

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

1.1.1 The Status of Women in Nepal

If we went through the day to day life of rural woman, they are working very hard both inside and outside the house but the value of their hard labor always in connotation with male. A female cannot expose the value of her hard work herself. This is becoming as a social and cultural system in our communities. In fact they are involving from normal activities in her life to different aspect of social development, from their family to her whole life. Woman give births of her child socialize them in the family and society by teaching to compete and adopt the social and cultural rules and regulations. A woman plays multiple roles of a good daughter, sister, wife, mother even the present time teachers, bankers, administrators etc.

Women make up about half of Nepal's population (50.4% as per UNIFEM Nepal). But the female population is not evenly distributed across the country. At the level of the national government there is a lack of explicit policy and program formulation to reduce gender disparities; at the community level, social and religious norms and taboos continue to prevail and constrain the activities of women; and at the household level there is often an overt discrimination against women. The consequence is that the status of women in Nepal continues to be low. They are disadvantaged in many ways: as poor people they live under the same harsh conditions as their male counterparts, as women they suffer from social, cultural and political biases, and as heads of households they have to carry out the full traditional roles with the added responsibility of household and production management. In contrast, men have benefited from expanded educational and employment opportunities, so that women's relative status has probably been declining. The life of the Nepali women in most of these communities is governed by traditional cultural values. In many ways, these stand as a barrier in the religion.

The irony of having powerful goddesses and disempowered women suggests that a closer look is needed at the religious, cultural and legal framework of society. The framework of rights is provided by national policies relating to such matters as the right to property, divorce and marriage. In practice, despite legal freedom, women remain vulnerable and dependent on men, with identities largely derived from the roles they play in relation to men wife/mother/daughter. Men are expected to be caretakers, protectors and masters of the household and exercise considerable control over women in every walk of life. Children are identified by the father irrespective of whether he is alive or dead, however, there is a remarkable change on the interim constitution recently in this regard. A widow still needs to produce the identification of her husband in any written document. Given the socio-cultural values there is a high degree of son preference. The nature of gender bias gets mediated through the extent of household poverty. By and large, poverty accentuates the hardship of women's lives. In these households women are often found to bear a disproportionate burden of work, and yet receive little recognition since much of the family and farm related work is classified as economically unproductive. The incidence of male violence and domination, resulting in psychological depression and dependency syndrome among women is reportedly high.

In Nepal marriage act defines the legal age of marriage with parental consent as 18 years for boys and 16 years for girls. Without parental consent, these ages are 21 years for boys and 18 years for girls (Shavitri Singh 1995). Marriage represents a major transition, from a life of relative liberty to one of control. An unmarried girl enjoys more freedom and privileges at her parents' home than in her husband's home where her life is limited to the household. Her prime duty will be to please her in-laws, to adjust to the norms of her new home, and it is this that will determine how secure her future will be. A woman's position in her marital home is influenced by the strength or weakness of her natal home. An economically and socially strong parental background and parental support raises her position in her husband's home, and vice versa. Acharya and Bennett (1981) explain the position and power of a woman in her husband's home as being influenced by. A woman's continuing relationship with their **Maiti** or natal home; Women's sexuality which encompasses both their ability to bear children and to give (or withhold) pleasure to their husband; Women's ability to

uphold or tarnish the honor/prestige (izzat) of the family in the community at large; Women's own labor and ability to contribute to the productivity of the affinal family.

Thus, a woman in a small nuclear agricultural family where her contribution is more visible enjoys more freedom than in a large economically better off family. As far as kinship practices are concerned, these vary across different ethnic groups. The Sherpas of the Himalayas practice polyandry (a woman is married to all the brothers in the family). Studies show that women in some communities, including the Newar women of Bulu (Pradhan 1981), the Tharu women of Dang (Rajaure 1981), the Kham Magar of Thabang (Molnar 1980) have been presented and treated as equals to men within the community. Similarly, equality and freedom among the Rai women have been described by McDougal (1968); among the Limbus by Jones and Jones (1976); among the Sherpas by Holmberge (1989). Women from these communities have traditionally been very hard working and enjoy inheritance rights in property, although national law denies property rights to women. The national law of Nepal provides inheritance right in property only to sons. Married daughters can claim a share only if there is no grandson. An unmarried daughter over the age of 35 is entitled to a share in the parental property but if she subsequently marries she has to return the parental property to her brothers.

A women's life is strongly influenced by her father, husband and son. Such patriarchal practices are further reinforced by the legal system. Marriage has a great importance in women's life. The event of marriage determines the way of her life. The early marriage generally depreciates the women's life. A woman's power to accept or reject marriage partner is evidently an index of the degree of freedom she exercises in the management of her own life, and thus also of her status. The status of women is determined by the patriarchal social system, values, and women's right preserved and protected by the state, and state policy for the development of women.

Women's relative status, however, varied from one ethnic group to another. The economic contribution of women is substantial, but largely unnoticed because their traditional role was taken as for granted. Due to the early marriage and premature pregnancy, the deaths of women have been occurring in a very high. High birth rates, low life expectancy, high infant and maternal mortality rates and high death rate indicate the poor health status of women according to the UNICEF. Although some

42 percent of the Nepalese women are literate, and 60 percent of them are said to be economically active (CBS, 2003), participation of women in politics is negligible. Women excluded economically, socially and politically in Nepal. Those women who are in the frontline and may be working in high profile may be benefited, but they are very few and their voice is rarely heard.

In regard of political background of Nepalese women, several women's organizations were born to raise the political and social consciousness among women in Nepal. In protest against the royal proclamation of 1960, a group of women organizations openly waved black flags in a public procession, and were imprisoned. Later, in the people's movement of 1990, women actively participated to get rid of the Panchayat system and to have multiparty democratic system. Women of various regions and ideologies contributed greatly to the success of this movement. After the restoration of democracy in 1990, only 32 women elected as the Members of Parliaments (MPs). In general, election of 1999, which was the third election held after the restoration of democracy (1999), only 12 women out of 205 seats that is hardly six percent elected as Member of the House of Representatives.

Constitution Assembly (CA) election in 2006, has significant achievement lays in electing 197 women members, which is almost 33 percent of the total seats. These women members have come from the diverse ethnic cultures, tradition, group and geographical areas. They represent the grassroots level, district and national level. There has been change in cultural assumptions about women and leadership in Nepal. Women are also expecting the change in the situation, and now they believe to be behaved like equal citizen as of males. The discrimination and injustice will end in the days to come.

In Nepal, like in other developing countries, the status of women is low. Male dominated family system provides very little scope for the females to assert their identity. They are marginalized from economic and social opportunities due to illiteracy, poverty and conservative social taboos. (www.unssc.org). Hence, the scenarios are going to be changed in present context. The present laws are narrowing the gap between the status of male and female. In this regard the future of Nepalese women is hopeful. In recent years, there has been an increasing recognition of the need to integrate women into mainstream development efforts.

1.1.2 Micro finance through SFCL

Poverty and inequality bears structural characteristics for Nepal. Feudal systems, under-developments, bias planning in the past were the causes of poverty and inequality in Nepal. Besides, low profile of agricultural growth, low pace of industrial development and under utilization of human and natural resources were also the causes and consequences of poverty and inequality in Nepal. Rural bias mode of development aggravated regional disparity, this also widened gap between haves and have not. Land and un-equal resources distribution, regressive public policy further fueled this situation. The economic institutions can support the economic life of people especially in rural areas.

Micro Finance (MF) could break existing culture of poverty especially on behalf of rural poor households, disadvantaged, destitute, women, etc. Efforts of Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs) for the expansion of MF outreach are not sufficient enough. Nepal had induced various models of micro-finance. But she lags her own indigenous model. How many MF players in this sector are still unknown. There lags single concrete MF policy to regulate, to supervise and to access such MFIs activities. Commitment for Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by Nepal and opening of service sector to the foreigners by 2010 urge MF players to have consensus, commitment and engage in this sector on sustainable way (HDR/UNDP-2009).

The equality issue is the central development problems of underdeveloped countries. Inequality relates to all socio-economic relationship. Inequality reflects individual's ability and effort, together with the returns on individual's human and physical capital. It is worth full to quote Myrdal: "Inequality and the trend toward rising inequality stand as a complex of inhibitions and obstacle to development and that, consequently, there is an urgent need for reversing the trend and creating greater equality as a condition for speeding up development" (Sigdel, 2005).

Micro-credit has become a major tool of development, and is developing as an international industry, with its own trade associations, dedicated finance, training and other support organizations. It provides together with two other forms of capital, i, e; human capital and social capital, enable people to move out of poverty. Appropriate savings and insurance, as well as loans for emergency expenditures or basic assets

such as housing and education, can contribute significant, to such security, not least among poorer and more vulnerable households. The credit plus approach in micro-finance thus have been practiced by most of developing countries of Asia,

1.1.3 Group formation and handover procedure of SFCL Chhatredeurali, Dhading

Economic transformation of the poor and deprived rural population lies on the shift in rural economic activities from subsistence to commercial. The savings and investments of the rural population are low due to low earnings. It means that there is still lot of people relying on merchants, money lenders, traditional cooperatives, etc., for financing on socioeconomic activities with high interest rates. In the absence of access to formal sources of credit, the poor of the rural areas continue to be subjected to exploitative terms (high interest, gift, premiums, free labor, bonded labor, etc.) feeding the perpetual cycle of indebtedness and poverty. Institutional development process is coined as the financial service rendered to the deprived group of the people and small entrepreneurs to help them in developing self-employment opportunities and various income generating activities. The small size of the loan, regular savings, small-scale entrepreneurs, diversified utilization and simple and flexible terms and conditions are the determining characteristics of its definition. Usually, SFCL is a program that serves a large number of clients with reference to women/deprived people and works at a grassroots level with financial sustainability. It is completely group approach; nothing is done in a single's aim. People take everything as our and us rather than my and me.

Small Farmer Development Program (SFDP) was initiated in 1975 with the objective of improving socio-economic conditions of the rural poor including women by bringing them into the mainstream of the development process. The group approach is the fundamental basis for the program implementation. Households having per capita family income of less than or equal to Rs. 2,500 per month and /or a land holding size up to 0.5 ha are categorized as small farm families for providing financial and non-financial services through SFDP. The Small Farmer Development Program (SFDP) was Nepal's first group based poverty alleviation program. The Agricultural Development Bank (ADB) started the Small Farmers Development Program (SFDP) in 1975 to extend credit to small and marginal farmers. Under SFDP, small and

marginal farmers were organized into groups of 5–7 individuals to borrow from ADBL based on the group guarantee. SFDP was carried out through its sub project office (SPO), which promoted village level committees and was facilitated by a group organizer. Groups were formed based on the community members' common socioeconomic status, such as having income below 2500 rupees per month, being from a common locality, and having citizenship certificates. Separate male and female groups were organized. Loans under SFDP were subject to the ceiling of NRs 30,000 per individual group member. Loans generally started at lower levels, with members graduating to larger loans based on experience and satisfactory repayment performance. In addition to the financial operations to support SFDP, ADBL has assumed responsibility for group mobilization and group training. Following resounding success in the pilot sites of SFDP, the number of groups has multiplied rapidly since 1980.

Institutional Development Program and SFCLs: In view of the few shortcomings of SFDP such as high operating cost and slow growth in outreach, an alternative approach of empowering the target groups was initiated within SFDP framework through Institutional Development program (IDP). Under this approach, small farmers are encouraged to build up autonomous and viable institutions owned, managed and controlled by them. Such autonomous body is named as Small Farmer Co-operative Limited (SFCL) which is registered under Cooperative Act. The beneficiaries of SFCLs are provided intensive training in different areas such as office management, bookkeeping, group functioning etc for capability development and the SFDP's assets and liabilities are ultimately handed over to the SFCL. After the completion of the hand over process, the Agriculture Development bank provides wholesale credit to these institutions from which loans are provided to the target groups.

When SPOs (Sub Project Office) are transformed into SFCLs the outstanding loans are handed over to them. One of the distinctive features of the approach, as in the case of NRB's, is that the ADBL extended bulk lending to the SFCLs which, coupled with their own increasingly large savings, enable their member farmers to make fairly large sized investments in their income generating activities such as agriculture, livestock, poultry, agricultural implements, irrigation, trading and cottage industries. It emphasizes that loans are to be extended only for income generating activities which

are universally adopted, in that most of the members in the coop do borrow, some more than one loan in different portfolios. From this perspective, the SFCLs have a very important role to play in rural finance focusing on women and children.

A recent study of four SFCLs in the country has observed that the tiered structure of the SFCLs with small groups at the base provides a very significant space for the men and women small farmers for self-help development, and that "poverty alleviation is quite effective as a self-help undertaking of the poor themselves, and it involves little or no cost to the government".

SFDPs were functioning as civil society organizations, which pooled their joint resources to meet basic needs and to defend their members' interests. Due to its activities, the SFDP was quite popular in the rural areas and there was huge demand to establish it in the villages. However, due to rapid expansion, the program faced several problems like high overhead cost, low repayment rate and lack of competent staff in the field level, it was impossible to implement the SFDP program all over the country at a time. So, the Dhading Development Project (DDP/GTZ) and ADB/N jointly initiated institution development program as an innovative approach in certain areas of Dhading district on 1986 AD. As a result of the pilot test the first four SPOs were transformed into Small Farmer Cooperatives Ltd. (SFCLs) in 1993. The SFCL Chhatreaurali is one of them.

According to the report provided by the Small Farmers Development Bank, Nepal's over 229 Small Farmer Co-operatives Ltd. (SFCL) offer microfinance services to their members. Inclusion of disadvantaged groups such as landless, Dalits and women even in decision making level. In order to attend to the capacity building needs of the SFCL.

1.1.4 Current status of SFCL, Chhatreaurali VDC, Dhading

SFCL Chhatreaurali is one of the renowned cooperatives which is a poverty alleviation program based on group approach, which was handed over to an Executive Committee where 33% representation of female was mandatory for innovative ways to sustain the program on 1993. It was one of four SFDPs which are known as the first handed over SFCL in the country. The small farmers under this cooperative have

benefited from leadership development, group solidarity, empowerment, financial literacy, and skills development. Some of the SFCL members are emerging as viable credit cooperatives and replicating institutional development processes on their own. SFCL is likely to play a significant role in reducing rural poverty. It is the broad-based institutional reform is crucial to transform them into autonomous and viable financial institutions that can continue to provide affordable financial services to small and marginal farmers. It trains small farmers in various sectors such as leadership, group liabilities, accounting, savings and credit management and other banking business.

