barahathawa Municipality-15 by caste/ethnicity is presented in the Table No.2

Table No.2

Population Distribution by Caste/Ethnicity

Caste/Ethnicity	Population	Percentage
Brahman	2474	18.025
Magar	2417	17.61

Chhetri	2396	17.48
Tharu	2912	21.21
Kami/Damai/Sarki/Gaine	1807	13.16
Sanyasi/Thakuri	847	6.17
Kumal/Gurung/Yadav/Baniya	503	3.66
Others	369	2.68
Total	13725	100.00

Source: CBS, 2012

According to the above table, Barahathawa Municipality-15 has mixed caste/ethnic groups. The table shows that the *Tharus* is also one of the main ethnic groups there. Mahato, Kami, Damai, Yadav, Gurung, Tamang etc. are also presiding there.

4.3 The *Tharus* of Barahathawa Municipality-15

Tharus is one of the main ethnic group in Barahathawa Municipality-15. As mentioned above (Table No.2) *Tharu* account for 21.21 percent of the population of this Municipality.

4.3.1 History

Regarding the origin of the *Tharus* tribe, even today, scholars have not been able to come to a definite and clear conclusion while some claim them to be migrants from the *Thar* Desert in Rajasthan, India. Others says that these are descendants of the children that were born out of the liaisons between the *Rajput* women and their servants who fled the Muslim invaders and after living without their spouses in these area for long periods, they ultimately cohabited with their servants thus giving birth to the breed known as the *Tharus*. Also that the *Tharus* are a mixed tribe whose ancestors had migrated into this area seems relevant to the *Rajput* women and servants migration aspect. But in spite of so much trouble taken in trying to associate the above theories with the presence of the *Tharus* people in the Terai and Duns of Nepal, none of them seem to be able to hold the picture as they profess to be a bit too farfetched, though highly romantic; There is one theory that seems to explain the presence and pedigree of these people who are considered the aborigines of the areas lying within the Inner Madesh or Duns and the Malarial forest areas of the not plains south of the *Mahabharat Lekh* and around the *Chure Range*.

One point to note here is that had the Tharu people been migrants, they would definitely not have been foolish enough to settle in the unhealthy flat land of the Terai, but would have naturally chosen a better site for habitation.

The explanation which seats the existence of the Vrijji Republic, which stretched from the south. East to the West and lay adjacent and south to the area of the present day Tharu habitat, through an area of almost 800 miles in length where its influence was strong. The capital was first at Vaisali or Baniyanbad in Muzzafarpur in Bihar, India and later on, it shifted to Chunsuna or Janakpur in Nepal. At this time, the Kapilvastu Shakya people, descendants of Lord Buddha, were also of some repute and surely they cannot be assumed to have kept a low profile. Thus it is apparent that while the Vrijji Republic consolidated, its area, the Shakya also did something similar by controlling the upper areas of the Terai from east to west and the Inner *Madesh* also, thus strengthening the foundation of the *Shakya* lineage. It is a great possibility that those *Shakya* are none other than the ancestors of today's Tharu people, because of the fact that they are still occupying the areas founded as the domain of the *Shakya* of old and they do not desire to leave the northern Terai and Inner *Madesh* areas.

Tharu people call other people who are different from them or live to the south as Baji as is customary among themselves and this word is said in a scornful manner indicating its dirty or bad meaning. It could be possible that the *Shakya* and Vrijji Republicans were enemies and the name Vrijji was later phonetically corrupted to Baji, Since the Shakya seem to have hated the Vrijji inhabiting the southern lands, marriage, relationship were never and even today are not maintained with people of the southern regions. This resulted in the extension of marriage pacts with the northern mongoloid tribal societies. For such interaction it is seen that while they somehow seem to have retained the southern cultural practices and language affinities, their features definitely resemble the mongoloid racial stock. Today, however, they are neither in contact with the southerners nor the northerners. It is possible that when the *Shakya* Kingdom spread across the length and breadth of the Terai and Inner *Madesh* and reached its peak, it fell into the usual cyclic decadence and began to disintegrate. One of these groups may have set up a separate community and labelled themselves as an independent tribe. This group could have been the ancestors of today's Tharu people.

It is a known fact that the *Shakya* people practiced *gotra* endogamy as written in the Buddhist literatures, however, once the kingdom split and the Tharu ancestors separated, then they must have stopped tribal exogamy with the northerners and began the practice

of tribal endogamy as is suspected to have occurred in that far off time by some scholars. But regarding their entry or migration into Nepalese territory, no definite date can be set on account of lack of evidence so far.

4.3.2 Language

It is essential to state that the Tharu do not have a single languages, known as Tharu language, as is other case with other tribes, however whatever they speak is what has slowly transformed from their original language to a mixture of the local languages and dialects, combined to form a sort of mixed tongue with its own specially as the mixing developed. The Tharu of Saralahi speak a language consisting of approximately 40% Nepali, 40% Hindi and the remaining 20% consists of *Maithali, Bhojpuri and Awadhi* etc. They converse among themselves in own language and they converse among another caste they used Nepali language.

Tharu of Barahathawa area speak more of the Hindi than the other languages and thus their speech is more Hindi than anything else. Among the Tharu of Saralahi, we find the use of certain ancient words which have almost become extinct in the Nepali language.

4.3.3 Family

The Tharu family is an extended structure and remains so far a period of 3 to 4 generation. The whole family unit is headed by the eldest member whose word is law. In the whole Tharu village there are old wise men among them one is selected and made the village representative or a sort of chieftain is called, *Kisan*. This person is authorized to again select a group of elders with whom he can sit and discuss various matters pertaining to the welfare of the village and make decision with their help in the form of suggestions and ideas.

4.3.4 Dress

In Saralahi district, where the temperature sometimes pushes the mercury in the thermometer, they were very little and light clothes. The male Tharu folks wear a *Bhegwa* or lion cloth of white cotten cloth and a half or full sleeved *Bhoto* called *Jhulwa*. Today they have begun to wear the modern waistcoats, shirts and even paints. The waistcoats are also called *Jaikot*. The women wear the knee length dress which is not much folded in the front and called a *Thetuwa Gunew (saya, sari and blouse)*. While young unmarried girls of *Bathiniyaa* wear *choalya* or a blouse which has strings on the back to tie it up. Married women have the same blouse but the strings are in the front. Women wear the sober white or plain *Gunew*.

4.3.5 Ornaments

The *Tharus* women like to adorn themselves with ornaments as the case with women of almost all tribes. On their ears these *Tharus* women wear the *Chhataur* or *Mundri* on which silver *Jhilmiliya* is hung. On the nostril is a *Phuli* or sometimes a *Natiha* is also hooked on. On the arms are bangles like ornaments called *Tra*, which are made of base metal or silver. The most attractive use of ornaments made by these *Tharus* women is on the neck, where they hang multicolored glassbeads or *Pote* necklaces, real or fake *Muga* necklaces. They wear *Tika* called *Tikuli* on their foreheads but *Sindur* or *Simrik* are not used to beautify themselves. It is seen that they use very little ornaments made of gold.

Married women tattoo not only their hands and legs but also their breasts with elaborate motifs. It is believed that should this not be done, whatever this women cooks is not worthy to be eaten. Males also tattoo themselves, however, unmarried women are not allowed the luxury of this practice. During the festivals and dances they wear attractive clothes and facial makeup is much more attractive.

