

# **EARLY CHILD MARRIAGE IN JANAKPUR MUNICIPALITY**

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**LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION**

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled **Early Child Marriage in Janakpur Municipality** is an independent work of Ms. Agya Adhikari, completed under my supervision as a partial fulfillment for the requirement for the Master's Degree of Arts in Population Studies. To the best of my knowledge, the study is original and stands on primary database. Therefore, I recommend this dissertation to the Evaluation Committee for the final approval and acceptance.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	=	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ASN	=	Aasaman Nepal
CBS	=	Central Bureau of Statistics
CEDAW	=	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, 1979
CRC	=	Convention on the Rights of Child Development
et al.	=	and other
etc.	=	et cetera
FWLD	=	Forum for Women Law and Development
GDPs	=	Gross Domestic Products
GoN	=	Government of Nepal
HIV	=	Human Immune Virus
ICPD	=	International Conference on Population and Development
ICRW	=	International Centre for Research on Women
IHEU	=	International Humanist and Ethical Union
ILO	=	International Labor Organization
INGO	=	International Non Governmental Organization
IPPF	=	International Planned Parenthood Federation
ISCA	=	International Save the Children Alliance
ISRC	=	Intensive Study and Research Centre
MoHP	=	Ministry of Health and Population
NDHS	=	Nepal Demographic and Health Survey
NGO	=	Non Governmental Organization
POA	=	Program of Action
SLC	=	School Leaving Certificate
SPSS	=	Statistical Package for Social Science
UDHR	=	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	=	United Nations
UNFPA	=	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
UNICEF	=	United Nations Children's Fund
VDC	=	Village Development Committee
WPF	=	World Population Foundation
ZPG	=	Zero Percentage Growth

## **ABSTRACT**

This research work “Early Child Marriage in Janakpur Municipality” was carried out in Janakpur Municipality, where the case of early child marriage is most prevalent in Maithali community. Examining the trend as well as reasons of early child marriage and finding out the impact of this practice on girls are main objectives. For this, one hundred and twenty-seven women who got married in early child age (less than 19 years of age) were taken for sample study. The traditional and cultural believes are playing dominant role in determining the age at marriage of girl. Similarly, the economic cause is also playing dominant role in determining the age at marriage of girl. One in every five female got married in early child age because of dowry system. Female age at marriage is lower than male age at marriage. Mostly Terai Dalits and Janajatis are found involved in early child marriage practice. Among Terai Brahmin and Chhetris and Kayasth this practice is in declining pattern. Parents do not have proper knowledge on early child marriage that this practice is harmful for her daughter and illegal from the laws of state as well. Parents and even the respondents never saw any legal action against these practices. Though our law and policies on marriage are said very well, the implementation mechanism is very poor. More than half respondents are literate. Very few, thirty two percent respondents have ever used the method of contraception. Among current user injectable is the most famous method of contraception. According to respondents, they became deprived from their right of education and even their freedom lost after early marriage. Early child marriage is bad tradition we are following in our society, it should be alleviated. The positive glimpses have been observed through times.

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 General Background**

Early marriage as well as child marriage is defined as the marriage which occurs under 18 years of age for both boys and girls. It is child marriage in any situation either it is by your own choice or by the decision of parents. In this age girls are not mature and not ready to take any responsibilities of marriage and childbearing.

Child marriage is illegal in many developing countries like Nepal and a series of international agreements and conventions also outlaw the practice. Despite nearly universal consensus that child marriage is harmful, the practice continues because of insufficient resources, lax enforcement or ingrained cultural traditions.

Men and women are married either consensually or religiously or legally and live together at the same or different places as husband and wife are known as married persons. Nepal's society does not allow sexual union to unmarried people, therefore marriage is the most essential events and conception without marriage is not accepted by the society. Family formation process starts after the marriage. Religious belief and practice in Nepal, provoke individual to marry early, because of all these factors, early marriage is almost universal in Nepal.

Child marriage in Nepal is not a new phenomenon. It is socially established practice that has been carried on from generation to generation. Religion has sanctioned it, and society has ensured its continuity.

Child marriage usually refers to two separate social phenomena which are practiced in some societies. The first and more widespread practice is

that of marrying a young child (generally defined as below the age of fifteen) to an adult. In practice, it is almost always a young girl married to a man.

Most countries have declared 18 as the minimum legal age of marriage, but parental consent and custom often override these laws. Despite the sanctions on child marriage, more than 100 million girls are expected to marry in the next decade. While it has decreased globally over the last 30 years, the practice is still common among the poorest of the poor and in rural areas. It is highest in South Asia, Western and Middle Africa. Where young girls are perceived as an economic liability, their marriage may form part of a family's survival strategy. More than two thirds of adolescents girl are married in Bangladesh, Niger and the Democratic Republic of Congo, and more than half Afghanistan, India and Nigeria. In six West African countries, about 44 per cent of women had married before 15. (The State of World Population, 2005)

Child marriage is a human rights abuse-it ensures that young girls do not have a fair chance in life. Mentally, physically, socially, the girl child is vulnerable result in high maternal mortality, it puts at risk her physical as well as mental health. The young mind and bodies are less able to cope with the physical and mental stress of sexuality, pregnancy and childbirth. They are also more susceptible to HIV/AIDS. She is deprived, not only of her childhood but also of her adolescence. A discontinuation of education and loss of career building opportunities, deprive her of opportunities to grow and learn, closing options and choices, which would otherwise be available to her. (UNIFEM and FWLD, 2007)

Nepal has had a patriarchal society where men subordinate women in all socio-economic and political spheres of their lives. Women constitute half of the total population and any development endeavors cannot achieve expected outcomes unless women are brought into the mainstream.