Farmers are federated into three tier levels. The first tier is a small group of individuals sharing similar economic activities where the group approach is the main concern of the program and this group structure is used as the foundation of the program. Small farmer groups are formed as joint liability groups, usually consisting of 5 to 12 members. Second tier is an inter-group at a ward level of VDC. The third tier is an apex body called executive committee constituted by the representative from inter group in VDC level. The main objective of the SFCL Chhatre Deurali is to improve the socio-economic condition of small farmers living in the rural areas by providing financial and non-financial services. The specific objectives are:

- To help small farmers increase their productivity, production and income thereby improving their quality of life by encouraging them to carry out other subsidiary activities;
- To increase employment opportunities for small farmers by mobilizing their skill labour and local resources;
- To enable small farmers to develop their own institutions and formulate village level plans and programs according to their choice and needs and implement them accordingly;
- To build up a feeling of social solidarity and trust among group members to raise their voice for different services by different socio-economic programs like health and sanitation, nutrition, water supply and family planning.
- It is a multi-service cooperative designed to deliver primarily financial, but also non financial services to its members in rural areas.

Credit is provided for different purposes related to production, marketing, and other income/employment generating activities. To develop a saving habit among small farmers, group saving and its mobilization is also being undertaken as an integral component. As complementary input to credit and saving services, the target groups of the program are also trained in different areas such as group management and its functioning, saving mobilization, income generating activities etc. Moreover, social and community development activities are also being undertaken for the welfare of small farmers.

The SFCL has a 17 members' Executive Committee along with 5 female members. Nine Inter Groups a ward level committee represented by the Chairman of all groups formed in the ward. There are total 129 groups in which 60 are female and 69 are male groups and 348 are female members and 417 are male members. Three women group out of sixty and 10 male groups out of 69 are inactive (Not functioning as the norms of SFCL' group operational guidelines). All the group members are share holders of the SFCL.

According to the record of SFCL, Chhatredeurali- Dhading, till the end of Mangshir 2067, the SFCL has 1079,000 rupees fund in share account. Similarly, Total group saving fund is 2001 ('000), Inter Group Saving 157,000 rupees, livestock insurance fund- 4,89, 000 rupees, loan security fund-Rs. 631,000, Others- 1052,000 rupees- in total 5409 ('000). The SFCL has Rs. 9854('000) loan in outstanding and the overall repayment rate is 74.40%. While talking to only the female members' repayment rate i.e. 94%.

Community development activities by the SFCL

- Conducted adult literacy classes- in all 9 wards where 90% beneficiaries are female
- Drinking water and sanitation in 3 wards (jointly SFCL and NeWaH)
- Leasehold forestry's program where all the members of management committee are women
- SFCL has a secondary school (Sana Kisan Sahakari School) which has its own building with 15 teachers which is going to appear SLC board exam from this year. In this school, all the children from small farmers can study with minimum

fee rate, at the same time, the quality of education is reportedly as better than the boarding school

- School improvement activities supported by district Red cross, Dhading in corditaion by SFCL
- About 45 taps and 15 Kuwas have been constructed and repaired by the initiation of female group members
- Two dairies are running to collect milk of farmers, operational and management part are controlled by SFCL mainly from female members
- Since, SFCL has banking unit for the Small farmers, females are benefitted to save cash from their skill such as tailoring, beautician and jam jelly and pickle making profession. SFCL has provided these trainings because as we all know that this are is a pocket area for vegetable and fruits production
- SFCL has its own stall in Kalimati vegetable and fruit market in Kathmandu to collect the vegetable and fruits of its farmer to sell

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In many cases, however, development projects have not taken adequate account of women responsibilities, participation and priorities in their specific local condition. SFCL, Chhatreaurali, Dhading has been successful in terms of economic activities, social and community development, community irrigation, environmental conservation, women development, training, institutional development, saving and mobilization and collaboration with NGOs and this program aims at making the women and backward small farmers capable and self-reliant for undertaking various socio-economic activities by developing local self-help small farmers organizations and building their managerial capacity to take over the responsibility of the SPOs and independently run the process of organizing, planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluation of the programs for the betterment of small farmer families in rural areas. We cannot take the SFCL as a problem free and perfect in running its program in terms of empowerment of woman. In addition of previous studies of many scholars on various issues on this topic, still there are lots of hidden problem on this topic.

It has been proved that the organized communities are the better managers. They should be empowered and supported. Government should formulate procedures to

implement programs that depend upon indigenous knowledge, socio-political situation and ecological conditions. Thus decentralized women participation processes are essential for the development. Women are the primary managers, sources of information and teachers in the use of resources. Women around the world have triple responsibilities i.e., for production, for reproduction at the household level, and for management of a range of activities at the community level. It was observed that rural women usually work larger and yet have less access to resources, find difficulties in getting loans or inheriting property, and have lower literacy rate than men (Siddiqi, 1989).

Most male dominated rural societies in Nepal have now been increasingly convinced that women are capable of making decisions and the sustainable use of their resources. In general, the poor, illiterate and disadvantaged women are still ignorant of SFCL's activities. This may be the reason that there is a poor reflection of their opinion. Such women attend the meetings but they do not exchange their opinion. Some factors might be rendered behind such inactive role of women, which is the major aspect of sustainable SFCL management.

Village women often lack confidence to become involved in CF management activities because of illiteracy. They may have to face numerous difficulties in decision making process. Various studies indicate that many women informants believed they could participate better in community development activities too. If they were able to read and write, they could maintain minute books or handle correspondence independently. Efforts should be given to integrate the concerns of women in SFCL. Women literacy and training for women may improve their confidence and management skills. This study has addressed the following research issues:

- How is the developing trend of economic independency of women after this program implementation?
- Are all the loans and other activities being utilized by female or only for name of users? It is still as a subject of study.
- How does group support on access over the resources by women in community development?

- There must be some cultural changes if the women empowerment policy has been implemented in real ground. So, how is the trend of cultural development
- There are still problems on women's ownership over the fixed property such as land for collateral so how the cooperative lending the loans for them
- What are the roles played by women in SFCL's programs?
- What is the level of women's participation?
- Do women have different decision making role in?
- How far the decisions made by women have been implemented?

1.3 Objective of Study

The general objective of this study is assessing the social inclusion of females in SFCL as an institutional development process. The specific objectives of the study are given here under:

- To analysis the economic changes after implementation of SFDP/SFCL women
- To find out the result and changes after formation of woman group under the SFCL policy
- To explore whether they have property right
- To analyze the inclusive representation of women in decision making form

1.4 Operational Definitions of Key Terms used in the Study

- **Community Development Activities:** It is an activity, which is managed through the direct popular participation of local people in various activities related to the community development.
- **Decision making process:** A logical and psychological process determining the best course of action from among the alternatives.
- **Group Saving:** Each group member has to save small amount of money every moth so that it could be mobilized in emergency circumstances. Be noted that the monthly saving amount should be same for all members of a group.
- **Female:** The women who are involved in the Small Farmer Group/Inter group & Main Committee

- **Inter Group:** A Ward levelly formed group in which each SFG sent a representative
- **IGA-** Income generating activities that enable the women to empower their economic status
- **IDP-** Certain approaches steps and practice to develop the SFCL as an institutional development program
- **Main Committee:** A key committee in which over all responsibilities and rights are reserved. Each Inter Group sends a representative where female involvement is mandatory
- **Micro Finance:** Refers to very small scale finance borrowed and mobilized by socio economically disadvantaged poor and related activities initiated thereafter
- **Participation:** People's participation requires organizing community, empowering them for contributing collective actions to achieve a common goal
- **Resources:** Any type of resources that can be used for strengthening the IDP
- **User Group:** It embodies of an organized or clearly defined group of users for a particular group who uses resources and who are regarded as having legitimate right to do so by other users.
- **Women Group:** The SFCL group that has its entire committee composed of women members.

1.5 Limitations of the Study

Though this study is expected to provide interesting information, it is not without its limitations. Firstly, this is an academic study which will be undertaken with in the limited time span, budget, also the availability of rural people for my research work as it will be the peak season of harvesting and the villagers won't have sufficient time to spend with me. This study covered 50members of the SFCL as the result; it is difficult to make generalizations in other groups. This is a 'research study' which assumes within the scope of this study topic "other intervening factors of Nepalese women's status remain constant". The study area was selected in central hill district of Nepal. Within this district, the SFCL Chhatredeurali is being supported by I/ NGOs for strength of WGs, so this study may or may not represent the situations of other parts of the country. The study was not based on complete enumeration. It was done with sample, so criteria and indicators may not be completely free from bias. The study

was carried out to fulfill master's degree in social science, the researcher has very limited time and budget to assess the research in depth. The study is based on the information gathered during the field survey, which needs further verification. It cannot comprehend the macro view of the subject matter because women's role is vague in SFCL and this study reflects some of the variables of WGs and socio-economy.

1.6 Basic Assumption

Following are the basic assumptions of the study:

It is essential to correlate the objectives of the SFCL based upon the needy people for sustainable development of the organization. It is worthless if the women active participation is considered only to fulfill the basic requirement to form the committee. Networking encouragement: Groups can be empowered if they know their options for how and where to seek help from Motivation for the women and back warded people by providing them trainings. Focus on group meeting on problem solving: Women group meeting is not taken as only for loan and saving collection purpose, the meeting can also aid empowerment by raising awareness about women's /family issues and where to go and when help is needed Income generating Schemes (IGSs) can help to improve their economic status of women. Health and sanitation activities might be more effective through women groups.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The study will be more beneficial for the further considerations of the program in the mid-hills.

- It represents the mid-hills of Nepal.
- It is home district and working organization of the researcher so, she better knows about socio-cultural, economic and political situation of the district. Further the study will cost as minimum as the student can sustain.
- The SFCL has already started its replication Programme in adjoining VDC i.e. Kewalpur VDC where all the SFCL is being manning through the women

management. All the staff are female, group members are female as the result the executive committee members are all female.

- Such type of study had not been carried out in the district before in my guess.

We cannot undermine the importance of the women in the social development .This study upon the topic can serve as a supportive guidance for future research related to women involvement and for planning any further activities for rural people specially women. This study can be helpful for those who wish to gain knowledge about IDP of SFDP and its effectiveness in multi aspects. This study is also related to the slogan as “Think globally act locally” also a mile stone for rural people’s empowerment not only the community based social activities, agricultural activities, natural resource management , micro financial activities but it is a holistic approach. Women are considered as primary users of the local resources and community development activities. The role of women in SFCL activities is very important because they are:

- Widely acknowledged as primary users of the SFCL
- More than half of the total population of Nepal
- Heavily involved in household activities.

Therefore, we should not ignore women to involve in any kind of development activities. It has been seen in many cases that the decision made by male only was not completely absolute. Rural women are usually among the most frequent and important SFCL's users. They are the ones who rare and care the child also as a good motivator for sending their girl child in school (school enrolment), good protector of natural resources in their localities. It is quite known fact that the women in Nepal are considered as weak, fragile and private sphere and one cannot easily accept them in public life. In this situation, the role of women in SFCL and the role of SFCL for improvement of their livelihood through decision making and other ways the SFCL should be assessed. Emphasis should be given to the fact that women are important group of SFCL users, their involvement is considered essential for the design and implementation of SFCL and more serious effort is required to improve their level of participation. Agriculture and natural resource management systems are made up of social, biophysical and economic systems. They must be viewed at different levels: from the individual farmer, the household up through the community to the national

and international levels. Economic enhancement process in society is a complex one as it works like a bridge between thought and action. The process consists of various steps requiring great deal of exercises in every step. Only participatory activities can give momentum to the success of program. Therefore, to find out existing decision making processes and situation of thus made decisions' implementation is necessary. Further the level of participation of members of SFCL's groups especially women and other disadvantaged groups in activities is a relevant issue. It is of crucial importance to carry out this proposed study in order to reveal some findings and make recommendations, which may useful in the related field.

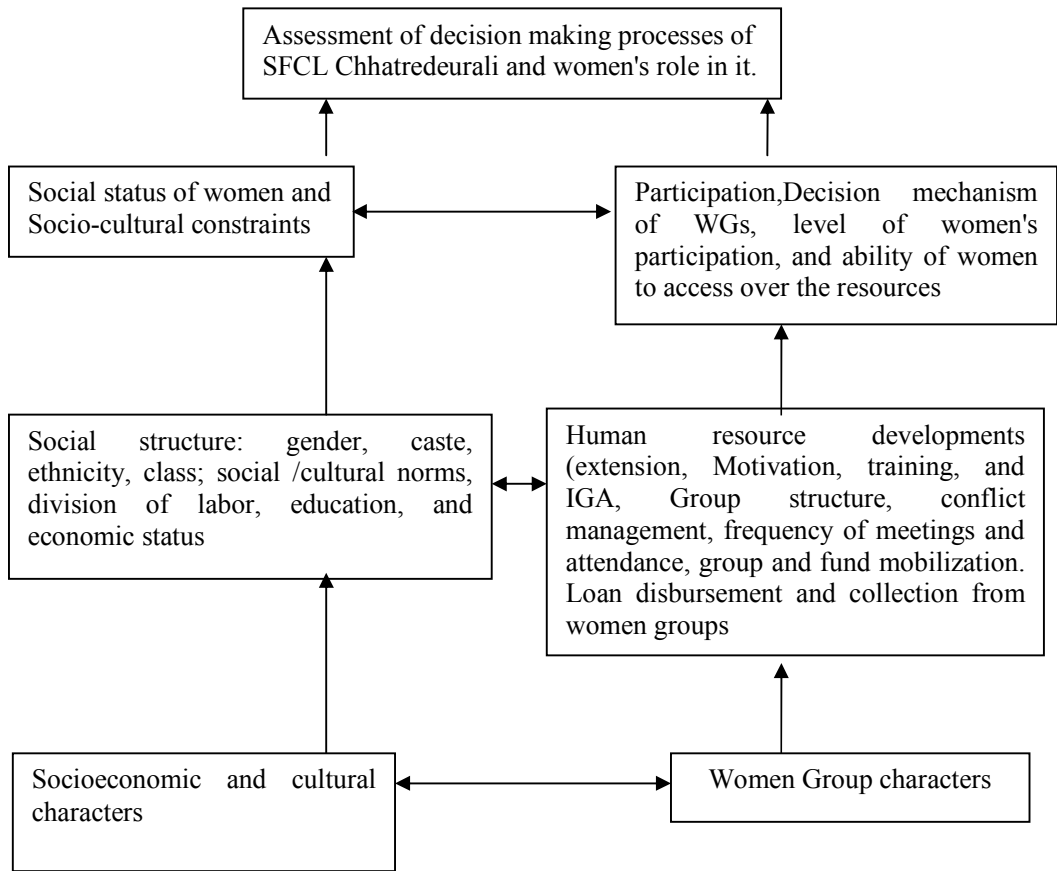
As the women's socio economic empowerment through decision making process and women's role therein is important, unavoidable aspect and dynamic process, the result will be useful in social as well as community institution and other stakeholders in planning and implementation of the program.