4.3.6 Feeding

Most Tharu people are non-vegetarians and their staple food is rice. They consume fish, meat and alcohol more than vegetables, curries and breads. The kind of meats they eat consists of chickens, pigs, rabbits, pigeons etc. They also eat chicken eggs.

4.3.7 Occupation

The main occupation of these Tharu is seen to be agriculture firstly and then livestock rearing. The women catch fish in small rivers, streams and pools using nets.

Using wheat, barley, rice etc. the women distil alcohol at home. Very few Tharu people work in government agencies. These Tharu people are seen to practice an ancient form of sustainable agriculture with the breeding of animals on one side while cultivating the land on the other side. Most Tharu families possess 2-4 cows, the same amount of goats, sheep, oxen, pigs and a whole lot of chickens. These they say must be present for their various feasts and festivals where the demand for blood sacrifices of a variety of animals is essential. These animals are later consumed. Thus it is observed that along with the gains in manure, the compulsory breeding of animals is for fulfilling the religion-social demands of the community.

4.3.8 Religion and Festivals

The Tharus of Saralahi (Pipara Bhita) celebrate the Srawane Sankranti, Guriha as their main festival along with Hardawa which is after the rice planting. *Aaulo*, which is after the harvesting and *Aitbariya* after the threshing.

Maghe Sankranti is *Maghi* for them and 3 to 4 days prior to the festival these people stop all work and begin enjoying themselves. The whole night of Poush month's last day, they keep vigil drinking alcohol and dancing. The village priest of *Mahatuwa* performs the *puja* here, and it is mostly couples who pray here whether thinking the deity for the child they have or asking for a child they do not possess. After they pray, they perform *dhag* at the statue and at the feet of *Mahatuwa*. *Guruwa* is appeased and propitiated with blood sacrifices of animals and the flesh is cooked and eaten there, for it is taboo to take any part of the sacrificed animal home. This festival carries on for almost a week.

On *Maghe Sankranti*, no milking animals like the cows are milked. Even for a short period the Tharus release their livestock so that they too enjoy the freedom for celebrating this festival.

Holi is celebrated from *Fagu Purnima* till the next *Purnima* i.e. a full month and within this period they neither work for themselves nor for anyone else. Males and females both drink alcohol and plaster each other with all sorts of colours both dry and wet, singing songs and dancing simultaneously. The dance with the males is called *Khichti nach*. On the *Fagu Purnima* the Tharus girls are permitted to stop anyone on the road and ask for donations of *Faguwa* and also fool with and colour him too.

One and half months prior to *Bada Dasai*, all the unmarried girls or *bathinya* go to the house of the village elders and sing devotional songs about the great epic *Mahabharat* and dances are performed too. On *nawami* and according to their religious customs and traditions, after *tika*, this dance is taken to the nearby town. On this festival these Tharus prepare special foods from fish which is of a special category called- *Guita Macha* and found only in Saralahi region.

They also celebrated *Krishna Astami*, because of acculturation, now a days, they celebrated also *Tihar*.

Every Tharu village consists of village council composed of a representative from every family called *Ghardhurya*. These representatives get together and select ahead from among their midst and he is called the *Mahato*. The council under the leadership of the *Mahato* decides cases and disputes, irrigation and agriculture, roads and bridges, and also problems pertaining to the worship of *Devi*, *Devta* of the village community. The decision of this council is final and must be obeyed. The *Mahato* is not paid a stipulated sum of money for his services, but he is permitted one or two days free labor annually from every house in the village. He does not gain materially, but in the social aspect he is a winner

definitely, because he is all the respect, honour and prestige. He is invited to any *puja*, festival or feast that occurs within the precincts of the village.

4.3.9 Lifecycle Rites

Birth

The Tharus of Saralahi (Pipara Bhita), the birth of a child is not exactly celebrated as in other tribes, but on the 6th or 12th day after birth, their Tharu priest performs a ritual called *Bhatna Karauna*, after which the woman who has given birth will be purified and allowed to touch water without polluting it anymore.

Chhaewar

If the male child is the eldest one, then when he reaches the age of 4 to 5 years, in the month of *Falgun* and on the Monday or a Wednesday, *Puja* is offered to deities worshipped by the family or in other words the *Kul Devtas*. This is followed by the child's maternal uncle or mama performing the ritual called *Chhaewar* or hair shaving. This ceremony is succeeded by a grand fest for all those invited and present there. Those *Tharus* who are affluent perform such ceremonies for all their male progeny.

No such rituals exist for the Tharu girls and even their menarche and later menstrual cycles are ignored and not considered to pollute the family, thus no pollution during monthly menstrual cycles is observed. However, those Tharu living side by side with Hindu neighbours have begun to observe this sort of pollution because they are not willing to be considered unhindu and so observe Hindu rites and rituals to show their hindusized status.

Marriage

Most *Tharus* marriages occur when the children are quite young. A boy of 13 to 14 years of age will be married off to a girl who is 17 to 18 years old. This sort of unbalanced age marriage match is done, they explain, because of their practical belief that an extra worker (the woman) is made available by this union. Another reason offered is that the girls' sexual appetite increase as she grows older and the boy will be able to accommodate her as he will also be growing proportionally and thus, the balancing of this sexual high is possible. This also serves as a buffer to control the desire for extra-material sex which is supposed to satiate this unfulfilled craving.

As a tribe the Tharu practice *jat* endogamy, but regarding *gotra*, endogamy, matrilateral and patrilateral marriages, these are strictly taboo and unthinkable among these people. Thus they are seen to be *gotra* exogamous and step or *thar* exogamous. In opposition to

this sort of social bias, some scholars are of the opinion that there exists some. *Tharus* pockets where this sort of social activity is not considered taboo.

Generally, there are just two types of marriages found among the Tharu people. One is *magi biwaha* where all the relevant rituals are completed, and the other is *chori biwaha* where the female is stolen meaning taken away without consent. Due to the fact that boys are married off at an early age with girls in their mid teens, there seems to be no question of love marriages and the concept also seems absent among these people.

The practices of divorce and *jari* are simple affairs among these people and similar to other neighbouring tribes. The death of an elder brother leads to younger brother marrying his *bhauju* or elder brother's wife. Should there be no brothers then a suitable bride is found and, she is married to this man, who must live in the same house as a son (substitute the dead son and husband). There are not objections voiced against this practice and it is prevalent even today.

Death

Death is considered as one of the events of great significance among the Tharu societies as also in the other tribal communities. The ritual of death differs according to the place of habitation. Tharus, in Saralahi areas cremate as well as bury their dead. As earlier stated, the males are buried face down and the females are buried face up. Some Tharus use the seated posture for burials. Prior to the burial, a white cloth is laid inside the grave and the corpse is placed on this then it is covered with the other piece of white cloth. The last rites are presided over by their own priest and he is called *guruwa*. After the death rites the kin are all seated together and a feast of rice, unpasteurised milk and *blackgram* is eaten. This feast is called *Dudh mukh barne* should a deceased woman not have any husband, son, grandson or other lineage kin, then the *Kriya* of such an unfortunate woman has to be performed by her *maiti*. But if this woman is in the unmarried category, then these rituals are unnecessary for she is just taken and buried like a dog, as she is considered unfit for these rituals.