Nepalese women contribute to the socio-economic development of the country by working inside and outside their homes. They contribute more than men to the agricultural sector and bear most of the responsibilities of household food security. Besides, they contribute significantly to maintain household economies by performing income generating activities, preparing food, fetching firewood and water, cleaning and washing, taking care of children, the elderly and the sick, and feeding the livestock. However, most of the activities conducted by women are unpaid and their economic contribution at household and national levels is not recognized to the full extent. As a consequence, overall status of women is relatively low in Nepal. (Pathak, Sedhai and Shrestha, 2007)

Gradual change has been experienced on recognizing the role of women at household and community levels over the last three decades. Overall status of women has gradually become better. Total fertility rate of women at reproductive ages 15-49 declined substantially from 6.3 in 1976 to 3.1 in 2006. Female literacy rate increased from 12 percent in 1981 to 42.8 in 2001. Contraceptive prevalence rate increased impressively from 3 percent in 1976 to 48 percent in 2006. Life expectancy at birth increased from 45 years in 1981 to 60.4 years in 2001. Similarly the maternal mortality ratio declined from 539 in the period of 1989-1995 to 281 per 100,000 live births in the period of 1999-2005 (MoHP, New ERA and Macro International Inc., 2007).

Domestic violence and early child marriage of girls are other obstacles to the improvement of the overall status of women. The incidence of child marriage and domestic violence is on the rise but it is highly underreported in Nepal. Particularly those women living in lowland Terai adjoining the Indian borders are more affected by domestic violence. Dowry and bride pricing system in this region further aggravated the difficult situation of women.

Still Nepalese women have not been able to enjoy their reproductive rights. Husbands and mother-in-law usually decide when and how often they should get pregnant. They are not even free to choose their own husbands as parents usually decide when and with whom they should get married. Normally they get married before the age of 20. About 32 percent of adolescent and young girls aged 15-19 are married and 18.5 percent of them are mother or pregnant with their first child. About two-fifths of girls' marriages occur before age 14 and seven percent at even lower than 10 years (MoHP, New ERA and Macro International Inc., 2007).. Early marriage and associated early pregnancies have deteriorated the health status of Nepalese women.

Early marriage before age 18 among females is common in both urban and rural areas of Nepal. Majority of rural Nepalese females marry before age 18. Early marriage among males, defined as marriage before age 20, is rare in urban Nepal but common in rural Nepal. Child marriages (marriages before age 15) are common in Nepal especially for females. In Nepal, 17 percent of urban females and 26 percent of rural females marry before age 15. Majority of Nepalese youth who married early think that they married too early. Among the married youth who think that they married too early, a large majority in Nepal report that they did so according to the wishes of their parents. Early motherhood, defined as giving birth to a child before age 20, is common in Nepal (Choe, Thapa and Achmad, 2001).

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

In Nepal, the civil code of 1963 fixed the legal age for marriage of girls at 16, and made polygamy and child marriage illegal. Nevertheless, while these laws may be on the books, they have shown to be faulty as well as contradictory. Such contradictions still exist as demonstrated by the Marriage Act, provision 6 of the civil code, which permits for the payment



of a dowry; reports of extreme variations in the age of girls being married - as low as 13.7 years in the Terai district of Mahottari - and as high as 25.8 years in the mountain district of Mustang.

Nepal is predominately a patriarchal society where women have a much lower status than men. It is the girl children who suffer most from this discriminately attitude. In a society, which has reportedly the highest rate of son preference in the world, girls are a liability from the time they are born. The researcher feel Sons continue the blood linkage; daughters do not. Sons look after their parents in their old age; daughters get married off somewhere. Therefore, daughter are somebody else's property, to be somehow reared, brought up and given in marriage as soon as possible.

Child marriage is still found to be one of the root problems in Nepal in bring gender equity in different aspects of life. Child marriage is illegal in Nepal, but it is still in practice. Still it is common amongst Madhesi community of Terai region in Nepal. It is very common amongst Yadav, Gupta, Thahare, Kurmi, Lodh, Harijan, Bajiya, Kalwar, Pasi, Paswan, Mourya and Tharu communities. These people believe that if girl is married before her menstrual period starts, it amounts to the donation of 7,800 cows (the scared Hindu animals as an incarnation of Laxmi, the goddess of wealth) and if the marriage is solemnized after her menstrual period, it amounts to be killing of 7,800 cows (Shrestha, 2004). Religious superstition coupled with lack of education and awareness are the major causes for this. Lack of awareness raising activities in local languages (Bhojpuri and Maithili) is said to be one of the major causes of failure of intervention programs against child marriage in Terai where child marriage is most common.