CHAPTER TWO

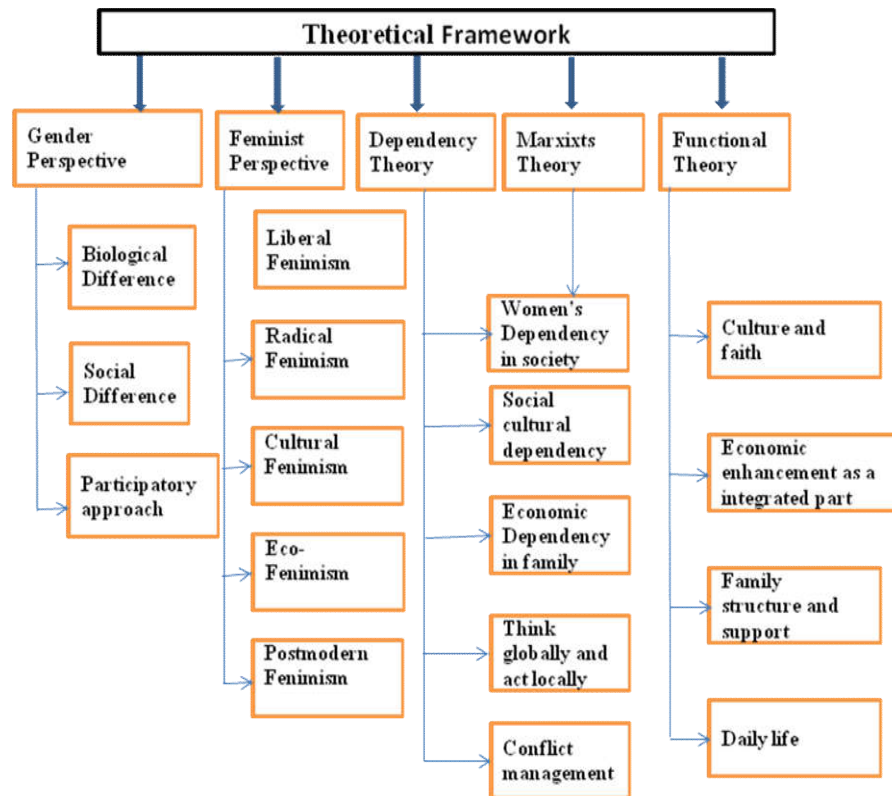
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptual Framework

The figure depicts the conceptual framework of Socio economic status of Small Farmer Women in Chhatredeurali, Dhading.



2.2 Theoretical Perspective



2.3 Theoretical Overview

Poverty may be coined by the economic status of some members in the society relative to others. ‘Poverty’ is concerned with the questions as what percentage of total income the bottom 10-20 percent of households receives and how poor their standards of living are as compared with richer people. As such it is the problem of inequality in income distribution in the society (Sigdel, 2009).

‘Poverty’ may be spelled as the status if a person whose material well being is below a certain minimum level demand reasonable by the standards of a society to which he belongs. Poverty contributes to physical weakness through lack of food, small bodies, malnutrition leading to low immune responses to infections, and inability to reach or pay for health services; to isolation because of inability to pay for health services; to isolation because of the inability to pay the cost of schooling; to vulnerability through lack of assets to pay large expenses or to meet contingencies, and to powerlessness because lack of wealth goes with low status; the poor have no voice. The failure of the

old development paradigm that of a top-down approach of development, has promoted to look for alternative and more promising pragmatic models for poverty alleviation through a participatory bottom-up process. Since the poor people at the grass root level must be the starting point, the center, and the end goal of all development interventions, they should clearly have a choice.

In Nepal, female population is more than 50% and also we have various ethnic groups. They have their own customs, traditions, rituals, religions etc. Many of us usually use the terms “Sex and Gender” interchangeably, but they both have different definitions. Equating them lead to the belief that difference in traits and behaviors of men and women are directly due to their biological variation, then the traits or behaviors actually may be shaped by culture. Sex defines the biological differences in the genetic composition and reproductive anatomy and functions. All mammalian species have two biological forms i.e. male and female. Whereas gender refers to the system of socially ascribed role determined by social and cultural context in which human beings live. Gender tells us how to interact socially, how a person appears and acts, how in the inclusion and equity of all people. All human societies have its own social distinction based on gender. The social classification that influences access to power and resources is as the creation of gender. In rural society, women play the dual role; one is household and outside works as well. As a whole, they must work hard for their family. They do not have their own income source directly as their works are taken as nonproductive works as the result, they are economically dependent to other. They do not have access over the property.

One should be economically strong and independent if anyone wants to move ahead in terms of progress. Until and unless people are economically forward nothing can be done with idea and participation only. It is clear that this is the, main constraints in front of rural women for their empowerment. Another factor is an education which makes men perfect. Most of rural woman women are illiterate, however, school enrollment of girls are being emphasized now a days. If the women were educated, they could put their ideas/views confidently. It plays vital role in decision making. Most of the group works are expected to be in written for future reference which is difficult for the women. To overcome this situation, we should focused on literacy

classes along with small scale income generated activities such as small amount of loan for cash crops production, vocational trainings etc.

➤ **Gender Perspective**

A socio economic variable to analyze roles, responsibilities, constraints and opportunities of both men and women involved in development and also the ways in which these interrelate (Russo et al, 1989). Zwarteven, 1993 states that gender is not only a source of difference but it is also one of the structuring principles of society and more especially in the organization of agricultural production. It refers to the behavior that learnt based on social conditioning that response no socio economic and environmental resources and conditions.

There are biological difference between men and women. The equality issue is central in the development problems of underdeveloped countries (Sigdel Bamadev, 2005). Gender issue involving access to and control of resources is a social, not simply an economic process. Given a strong linkage between gender, literacy rate, poverty, and ecological decline, it is imperative to recognize the role of women in conservation and development activities. Nowhere is this more important than in the area of community organization and natural resource management. Training and capacity building, primarily focused in women, are necessary prerequisites to local biodiversity conservation program. United Nations conference on Environment and Development's (UNCED) Agenda 21 calls for women to be fully involved in decision-making and in the implementation of sustainable development activities. Information on the contribution of women in various household and economic activities in different parts of the country is scanty. In order to determine the share of women in various household and economic activities, (Gurung, 1995) however, conducted a study on the socio-economic status of women in two remote villages i.e., Benigaon and Ranagaon at Gorkha District. Women in development approach are based on assumption that development proceeds much better if women were fully incorporated into development action. However, gender in development emphasize that to focus on women in isolation is inadequate and ignores the real problems which are associated with roles and responsibilities of male and female within society. Therefore, gender analysis focuses on both women and men and best interventions that empower to improve their position in relation to men which will benefit and transform society as a

whole. So, the approach adopted by the program will be a powerful tool for motivation to work for equity and respect potential contribution from all community members. The SFCL's program will focus on developing a field network of change agents (local activists) to organize the participation of women in their household management mainly through economic development activities. The change agents are envisioned as local leaders (women and men) who were respected for their age, intelligence, skills and other personal qualities. Such agents will be trained by program and will act as local agents for promoting developments. They would support themselves by providing services to the local community in return for a small fee. Thus local activists are to be development facilitators who could lead, demonstrate and communicate innovations to improve the conditions of life and work in their settlements through the process of community mobilization.

Since gender issue aims at analyzing the position of women and men in society in order to identify their specific potentials and needs, women's empowerment in isolation of their male counterpart is not possible. So the gender analysis method will be applied in planning, monitoring and evaluation in order to ensure the participation of men and women in accordance with their specific potentials and needs.

➤ **Feminist Approach**

Hitherto, the social realities have largely been understood from the perspective of a few economically, politically and culturally powerful people of their times, mostly men. Feminism is not one unitary concept, it is instead a diverse and multi-grouping of ideas and indeed and actions (Freed man, 2002). It constitutes an awareness of the discrimination, exploitation and oppression of women by the society.

➤ **Participatory approach**

SFCL is a member-owned, controlled and have an open membership policy towards 'poor' farmers. The innovative mode of delivery of services allows the SFCLs to run on low transaction costs. This is one of the prime reasons why SFCLs can sustain their operations in the remote areas. Participatory management and democratic governance is the other asset on which the success of SFCLs is building. Women can automatically participate any activities if they could feel that they are economically

strong, otherwise the poverty always push back them. After implementation of SFCL, women are gaining confidence gradually in economic independency for small expenditure.

Participation of women in SFCL will be promoted through sensitizing men to the role of women (prepare sensitizing materials focusing on changing the attitude of elite and men toward women)

- Sensitizing men about women's drudgery and workload so that they can plan community interventions to coincide with less busy periods, supporting informal education such as adult literacy classes for males and females
- Identifying training needs for women and providing skill development training in support of SFCL
- Safeguarding women's interest by supporting existing women's groups or forming new groups, which could facilitate the participation of women in development activities
- Encouraging women's groups to save and repay in timely manner
- Extend message about the benefits of SFCL through support organizations and women's organizations.

Women's involvement will be evaluated through the following indicators.

- Empowering socio economic statutes through IGSs
- Women's participation in resource management in terms of decision making, meetings, extension, motivation and local organization
- Women trainees and employment
- Change in literacy rate of women
- Change in women's income, expenditure & saving
- Equitable distribution of resources and materials primarily to the marginalized groups, and among actors

Participation

Organization + empowerment + contribution = people's participation

The mechanism of participation is to organize people first, when weak individuals bond together, their collective member can rectify the imbalance between weak and stronger. In assessing the degree of participation, following points should be considered. These are freedom and opportunity to participate, the ability to participate, and willingness to participate. There are five levels of participation viz. informative, consultative, associative, administrative and decisive. At informative level only information are shared while at decisive level decisions are made based on active participation. Pretty et al, 1995 (as cited by Pokharel, 1997) has pointed out the following typology of participation.

- Information giving
- Passive participation
- Participation by consultation
- Participation for material consumption
- Functional participation
- Interactive participation and
- Self mobilization.

Pradhan, (2005) studied and reported that, Participation of the members is directed by collective decision making process and distribution of responsibilities among the female members, there is collective leadership and open discussion and interaction takes place that the members contribute their time in meetings, programs, money/material, membership fee etc. Gentle, (2004) reported based on his experience that only physical present of people in meeting is not actual participation. Her/his voice is heard or not, her/his view is effective or not, her/his things are beneficial for other or not, and there voice can be implementable or not and if can, they are implemented or not are important thing of participation

Participation of Women in SFCL

It was observed that women and disadvantage people are increasing in participation and holding SFCL's major position, mechanisms for leadership changes are being established, the SFCL Operational Plans are followed more and renewed Basic Operational Guidelines (BUG) reflect more of the needs of Poor and marginalized households. Deeper analysis indicates that men from the elite and wealthier households continue to dominate on key positions.

Socio-economic, technical, institutional and political factors, including government policies are responsible for the discrepancy overall, women and disadvantage group people do not have equal representation in the key positions which contributes to a vicious cycle of lower awareness, lower participation, less access to information, and fewer benefits. Gentle (2004) in his lecture note reported that "According to UN statistics, women do 67% of the world's work, yet their earning for it amount to only 10% of the total world's income."

However, host of women are still unaware of their rights and responsibilities. They have triple role (productive, reproductive and community managing) but often excluded in decision-making processes. He suggested that empowerment of women is the best opinion to uplift women in the society. Flintan (2003) argues that Women have less access to the resources, fewer opportunities to improve their livelihoods and share in decision-making power also low. "At the point in time it seems that inevitable that women's participation will help SFCL first and women second. The general assembly is the main forum where all the major decision-making takes place for implementing many of the SFCL related activities.

Participation of Poor in SFCL

The poorest Group Members, who depend relatively more on the SFCL's programme for their livelihoods, have limited participation in the whole process of Organization. In general, and specifically due to their lower representation and participation in severely committees, the contribution of SFCL towards supporting the Poorest, most vulnerable and marginalized members of society has been limited. Much concern has been expressed regarding the success of the community SFCL and its hand over

programs in terms of reaching and benefiting the poorest users. So the real success of SFCL lies in how far it can reach and impact upon the Poorest. Since the SFCL is for poor people, there can be found very positive trend of their development.

Participation of Dalit in SFCL

If we went through the national level status of Dalits, the reality of Chhatreaurali DVC can't escape from this scenario too. So it would be meaningful to go through the nationwide statues of them. Sob (2003) argued that the untouchability is deeply rooted in the society. Upper caste mind set- up makes the perception towards the Dalit people and neglect them by various opportunities of the state benefits. The basic pillars of human rights like dignity and equality are becoming dreams for Dalits in Nepal. Gentle, (2004) in his lecture note reported that Dalits are most disadvantaged segment in the Nepalese community Constituting (15-20%) with a large population of the country. The untouchable, popularly called Dalits remained exploited for centuries and disadvantaged in all opportunities..

According to the census held in 2001, the total Dalit population is 2,962,591 (13.05%), of which the whole female population is 1,496,622 and the male population is 1,465,969. Their per capital income is US \$ 39.6, which is almost lowest in the world. Life expectancy of the Dalits is as low as 42 percent. Despite the civil code (1964) along with its several amendments, ensuring equitable justice for Dalits rights, the caste-based discrimination and the practice of untouchability still continue. There are contradictory laws and by-laws, which violate Dalits rights. Still there is an urgent need to formulate laws as to abolish disparity both in principals and practice. Poor, Women and Dalit are not adequately represented in the executive committee of SFCL Chhatreaurali yet.

The presentation of Women, Poor and Dalits are to be Poor, it were willingly or unwillingly in the meeting in the past but now a days the situation has changed and there are various record of forming committees and maintaining regular meeting very effectively in SFCL groups Chhatreaurali. The normal practice in SFCL was that the elite members of the society tend to take all key position in the executive committee and make decision on programme and management in the past.

➤ **Decision Making**

The whole process of decision making in the house hold is a complex one. Recent trend shows in Nepalese society is that men are culturally accepted as being the decision maker in the house hold. The decision that they make are usually suggested by other members of house hold particularly by wives. Tish, 1992- sates that one of the several key issues that needs to be considered in gender concern is access to and control of resources that contributes to family welfare and agricultural productivity.

➤ **Marxist Theory**

Marx had predicted growing inequality in the capitalist development process. Corresponding to a reduction in the importance of land through further process of industrialization that can be seen in our study area. For an example, lots of fertile lands have been using for brick factories by the industrialist from Kathmandu. Small farmers are attracted to work in the locally established industries and also, are in search of other work rather than the agriculture. Females are not separate from this problem too in the village. Marx had analyzed, "how national income is divided between the two categories, ie; wage and profit, and predicted increases in the latter relative to the former, resulting in the concentration of income in the hands of capitalists and the popularization of labors"

➤ **Karl Marx Capitalism Theory**

Though much of what constitutes local development seeks to undercut such hated intermediaries as money lenders, merchants, and other professional "go-between", the more "legitimate" constellations of local politico-cultural power often go un-problematised and often even come to be seen as part of social capital.