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CHAPTER - V

SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION AND DECISION MAKING

5.1 Socio-economic status of Tharu women

There are Six villages in this ward (Ward No.15, Barahathawa Municipality-15) Like, Pipara Bhita, Uprety Tol, Bel Tol, Saitpur, Sukambasi and Harpurwa. The area has been settled by migrant people from hills and neighbouring districts with mixed caste / ethnic groups. The main caste/ethnic groups of this area are Tharu, Brahman, Chhetri, Pashaman, Magar, Kami, Damai, Yadav, Chamar, Lohar, Musalman and Shah who are mainly engaged on agriculture, animal husbandry, petty trade and traditional occupations. The participation of the people in non-agricultural sectors is quite low.

Nepali is the main language of communication in the study area. The people of Indian roots, and *Tharu* speak their own language among themselves, but they use Nepali language to communicate with other communities.

Mainly, Hinduism is the main religion of the caste/ethnic groups but Tharus believe and practice Animism. But nowadays, their belief and practice is gradually changing because of the education as well as interaction with Hindus.

In this area, generally the houses are in traditional types. But now a days, some houses are built in modern style because of the developing of village-market. In this village health, sanitation, education, family planning situation and employment opportunities are very poor. In other words, like other rural part of the country the condition of this village seems to be quite similar.

5.2 Role of Decision Making

5.2.1 Marital Status

Marital status makes difference in women's status because it is through marriage that the women change their status from the status of daughter to daughter-in-law which increases their responsibility regarding the decision making. In Nepalese context marriage leads women to child bearing; with increasing role expectations the married and unmarried have different status due to this position in Nepal. In the life of women, marital status is an important indicator.

There are also unmarried, widow and separated people in this ward. In 50 *Tharus* women, how many *Tharus* women are married, unmarried, separated and widowed in the *Tharus* community that can be explored in this research.

Table No. 3

Marital Status of the Respondents

S.N.	Marital Status	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Married	40	80.00
2.	Unmarried	5	10.00
3.	Widowed	2	4.00
4.	Separated	3	6.00
	Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2021

The Table No. 3 shows that 80% of the sample respondents, are married, only 10% are unmarried and 4% of the total respondents are widows and 6% are separated.

5.2.2 Educational Status

Education is the most important element of human development which affects every aspects of human's life. Like income, living standard, occupation etc. The education attainment level of population is an important indicator of social-development. It plays vital role for the development of people, national economy as a whole. It is principal mechanism or agent for fulfilling the awareness and change of the people. Therefore it is a central to the process of empowering both men and women.

Education of the sample respondents was measured in terms of literacy status. Those who were not even able to read and write were considered as 'illiterate' and those who were able to read and write without any formal education were considered as 'non formal schooling'. Those who had received formal education were graded as Primary, Lower secondary, Secondary, SLC passed, Intermediate class, and Bachelor and above on the basis of the level of education they have completed. The distribution of respondents by literacy status is presented in the table below.

Table No. 4
Distribution of Respondents by literacy status

S. N.	Literacy Status	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Illiterate	40	80
2.	Non formal schooling	6	12
3.	Primary	2	4
4.	Lower-Secondary	1	2
5.	Secondary	–	–
6.	SLC Passed	1	2
7.	Intermediate	–	–
8.	Bachelor and above	–	–
	Total	50	100

Source : Field Survey, 2021

The table shows that majority (80%) of Tharu women is illiterate and none of them had passed intermediate level or above.

5.2.3 Education of Respondent's Husbands

In the male-dominated society, a woman is usually identified through her husband's name, husband education gives her a social identity. So, the educational status of husband's plays an important role on the social status of a woman. In view of this, the education of respondents' husband has been taken into consideration.

Education of the respondents' husband was classified and measured in the same way as it was done in case of the respondent education. Distribution of the respondents by their husband's education has been presented in the table below.

Table No. 5

Distribution of Respondent's Husband by Literacy Status

S. N.	Literacy Status	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Illiterate	28	70
2.	Non formal schooling	3	7.5
3.	Primary	4	10
4.	Lower-Secondary	1	2.5
5.	Secondary	1	2.5
6.	SLC Passed	2	5
7.	Intermediate	1	2.5
8.	Bachelor and above	–	–
	Total	40	100

Source : Field Survey, 2021

The table reveals that, 70% of the respondent's husbands were illiterate and only 12 respondent's husband (30%) was literate. Among the literate (7.5%) was literate but non formal education. Four (10%) were passed primary level education and 1 (2.5%) were lower secondary. Similarly, 1(2.5%) were secondary, 2 (5%) were SLC passed and 1(2.5%) were passed intermediate. In other words, the literacy rate 30% of the respondent's husband is far below the national even age literacy rate of 55% percent among the male population.

5.2.4 Occupation of respondents

Occupation status of an individual plays an important role of her social identity, so all are known by their working status. The working status of the people is also determined the fertility behavior. In view of this, occupation of respondent has been taken as an important characteristic into consideration. The distribution of the respondents' occupation has been presented in the table below.

Table No. 6
Distribution of Respondents by their occupation

S. N.	Occupation	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Agriculture	31	62
2.	Business	–	–
3.	Service	1	2
4.	Household work	16	32
5.	Others	2	4
	Total	50	100

Source : Field Survey, 2021

According to the above table, 62% respondents were engaged in agriculture and 32% respondents were involved in household work, or 32% respondents were not earned any income from outside. The service holder respondents were 2 percent, 4% respondents were other (wage labor) or (servant). But there are no respondents in the business field.

5.2.5 Occupation of respondents' husbands

It has already been mentioned that occupational status of an individual plays an important role of his/her social identification, husband's occupation give social identity to a woman. So occupation of the respondent's husband has been taken as an important indicator of her social status. The distribution of the respondents' husbands' occupation has been presented in table below.

Table No. 7
Distribution of Respondents' Husband's by their occupation

S. N.	Occupation	No. of Respondents' Husbands	Percentage
1.	Agriculture	32	80
2.	Business	3	7.5
3.	Service	2	5
4.	Household work	–	–
5.	Others	3	7.5
	Total	40	100

Source : Field Survey, 2021

As the table shows, 80% of the respondent's husbands were engaged in agriculture and 7.5% were in business. Similarly 5% were involved in services, 7.5% respondent's husbands are in other works (wage labor) but they are no any household work.

5.2.6 Family Structure

Family is one of the social institution, concerns mainly with love, affection, sexual relationship, reproduction, child bearing, child care and socialization. Everybody belongs to a family either by birth or by affinity. Most of the activities of an individual revolve around his/her family.

Ever since the evolution of the family, its several forms also have existed. The sample respondent's family structure was operationally defined as the type of family. So, it has been taken into consideration. The type of family prevalent of the sample is given in the table below.

Table No. 8
Distribution of Sample Household by Type of Family

S. N.	Type of Family	No. of Household	Percentage
1.	Nuclear	13	26
2.	Joint	37	74
	Total	50	100

Source : Field Survey, 2021

The above table shows that 74% of the sample household consisted of joint family. Joint family included husband, wife and their married and unmarried children living together and having meal in same kitchen. There are only 26% of the sample household consisted of nuclear family. Nuclear family means the family with husband, wife and their unmarried children. Some of the caste/ethnic groups (like *Tharus*) still live in joint family but other caste /ethnic groups like to live in nuclear family. In nuclear family, decision making role of women is higher than in joint family.

5.2.7 Age and Sex composition of Sample Household

Age and sex are important demographic characteristics. Age of an individual denotes one's mental and physical maturity, roles and responsibilities, and status in the family and in the society. Age makes different in working hours, types of work, mental and physical awareness, responsibility and involvement in decision making. Sex refers to the biological differences that are universal and unchanging. The sex difference also refers to

the gender roles. The people of the community take the sexual division of labor as traditionally granted and make gender specific distinctions between what men and women should do. Thus age and sex are the most important personal characteristics. In view of this, age and sex composition of the population of the sample household have been taken into consideration.