There are various reasons behind the early and child marriages. They are religion, social values for purity of the female body, dowry and education. As a result of early/child marriage girls are deprived from education, no

career development, more responsibilities and less privileges, health problems, mental and physical violence. It is very important to take into consideration that major causes of early child marriage can be different/region and ethnic groups and similarly its consequences may also differ by region and ethnic groups.

Therefore this research tries to find-out the answers of following problems in Maithali community of Janakpur municipality:

1. What is the trend of early child marriage?
2. What are the major reasons of early child marriage?
3. What parents think about early child marriage?
4. What are the impacts of early child marriage to girls?

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The major objective of this study is to identify impact of the early/child marriage on girls. In general this study is trying to assess the situation of early/child marriage in Janakpur municipality. The main objectives are:

1. To find out the trend of early/child marriage in Maithali community of Janakpur Municipality.
2. To determine major reasons of early/child marriage in Maithali community of Janakpur municipality.
3. To find out parents attitude on early/ child marriage.
4. To analyze impact of early/child marriage on girls.

### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

The issue of early/child marriage is one of the burning issues in the field of children and women.

A lot of studies have been done dealing with children's problem. The issue of early/child marriage is not new all over the world. Many studies are conducted dealing with early/child marriage by various national and international agencies of organization and also by university students. But the issues related with early/child marriage in Terai region is still to be done, where practice of child marriage is common. So, it is the first study which is about the early and child marriage of Maithali women of Janakpur municipality.

1. This study highlights the reasons and impact of early child marriage.
2. This study will help to recommend appropriate policy and law to stop early/child marriage.
3. This study can be helpful for the students of research who are interested to study in this field or issue.

### **1.5 Limitation of the Study**

Limitation of the study controls the researcher to deviate from the content, sample and methodology. So, we have to determine the limitation of the study, which make study valid, systematic and specific. The study is micro study. This study aims to find out the causes, impact, and trend of Early/Child marriage in Janakpur Municipality.

The research is limited under the following condition.

1. This study is limit only in Janakpur Municipality of Dhanusha District.
2. The study area is women of Maithali community of Janakpur Municipality.
3. The study is limit in 127 married women aged 10-35 and their parents.

4. This study is limit in selected two wards 14 and 16 of Janakpur Municipality.

## **1.6 Organization of the Study**

To study early child marriage in Janakpur municipality, this study is divided into seven chapters.

Chapter one introduces the early child marriage. This chapter includes general background, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, significance of the study, limitation of the study as well as organization of the study.

Chapter two includes the review of theoretical and empirical literature on early child marriage. After understanding the theoretical and empirical ground, to understand it more deeply conceptual framework is also created.

Chapter three introduces the study area and sampling method of this study. The method of data analysis is also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter four provides the basic information on socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the household population of study area.

Chapter five describes the demographic and socio-economic profile of respondents.

Chapter six includes the analyses of data of study area. This includes age at marriage affected by different socio-economic, cultural and demographic variables.

Chapter seven summaries the findings of the study and draws conclusion.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature which are related and have important link with early/child marriage. This chapter reviews the literature on early/child marriage. Two type of literature are reviews in this chapter: first theoretical and second empirical.

#### **2.1 Theoretical Literature**

The definition of child marriage and child vary from country to country, culture to culture, society to society and group to group. Generally speaking child refers to the human beings between birth and puberty. As the morning leads days, the children are the tomorrow's parents. The skill, idea and energy of the children are vital attainment of the goals of development. Nepalese law also has separate bills that address children's rights in general, but there are variations in the definition of child. For example, the Children Act defines a child as 'a boy or girl not attaining the age of 16 years' whereas the Labor Act defines a child as a person who has not attained the age of 14 years, and a 'minor' as a person who has attained the age of 14 years not completed the age of 18 years. Likewise, international conventions adopted by the United Nations, International Labor Organization (ILO) and International Save the Children Alliance (ISCA) define 'child' as anyone who is below the age of 18 years. However, it is stated in Section 17 of the Marriage Act of Nepal that a child who has not attained the age of 18 years is not allowed to get married. Further, it is also stated that to force for marriage opposing his/her will is against the law if a child does not want to get married.

Child marriage, also known as early marriage, is defined as "[A]ny marriage carried out below the age of 18 years, before the girl is

physically, physiologically, and psychologically ready to shoulder the responsibilities of marriage and childbearing.” (IAC on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children (1993) *Newsletter*, 2003). Marriage is a formalized, binding partnership between consenting adults, which sanctions sexual relations and gives legitimacy to any offspring. It is still a respected and valued social institution throughout the world, and may take different forms in different cultures. Child marriage, on the other hand, involves either one or both spouses being children and may take place with or without formal registration, and under civil, religious or customary laws. In many societies in developing countries, child marriages are used to build or strengthen alliances between families. Sometimes this may even include the betrothals of young children or babies.