In SFCL, poor females had to go the local landlord and money lenders to ask money to manage their crisis. After the implementation of SFCL, these practices came down to almost zero in the VDC. At the mean time, the local landlords and money lenders always criticize the SFCL too. The females had to work whole day at the Money lenders' house without wages if her husband went to work in daily wages.

From the longstanding US conflict between white Southerners demanding the right to local tradition and identity in face of federally mandated desegregation and civil rights for African Americans (Lawson and Paine 1998) to the Jews of Europe facing persecution at the hands of counter-enlightenment localists (Wolf 1999), low caste Indians facing social exclusion at the local level that would not be acceptable nationally (Mendelsohn and Vicziany 1998), and indigenous campesinos in Southern Mexico struggling for political autonomy against local power structures, which they claim have denied them the federalist benefits of the Mexican revolution (La Botz 1995), the logic of the local has rarely benefited the neediest or most oppressed. There are, of course, many examples of cooperative and participatory development programs that have used local action to shake loose some of the power of local elites such as SEWA in India (Rose 1992), the Movimento dos Trabalhadores Ruras Sem Terra—Landless Workers’ Movement (MST) in Brazil (Vanden 2003) and the Christian base communities of Latin America (Canin 1997). However, as Dombrowski (2001) has observed, the most popular and successful examples of local empowerment often share an ambivalent, if not hostile relationship with local culture and custom, sometimes rejecting it in favour of ideologies and explicit political and social commitments that promote thinking and acting globally.

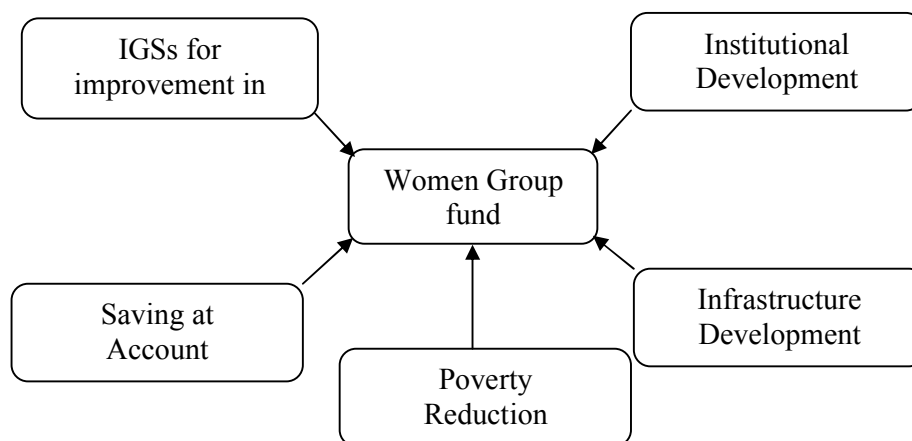
➤ **Economic theory**

According to Marx, we cannot imagine a prosperous and developed society until and unless the people of society are economically strong. This concept clearly meets in the Chhatreaurali VDC’s context. To cope this situation, there are lot of activities to for economic strengthen. Such as:

Saving Fund Mobilization Procedure for Strengthening the Women

The Group and Intergroup fund management is a critical aspect of increasing equitable distribution in benefits to Group members and increasing transparency and was found that saving fund mobilization in SFCL means community mobilizations and it is mobilized through open discussion. There is a clear guideline for fund mobilizations in women groups such as liquidity, duration, interest rate and others. Transparency means awareness of decision made in minutes, files, reports, constitution and policies and the program budget accessible to all the members.

Increase in representation of women and Dalits has gradually influenced the decision making process of WGs. Women are raising their concerns about increasing support for income generating activities utilizing saving funds. In Chhatreurali, women have accepted key positions in the executive committee in SFCL. After the literacy training, women succeeded in taking actions against the executives who misused fund.



Need of SFCL in Rural Female Community

SFCL in Nepal offers many examples of decentralized decision-making, participatory management of resources, and equitable sharing of benefits. Government / nongovernmental and private sector agencies. They have developed a very good thought from “Me and Mine has been changed as we and our.

Saving Practice in their Own Bank of SFCL:

Another major thing is that this program is very popular among the woman group in terms of saving as they cannot save money in large amount. The SFCL is only the way where they can save their little money for their future emergences. For the SFCL program, women and back warded people are targeted specially.

➤ Women centred

This cooperative is basically women centered for lifting up their socio-economic status through economic as well as community development and skill development activities. As the positive impact of this program, the neighboring VDC Kewalpur has

started as a replication program of SFCL Chhatreaurali, where all the members of Executive Committee, Inter Groups and Groups are women. It means it has been run by the women.

➤ **Development Theories**

Poverty and inequality have found to be structural and hybrid with the calamities and imperialism in majority of developing countries / parts of the world. The pioneers of dependency school of thought on development opine³: “The cause of underdevelopment lie in the capitalist system itself, and the only remedy against the causes, as well as symptoms of underdevelopment, is revolutionary distraction of Bourgeois capitalism and its replacement by social development”. Planned development practices did not bring expected fruitful outcome on the drive of sustained economic growth with lesser poverty and inequality. Some sectors as education, health fairly improved during planning era. Poverty reduction through inclusive growth is a goal of Nepal’s development. It is now widely acknowledged that poverty encompasses not only the material well being, but also inferior outcome in access to services and exclusion. Poverty alleviation programs in Nepal must embody the most important casual factor: population growth, income inequality, low means of subsistence and unemployment. As the bulk of poor is concentrated in rural and agrarian setting, the centrality of agrarian reform for sustained long-term development cannot be underestimated. Agrarian reform as implemented in the past has not substantially changed the traditional hierarchy of interest where rural landlords are still dominating the political economy of village life. The irony of the plans, programs and projects in Nepal is that they generate only a trickle down effect on the rural poor and the needy. Rather it is benefiting the urban elite and rural elite. With urban connection, while the overwhelming majority of the poor of the nation have remained in the periphery of the development circle. Thus, for Nepal, several decades of the second half of the last century was a loss while assessing development performance. Neither economic nor social reforms were effectively neither enacted, nor public or private investments in creating necessary socio-economic infrastructures were forth coming. Development outcomes were lopsided and mostly digested by feudal elements leaving a large segment of Nepal’s rural population by passed from the minimum basic public services and development benefits. By the end of Tenth Plan, Nepal’s government

revealed that the head count poverty rate declined dramatically between 1995-96 and 2003-04, from 42 percent to 31 percent, a decline of 3.7 percent a year. Thus, the incidence of poverty in Nepal declined by about 11 percentage points (or 26 percent) over the course of eight years. The incidence of poverty in urban areas more than halved (it declined from 22 to 10 percent) while poverty in rural areas also declined at one percentage point per year, its incidence remained higher than urban areas. International poverty lines such as the \$ 1 a day poverty line in 1995-96 and 24 percent in 2003-04. However, the elasticity of poverty reduction compatible to growth in Nepal is quite low (-0.6 percent) by international standard. (Source: BFIRD/NRB, Banking and Financial Statistics–Mid January 2007, Banks and Financial Institutions Regulation Department, Nepal Rastra Bank, Kathmandu, July 2007.)

➤ **Dependency Theories**

Women, Poor and Dalits have been considered peripheral to the process of development. Woman, Poor, and Dalit are often ignored and excluded from real participation in decision making and benefit sharing process. Their voices are hardly incorporated in management level. Such a thing makes them unhappy and they hesitated to participate on SFCL activities

➤ **Good governance**

Social change is presented as gradual and accretive, as many islands of small, local, civil action displace global action. In the long run the global is something that is hoped when the whole world has bit by bit turned its face away from global actors and left them all alone with their global toys (Marcus & Acharya, 2005).

Ultimately this perspective presents states as empty vessels into which various acts, local and otherwise, are put, counseling passivity in face of structural accumulations of macro/global power. As James Petras (1997) has observed “NGOisation” and other face to face civil society projects that seek to act locally may actually take precious human energy and initiative away from acting globally. In the following pages we will provide some examples of these problems with the logic of global thinking and local acting as it was experienced by our informants in rural Nepal.

➤ **Feminist Approach**

Feminism is not one unitary concept; it is; instead a diverse and multi- faced grouping of ideas and indeed, actions (Freedman, 2002). It constitutes an awareness of the discrimination, exploitation and oppression of women by the society. It also constitutes collective action by women and some men to transform the context of discrimination.

A realization of patriarchal control over women's lives generates a desire among women to be free from such patriarchal control at both the material and ideological levels of women's labor, fertility and sexuality within the structure of family, the place of work and in society (Mishra, 2005).

Hitherto, the social realities have largely been understood from the perspective of a few people of their times, mostly men. Women's participation in decision-making in SFCL .Extent of women's participation in decision-making in SFCL Socio-cultural and economic hindrances Women's limited involvement in Nepalese politics and the bureaucracy. It measures to encourage women's participation in decision-making acceptability of change measures. Measures to promote change increasing women's participation in decision making and Nepalese women's involvement in economic activities. Women in the Nepalese labor force changes in women's economic role. The impact of women's increased economic involvement on their status can also be analyzed under this approach.

2.4. Review of Related Literature in Nepal

Many research works and studies have been carried out in the field of SFCL. Consequently several papers and reports have frequently presented and published in this regard. But the studies about women's socio economic transformation through SFCL's activities, issues are limited like other sectors. Some NGOs and scholars including employees of ADB/N and GTZ have done studies in the aspects. Very fewer studies have been carried out to assess the Sociological study of economic status of Women.

“A man makes house but a woman makes home” (Kantipur National daily-2067 Magh, 24). This is a very contextual for supporting this research work.

The equality issue is central in the development problems of underdeveloped countries. Inequality relates to all socio-economic relationship. Inequality reflects individual's ability and effort, together with the returns on individual's human and physical capital. Many would agree that those should be rewarded. Additionally, relatively higher returns to certain activities send important signals in the economy to reallocate human and physical capital to them. These signals are a necessary pre-requisite for growth and prosperity. Inequality and the trend toward rising inequality stand as a complex of inhibitions and obstacle to development and that, consequently, there is an urgent need for reversing the trend and creating greater equality as a condition for speeding up development.

It has been widely argued that small farmers should have a participatory role with active participation of women in and full ownership over microfinance organizations. This argument has been based primarily on two propositions that are part of a generally accepted consensus on best practice in the International Development industry. The first of these is the radical democratic ideal that holds that individuals and the communities that they inhabit have a basic human right to determine the conditions of their livelihood and control their own destiny (Escobar 1995; Laclau and Mouffe 2001; Lummis 1996). Though there are authors, politicians and policymakers of all ideological stripes who have questioned whether genuine democracy in development is possible given the contemporary and historical dynamics of the world economy (Huntington 1993; Kirkpatrick 1982; Petras 1997, 2003; Zaccaria 1994) and the notion that democracy, community and identity are necessarily “local” or even geographically definable (Amit and Rapport 2002; Burbach 1997; Castells 1996; Norris 2001; Reeves 2001) the long term goals that are expressed in this proposition are difficult to disagree with, at least in the abstract.

The second proposition is generally the far more immediately important one in marketing and maintaining microfinance projects. This is the efficiency argument. It has often been claimed that self-ownership, self-management, and face to face democratic participation by bringing the women in line of development work is a far more efficient, effective and productive way to structure programs and promote

development. Following such classical 19th Century writers on mutual aid and cooperation as Pyotr Kropotkin (1897), more recent work process theorists such as Harry Braverman (1975) and Michael Piore and Charles Sabel (1984), and celebrated development theorists such as Gilbert Hardin (1968), Paulo Freire (1970), E.F. Schumacher (1973), and Amartya Sen (1999), it is argued that direct local democracy is more efficient due to its ability to give people a sense of ownership over social activity and some measure of direct oversight management thus drawing out their creativity and giving them a larger stake in making production move smoothly and waste remain at a minimum.

Uplifting the Socioeconomic status of rural women and the micro finance come together in many times. In the area of microfinance, which is by definition small, almost inherently local and participatory, this argument has typically stressed the degree to which the farmers themselves have access to local knowledge, which is unknown to official experts, and are better able to manage their own planning, creation and maintenance of programs. It is further argued that by avoiding extensive administration by national public sector organisations and international development experts a sense of ownership and responsibility will be claimed by the stakeholders, yielding programs with fewer administrative costs, less waste, and more careful management than could be expected from bureaucrats, outsiders, and other stakeholders who might view project resources as external and therefore expendable “commons” (deSoto 1996; Khandker 1998; Ledgerwood 1999; Weitz, 1982, 30-33; Shah, 1999; Sharma and Nepal, 1997). Finally, despite the low level of fixed capital, tiny economies of scale, and other impediments to significant capital accumulation, microfinance is often viewed as highly efficient for its ability to not only raise income, but also to spur the accumulation of “social” and “human” capital, which, it is argued, is where participation and the local meet genuine sustainable development (Bebbington 1997; Gomez and Santor 2001; Koopman 1996; Putnam 1993, 1995; Wilson 1997).

➤ **Small is Beautiful/Think Globally and Act Locally**

In general it is not easy to make a systematic argument against **women’s participation** as a beneficial value, against self-ownership as a means to make people work harder and more productively, or against the notion that people should have

experience collaborating with their neighbors in a space where they have control over the important aspects of their livelihoods; and we would not like to do so. However, there have been many important empirical discussions of the economic strengths and weaknesses of varied microfinance approaches (Bhatt & Shui-Yan 2001; Galor 2002; Ito, Sanae 2003; Murdoch 2000; Paxton and Carlos 1998; Wright 1999; Zeller and Mayer 2003), as well as several empirical appraisals of the SFCL program in Nepal (Sharma, Bhattachan, and Shrestha 2001; Wehnert and Shakya 2003), including our own assessment (Acharya, Lakha, and Marcus 2004). Such empirical assessments of microfinance are useful for improving specific policies, management efficiency, and the overall fairness and success of programs. However, in this essay we are more concerned to identify and analyze the socio-political implications of the “small is beautiful/ think globally and act locally” best practice consensus than to identify either success or failure of specific local programs.

➤ **Bottom-up Decision-Making**

With regard to “populist approaches” (Ziai 2004) such as local tradition, participatory development, bottom-up decision-making, spaces in civil society, worker self management, and non-governmental organizing (Clarke 1990; Cooke and Kothari 2001;), we will use the case of SFCL to argue that, far from being merely a slogan, the phrase “think globally, act locally ” is based on a political world view that views human beings through the particularist lens of place and culture. This place and culture centered perspective contains an inbuilt tendency to substitute populism for politics and continuity for change, militating towards the revindication of personalistic patron client relations, often at the expense of the politically, economically and socially subordinate. At the highest level of political abstraction, historical scholarship on nationalism and nation building has observed an almost universal pattern in which metonymic national elites “think globally and act locally” by promoting customary local practices, local traditions and local institutions at the expense of minorities and subordinate groups.