The population of the sample household was classified into four age group, e.g. 0–9 years, 10–14 years, 15–19 years, and 60 above years. The classification was based on the role expectations in general. The babies, infants and children of up to the age of 9 years were considered as completely dependent population in many respects. The children and adolescents of the age group of 10–14 years were considered economically inactive and dependent population. They were taken as the school going age population. The youths and adults of the age group of 15–59 years were taken as the economically active population. And the old people above 60 years of age were considered as the economically inactive, at least in the formal sectors. The details of the distribution of the population of the sample household by the age and sex are presented in

Table No. 9

Distribution of Population of Sample Household by Age and Sex

S. N.	Age group	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
1.	0–9	58	71	129	21.35
2.	10–14	57	58	115	19.03
3.	15–59	169	170	339	56.12
4.	60 above	12	9	21	3.47
	Total	296	308	604	100

Source : Field Survey, 2021

Table No. 9 shows that the total family members age distribution in the study area. It shows that male of 0–9 years are 58, 10–14 years are 57, 15–59 years are 169 and above 60 years are 12 individuals. Where as female of 0–9 years are 71, 10–14 years are 58, 15–59 years are 170 and above 60 years are 9 individuals.

The table shows that 56.2% of the population belongs to the economically active age group (15–59 years). The population that belonged to completely dependent and economically inactive age group (0–9 years and 60 above years) accounted only 25 percent. Nineteen percent of the population belongs to the school going age group (10–14 years). We could see female population is higher than male population.

5.3 Social Characteristics

Marriage is one of the social institutions of human social life. Since the development of human society, marriage has been existing as an essential social institution. It brings change on the status, right and responsibilities of an individual to great extent. After marriage a son becomes husband, father and daughter becomes bride, daughter-in-law, mother and so on. The national law as well as social rule and regulations, their belief system, education and occupation etc. are determined the age at marriage of women. After marriage a female is identified by her husband's name and so many additional responsibilities are imposed upon her. In Nepal, there is a debate on marriage is a private affair or not. Before, parents decide their children's marriage, but now a days, this view is changing slightly.

Table No. 10

Decision on Marriage of Children

S. N.	Decision Maker	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Self	13	32.5
2.	Husband	20	50.0
3.	Both	7	17.5
	Total	40	100

Source : Field Survey, 2021

Table No. 10 shows that 32.5 percent of respondents of women took decision themselves regarding the marriage of their children. Near above 50 percent of their husband decided on marriage of children. And 17.5 percent of both husband and wife decided in marriage of children.

Therefore, it can be concluded that most of husband (50%) decided on marriage of children. There is low involvement of women in marriage of their children.

People involves in many organization and institution. They think that familiarity brings closeness. According to their ability and wishes they get the common or executive membership from the organization.

Table No. 11**A. Membership Pattern and Type of Membership**

S. N.	Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Yes	21	42
2.	No	29	58
	Total	50	100

B. Type of Membership

S. N.	Name of Group	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Mother group	15	71.42
2.	User group	2	9.52
3.	Community group	3	14.28
4.	Others	1	4.76
	Total	21	100

C. Pattern of Membership

S. N.	Types of Membership	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Common Membership	16	76.19
2.	Executive Membership	5	23.80
	Total	21	100

Source : Field Survey, 2021

Community group are widespread in the country. Likewise, Pipara Bhita community is one if the groups. Table No. 11 shows that in Barahathawa Municipality-15, out of total respondents 42 percent took the membership in one or more than one groups. 58 percent respondents do not belong to any membership. From the Table No. 11, it is clear that a large number of respondents did not take any membership to any group.

According to the table the percentage of *Tharus* women as having some kinds of membership, like that 71.42 percent of respondents were the number of mother group. Similarly, 9.52 percent women are involved in user's group. In the same way, 14.28 percent of women were involved in community group. And 4.76 percent women were involved in other group such as livestock and agriculture. Therefore, it can be concluded that most of women i.e. 71.42 percent were involved in mothers' groups.

The table reveals that out of the 50 respondents, 21 were involved in any type of community groups. 76.19 percent out of 21 respondents were involved in common

membership where as 23.80 percent were involved in executive membership. 5 respondents out of 21 had replied that they could have expressed their opinion in the meeting but 16 respondents replied facing difficulties in expressing their views. Those respondents were educated they took executive membership but another respondents have common membership.

5.4 Economic Characteristic

As in other rural parts of the country, the economic characteristic of the people of Barahathawa Municipality-15 is based on agriculture. Most of the people are engaged in agricultural activities. Besides agriculture, animal husbandry and poultry farming as supplement to agriculture.

Because of unequal distribution of land, almost half of the population is not able to produce enough crops to feed themselves. Some of the people are engaged in government and nongovernmental organization, petty trade as shopkeepers and as labors.

5.4.1 Landholding situation

In the agrarian society, the ownership of land or landholding size is the main indicator of relative economic status of people. Land was found to be the main source of living in *Tharus* community. A person is called wealthy or rich who possess large size land. Not only economically, but also socially he has a high position. So, landholding situation of the sample household was taken in the consideration.

Landholding situation of the sample households was measured in terms of the landholding pattern. Those who had no land were considered as 'landless' and those who had small size of land but not registered were considered as '*Ailani/Bagar*'. Most of the *Tharus* people were cultivate in *Zamindar's* land were considered as '*andhiya*'. Those who had own land were classified on the ownership of land in '*Kattha*'. The distribution of sample household by their landholding size is presented in the table below.

Table No. 12**A. Distribution of Sample Household by Landholding Pattern**

S. N.	Landholding size	No. of Household	Percentage
1.	Landless	3	6
2.	Ailani / Bagar	5	10
3.	Own land less than 10 Kattha	28	56
4.	Own land (10–20 Kattha)	12	24
5.	Own land (20–40 Kattha)	2	4
6.	Own land (40–60 Kattha)	–	–
	Total	50	100

B. Distribution of Sample Household of Zamindar's Cultivable Land in 'andhiya'

S. N.	Landholding size	No. of Household	Percentage
1.	Less than 10 Kattha	2	4
2.	10–20 Kattha	11	22
3.	20–40 Kattha	22	44
4.	40–60 Kattha	15	30
	Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2021

As the table shows that 6 percent household were landless and 10 percent of the sample household were staying in the *Ailani / Bagar*. Among the land owners, 56% sample household owned less than 10 Kattha. So, about 72 percent households were either landless or owned less than 10 *Kattha*, 24% household owned 10–20 *Kattha* and 4 percent household were owned 20–40 *Kattha*.

Above the table shows that all of the sample household were used on Zamindar's cultivated land in '*andhiya*'. Four percent sample household were used on less than 10 *Kattha*, 22% were used on 10–20 *Kattha*, 44 percent were used in 20–40 *Kattha* and 30 percent were used in 40–60 *Kattha*.

The large number of household in *Tharus* community had few cultivated land. More than 50 percent household from *Tharus* community were living in below than 10 *Kattha* in the study area. The *Tharus*, were depend on Zamindar's cultivated land.

From the study area, I found that the large number of household involved in agricultural sector. In *Tharus* community, most of the household depends upon agriculture. Most of the male and female work in land (*khet/bari*).