The 2001 census of Nepal defined Child marriage as the marriage under 15 years of age and early marriage as 18 years of age (CBS, 2003).

The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that marriage should be “entered only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.” But, in the majority of child marriages, there is often an element of coercion involved: parents, guardians or families pressurize, collude or force children into marriage. Today girls are still socialized into accepting child marriage as the norm, a ‘given’, and many give their consent as a duty and sign of respect. However, where one of the parties in a marriage is under 18 years, consent to marry in such cases cannot always be assumed to be of ‘free and full consent’ and may also not always be in the best interest of the child. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) defines a child as “every human being below the age of eighteen years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.” The expert body that monitors the Convention on the Elimination on All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in its General Recommendation 21, which explicitly

deals with equality in marriage and family relations, outlaws child marriage, and stipulates 18 years as the minimum age for marriage for males and females. This is the minimum age when young people attain “full maturity and capacity to act.” (UN, 2000)

Child marriage is culturally packaged as a social necessity, but in many cases this amounts to “socially licensed sexual abuse and exploitation of a child.” It is one of the most persistent forms of sanctioned sexual abuse of girls and young women. “The fact that the arrangement is socially accepted does not diminish the reality that a girl is deliberately exposed to sexual abuse and exploitation, usually by her parents and family.” (Forum on Marriage and the Rights of Women and Girls, 2001)

“Child marriage makes it harder for families, communities and countries to escape poverty. It erodes the health and well-being of girls and the overall welfare of communities. It also undercuts international efforts to fight poverty and HIV/AIDS, improve child health and survival, and support other international development initiatives, making billions of development assistance dollars less effective.” (ICRW, 2005).

A number of human rights instruments lay down norms to be applied to marriage, covering issues of age, consent, equality within marriage, and the personal and property rights of women. The key instruments and articles are as follows (paraphrased for clarity in some cases):

### **International Human Rights Instruments and Early Marriage**

A number of human rights instruments lay down norms to be applied to marriage, covering issues of age, consent, equality within marriage, and the personal and property rights of women. The key instruments and articles are as follows (paraphrased for clarity in some cases):

Article 16 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) states: (1) Men and women of full age ... have the right to marry and

found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution. (2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending parties. Similar provisions are included in the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Article 1 of the 1956 Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery includes in the institutions and practices similar to slavery: Article 1(c) Any institution or practice whereby: (i) A woman, without the right to refuse, is promised or given in marriage on payment of a consideration in money or in kind to her parents, guardian, family ...

Articles 1, 2, and 3 of the 1964 Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages state: (1) No marriage shall be legally entered into without the full and free consent of both parties, such consent to be expressed by them in person as prescribed by law. (2) States Parties to the present Convention shall ... specify a minimum age for marriage ("not less than 15 years" according to the nonbinding recommendation accompanying this Convention). No marriage shall be legally entered into by any person under this age, except where a competent authority has granted a dispensation as to age, for serious reasons, in the interests of the intending spouses ... (3) All marriages shall be registered ... by the competent authority.

Article 16.1 of the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women prescribes equally for men and women: (a) The same right to enter into marriage; (b) The same right freely to choose a spouse and to enter into marriage only with their free and full consent; ... Article 16.2 states: The betrothal and the marriage of a child shall have no legal effect, and all necessary action, including legislation, shall be taken to specify a minimum age for marriage. Article XXI of the



1990 African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child states: Child marriage and the betrothal of girls and boys shall be prohibited and effective action, including legislation, shall be taken to specify the minimum age of marriage to be eighteen years. (UNICEF, 2001)

### **International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD)**

International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) was held in Cairo in 1994. The conference was organized under the auspices of the UN. More than 179 countries including Nepal took part in the conference to finalize the Program of Action (POA) in the area of population and development. It had mentioned that in addressing the mandate of the ICPD and its overall theme all the participants will continue to be guided by the 15 principles. Among these principles, in ninth principle it has endorsed on marriage that must be entered into with the free consent of the intending spouses, and husband and wife should be equal partners. However, Government of Nepal is fully committed to implement the POA of ICPD. In this regard, Action 4.21 of ICPD is accepted as guideline to eliminate all forms of discrimination against the girl child. It stated that “Governments should strictly enforce laws to ensure that marriage is entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses. In addition it has declared that the Government should raise the minimum age at marriage where necessary. It further reveals that Government and Non-governmental Organizations should generate social support for the enforcement of viding educational and employment opportunity. However, it strictly stimulates the minimum age at marriage especially for girl where necessary, but in practice the prevalence of early marriage is still high in Nepal.