At the level of villages and communities in the developing world it has been observed that political devolution and local administration of land, labour, taxation, and governance policies often entrench local power differentials, thus proving destructive to weaker and subordinate “locals females”.(Bardhan and Mookerjee 1999; Cheema

and Khwaja 2004; Mohan 1996) as well as older and more traditional literatures on patron/client relations and “culture brokers” (Gellner and Waterbury 1977; Metcalfe 1962; Siddiqui 1992; Wolf 1966).

➤ **An Experience from Nepal.**

The Small Farmer Cooperatives Ltd. (SFCLs) are as sustainable grassroots organizations in Nepal. As per the recent reports, there are 229 SFCLs which are handed over to the management committee of Small Farmer Co Operatives Ltd- (Small Farmer Development Bank, Nepal). The relation women with SFCL are very close and inseparable.

There are many scholars who carried out their studies on the SFCL. The Rural Finance Nepal/GTZ (RUFIN) and Agricultural Development Bank of Nepal (ADBN) which had prepared a long report on Title: Small Farmer Cooperatives Ltd. (SFCLs) in the Hills and Mountains

Small farmers ‘group networks: a case study of Small Farmers Cooperatives Limited in Nepal by Kailash Pyakuryal. He has included 4 Case study reports of SFCL, Bhalwad, Kapilbastu, Piple, Chitwan, Bhumisthan, Dhading and ChhatreDeurali. Melbourne University Private Working Paper Series 8 Working Paper No. 01/05 – Local Culture, Local Power: Microfinance in Rural Nepal, Anthony Marcus & Yogendra Prasad Acharya had written a report on SFCL, according to the report: SFCL is one of the most common forms of dealing with hierarchy, particularly the amorphous, informal and customary type which requires personal contact and local context for its usage by the powerful over the less powerful, is avoidance. Poorer farmers did everything they could to avoid taking leadership over direct management by refusing to join the Executive Committees (EC), but this strategy meant that they were often at the financial mercy of more powerful farmers who did take committee posts. Regardless of whether they took such posts, if they were part of the cooperative they were restricted in their ability to engage a strategy of avoidance of power. An example of this was the way that the compulsory savings rule designed for the financial health and long term viability of the project was used by higher status farmers.

For further and specific way, I will go through the a thesis paper prepared by Mr. Krishna Lamichhane of ADB/N on SFCL Kumroj of Chitwan district from which gender related literature will be reviewed.

A Small Farmer Cooperative Ltd. is a multi-service co-operative designed to deliver primarily financial, but also non-financial services to its members in mountain and other remote areas. SFCLs are civil society organizations, which pool their joint resources to meet basic needs and to defend their members' interests. They are member-owned and controlled and have an open membership policy towards "poor" farmers. The innovative mode of delivery of services allows the SFCLs to run on low transaction costs. This is one of the prime reasons why SFCLs can sustain their operations in the remote areas. Participatory management and democratic governance is the other asset on which the success of SFCLs is building.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Setting of the Study Area

Chhatredeurali VDC of Dhading district lies in the mid-hills of Nepal in between 27°43'N north latitude and 85 ° 11' E east longitudes. Average temperature ranges from maximum 28 ° C to minimum 4 ° C.

As mentioned previously, the study area of this research will be the Small Farmers Cooperatives Ltd. Chhatredeurali VDC of Dhading district, which is just 17 kilometer west from Kathmandu metropolitan city. This VDC is surrounded by four different VDCs, at the eastern part, Bhimdhunga VDC of Kathmandu district, Okharpauwa VDC of Nuwakot district in North, Jiwanpur VDC in west, and Naubise VDC of Dhading south. The VDC is famous for fresh vegetables and fruits production and dairy business is recently increasing. As per the information provided by the VDC secretary and profile of the VDC, it has 1038 households with total population 7690 in which 3780 are males and 4110 are females. While talking in the literacy rate, it hardly meets 40% out of total population. This VDC is nationwide famous for producing unseasonal vegetables and fruits. Because of the geographical setting like it is joint area of Kathmandu and easy access of road transportation, farmers can easily sell their products in the market. It has been observed that most of the cultural activities are similar to the village people (Kanth) of Kathmandu. Most of them have marriage relation with Kanth area of Kathmandu. Daily expenditure practice has been noticed as quite large in compare to the nearby VDC people. During my research period, the VDC area's environment was very beautiful because of the blossoming of Rhododendron every where around the hill areas.

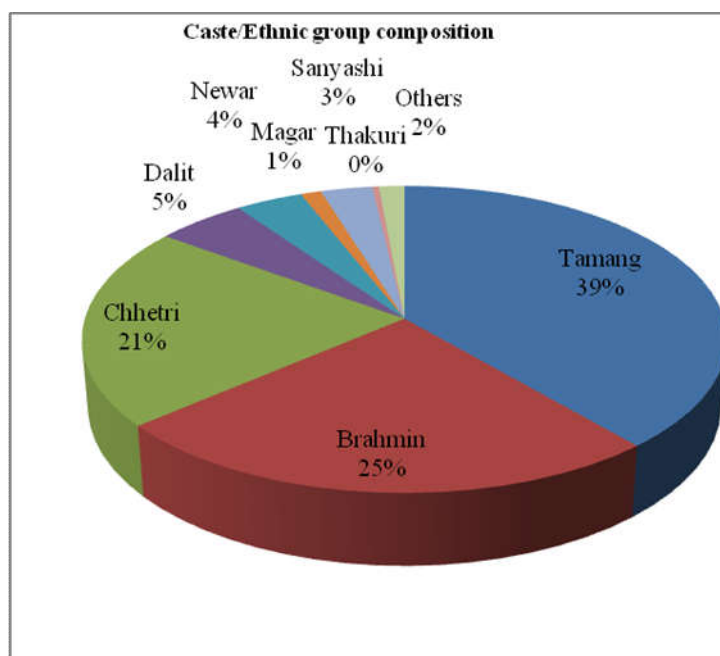
According to SFDP baseline survey, more than 80% people are poor. Main occupation is agricultural. The majority of people in the village are Brahims, Chhetri, Tamang, and other Dalit casts.

The study has focused on Caste, ethnicity, geographical variations and woman head group. Radom survey method has been applied during the study period Fifty members from different women groups were included in the study.

VDC Level Population by Caste/Ethnic Group

SN	Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	%
1	Tamang	2975	39
2	Brahmin	1927	25
3	Chhetri	1638	21
4	Dalit	395	5
5	Newar	297	4
6	Magar	90	1
7	Sanyashi	227	3
8	Thakuri	29	1
9	Others	112	1
Total		7690	100

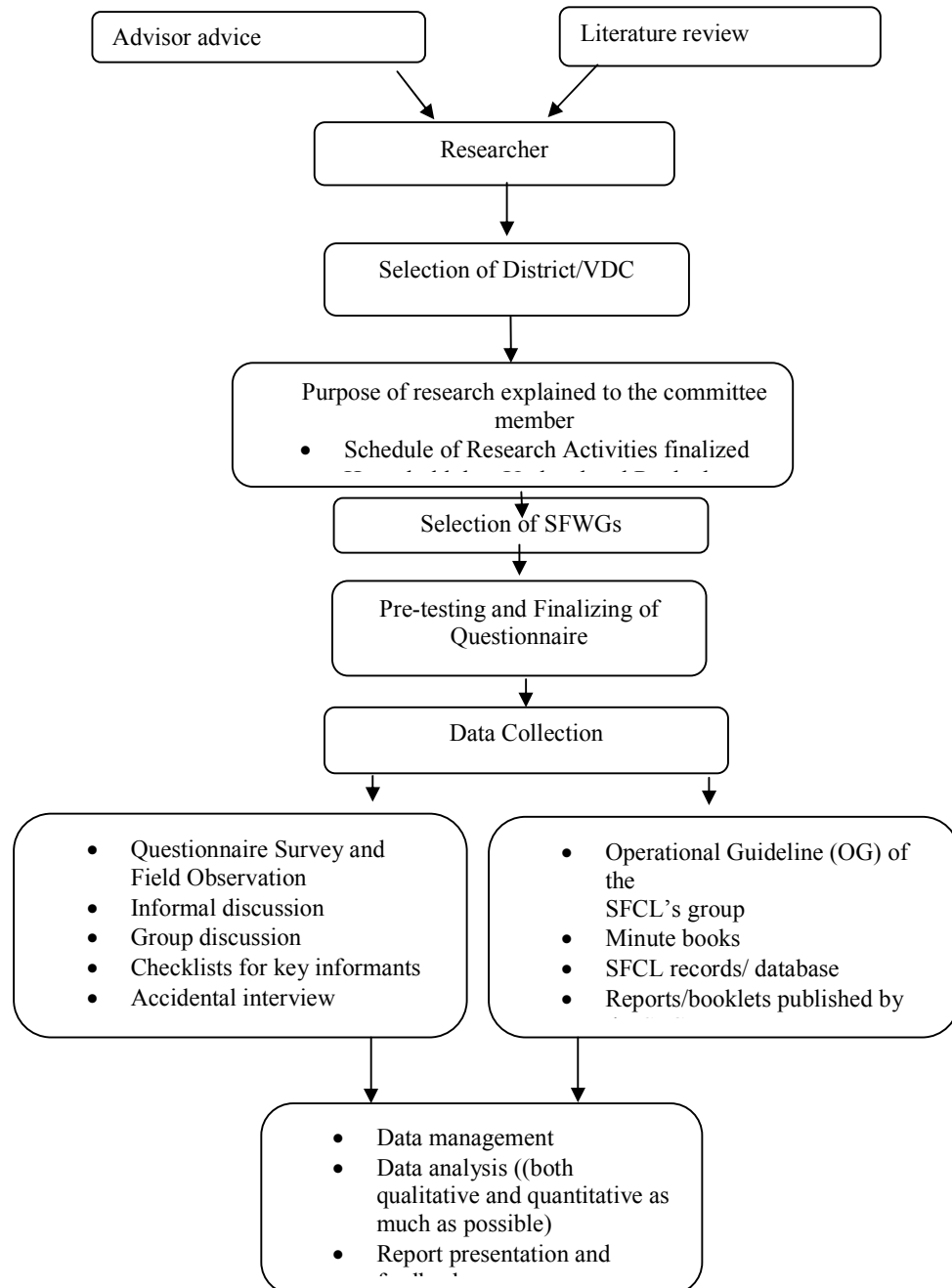
Source: VDC Profile of Nepal 2008 Intensive Study and Research Centre



3.2. Research Design

This study aims to the study of the socio economic status of female through the SFCL's program in the present social setting with comparison to previous years. Thus the nature of this study will be both exploratory as well as descriptive research design and other methods will also be applied as per required.

Major steps followed from the preparation of the proposal to data collection and final write up are presented in the following figure.



3.3 Sampling Procedure

The universe of this study will be 60 woman groups (in 290 households) of SFCL Chhatredurali and an executive committee. Each group consists. . The sampling group will be selected by using systematic technique. The key informants for this study will be SFCL, Chhatredeurali and ADB/N Khanikhola Dhading. In order to collect the primary data following methods will be adopted:

3.4 Nature and Resource of Data

As per the requirement of the study, primary and secondary data will be collected. The primary data will be collected from the field observation, survey by collecting house hold survey basically on Loan volume increment , repayment rate of female groups, saving fund status of women, women group status etc. For secondary data, the SFCL, Chhatredeurali will provide all the details and ADB/N Khanikhola and GTZ's support will be requested based on requirement.

3.5 Data Collection, Analysis and Presentation

It is one of the popular methods for the study. Under this system a comprehensive questionnaires were prepared and distributed to the individual. The questions expecting answer by the members to collect fact information to meet the objectives of the study.

A huge mass of data was collected during the study. To handle it conveniently collected raw data were first processed in a computer by means of sorting, grouping, frequency distribution and tabulation. Both qualitative and quantitative data have been analyzed with appropriate statistical tools accordingly. The statistical tools used to analyze the data include classification, ranking, percentage, diagrams and correlation

3.6 Primary Data Collection Techniques

3.6.1 Interview

This technique will be the main tool for the primary data collection for this study. It will help to collect the required data on the condition of females in the SFCL and their

decisive role in the Group/Inter Group and executive committee. It can also be supportive to know about the other peoples' thought over the female representation. This method will be used to get particular insight on certain aspects regarding the traditional perception on gender related issues. A discussion will be carried out on their experience with SFCL, success and challenges and will gather background information. Also this method can be useful to find out which groups remain active and why and to determine sustainability of groups formed under the SFCL

3.6.2 Observation

An effective observation tool will be applied to find out different aspects of women including overall feeling towards the SFCL's activities. Their meeting procedure for an eg: minute writing system, loan request form fill up and group granted system, saving collection mechanism, budget allocation for community development, training and empowerment program etc. Also, a meeting of executive committee will be observed and get information about how female members take part in the discussion. We can observe the adult literacy class, sanitation program; forest conservation activities run by the SFCL affiliated female groups.

3.8 Data Collection Technique

This research study mainly consists of formal and informal interview conducted using survey formats and interviews conducted in the field. Also much background information was collected through old reports of cooperatives. The collected data will be analyzed both qualitative and quantitatively. Simple static techniques will be adopted for analysis the data. This research conducted by using household interviews, questionnaires survey, focus group discussions, visit to the toles and executive committee meeting.

3.9 Focused on Group Discussion

Group discussions will be observe both in regular monthly meeting or any time if need to get more information on decision making capacity of women.

3.1.1 Women Participation Framework

This is one of the major tools of gender and development approach can be used to know the empowerment levels of women. In these methods, we can get clear information about whether the women sustain their acquired abilities! Are they continuing participation after handed over the cooperatives? From this method we can understand about the women's access and control over the property both public and private, their consciousness over the welfare etc.

3.1.2 Secondary Data Collection

The secondary data and information have been collected from the following sources.