Table No. 13
Working Hours Among Male and Female in Khet / Bari

S. N.	Working hours per day	Male	Female	Male %	Female %
1.	1–3 hrs	5	14	12.5	24
2.	4–7 hrs	17	25	42.5	50
3.	8–10 hrs	18	11	45	22
4.	11–12 hrs	–	–	–	–
	Total	40	50	100	100

Source: Field Survey, 2021

The male input in terms of working hours (8–10) in land per day is higher than of their female counterparts and female input in terms of working hours (4–7) in land per day is higher than of their male counterparts. In the study area, I found that male involved only in outer sphere (agriculture) but female involved in domestic (household) and out sphere. Being an agricultural country, more than two third population is still engaged in agriculture. Total cultivable agricultural land is approximately 25,00,000 hectares. The contribution of agricultural to GDP is 38 percent (Bhusal, 2004). In this study area also most of the *Tharus* women are engaged in agriculture.

Table No. 14
Decision Makers for the Cropping Patterns

S. N.	Decision Maker	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Self	8	16
2.	Husband	23	46
3.	Both	5	10
4.	Other male in the family	10	20
5.	Other female in the family	4	8
	Total	50	100

Source : Field Survey, 2021

Corresponding to Table No. 14, household members contribute in the decision making cropping pattern. It has clear evident that the husbands of the household have a greater input in the cropping pattern in decision making process, i.e. scoring 46% of the total but only 16% by wives. The other male family of the household score 20% and other female family of the household score is 8%.

It was found that most of the people are dependent on agriculture. But only few *Tharus* families have sufficient food for the whole year. The *Tharus* people are facing the problem of food deficit, as the study area, Saralahi district, there land is fertile but some of the *Tharus* people are landless, *Ailani/Bagar* or few land. So, most of them face the problem of food deficit.

5.4.2 Sufficiency of Food Production

According to the field study, out of the total 50 sample households, only 30 percent households have food sufficiency while 70 percent household are facing the food deficiency. It is because of the low agricultural land. Those who have food deficiency, fulfill their food requirements from other income sources as business, services, livestock farming, wage earning etc. The following table shows it clearly.

Table No. 15

Distribution of Households by Food Production

S. N.	Food Production	No. of Household	Percentage
1.	Sufficient	15	30
2.	Not Sufficient	35	70
	Total	50	100

Source : Field Survey, 2021

It was found that 70 percent household have food deficit. They have to face the problem of food, though it is essential for sustaining life. They fulfill their needs for food by different alternatives.

Table No. 16

Distribution of Households by Coping Deficit Food Production

S. N.	Activities	No. of Household	Percentage
1.	Service	3	8.57
2.	Business	3	8.57
3.	Livestock farming	10	28.57
4.	Wage earning	16	45.71
5.	Debt.	3	8.57
	Total	35	100

Source : Field Survey, 2021

Above the table shows the various alternative ways of fulfilling the food deficiency. The main means of compensation for deficit production is wage earning which covers 45.71 percent household, followed by livestock farming is 28.57 and business 8.57 percent and about 9 percent households are taking debt to fulfill their needs.

Out of the total 50 sampled household, only 15 household had surplus agriculture products to sell.

Table No. 17

Distribution of Households by Decision on Selling Surplus Agricultural Products

S. N.	Decision Maker	No. of Household	Percentage
1.	Self	2	13.33
2.	Husband	8	53.33
3.	Both	1	6.66
4.	Other male	4	26.66
5.	Other Female	–	
	Total	15	100

Source : Field Survey, 2021

Above the table shows, selling of these surplus products mostly 53.33% of decisions was made by husband. Only 13.33 percent herself decide to sell such surplus products and 6.66 percent of the household were decided both husband and wife. 26.66 percent of decision was made by other male of the family. Since, selling activities is related to outside home and has to go to market which is far from their residence male dominate in this activity. Females rarely go to market to sell. The above table shows the decision

made by males and females in selling surplus agriculture products, such as vegetables, rice, pulse, milk, fruit etc.

Respondents were asked "who decides to buy the agricultural products?" Among the 50 sampled household, 70 percent replied that they buying food from others to fulfill their needs.

Table No. 18

Distribution of Households by Decision on Buying Deficit Agricultural Products

S. N.	Decision Maker	No. of Household	Percentage
1.	Self	10	28.51
2.	Husband	12	34.28
3.	Both	4	11.42
4.	Other male	5	14.28
5.	Other female	4	11.42
	Total	35	100

Source : Field Survey, 2021

The table shows that most of the decision were made by husband. Out of 35 households, in 34.28 percent household, decisions were made by husband and 14.28 percent household decisions were made by other male in the family. So, 48.56% household, decisions were made by male members while only 28.51 percent household decisions were done by herself and 11.42 percent household decisions were done by other female in the family. So, 39.93 percent household decisions were made by female members. Similarly, in 11.42 percent household, decisions were made by husband and wife.

It is considered that male and female are equal in family and they have equal roles and responsibilities. But males have dominance in decision making process and other social activities. Male alone have greater contribution over the purchasing of household things and its consumption. But in the case of livestock purchase, the decision of female is higher than male member.

Table No. 19**Decision on Livestock Purchase**

S. N.	Decision Maker	No. of Household	Percentage
1.	Self	27	61.56
2.	Husband	11	24.99
3.	Both	6	13.63
	Total	44	100

Source : Field Survey, 2021

The table shows that the only 44 out of the 50 households are involved in recent livestock purchase. In the sense of livestock purchase, women's score the highest (61.56%) as the persons consulted as well as the final decision makers. But husband and both (husband and wife) score a lower percent 24.99 and 13.36 respectively than the women (wives) as the final decision maker in this matter.

The personal income is important for the identification of personality. The people of high income are relatively with high social status. This is even more important in a society where majority of the person were under absolute poverty line. So, personal income of the respondents has been taken into consideration.

Table No. 20**Decision on Personal Income from any Economic Activities****A. Annual Income of the Respondents**

S. N.	Amount (in Rs.)	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Upto 1000	5	12.5
2.	Upto 5000	12	30
3.	Upto 10,000	14	35
4.	above 10,000	9	22.5
	Total	40	100

B. Decision on Personal Income of the Respondents

S. N.	Keeping	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Self	14	35
2.	Husband	18	45
3.	Mother-in-law	3	7.5
4.	Father-in-law	5	12.5
	Total	40	100

Source : Field Survey, 2021

People, who were engaged in economic activities in the Barahathawa Municipality-15, produced crops, vegetables, fruits, milk and who also engaged in the agri-labor and construction labor earned money. The table shows that the annual income of the respondents. Out of the 50 respondents only 40 respondents are found to be involved in gainful employment generating income, out of the gainfully employed 40 respondents. 22.5 percent of women earned above Rs.10,000. Similarly, 35 percent women earn up to Rs.10,000. Similarly, 30 percent of the women earn up to Rs.5,000 and 12.5 percent of women earned Rs.1,000 annually.

The table mentioned above shows the percentage of decision makers on personal income of respondents. 35% of the women kept their income with themselves. Similarly, 45% of the women decided for utilizing the income by husband. Likewise, the decisions regarding the utilizing the income of 7.5% of the women was in the hand of mother-in-law. In the same way 12.5% of the women had the authority to utilize their income by father-in-law. This data proves that only the few respondents are able to save their income.

What kind of saving pattern in *Tharus* community that can be explore in this research study.

Table No. 21
Saving Pattern of the Respondents

S. N.	Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Yes	5	12.5
2.	No	35	87.5
	Total	40	100

Source : Field Survey, 2021

The table shows that out of 40 respondents only 12.5 percent of women are able to save from their income and large number of women of 87.5 percent cannot save from their income.