### **Fourth World Conference (Beijing, 4-15 September 1995)**

In Beijing Conference (1995), particularly 12 specific areas of critical concern were identified on women in Fourth World Conference (Beijing,

4-15 September 1995). Among them eleven areas were related to the women and the only one area was related to the girl child. Regarding to the girl child right stated in Beijing Conference there are two strategic objectives: firstly, to eliminate all forms of discrimination against the girl child and secondly, to eliminate negative cultural attitudes and practices against girls. For fulfilling the first strategic objective the role of the government/non government are recommended as follow:

By governments (para 274):

- ) Enact and strictly enforce laws to ensure that marriage is only entered into with the free and full consent of the intending spouses; in addition, enact and strictly enforce laws concerning the minimum legal age of consent and the minimum age for marriage and raise the minimum age for marriage where necessary. (e. pp. 115)
  
- ) Develop and implement comprehensive police, plans of action and programs for the survival, protection, development and advancement of the girl child to promote and protect the full enjoyment of her human rights and to ensure equal opportunities for girls; these plans should form an integral part of the total development process; (f. pp. 115)

By government and international and non-governmental organization (para 275):

- ) Generate social support for the enforcement of laws on the minimum legal age for marriage, in particular by providing educational opportunities for girls (b. pp. 116).

Similarly, for fulfilling the second strategic objective the role of the government/non government are recommended as follow:

By Government (para 276):

- ) Encourage and support, as appropriate, non-government organizations and community-based organizations in their efforts to promote changes in negative attitudes and practices towards girls;(a, pp.116)
- ) Set up educational programs and develop teaching materials and textbooks that will sensitize and inform adults about the harmful effects of certain traditional or customary practices on girl children (b, pp.116).

By government and international and non-governmental organization(para 277):

- ) Develop policies and programs, giving priority to formal and informal education programs that support girls and enable them to acquire knowledge, develop self esteem and take responsibility for their own lives; and place special focus on programs to educate women and men, especially parents, on the importance of girls' physical and mental health and well-being, including the elimination of discrimination against girls in food allocation, early marriage, violence against girls, female genital mutilation, child prostitution, sexual abuse, rape and incest (d, pp. 116).

The convention on the Rights of the Child recognizes that " States parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, color, sex. Origin, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or status" (para. 259)

## **2.2 Empirical Literature**

Child marriages cover the globe, and are most common in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, including Ethiopia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Afghanistan, Nepal, and Bangladesh. However child marriages continue in other parts of the world, including South America and among the Roma of Europe.

Marriage patterns are much more diverse. The extreme cases are Afghanistan and Bangladesh, where 54 percent and 51 percent of girls respectively are married by age 18. In Nepal, where the average age at first marriage is 19 years, 7 percent of girls are married before they are 10 years old and 40 percent by the time they are 15. In many Asian countries, such as Vietnam and Indonesia, there are vast differences among regions, states or islands; some in line with ethnographic patterns. Meanwhile some countries have managed to rise the age of marriage significantly. In Sri Lanka, for example, the average age at first marriage is 25, compared to 19 in neighboring India (UNICEF, 2001).

Despite a shift towards later marriages in many parts of the world, 82 million girls in developing countries who are now aged 10 to 17 will be married before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. In some countries, the majority of girls still marry before the age of 18. These include: 60 percent in Nepal, 76 percent in Niger and 50 percent in India (UNFPA, 2003)

Domestic violence seriously endangers the physical and mental health of women and girls and can even put their lives at risk. Gender inequality is both a cause as well as a consequence of child marriage. Child brides usually have lower levels of education than girls who get married at an older age. Education is therefore seen as a way to prevent child marriages. Early marriage, together with its relation to low levels of education, high levels of violence and abuse, severe health risks and harmful power dynamics, results in increased vulnerability to poverty for

girls and young women. In most places, persistent early childbearing is a public health concern. Efforts to delay marriage and increase age at the first birth include enforcement of existing laws, expansion of schooling and provision of job training. The Government of Nepal, in collaboration with UNFPA, has educated adults about the harm that very early marriage can cause, and has created materials encouraging parents to delay marrying their daughters before age 20 (UNFPA, 2003 ).

Early marriage is a global issue which can challenge the rights of girls and boys not only in this generation but to the next generations as well. It affects the overall aspects of the society in general, and education and well-being of millions of children in particular. Furthermore, the negative impacts can be seen throughout the lifecycle of individuals, especially the females. More than 51 million girls in the developing world are child wives. Parents who promise their daughters into early marriage often do so for economic reasons or to shelter them from premarital sex and pregnancy before marriage. But instead of being protected, these girls often find themselves exposed to even greater harm (ICRW, 2004). One in seven girls in the developing world marries before 15 (Population Council, 2006). Nearly half of the 331 million girls in developing countries are expected to marry by their 20th birthday. At this rate, 100 million more girls—or 25,000 more girls every day—will become child brides in the next decade (Bruce and Clark, 2004).

Child marriage is a violation of human rights. WPF and IHEU therefore urge all governments to end child marriage: a practice in which the parents of a child arrange a marriage with another child or an adult. In most cases young girls get married off to significantly older men when they are still children. Child marriages must be viewed within a context of force and coercion, involving pressure and emotional blackmail, and children that lack the choice or capacity to give their full consent. Child marriage must therefore always be considered forced marriage because

valid consent is absent - and often considered unnecessary. Child marriage is common practice in Niger, Chad, Mali, Bangladesh, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Mozambique, Nepal, Uganda and Cameroon, where over 50 percent of girls are married by the age of 18. More than 30 percent of girls are married by the age of 18 in another eighteen countries, mostly in Asia and Africa (UNICEF, 2005).