- Operational plans of the SFCL
- Minute books/Records of the FUGs
- Profile and program and progress documents of the office were picked out
- Different published and unpublished documents
- Text and reference books: the literature regarding women's socioeconomic status and roles in decision making in community were consulted throughout the study

CHAPTER FOUR

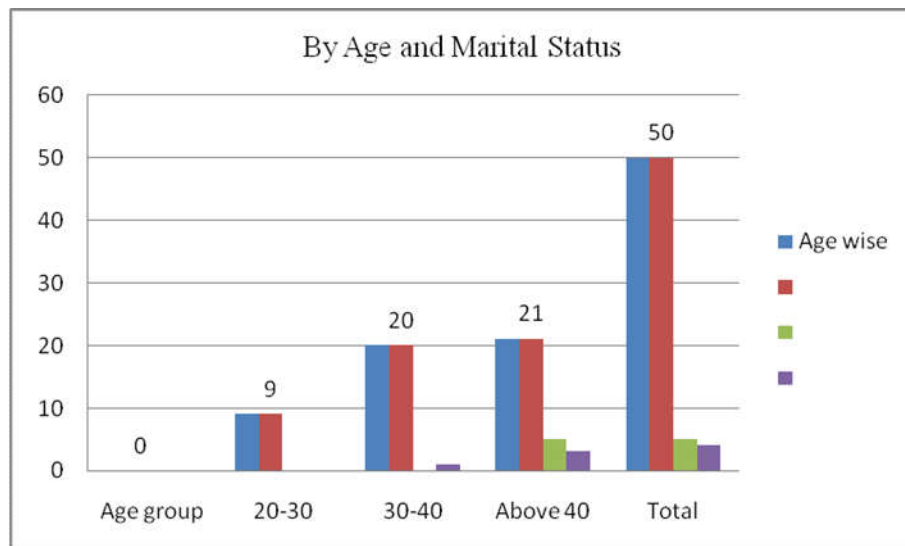
DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 By Age and Marital Status

Table No-1

	Age wise			
Age group	No of respondent	Married	Widow	Divorce
20-30	9	9	0	0
30-40	20	20	0	1
Above 40	21	21	5	3
Total	50	50	5	4

(Source: Filed Survey, 2010)



The age range of functional members in the WGs is minimum 20 to above 56 in maximum. The most common age group of women is around 40 years. Since there is a mandatory rule that all the female group members of SFCL have to be married due to various practical reasons. All of the respondents were married, however, it was noticed that some of them were already widow and very few numbers were divorcee. Those who had divorced did not have the legal letter of divorce from the court as it was declared from villagers (Pancha Bhela).

4.2 Caste /Ethnic Composition of the Respondents

Table No-2

Caste/Ethnic composition of Respondents			
SN	Caste/Ethnic group	No of respondent	Percentage
1	Brahaman	14	28
2	Chhetri	12	24
3	Tamang	10	20
4	Dalits	8	16
5	Newar	6	12
Total		50	100

(Source: Filed Survey, 2010)

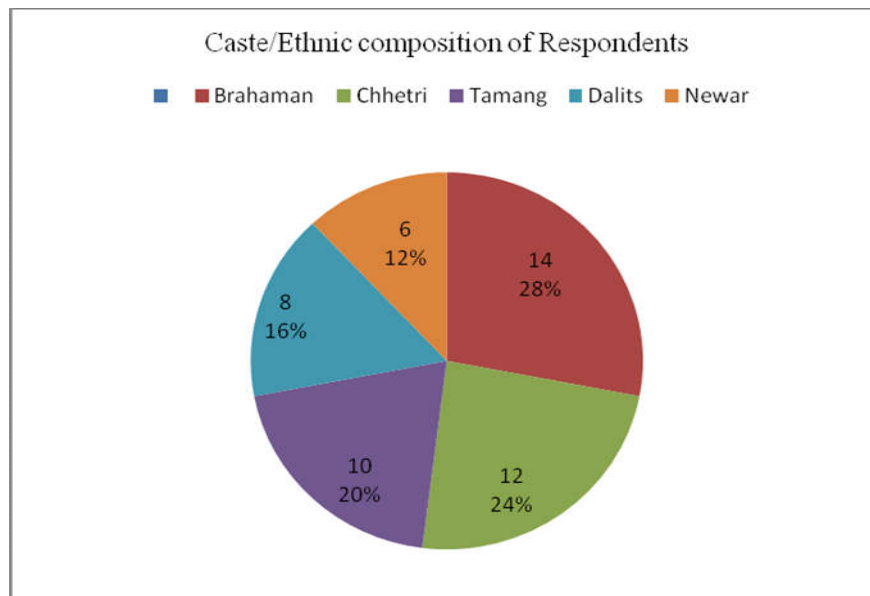


Table no- 2 shows that each WG consists Brahmins, Chattiri, Sanyashi, Tamangs, Newar and Dalit caste which is reflected in the diagram and table along with number and percentage of the respondents. The caste and ethnic groups have been represented in the executive committees SFCL proportionately. There is no weakness left by the EC to represent its ethnic groups and area (Bhek) in the executive committees. Similarly females represent all the WGs so far and it may be a formality because they were found to have quite inactive participation in comparison to the male group members due to minority. Respondents were categorized in two major castes; Dalit

and Non-Dalit. Non- Dalit includes Brahmins, Chhettri, Tamang and Newar and similarly Dalit includes Kami, Damai, Sarki. The majority of Brahmin and Chhetri followed by Tamang were found.

4.3 Occupation Status of the Respondents

Table No-3

SN	Occupation	No of Respondent	Percentage
1	Agriculture	45	90
2	Wages/Labor	3	6
3	Business	2	4
Total		50	100

(Source: Filed Survey, 2010)

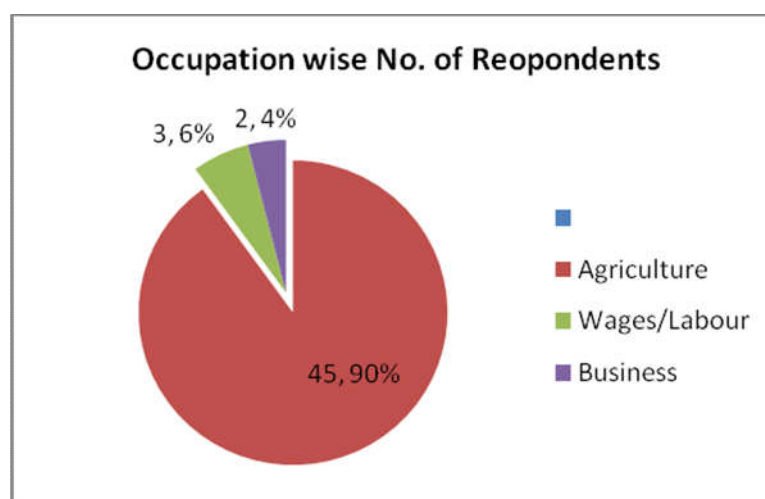


Table (2) shows that occupation of WGs in SFCL Chhatredeurali is primarily agriculture. Some of the respondents' field (Khet) is far on foothill and settlement is uphill side making farming much difficult with daily up and down. Livelihood of the people is hard.

Both agriculture and cattle rising are common among them though few are engaged in other professions like shop keeping and wages labor too those who do not have sufficient land. The shopkeepers have been served as key contact persons and

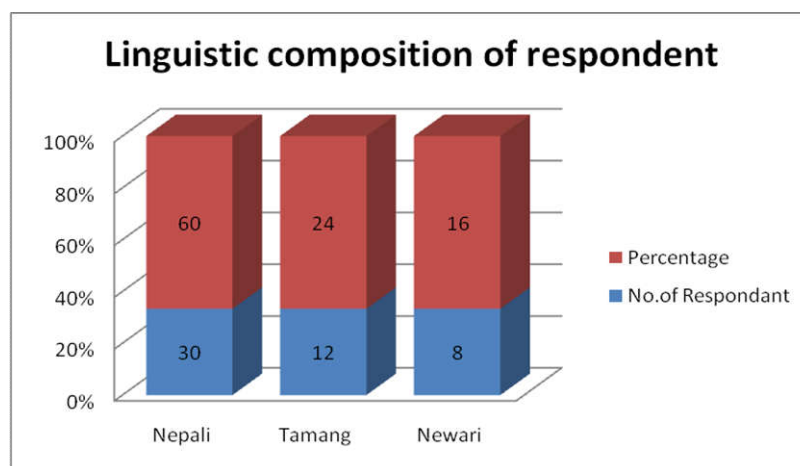
informants for both the WGs and outsiders. Group members could not clearly state about their earnings, they also hesitated to describe annual savings or credit/debt, however almost all have been maintaining their bi- or tri-annually account balanced in the SFCL . In Dhading district 98% of total population depends on Agriculture. As agriculture is the vital source of income, majority of respondent were from the agriculture-based. It revealed that least percent were involved in daily wage labor and business. In case of government service due to insufficient education only few people engaged in the government job.

4.4 Linguistic Composition of Respondent

Table No-4

No of Respondents by Language			
SN	Language	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Nepali	30	42
2	Tamang	21	42
3	Newari	8	16
Total		50	100

(Source: Filed Survey, 2010)



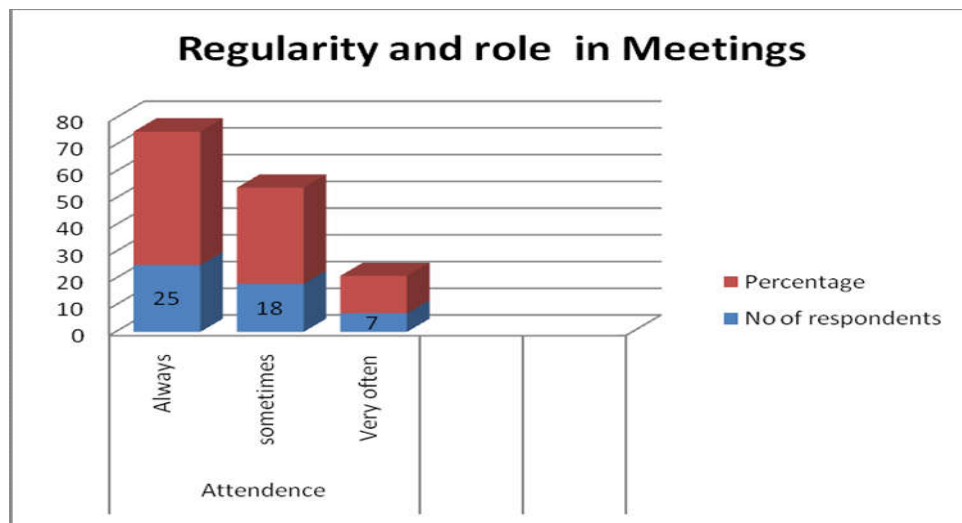
It was found that 60% of the respondents' speak Nepali as a medium of language, 24% uses Tamang as a primary language but uses Nepali for non Tamang people and 8% uses Newari as a mother tongue. Both Tamang and Newari spoken respondents' use Nepali as a secondary language.

4.5 Regularity and Role in Meetings

Table No-5

	Attendance			Role in meeting	
	Always	sometimes	Very often	Poor	good
No of respondents	25	18	7	13	20
Percentage	50	36	14	26	40

(Source: Filed Survey, 2010)



It has been known that there is monthly meeting system. Each has to present in the meeting. Decision made by majority of attendance is valid. Most of wards have their own community hall in which they use to have meeting and other gatherings. All the groups of the ward have meeting schedule in the same day. For an example, In ward number five where nine groups both male and female and one Inter group are existing. They have to fix the meeting in same day. The chairperson of group and intergroup monitor the attendee of the members. It has been found that there is system of fine if anyone missed the meeting without any reason. Also, the group members have right of approval and disapproval of any loan if one does not attend the meeting. The table shows that 25 out of 50 respondents always attend meeting 18 attends sometimes and seven attends very often.

4.6 Conflict Management

Table No- 6

Able to solve the problem	
Yes	42
No	8
Total No. of respondents	50

(Source: Filed Survey, 2010)

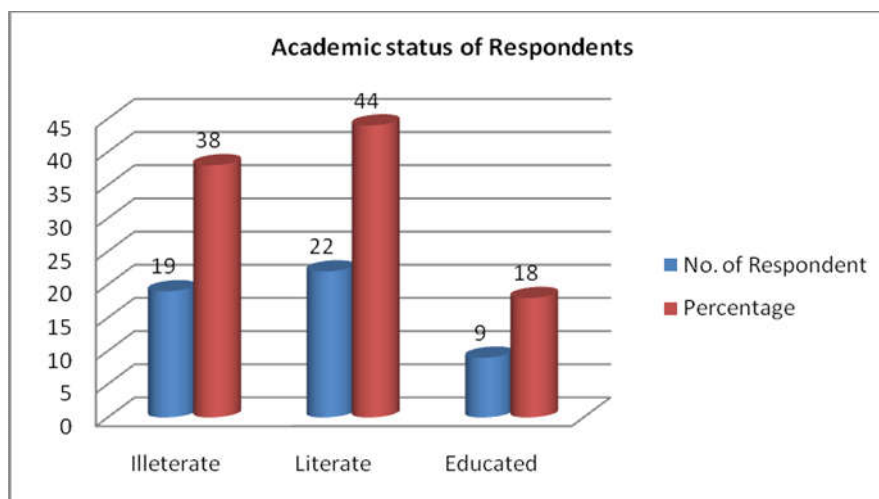
Conflict is a natural process which helps to change the circumstances and make better of any kind of social system. As per the respondents, there might be lot of conflict and debates in several issues such as budget allocation for community development, taking and handing over the responsibility, loan approval, saving fund mobilization etc in SFCL's case. Similarly in their households they are facing lot of conflict in different issue ant at the last they are able to settle the problem themselves in long-term basis. Above table shows that 42 respondents out of 50 are able to handle the problem where as rest of 8 are unable to do so without help of others.

4.7 Educational Status of Respondents

Table No- 7

SN	Description	No. of Respondent	Percentage
1	Illiterate	19	38
2	Literate	22	44
3	Educated (above SLC to Masters level)	9	18
4	Total	50	100

(Source: Filed Survey, 2010)



Respondents were categorized into 3 groups with respect to education status such as illiterate, literate and educated. Those who cannot read and write were illiterate, those who joined the adult literacy classes or any informal classes and can read and write were considered as literate and those who pass the school level (Class X) were categorized as educated. Table shows that 44% respondents were literate, 38% were literate and 18% were educated.