The *Tharus* community, most people spend their income in food item. Similarly, in the study area, I found that the women who spend their income in food sector than another sector.

Table No. 22

Decision on Spending From Their Income in Different Sectors

A. Spending Sectors

S. N.	Sectors	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Health	7	17.5
2.	Education	5	12.5
3.	Food	25	62.5
4.	Cloth	3	7.5
5.	Others	–	–
	Total	40	100

B. Decision on Spending

S. N.	Decision Maker	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Self	12	30
2.	Husband	24	60
3.	Other male	3	7.5
4.	Other female	1	2.5
	Total	40	100

Source : Field Survey, 2021

As the table shows, out of the 40 respondents 17.5 percent of the women spend their income in family health. Similarly, 12.5 percent of the women spend their income in their children's education. In the same way, 62.5 percent of the women spend their income in purchasing food items and 7.5 percent of the women spend their income in purchasing clothes. The table shows that 30 percent of the women have self decided about spending on their income. 60 percent of women were dependent to their husband's decisions and 7.5 percent of women dependent to other male in the family and 2.5 percent respondents dependent to other female in the family members' decision to spend this personal income. It shows that almost women spend their personal income in purchasing the food item. and their decision on spending from income is very lower than husband and other members in the family.

5.5 Health Characteristics

With the modernization, medical science has developed lots of methods and medicine for treatment. However in underdeveloped countries like Nepal people are even depending upon the traditional methods for treatment of diseases. In our country, people have no easy access to modern medical facilities. But recently, the proportion of people is getting treatment with doctor due to increase in literacy and getting aware about their health.

Saralahi is also known as sub-regional hospital, zonal hospital, eye-hospital and health-post are established in the district but whether the *Tharus* women are getting the health treatment or not? This burning question may be solved after finishing this research.

Table No. 23

A. Place of Getting Treatment

S. N.	Place	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Helath Post	20	40
2.	Private Clinic	3	6
3.	Nursing Home	2	4
4.	Government Hospital	13	26
5.	Dhami / Jhankri / Guruwa	12	24
	Total	50	100

B. Decision Making on Getting Treatment

S. N.	Decision Maker	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Self	10	20
2.	Husband	29	58
3.	Both	6	12
4.	Other male	4	8
5.	Other female	1	2
	Total	50	100

Source : Field Survey, 2021

According to the above table, the approach medical treatment through different place, like health post, private clinic, government hospital etc. out of the 50 respondents, 40 percent women getting treatment from health post. Similarly, the above table shows the fact that 6 percent women getting treatment in private clinic, 4 percent in nursing home, 26 percent in government hospitals and 24 percent women getting treatment from *Guruwa*.

In the decision making on getting treatment as shown in Table No.23, out of the 50 on medical treatment, 20 percent of the women have their own decision power, 58 percent women depends on their husband's decision. 12 percent women's treatment both (husband and wife) decision, 8 percent depends on other male in the family and 2 percent women depends on other female in the family member. The majority of the women still depend on their husband's decision while getting treatment.

Nepali people hesitate to talk about the family planning measures due to the illiteracy. When the government organizations and NGOs started a lot of awareness programme, their view is also changing day by day. Distribution of the married respondents by their use family planning measures is presented in the table below.

Table No. 24

A. Distribution of Respondents by use of Family Planning Measures

S. N.	Family Planning Measures	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Users	16	40
2.	Non-users	24	60
	Total	40	100

B. Decision Making for the use of Family Planning Measures

S. N.	Decision Maker	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Self	6	37.50
2.	Husband	7	43.75
3.	Both	3	18.75
	Total	16	100

Source : Field Survey, 2021

Above the table shows that, the respondents on the use or non use of the family planning measures showed that 60 percent of the respondents had never used any of the family planning measures and the remaining 40 percent had used any of the measures. The decision for its use is non- sufficiency. Their inputs in this process constitute only 37.50 percent of the total. Both of the decision is 18.57 percent and their husband decision is 43.75 percent. The strongest role is of male counterpart in deciding which family planning measure to adopt.

Delivery is the most important and sensitive period for women. In this delivery period, family members and also women should be careful. Because of the less education in the rural area, women not seem to be serious during their delivery period. Most of the women

conduct their delivery at home. Similarly, in my study area, most of the women conduct their delivery at home and few women conduct their delivery in the hospital.

Table No. 25

A. Occur the Delivery

S. N.	Place	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Hospital	11	27.5
2.	Home	29	72.5
	Total	40	100

B. Decision Making on the Delivery

S. N.	Decision Maker	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Self	12	30
2.	Husband	17	42.5
3.	Both	6	15
4.	Other Male	–	–
5.	Other Female	5	12.5
	Total	40	100

Source: Field Survey, 2021

According to the above table, a large majority of 29 (72.7 percent) respondents are found their delivery at home while only a small minority of 27.5 percent out of the 40 respondents were occur their delivery in the hospital.

The decision power of the respondents is lower than husband's decision about delivery, where 42.5 percent of the husband's and 30 percent of the herself decision on delivery. Similarly, both (husband and wife) of the decision are 15 percent and 12.5 percent decision were other female in the family.

5.6 Educational Characteristics

Education is the key indicator of life that exposes the bright future of life. It gives social status to the individuals. Education enhances the ability and capability of human being to judge for right and wrong. It also plays the vital role in decision making process in the society. In most of the cases, it can be seen that higher educational status played dominant role in decision making field. Those voices are respected who are educated and having higher educational background. In *Tharus* community, because of the lack of education,

the literacy rate is very low. They are involved in agriculture than education. But now a days, the *Tharus* parents send their children to go to school. According to the census 2001, the total population of the *Tharus* in Terai is 15,33,879 (6.75%). Among them 7,58,955 are males and 7,74,924 are females. The total population 6 years and above is 12,89,342. The literacy rate of *Tharus* 6 years and above is 47.12% which is not sufficient.

Table No. 26

Decision making in Children's Education

A. Enrolment of Children in Schools

S. N.	Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Yes	43	95.55
2.	No	2	4.44
	Total	45	100

B. Decision Making in Sending Children to School

S. N.	Decision Maker	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Self	28	65.11
2.	Husband	9	20.9
3.	Both	4	9.30
4.	Other male	2	4.65
5.	Other female	–	–
	Total	43	100

Source : Field Survey, 2021

A large majority of 43 (95.5%) respondents are found to send their children to go to school while only a small minority of 4.44 percent out of the 45 household do not.

The decision of the respondent herself in sending their children to school are found to be the strongest 65.11 percent among the 43 household. Similarly, 20.9 percent decision are husband, both (husband and wife) of the decision are 9.30 percent and 4.65 percent of the decision to send the children are other male in the family.

Table No. 27

Women's Education

A. Women Participation in Adult Literacy Classes

S. N.	Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Yes	10	20
2.	No	40	80
	Total	50	100

B. Decision Making for Women's Education

S. N.	Decision Maker	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Self	5	50
2.	Husband	3	30
3.	Others	2	20
	Total	10	100

Source : Field Survey, 2021

Only a small percent (20%) of the women among 50 household are found to participate in adult literacy class. For the 10 women participate in these classes. Out of the 10 respondents, 50 percent of the women have self decision, 30 percent of husband decision and 20 percent of the respondents were others decision making in literacy classes.