Although early marriage sometimes extends to boys as well, but the number of girls involved is far larger. According to an analysis of household survey data targeted to 49 developing countries conducted by UNICEF in 2005, 48 percent of South Asian females aged 15 to 24 found to have got married before age 18. However, at 18, a girl still considered a child under the marriage tends to ensure that a woman is firmly under the control of male, living in her husband's household, and also supposedly guards against premarital sex for women. In many societies, the independence that can emerge during adolescence is seen as an undesirable attribute in women, who are expected to be obedient. Early marriage is therefore convenient because it effectively cancels out the adolescent period, quenching the sparks of autonomy and strangling the developing sense of self (UNICEF, 2006)

Early/child marriage leads to high fertility and maternal mortality. Kharel says, "Though marriage is considered a private matter and can be considered a human rights issue, it is sensitive from a demographic point of view because early marriages can contribute to high fertility levels. Whereas in developed countries, the population growth is approaching ZPG (Zero Percentage Growth) due to fertility levels falling below the replacement level"(Kharel, 2006).

Girls and women who get married younger, especially when married as children, are more likely to get experience of domestic violence and to believe that it is justified for a man to beat his wife. In addition, child brides are least likely to take action against this abuse (IPPF, 2006).

In many countries child marriage is linked with poverty. This is because it affects particularly the poorest in the population, and helps to reinforce cycles of poverty. Poverty and low levels of development are also important reasons for the early marriage of girls. In families that are very poor, a daughter may be seen as an economic burden that must be shed through marriage as early as possible. Child wives tend to have more children and fewer independent income options. But child marriages can result in the fragmentation of families, either due to early widowhood, when the older spouses of child brides die, or due to higher levels of divorce. As child brides are often more likely to experience domestic violence and least likely to take action against this abuse, the majority of affected girls become condemned to a life of financial and social insecurity. This is a real paradox for many parents, given that they marry off their daughters at a young age in the belief that this will enhance the girl's and the family's security. Poverty ultimately fuels child marriage, which in turn perpetuates the feminization of poverty. This situation is also supported by country economic indicators for measuring the health of the economy. Several countries with very low gross domestic products (GDPs) tend to have higher rates of child marriage (IPPF, 2006). As being a least developed country, Nepal is also a harbor of early child marriage undergone for vicious cycle of poverty.

### **2.2.1 Early/Child Marriage in the Context of Nepal**

Child marriage is a violation of human rights and is prohibited by a number of international conventions and other instruments. Nonetheless, it is estimated that in the next ten years more than 100 million girls are likely to be married before the age of 18 (UNFPA, 2005). Being the serious issue, the question emerges what the child marriage is? Generally speaking child marriage is not a new phenomenon in the developing countries like Nepal. Early marriage, also known as child

marriage, is the marriage of a young person (typically a girl) before the onset of adulthood as defined by the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child. Child marriage usually refers to social phenomena which were practiced dominantly in the past and it is still in practice in some societies. Regarding the context of Nepal, child marriage is an institution authorized by ancient Hindu laws and mythology and devotedly practiced by its followers. The Hindu Holy Scriptures states many references about child marriage. It is stated that the best age for a girl to get married is between 8 to 10 years. It has also been mentioned that a girl should not wait for marriage more than three years after attaining the puberty.

By 200 BC, the rules for a daughter's marriage seem to have become even more inflexible. The religious scriptures of that time contain firm moral and spiritual laws providing full authority to the father to get his daughter married even before she reaches puberty. The preoccupied faith for 'punya' by getting the daughter married earlier came to be a culture. The scriptures state that the tradition of 'Kanyadan', the gift of a virgin, earns a lot of 'punya' or spiritual credit to the father.

Sage Manu in his treatise, *Manu Smriti*, states, "If a girl remains unmarried after reaching the puberty, the father has failed in his duty towards her". Another sage Parasara has expressed the similar view about child marriage. To quote Parasara "the parents or guardians of a girl in who reaches puberty before marriage will definitely go to hell" (Manjupuria, 1996).

In the traditional societies like Nepal the tradition of early marriage is still in practice. Along with the hope of getting 'punya' through 'Kanyadan' there are many other reasons that encourage parents to marry their daughter earlier. 'Parents choose to marry off their daughters earlier for a number of reasons: Poor families may regard a young girl as an economic burden and her marriage as a necessary ensure family survival. They may think that early marriage offers protection from the



dangers of sexual assault, or, more generally, offer the care of a male guardian. Early marriage is also a means to prevent avoid girls from becoming pregnant outside marriage' (UNICEF website on Married Adolescents).