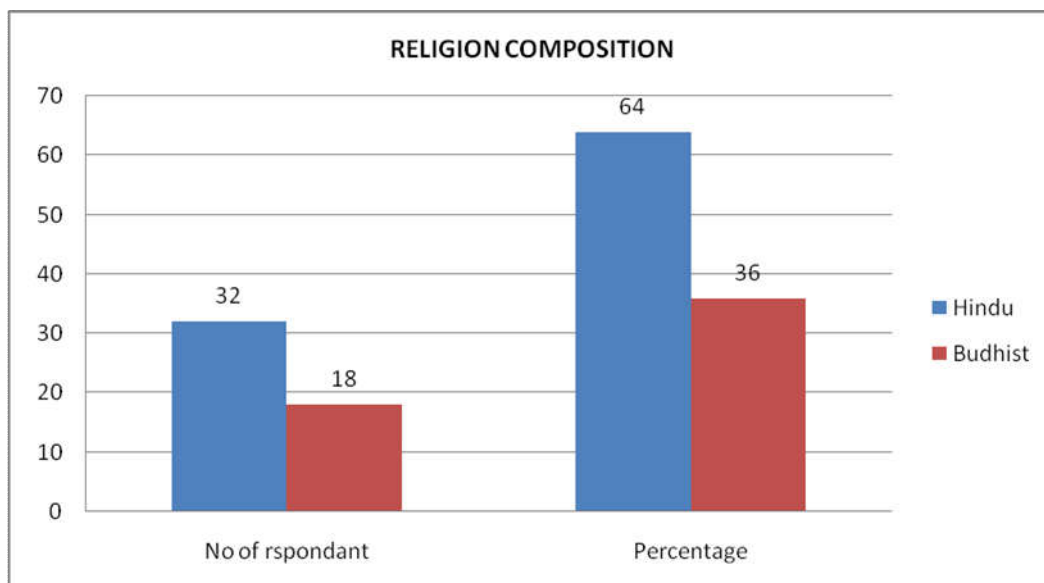
Though illiterate, some experienced women are more forward to discuss and convince others but virtually it was found that literate women rather hesitate to speak than illiterate and experienced age-old women do. Further younger women seemed to be very shy and withdrawal.

4.8 Religion Composition of Respondent

Table No- 8

Religion composition of Respondent			
SN	Religion	No of respondent	Percentage
1	Hindu	32	64
2	Buddhist	18	36
		50	100

(Source: Filed Survey, 2010)



It was found that 64% of respondents were Hindu and 36% were Buddhist. It was also noticed that the Sanyashi were also Hindu. Religion does not differ for manning the group activities.

4.9 Occupation, Income and Expenditure of the Respondents

General Trend of Expenditure of the Respondents

Table No- 9

Annual		
No. of respondents	Expenditure	Savings/debts
32	Average 80-90 thousands	annual balance in general condition
11	Average 90 to 1 Lakh	generally balance
7	Up to 1 Lakh rupees	Have annual balance

(Source: Filed Survey, 2010)

Note: Balance refers for the bank balance in SFCL banking unit.

It has been known that the expenditure trend of the respondents is in increasing order as they have improved in their income source by improvising agricultural technologies. Another reason behind it is that recently, the area has been connect with

a road from Sitapaila of Kathmandu where daily local transportations are available to transport their product to the market. It takes only about 40 minutes to reach Kathmandu.

There is average expenditure of Rs. 6000-7000 per month for a family of six members studying 2 to 3 children in school. But when there are children studying above school level, the amount exceeds much. For sources of income, all the members are involved in agriculture solely or partly and since agriculture is directly connected with animal husbandry, more or less cattle rising, poultry and dairy business is common among them. Despite, some women are engaged in teaching and small-scale shop keeping whereas males are either in domestic job or in foreign services too. So far talking to the bank balance, the members have to collect certain percent of cash into their account when they borrow the loan. According to the accountant of the banking unit, female group members are very much excited and work hard to earn extra money so that they could save it on own account in regular basis. Majority of women want to provide the saved amount to their daughters and for children's health and education.

4.1.1 Representation of Women in different Committees

Table No- 10

SN	Involvement of respondents	
	Executive Committee	3
1	Inter Group	2
2	Group	50
3	Livestock Insurance Committee	2
4	Account Committee	1
5	Others	7

(Source: Filed Survey, 2010)

However, all respondents were selected from the woman groups and by the help of SFCL staff and EC members; it has been known that they are trying to bring females forward in the course of development as much as possible. Currently, they have 5 female members out of 17 members in EC which was only two in past five years. Similarly, there is practice of women involvement in other committees. A

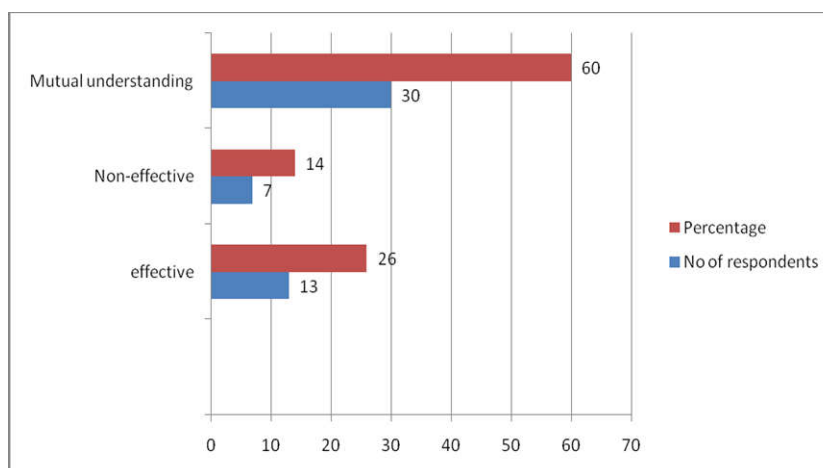
professionally educated female from Management faculty is looking after all the account keeping system of SFCL as a task of Account Committee once a week. It was observed that women are taking role in different committees formed under the SFCL, at the mean time; I have found a drawback on it that there is no female staff in the SFCL at the moment. In normal practice at least a Woman Group Organizer (WGO) is supposed to look after the female groups. It is noticed that they have meeting schedule in monthly basis, write minutes and send it to SFCL with saving cash through the group chairperson.

4.1.2 Decision Making

Table No- 11

Decision making both in loan utilization and meetings			
SN	Level	No of respondents	Percentage
1	effective	13	26
2	Non-effective	7	14
3	Mutual understanding	30	60
Total		50	100

(Source: Filed Survey, 2010).



The respondents were asked to two types of question on this regard. One was to find out how do they make decision into their family and another was in SFCL. 60% of respondents make decision basically about loan utilization, expenditure and other house hold activities through mutual understanding among the family members (husband, in-laws and son/daughter). As per verbal queries from my request, they did

not have such system 10 years ago. 7 out of 50 respondents (14%) told that their decision cannot be implemented in very extent. Their husband always interfere over their decision so they have to go as per the husband's decision 26% of respondents said that their right decisions are seriously taken in the family. It is very effective in their judgment too. So far talking in the SFCL's context, A group meeting has been a public forum where every members of the group has legitimate right to participate in assemblies, meetings etc without any biasness in sex, caste, educational status, economic class, and presence of interest groups and code of conducts of the group. In this study it was found that all the respondents now feel themselves easy among the GMs. About 14% members used to feel uneasy and be afraid in few previous meetings due to hesitation and immature. This finding has revealed the fact that a large number of members of the WGs can participate in such public forum and feel easiness to put their views therein. They feel interesting prior to attend the meetings of the forest user group as they can listen new subject, know new things about their group. Management and discuss on it as well as on their personal problems. The 14% of respondents feeling bore to attend the meetings are those who cannot find their personal problems solved after joining the meetings. This finding indicates that there is willingness of users to participate. Therefore, the ability of them to participate has been a decisive factor for the level of participation of women. Basically, the decisions should be made in view of better implementation of an activity as decision making process is an act of choosing best alternative. The WGs have taken decisions on loan request, saving fund mobilization, participation for tours and trainings; request for support on deed based activities in their area (Tole). In the beginning, it was difficult to make the GMs understand that not only the chairperson and secretary but also all of them should do something for the betterment of the group management. All decisions, though few, made have been implemented well.

4.1.3 Groups, saving funds and total loan details of SFCL

Table No- 12

Executive committee		Inter Group	Group formation				Group member		
			M	F	Total	Inactive group	M	F	T
12 (M)	5 (F)	9 mixed both M & F	69	60	129	3 (F) & 10 (M)	417	348	765
Total Share holders- 765									

(Source: Filed Survey, 2010)

Saving details of SFCL (Rs in Thousands)

Total Share Amount	Total Group Saving	Total Inter Group saving	Livestock Insurance	Loan Security Fund	Others	Total
1079	2001	157	489	631	1052	5409

(Source: Filed Survey, 2010)

4.1.4 Over all loan details of SFCL (Rs in Thousands)

Over due	Total outstanding loan	Repayment Rate	Women groups' Repayment Rate
109	9854	74.40%	94%

(Source: SFCL, Chhatreaurali- Dhading, till the end of Mangshir 2067)

4.1.5 Loan details of the respondents

Table No- 13

SN	Description	Loan Amount	Percentage
1	Due	12,15,000	
2	Overdue	45000	3.57
1	Livestock	399000	31.66
2	Vegetable farming	157000	12.46
3	Horticulture	262000	20.79
4	Small cottage industry	225000	17.86
5	Land reform	170000	13.49
6	Education	47000	3.74
	Total	1260000	100

(Source: Filed Survey, 2010)

The above table is the loan details of the respondents invested by SFCL. Since the area is fertile for up/seasonal vegetable and fruits cultivation, farmers are benefited from the reasonable selling price in their products and they are able to buy additional livestock mainly buffalo and sell milk in local dairy. Majority of loan amount is in vegetable and horticulture farming. Small cottage industry refers for the locally established small scale industry (mainly by occupational caste) such as carpentering, tailoring, dairy business, shoe making, musical instrument (Madal), Jam jelly making etc. One remarkable thing is that there is very few amount of overdue loan in women group members in compare to the male members. We came to know the reason behind it that the female are very conscious on loan implementation and repay in right way. As the result, they are able to manage small scale economic constraints themselves such as children's education, health and festival celebration. Such IGAs supported to save little money in the banking unit and can be used in crisis situation and they need not to request to the local landlord. If they could not return the loan in time, there is a system of extension of duration with valid reason in recommendation of chair person of the group.

Bio gas plant to save Natural Resource

It has been found that 25 respondents out of 50 have installed bio gas plant in their house in loan subsidy coordinated by SFCL. They are very satisfied from this and expressed their satisfaction that it saved their time of collecting fire wood from the forest. Very easy to clean the kitchen appliances very quickly and elder persons and children of the family of are getting somehow relief from the smokes from the kitchen. The more interesting thing is that after installed the bio gas plant their children are found to be ready to cook meal in the leisure time. As the result the women farmer got extra time to spend in their agricultural work. They added that the compost fertilizer from the Bio Gas increased in production of vegetable and fruits. The nearby forests have been saved because of the use of it. Health condition of the family members including old aged and children is getting better than before.

4.1.6 Knowledge about Fund Mobilization in Women Groups (group wise)

Table No- 13

SN	Saving			
1	Monthly Saving rate	Balance	Mobilization Rate%	Mobilized amount
	100-500	326995	20%	479808

(Source: Filed Survey, 2010)

It was found that all the respondents know about the monthly group saving and mobilization system. All replied that they have to pay 20% interest on the saving fund mobilization and duration is two year in maximum and it is on need (emergency) basis with discussion in meeting along with written minutes to be submitted to SFCL. Each group has its separate amount of saving based upon the possible minimum amount. They have RS 100 in minimum and 500 rupees in maximum rate in group saving. Homogeneity maintaining is mandatory within the group members. They all know about the bank balance and mobilization of fund.

4.1.8 Land ownership

Table No- 14

No. of Respondents	Land in own name	No land certificate in own name	Jointly (husband & wife)	Remarks
8	X			
40		X		
2			X	

(Source: Filed Survey, 2010)

The above table shows that majority of the female does not have land in their name. They have to take husband's land certificate for collateral. 40 out of 50 respondents does not have land certificate in own name, 8 have it and rest of 2 have in jointly (both husband and wife's name)

Participation in trainings and tours

Tour and training program is very pivotal for human resource development.

It has been organized by different organizations in coordination of SFCL. Participant's selection for the trainings and tours helps to assess the governance status of SFCLs, so the group meeting decides the participant and send it to Intergroup. Intergroup reviews the whole requests from all groups of the respective wards and nominates the members and send the name in executive Committee for final approval. This should be according to need of GMs and willingness of people.

It was found that overall 69% of the users in the Jay Bageshwori have participated in the different tours and trainings conducted by different line agencies . The trainings are basically on vocational skill development, account keeping and tours such as inter SFCLs tours, study tours in other cooperatives with in Nepal. And, it was also noticed that the Lisold Forestry, Bio gas companies, JICA/Nepal, VDC, Redcross, GTZ, FAO are supporting for the farmers for enhancement of knowledge and skill. Farmers are seemed to be very satisfied from this because they have adopted the positive aspect of visited organizations and implementing it into the SFCL Chhatredeulali's system too.

Role of Males

The entire respondents said that they have been getting supportive role from their family. Few have been insisted on participation though objection from their husbands. It is said that male sends his wife in meeting if they need loan and other request, but while interviewing individual females, everyone opposed the statement and said that her husband has helped her.

This indicates that female still hesitates to speak against her husband. The aspects in which the necessity of men's cooperation felt includes hard works like logging, punish offender, extension, coordination with other agencies, account, and help them in household activities and encourage participating in meetings and other activities. Further, they should advice them on subjects not experienced by them.

Time Management

The entire women respondents have been managing their times for community based activities by doing overtime works as far as possible. When not possible, only 30% get their family help in their works and 70% manage the time by postponing the works like cooking that male generally deny to do.

CHAPTER-V

SUMMARY AND FINDINGS

5.1 Summary

The study entitled “**Assessing the Role of Small Farmers Co-operative Limited (SFCL) in the Economic life of Rural Women**” was carried out in fifty members of women groups of Chhatredeurali in Dhading district of central region in Nepal with an aim to

- find out the result and changes after formation of woman group under the SFCL policy
- explore whether they have property right
- analyze the participation of women in decision making and their effectiveness

Fifty members of different women groups and age were taken as a sampling. Personal interview with Focus group discussion, Committee Meetings, Direct observations were identified and further probed by information, documents review of WGs and secondary sources.

This research study is also intended to assess the existing status of women in SFCL Chhatredeural of Dhading district in Nepal. It is crucial important to carry out this study to assess the economic status including decision making role of women, the socio-economic, cultural and WGs-related variables have been chosen and analyzed. These variables encompasses various dimensions of social structure (gender, caste, age group, ethnicity, class), socio-cultural norms, education, income/savings, extension, motivation, training, income generation activities, WG structure, group management activities and meetings. The research is descriptive in nature. The sources of data have included societal as well as WG characters, which are collected both qualitative and quantitative from primary and secondary sources. Extensive field survey was conducted using questionnaire to collect primary data. Consultation of relevant literatures and research advisor has been sought throughout the study. Collected data have been processed and analyzed both qualitative and quantitative

using appropriate statistical tools accordingly and presented in tabular as well as diagrammatic forms.