Husband and wife are the two wheels of same cart when these two souls and two bodies became one, their outcome born after the nine months. Both have a same responsibility for caring up, brought up, sending to school and decision on educational tools of the children. Father or mother who is much sensitive or both are equally sensitive towards their children, this research work gives us little knowledge who are interested to know.

Table No. 28

Decision on Educational Materials Providing to the Children

S.N.	Particular	Male	%	Female	%	Both	%	Total
1.	Book/copies	28	65.11	11	25.58	4	9.30	43
2.	Uniforms/Dress	16	37.20	22	51.16	5	11.62	43
3.	Payment of Fee	19	44.18	16	37.20	8	18.60	43
4.	School Admission	24	55.81	13	30.23	6	13.95	43

Source : Field Survey, 2021

In the present study, 43 respondents were asked about who decides to take admission of their children to school, buy books, uniforms and payment of fee. The above table shows that the decision of males and females regarding education of the children. As shown above, 65.11 percent of the male, 25.58 percent of female and 9.30 percent of both of them made decision to books and copies of children. Similarly, to buy their uniforms, the decision is made by 37.20 percent of male, 51.16 percent of female and 11.62 percent of both of them. Likewise, 44.18 percent of male, 37.20 percent of female and 18.60 percent of both of them made decision to pay the fees of the children. 55.81 percent of male, 30.23 percent of female and 13.95 percent of both of them decided regarding their children admission out of 43 respondents.

As shown in table No.28, it is clear that most of the decision regarding education of the children, purchase of their books and copies, payment of their fees and school admission is made by males where as female made the decision regarding the uniform of their children only.

5.7 Information about Women's Training

This study reveals that *Tharus* women from Pipara Bhita are involved in different types of training, like cutting / sewing, weaving and agricultural training. It shows the situation of trainings related to women age group (15–59 years) in study area.

Skilled man powers are the most demand all over the world. They can easily finish their work and earn money in comparison to the unskilled manpower. So their social status becomes high. Training provides us the different kinds of knowledge and it's save our time also.

Table No. 29

Training and Decision Making

A. Women Received any Kind of Training

S. N.	Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Yes	16	32
2.	No	34	68
	Total	50	100

B. Types of Training

S. N.	Types of Training	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Cutting / Sewing	3	18.75
2.	Weaving	2	12.5
3.	Agricultural Training	11	68.75
4.	Computer Training	–	–
	Total	16	100

C. Decision on Training

S. N.	Decision Making	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Self	5	31.25
2.	Husband	7	43.75
3.	Others	4	25.0
	Total	16	100

Source : Field Survey, 2021

According to the above table 50 out of only 16 respondents were involved in different types of training. The majority of the respondents (34) were not received any kind of training. The table shows that 18.75 percent of the respondents were involved in cutting and sewing, 12.5 percent in weaving and 68.75 percent in agricultural trainings. No one has received training on Computer. All trainings received in their local area. The decision making for taking training for women, it shows that 31.25 percent of women decided to take training herself, 43.75 percent of women decided to take training because of her husband. Similarly, 25 percent of the remaining women decided to take training because of other family members. It is clear that most of the male (43.75%) decided to train their wives.

5.8 Political Characteristics

Politics is a social work. Anyway in underdeveloped countries many people are participating on political programme.

Table No. 30
Participation and Decision Making on Political Aspect

A. Participation on Political Programme

S. N.	Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Yes	11	22
2.	No	39	78
	Total	50	100

B. Decision Making of Participation on Political Programme

S. N.	Decision Maker	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Self	5	45.45
2.	Husband	4	36.36
3.	Both	1	9.09
4.	Others	1	9.09
	Total	11	100

Source : Field Survey, 2021

General observation reveals that large numbers of *Tharus* women in study area are not involved in any political party who have no knowledge about involvement of political party. The table shows that out of 50 respondents only 22 percent of women were participated in political programme and remaining 78 percent of women were not participated in political programme.

The table shows that out of 11 respondents, 45.45 percent of *Tharus* women were decided ownself to participate any political programme, 36.36% of the women were encouraged by their husband, 9.09 percent of both of them (husband and wife) decided to participate in political programme and 9.09 percent of women were encouraged by other people.

Most of the women are participating in voting process. Voting process is a part of election. How many *Tharus* women's are participate in the voting process that can be shown in the given table.

Table No. 31

A. Participate in Voting

S. N.	Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Yes	45	90
2.	No	5	10
	Total	45	100

B. Decision Making on Participation in Voting

S. N.	Decision Making	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Self	20	44.44
2.	Other family members	10	22.22
3.	Others	15	33.33
	Total	45	100

Source : Field Survey, 2021

General observation reveals that large number of *Tharus* women in study area participated in voting. As shown in Table No. 31, 90 percent of the women were directly involved in voting, remaining 10 percent were not involved in voting because of their low age and other factors. It shows that out of 45 respondents, 44.44 percent of women were self decide in voting and 22.22 percent of women were depended upon the decision of other family members and 33.33 percent of women were encouraged by other people in voting.

It is clear that most of the women (44.44%) decided ownself on voting and other women were depended on decision of other family members and other people.

Thus the final decision regarding social, economic, health, children's education, activities etc. was found to be totally depended upon the husband. Very less involvement of other male and other female members was found in decision making in different aspects. The greater role of husband as final decision maker signifies that women are still far behind than male as major decision making. One of the major problems was illiteracy in rural area which leads only the husband as final decision maker.

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CHAPTER - VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Summary

The analysis focuses upon the status of women in terms of their household decision making power in comparison to their male counterparts. Before summarizing the target issue, socio-economic characteristics of the total households are summarized.

The general objective of the study was to explore and describe the women's participation in household decision making among *Tharus* in the study area and the specific objectives were to analyze decision making role of women in seven general dimensions (social, economic, health, education, political, training etc.) and supportive information selected to household decision making.

In view of the objectives of the study, Barahathawa Municipality-15 of Saralahi district was selected as the site of the study. One of the wards (Ward No.15) of the Barahathawa Municipality 80 households are selected for the study. At Least 50 households of *Tharus* family are considered for study.

This study is based on exploratory and descriptive research design. Both Primary and Secondary data were used for this study. Primary data have been collected from the field and necessary secondary data are gathered from various resources i.e. from CBS records, different published and unpublished articles, literatures, journals and books.

In the study area two types of family, nuclear and extended were found. Among the 50 families nuclear was found in 13 households and extended family was in 37 households.

Out of 50 household of the *Tharus* 15 households were found into sufficient food production and 35 households had no sufficient food to sustain themselves through out the year. Concerning the occupation check of the households, any household doesn't depend on a single source of income. Main source of livelihood of all the 50 household was agriculture while 3 household had service and 3 household had business, 10 households had livestock farming, 16 household had wage earning and 3 household had debt service to fulfill their needs. The majority of the respondents depend on agriculture (62%) and 32% respondents were household work.

The average working hour of women being 5–7 hours per day. Early marriages for women are still practiced; their average age at marriage is 14–20 years. About 62 percent respondents were depending on agriculture. The wives have a less input in the decision making of the cropping pattern scoring is 16 percent as compared to 46% by the husband.

Tharus women were not found to be actively participating in buying and selling agricultural products. 40 women were earned money by doing different work, out of 40 women only 12.5% were save in annually. They mostly spend their income in food.