Discrimination on the basis of gender is widespread in Nepal and it cuts across all classes and ages. In rural areas, where patriarchal traditions remain strong, the intensity of violence and discrimination is severe. Women run the households and do much of the fieldwork as well, but they have a low status in society. They have no right to property. Discrimination against women starts from home right after the birth; it is varied and far-reaching. Parents are reluctant to invest in a girl's education because her major role is viewed as nurturing children remaining in the traditional sector of society. Women are often denied the right to parental property. They are seen as "second class citizen, discriminated against in social, cultural, economic, religious and political fronts, and oppressed, exploited and dominated" (FWLD, 2000). This is the life faced by a typical Nepali girl. Her inadequate nutrition and access to healthcare means that she faces a higher probability of death than her male peers. Her restricted socialization leaves her shy and unconfident. She is unable or reluctant to make decisions or express her needs. Her poor education means that she is barely literate or even illiterate. Her low status means that others take decisions for her. She is trapped in a cycle of dependency that is handed on from her natal family to her husband's family on her early marriage (UNICEF, 2006).

Early marriage and early childbearing persist among women in many South Asian countries, including Nepal (Singh & Samara, 1996; Singh, 1998). In Nepal marriage takes place at early age and almost universal. Early and universal marriage practice leads to long term social and economic consequences. This is true even in the present context. In most parts of Nepal, economic and social development, as well as demographic

transition, is still in their early stages. The fertility level remains high, and early marriage and early motherhood are quite common (Thapa, 1996; MoH *et al.*, 2002).

There is no separate Act in Nepal dealing with child marriage. Civil Code of Nepal (Mulukin Ain, 1963) is only one general law which manages and controls all kind of human behaviors relating to marriage such as child marriage, age-disparity or inter-age-group marriage (with 20 or more years' difference in the age of the couple).The legal or civil code explicitly provides equal rights to women so that women are in no way treated as inferior to men in the eyes of law.

The National Code of 1963 completely banned child marriage. According to the law, no girl could be married before the age of 14 and no boy before the age of 18 even with the consent of their guardians. According to the sixth amendment, enacted during the International Women's Year the minimum age of marriage for a girl with her guardian's consent was raised to 16. The minimum age for marriage without the consent of the guardian was 18 for a girl and 21 for a boy.

Similarly in Country Code 1963 (11<sup>th</sup> amendment), Chapter on marriage, No.2 states that no marriage shall be contracted or got contracted if the man and women are not of 18 years of age where the consent of guardian is available and not of 20 years of age where such consent is not available. If the marriage is contracted contrary to this provision, the principal offenders having attained majority (age of legal responsibility), out of those committing the offense, shall be liable to the following punishment:-

Where the marriage of a girl below 10 years of age is contracted/procured, punishment of imprisonment for a term from six months to three years and a fine of one thousand to ten thousand rupees.....1

Where the marriage of a girl over 10 years and below fourteen years of age is contracted/procured, punishment of imprisonment for a term from three months to one year and a fine of up to five thousand rupees.....2

Where the marriage of a woman over fourteen years and below eighteen years of age is contracted/procured, punishment of imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months or a fine of up to ten thousand rupees or both.....3

Where the marriage of a woman or man below twenty years of age is contracted/procured, punishment of imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months or a fine of up to ten thousand rupees or both.....4

One who contracts or arranges marriage without knowledge that marriage is arranged or contracted lying that it is within the limitation of law is not liable to punishment.....5

Out of the priest, matchmaker and other abettors who knowingly performs the acts of marriage prohibited under the above-mentioned provisions, one having attained majority shall be punished with imprisonment for a term of up to one month and a fine of up to one thousand rupees.....6

Notwithstanding anything contained in the above-mentioned clauses of this number, in cases where marriage has not yet been contracted but it has already been set after performing the rites and rituals, the principal who has arranged it shall be punished with a fine of up to five hundred rupees and the set matter shall be invalidated .....7

The fines imposed under clauses 1, 2, 3 and 4 above shall be collected, if they are paid, and be given to that girl, woman or man. If the fine is not paid, the partition property of that person subject to

punishment shall be confiscated, and the figure of punishment recovered there from shall be provided to that girl, woman or man. If the fine cannot be recovered from the confiscation of property, the offender shall be punished with imprisonment for up to three months for the fine not recovered.....8

Where the marriage has been contracted before the man or woman has attained the age of eighteen years and no offspring is born to them, the man or woman who has so got married before his or her age of eighteen years may, if he or she does not accept the marriage after he or she has attained the age of eighteen years, void such marriage.....9 (fwld.org/pdf\_files/Inclusion\_women.pdf) <sup>1</sup>

This Ain is amended eleven times bringing changes according to the Constitution of Nepal. This amendment has brought some radical changes on child marriage. And, as described above, although child marriage is prohibited by law, child marriage is prevalent, and intercourse in child marriage is not considered to be rape. The Supreme Court of Nepal, however, recently established marital rape as a crime; its decision allows a wife to live separately from or divorce her husband, and proposes severe punishment in cases of child marriage. Laws in accordance with this decision are yet to be enacted.