Majority of the respondents were with age group above 40 where age none of them were below 20 years. All the respondents were married as it is mandatory from SFCL. There were 60 women groups out of 129 total groups of SFCL. The SFCL has a 17 members' Executive Committee along with 5 female members. Nine Inter Groups a ward level committee represented by the Chairman of all groups formed in the ward. Major ethnic groups of the study (52%) came from Bahun/ Chhetri, (20%) from Tamang, (16%) Dalit and (12%) from Newar community. In regard of occupation, largest number of respondents (90%) relies on agriculture followed by (6%) wages/labor and 4% on business. It was found that 60% of the respondents' speak Nepali as a medium of language, 24% uses Tamang as a primary language but uses Nepali for non Tamang people and 8% uses Newari as a mother tongue.

Sixty four percent of respondents were Hindu and 36% were Buddhist in religion. Respondents were categorized into 3 groups with respect to education status such as illiterate, literate and educated. Those who cannot read and write were illiterate, those who joined the adult literacy classes or any informal classes and can read and write were considered as literate and those who pass the school level (Class X) were categorized as educated. Table shows that 44% respondents were literate, 38% were literate and 18% were educated.

A professionally educated female from Management faculty is looking after all the account keeping system of SFCL as a task of Account Committee once a week.

The respondents were asked to two types of question on this regard. One was to find out how do they make decision into their family and another was in SFCL. 60% of respondents make decision basically about loan utilization, expenditure and other house hold activities through mutual understanding among the family members (husband, in-laws and son/daughter). As per verbal queries from my request, they did not have such system 10 years ago. 7 out of 50 respondents (14%) told that their decision cannot be implemented in very extent. Their husband always interfere over their decision so they have to go as per the husband's decision 26% of respondents said that their right decisions are seriously taken in the family. So far talking in the

SFCL's context, a group meeting has been a public forum where every members of the group has legitimate right to participate in assemblies, meetings etc without any biasness in sex, caste, educational status, economic class, and presence of interest groups and code of conducts of the group. In this study it was found that all the respondents now feel themselves easy among the GMs. About 14% members used to feel uneasy and be afraid in few previous meetings due to hesitation and immature.

It has been known that the expenditure trend of the respondents is in increasing order as they have improved in their income source by improvising agricultural technologies. Another reason behind it is that recently, the area has been connect with a road from Sitapaila of Kathmandu where daily local transportations are available to transport their product to the market. It takes only about 40 minutes to reach Kathmandu.

There is average expenditure of Rs. 6000-7000 per month for a family of six members studying 2 to 3 children in school. But when their children study above school level, the amount exceeds much. For sources of income, all the members are involved in agriculture solely or partly and since agriculture is directly connected with animal husbandry, more or less cattle rising, poultry and dairy business is common among them. Despite, some women are engaged in teaching and small-scale shop keeping whereas males are either in domestic job or in foreign services too. So far talking to the bank balance, the members have to collect certain percent of cash into their account when they borrow the loan.

According to the accountant of the banking unit, female group members are very much excited and work hard to earn extra money so that they could save it on own account in regular basis. Majority of women want to provide the saved amount to their daughters and for children's health and education. Most of the respondents know about the loan and saving fund mobilization procedures. Rs 100-500 in average is the monthly saving trend in the group. Group meeting is held in every month.

It is a micro study which attempts to explore the socio economic status of women in the WGs of SFCL of certain area. So, it cannot comprehend the macro view of the subject matter because women's role is vague in SFCL and this study reflects some of the variables of WG and socio-economy. Despite of SFCL's success, it has faced

several second-generation issues among them; Socio-economic status of women small farmer is one of the burning issues. Participatory group approach and economic strengthen of rural women is a democratic process in which all members get opportunity for meaningful and functional involvement in the process of participatory decision- making and decisions are implemented for their collective benefits. . Participation of Women, Poor and Dalit in activities and the transparency of fund, its mobilization for them are the key indicator to see the status of good governance. The findings of the study have indicated that WGs variables are more responsible for increasing women's participation in SFCL activities. Economic aspect is still occupying a decisive position. Hesitation due to caste and gender in participation is being faded away and there is an increasing trend of female's involvement in public sphere.

Subsistence economy of users is to hinder the participation weakening the decision making role. In contrast, good communication, motivation extension, training/workshops, income-generating activities, frequent meetings opportunity and support by males may considerably increase women's participation enhancing decision making role. Therefore, it has been recommended that such activities should be run in order to increase role of women in decision making. The study shows that overall participation of women were found different in different WGs and similarly, transparency in financial mechanism were different within WGs which was due to different in its nature. Participations of Women and transparency mechanism were good. More respondents strongly agreed that they were expressing their views on proposed agenda in meetings. Due to economic strengthen of female group members; their livelihood has been changed mainly in their thoughts and behavior. For an example: There is very few number of school dropout cases of children in the area. Most of the girl children are under school enrolment. In private boarding schools, number of girl students is in increasing order. Due to the proper awareness in health sectors, females are conscious on child health. Child birth and mortality rate is in decreasing order. Below are some findings which were observed during the research:

- Majority of females does not have land in their own name (land certificate) yet
- All the members are married

- They are still giving space to their husband for making decision and remain as an advisor only
- The average family size of a household in the respondents is 6 in average
- The SFCL which have been organising extension and awareness programs for its members have proven active women's participation.
- All decisions, though few, made have been implemented however,
- All the respondents are solely or partly involved in agriculture
- Females have limited ownership in property
- The status of SFCL is getting better after handed over to the locals
- Decision making areas of women are basically narrow and mostly loan related
- The Sana Kisan School (Small Farmer's School) is going to appear SLC examination from this year and the quality of school not less than a well established boarding schools
- Sometimes it could be felt that the women committees have been made up in the compassion or mercy of males. Therefore, they have not represented themselves as they are nominated by males.
- Microfinance activities have supported to empower women through economic independency
- A women managed SFCL has been established in nearby VDC (Kewalpur) as the replication program where all the SFCL is completely manning by females
- No female staff was found in SFCL, however, it has 60 female groups
- An effective impact of family planning program was observed but it was quite low in the Tamang and Dalit communities
- Dairy business was flourishing over there, lot of female members were seemed to be engaged on this and get money apart from other agricultural production
- A substantial proportion of women are confined to household work due to social and reproductive reasons. Even if homemaking activities, such as household maintenance and childcare, do not fall within the production boundary defined by the System of National Accounts (UN, 1993),

5.2 Conclusion

Based on the aforementioned findings the following facts have been noted as concluding remarks. SFCL is different from general trend of other cooperatives. There is no missing in the representation of ethnic groups and females in the executive committee. The process of meetings is simple in women WGs as they have fixed date for this and the timing of meetings is also short i.e. 1-2 hours. There is long continuation of the chairperson in many WGs, which may cause leadership gap in the future. Some females have argued that they could take leadership if there is adequate encouragement from male side. There is no need of further adult literacy programs for women because they have already received opportunity to such programs, which has made them no far literate except enabling in signature and normal reading and writing as per the respondents. Further, there are no clear-cut criteria set for participant selection in training etc. Micro Finance has brought lot of changes in economic status of rural women through income generating activities. The banking unit of SFCL is being realized as the own bank among the rural people. Everybody have bank account with certain cash and they are also the share holders of the SFCL. Empowered women contribute to the health and productivity of whole families and communities and to improved prospects for the next generation, therefore, it is very critical to empower and capacitate women in general and poor women from the discriminated castes and ethnicities in particular.

As we know that nothing is perfect in developing trend, the there are many rooms to be improved and hopefully it will be overcome gradually in coming days.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations have been postulated for the further consideration of those who are concerned so far:

- First of there should be at least a Woman Group Organizer for the female groups
- It would be better if there a system guarantee system for loan provided by SFCL
- Gender equality is, first and foremost, a human rights issue. Women are entitled to live in dignity and in freedom from want and from fear. Empowering women is an indispensable strategy for advancing development and reducing poverty

- In fact, the amount of suffering and the human rights violations faced by women is yet to be reduced in the study area
- Assessment program, and tour/ training programs have to be conducted in large scale to fulfill the objectives must be necessary for this
- Even large SFCLs should be handed over to such women headed
- Women should be involved more in outdoor activities like trainings, workshops and meetings, and for this, both males and females should be made aware by organizing awareness programs simultaneously.
- Extension workers should approach to women, as they want to listen direct from first persons. For field visit female staff should be increased and they should approach to women
- The ability of women to participate in public forums was found influenced by their economic status. So as more IGA as possible should be run to get their better participation.
- The key post needs to be held by women too
- There should be equi-proportional participation of poor and women in decision making forum, so that leadership development from the poor and women may be possible.
- Women's access to fixed assets, property, and credit is still very limited so needs to be improved
- Discriminatory wage structures and unequal access to earned income have not been reduced, but have actually increased over the last ten years both in agricultural sector. Women are concentrated at the lower end of the pay scale. Traditional discriminatory social structures are still in poor rural women that's why need to be eliminated
- Socially, marriage and children continue to determine a woman's life options. Traditional practices such as dowry/Tilak system should be demotivated
- There should not be son preference, social acceptance of domestic and public violence against women, polygamy, early widowhood and associated exclusion; practices should not be given the places
- All training packages should have follow-up or impact assessment components.

- Young women and men should be trained for employment in large-scale enterprises, and new expanding service sectors such as information technology, secretarial or financial services, tourism and travel, house-keeping etc
- The progress in increasing women's access to literacy, education, and health care services has been significant, yet disparities between men and women, castes, and ethnic groups continue.
- It is only a periodic study of 50 members. It is recommended that such types of deep study in large scale should be carried out to make the effective policy. Awareness should be created and/or enhanced in the poor and women for being included in the groups as the main stakeholder of the SFCL.
- Finally, it is recommended to enhance in the meaningful participation of Women, Poor and Dalit in development activities through awareness, motivation and empowerment program. Different Pro- Poor programs

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Appendix 1

Questionnaire

2 Questionnaire/interview Schedule

Name of Respondent:

Age:

Ward:

Education:

Tole:

1. Respondent's identification

a. Name:

b. Age:

c. Cast:

d. Religion:

e. Level of education:

f. Ward number: Tole

g. Village :

h. SFCL group Number:

i. Position in Small Farmers' Cooperative Ltd. Chhatredeurali:

Member of Executive Committee	Yes	No	Remarks (If Yes, which role do you play?)
Role in Inter group			(If Yes, which role do you play?)
Group member			
Others			

2. Family size: (Male:) (Female :)

3. Number of children:

1-2 year	3-4
5-6	6 above

A. Female small farmer's identification:

1. Do you know about SFCL?

- a. Yes b. No c. I do not know

2. Are you a group member in the SFCL?

- a. Yes b. No

a. a. If yes, how often do you attend the group meeting?

- a. Every month b. Almost regularly c. very few

3. Your group number?

4. How many members in your group?

5. Is your husband a group member in the SFCL?

- a. Yes b. No

6. How many women group members do attend the monthly meeting?

- a. All b. More than 75 percent c. Very few

Socio economic status of respondents

1. What is your main occupation?

A. agriculture	B. job
C. business	D. others

2. How long your family can be rely on your own agricultural products?

A three months	B. six months
C. eight months	D. more than one year

3. How many domestic animals do you have?
4. What are the major crops, (cash crops, credential crops etc)
5. How is your loan volume in SFCL?
 - a. Five thousand b. Fifteen Thousands c. Thirty thousand d. above thirty thousand
6. Has your husband also borrowed loan from SFCL, if yes, How much in amount?
7. Do you utilize the loan as per the objectives of SFCL or invest it any sector?
8. Does your husband allow you to utilize the amount as your wish?
9. Are you using the income after the SFCL's investment on the specific title or you have to go through your husband?
10. How is your group saving system?
 - a. 20 rupees per month b. 50 c. 100 d. above 100
11. How is interest rate provided by SFCL in your group saving?
12. What is interest rate in your SFCL's credit system?
13. Does the SFCL provide loan for group member or anyone?
14. Do you save extra money in SFCL's banking unit?
15. When group members mobilize their fund saved in monthly account and what is the process to reimbursement it?
16. Have you bought anything by using the saving fund or.
17. Do you have land in your own name?
18. How is the collateral system in your group
19. How many litters of milk do you sell in the dairy?

20. Does your income source fulfill your daily expenditure and monthly saving along with interest of loan in SFCL sufficiently?

21. How is your children's academic status?

Group/ Inter Group / Executive board meeting and general assembly

1. How is the women group formed under SFCL?

By personal desire, at the request of the SFCL or other GMs?

2. Number of female members

5	5-7
7-10	10-15

3. Does your group leader raise all group members' common problem to Inter group?

Yes	Very often
No	Sometimes

4. Are they (GMs) cooperative to each other?

5. Did you received any benefits from being part of the GM?

6. What do the GMs mainly discuss in the monthly meeting?

Loan	Savings
Financial progress report of individuals	Others

7. Did you have right access over the cash utilization in family before involvement in SFCL? I. Yes II. No

8. After SFCL, does your husband interfere on your decision for income mobilization? I. Yes II. No

9. Is the decision made by intergroup shared to each other? I. Yes II. No

10. Do you know about the Executive Committee of SFCL?

11. Does a female member put her views in Executive Committee meeting?

Very often	Frequently
No	Others

12. In General Assembly, do you vote for the candidate to represent the EC?

13. Are you member of other institution of you community?

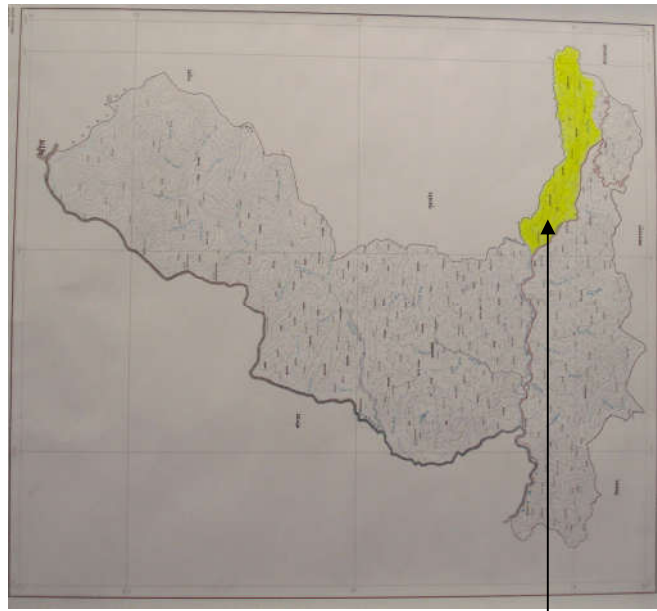
14. Have you attended any training conducted by SFCL? Have you been able to use skills or trainings to benefit you personally? Y/N If yes, what skills and how do they benefit you?

Bee keeping	Frequently
No	Others
Very often	Frequently
No	Others

Appendix -2
Study Area (District Map)



Appendix -3



Study Area

Appendix -4



Inter Group Meeting



Interviewing with SFCL Staff.

Interviewing with EC Members





SFCL Building