In the sense of livestock purchase, women's score the highest (61.56%) as the final decision maker. In getting medical treatment, almost women (40%) were getting treatment from health post and then government hospital 26% and then *Guruwa* 24% for getting treatment only few, 6% were getting treatment in private clinic and 4% were getting treatment in nursing homes. Women's were depended on their husband's decision. 40% of women were using family planning measures in my study area. 72.5% of women were getting delivery at home. The power of decision making in delivery process, their husbands have greater input 42.5%. Women have low input of decision making in delivery process.

A large majority of 95.55 percent respondents were found to send their children to go to school and the decision of the wives in sending their children to school were found to be the strongest, 65.11 percent among 43 households.

For the women participation in adult literacy classes, out of the 50 respondents, only 20% were involved in this literacy classes. 50% respondents were self decision for their education. Regarding the marriage of children, the husband have greater control. 50% over the decision making of this particular issue. 42% *Tharus* women were having different types of membership and 32% of women have getting different types of training. The majority of *Tharus* women had got training almost in agricultural training. The decision regarding getting training, the husband has greater control. In study area, the large numbers of *Tharus* women were not involved in any political program. But almost 90% of women were involved in voting. The decision of voting women has greater contribution 41.46%.

6.2 Conclusion

As this study is concentrated to analyze the decision making power of women in household activities, it can be concluded that females have lower decision making power and they have sub-ordinate role in family and in society. They are deprived from their right and responsibilities. They have lower decision making power than their male counterparts. The society of the research area is fully male dominated. All major decisions of their society have been taken by male. The status of literacy rate of women is comparatively lower than men. Males have superiorities status in most of the cases and female have to follow to them. Even they cannot decide for treatment of illness.

It can also conclude that females have low socio-economic status and thus lag behind men in household decision making. So it is essential to improve their ability and capacity to participate major the decision making process. This study shows that female have to work more in household having less decision making. Though they have responsibility to complete the work, they have no chance to decide for it. If there is any difficulty to complete the work, they cannot decide at that moment, they have to ask for it. The *Tharus* women are basically followed their traditional rules and regulations. Even now, there is little change in the status in *Tharus* society of Pipara Bhita.

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APPENDIX
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Role of Women in Household Decision Making in *Tharus* Community: A Case Study of Barahathawa Municipality-15, Saralahi.

A. General Information

1. Name:

2. Marital Status :

a. Married b. Unmarried c. Widow d. Separate

3. Education: a. Literate b. Illiterate

4. If literate, level of education

- a. Non formal
- b. Primary (up to class 5)
- c. Lower secondary upto 7
- d. Secondary upto 10
- e. SLC pass
- f. Intermediate
- g. Bachelor and above

5. Husband's literacy:

a. Literate b. Illiterate

6. If literate, level of education

- a. Non formal
- b. Primary (up to class 5)
- c. Lower secondary up to 7
- d. Secondary up to 10
- e. SLC pass
- f. Intermediate
- g. Bachelor and above

7. Your occupation:

- a. Agriculture
- b. Business
- c. Service
- d. Household work
- e. Others

8. Husband occupation

- a. Agriculture b. Business c. Service
d. Household work e. Others

9. Types of family: a. Nuclear b. Joint

10. Total no. of family member in the household

Year	0-9	10-14	15-59	60 above
Male				
Female				

11. How many children do you have ?

- a. Son b. daughter c. None

B. Information Regarding Household Decision Making

Economics Aspect

1. Landholding Cultivated :

- a. Khet land (in kattha). b. Bari (in kattha)

2. How many hours do you work in *khet* or *bari*/other work per day?

3. How many hours do you husband work in *Khet* or *Bari* /other work per day?

.....

4. Cropping pattern

	Summer	Winter
Area
Crop
Production

5. If food sufficient for the whole year

- a. Yes b. No.

6. If not, for how many month, it is enough from your own production?

- a. less than 3 months b. upto 6 months
c. upto 9 months d. Whole year

7. If surplus, do you sell it?

- a. Yes b. No.

8. If there is food deficit in your family, how do you cope with this situation?

- a. Agri-labor b. Wage labor
c. Others specify

9. Number of Livestock:

- a. Cow b. Ox c. Buffalo
d. Goat c. Chicken/Hen f. Sheep

10. Who invests for livestock's?

- a. Self b. Husband c. both d. others

11. How much do you earn yearly in total ?

- a. Upto 1000 b. Upto 5000
c. Upto 10,000 d. Above 10,000

12. Who keeps you income ?

- a. Self b. Husband c. Mother-in-law
d. Father-in-law e. Others (specify).....

13. Do you save some part of your income?

- a. Yes b. No.

14. If yes, how much saving do you have monthly

- a. Up to 100 b. Up to 500
c. Up to 1000 d. Up to 5000 e. Above 5000

15. Who keeps this saving ?

- a. Self b. Husband c. Others

16. How much do you have to spend per month in total ?

- a. Up to 100 b. Up to 500
c. Up to 1000 d. Up to 5000 e. Above 5000

17. In which sector, do you spent most part of your income.

- a. Health b. Education
c. Food d. Cloth e. Others.....

18. Do you have any property in your name?

- a. Yes b. No.

19. If yes, what types of property?

- a. Land b. Cash
c. Housing d. Investment

20. If there is saving, where do you invest your savings?

- a. School b. NGOs
c. Training institutes d. Livestock e. Bank balance

C. Health Aspect

1. Where did you get treatment, when you suffered from illness?

- a. Health post
- b. Private clinic
- c. Nursing home
- d. Government hospital
- e. Dhami/Jhankri (Guruwa)

2. Do you use family planning measures?

- a. Yes
- b. No.

3. Where did you occur your delivery?

- a. Home
- b. Hospital

D. Educational Aspects

1. Do your children go to school ?

- a. Yes
- b. No

2. Are boys given priority over girls to go to school?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Equal

3. Do you think that girls should go to school?

- a. Yes
- b. No.

4. If not why?

.....

5. Are you participating in Adult literacy classes ?

- a. Yes
- b. No.

E. Social Aspect

1. What kind of marriage do you had/like?

- a. Arrange
- b. Love
- c. Other

2. Are you a member of any community groups?

- a. Yes
- b. No.

3. If yes, which group?

- a. Mother group
- b. User Group
- c. Community Group
- d. Others

4. What types of membership have you got in your community group?

- a. Common membership
- b. Executive membership

5. Do you express your opinion in the meeting of community group.

- a. Yes
- b. No.

F. Training

- 1. Have you received any training?
a. Yes b. No
- 2. What types of training
- 3. Did you received income generating trainings?
a. Yes b. No.
- 4. Where did you get that training?

G. Political Aspects:

- 1. Are you involved in any political party
a. Yes b. No
- 2. If yes, who suggests to involve
a. Self b. Following members c. Husband
- 3. Have you know been participated any political programme?
a. Yes b. No
- 4. If yes, who encouraged your to participate?
a. Self b. Others

Program Level Issues

- 1. In your opinion, what is the important factor for equal opportunity of husband and wife in household level decision making?
.....
.....
.....
- 2. What should be done by the family member to create equal opportunity in decision making?
.....
.....
.....
- 3. What should be done by the government policy for creating equal opportunity in decision making?
.....
.....
.....

Decision Making Activities

S. N.	Activities	Self	Husband	Both	Other male in the family	Other female in the family
1	No. of Children to give birth					
2	Cropping pattern					
3	Selection of seeds					
4	Selling food (Surplus)					
5	Buying food (deficit)					
6	Buying livestock					
7	Selling livestock					
8	Spend in your home					
9	Treatment (Family)					
10	Family planning method					
11	Occur your delivery					
12	Children's education					
13	Children's marriage					
14	To take training					

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