Child marriage is a crime under the law, punishable by terms of imprisonment that range from three months to one year. However, as indicated by the terms of punishment, it has not been taken as a serious crime in society. Child marriage is widespread in remote and rural villages. It has been reported that out of all marriages performed in Nepal 34 percent of brides are children and, of these 7 percent are below 10 years of age. Child marriage is in nexus of crimes is violence, together

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<sup>1</sup> Malla , Sapana, *Inclusion of Women's Human Rights and Politics of Exclusion* fwld.org/pdf\_files/Inclusion\_women.pdf

with crimes like polygamy and trafficking. Nepal government has made a commitment of follow the Beijing deceleration to control and reduce all forms of violence against women; however the enforcement of laws against such violence is seriously weak. The centre for legal Research and Resource Development has conducted research regarding child marriage in two districts of Nepal Nuwakot and Sindhupalchowk. In Nuwakot 47 percent of the girls were married when they were children (i.e. below the age of 16), whereas, in Sindhupalchowk 7 percent of the girls were married before they reached the age 16 years (Sangroula and Pathak, 2002).

GoN has approved the National Plan of Action for Children (2004/05-2014/15 A.D) on the basis of United Nations General Assembly Special Session for Children Declaration 2002. The Plan of Action was prepared from the joint participation of government line agencies, the UN agencies, INGOs, NGOs and children themselves participating in a series of workshop organized up to regional level. The National Plan of Action has covered 6 sectors: (a) health (b) quality education (c) child rights protection (d) combating HIV/AIDS (e) child participation and (f) coordination, monitoring and evaluation (UN, 2006, para 191).

In Nepal, approximately 40 percent of girls are getting married below the age 16. Early child marriage remains a major contravention of children's rights in Nepal, and is a key indicator of child labour, school dropout and education, discrimination, health concerns, reproductive health issues, low levels of literacy and reduced overall well being among women and girl children. These infringements upon basic human rights occur in a broader social context in which traditions of child marriage and dowry weigh heavily against the girl child (Aasaman Nepal, 2005).

Aasaman Nepal (ASN) realizing the urgent need to address this issue has stood against this deep-rooted social problem by coordinating with various stakeholders and has conducted numerous activities to fight

against early child marriage in its working area. The activities include stage and street drama against child marriage, *Jhanki* exhibition against child marriage, campaign against child marriage, and use of television campaign against child marriage.

Overall, the age at marriage has been increasing over the years in Nepal. According to the 2001 population census the average age at marriage has increased from 15.4 years in 1961 to 19.5 for females and 19.5 in 1961 to 22.9 for males. The figure is higher in urban (21 years) than in rural (19 years) areas. This trend of increasing age can be seen as a vital achievement. However, the rising trend is very slow. Thus, the slow pace in the increasing marriage age has caused the slow decrease in the fertility rate (CBS, 2003).

Likewise According to [UNICEF](#), 7, 40 and 52.2 percent of marriages take place below the age of 10, 15 and 16 respectively. Nepalese encourage child marriages, because of some existing social and religious values, marriage should occur before puberty (before menstruation starts) (Kharel, 2006).

Among the 15-19 age group, 34 percent of girls compared to 12 percent of boys were married in 2001 (CBS, 2003), which is declined when compared with the 1991 figures of 47 percent and 21 percent, respectively. In terms of ecological regions, the *Terai* region (40%) registered the highest percentage of married adolescent girls in 2001 followed by the mountain (33%) and the hill regions (27%) (Pathak, Sedhai and Shrestha, 2009).

According to an analysis of recent surveys associated with the Asian Young Adult Reproductive Risk (Choe, Thapa and Achmad, 2001), Nepal's economic and social development is still at an early stage. Fertility remains still high, early marriage and childbearing are widespread, and infant mortality is also high. It also expressed that

more than half (56%) of rural women in Nepal are married by age 18, and nearly three-quarters (71%) are married by age 20. Among rural women, an estimated 25 percent marry before age 16. Childbearing before age 20 is very common in both urban and rural Nepal. In Nepal, four out of 10 rural women have a child by age 20, and more than one in 10 has a child by age 18.

Although, the marriage age in Nepal is increasing, the growth is very low. The focus therefore should be on the female age at first marriage and the programs should be rurally based. The people and the government should overcome local customs and laws, which are not in the favor of the nation. Besides, job opportunities can empower women and motivate them for late marriage.

## **2.2.2 Legal Framework in Nepal**

### **2.2.2.1 Constitutional Provision**

#### **Right against exploitation**

Interim Constitution of Nepal, 2006 provides separate articles for the protection of the rights of children and women that include right against physical, mental or other forms of exploitation, Interim Constitution also guarantees right against violence against women, reproductive health and equal right in parental property. Interim Constitution recognizes rights against exploitation based on tradition and cultural practices. Child marriage is a form of exploitation against girls based on sex, culture, religion and tradition, and most of the victims of child marriage are girls.

#### ***Prohibition of discrimination on the basis of girl child***

The Constitution of Nepal guarantees right to equality and provides that no discrimination shall be made against any citizen in the application of general laws on the grounds of religion, race, sex, caste, tribe, ideological

conviction, or any of these. Child marriage is a form of discrimination against girls based on sex as most of the victims of child marriage are girls. The constitutional guarantee of non-discrimination is violated due to the prevalence of child marriage. The Interim Constitution of Nepal, 2006 also guarantees the right of non-discrimination for being a woman.

#### **2.2.2.2 Legal Provision**

*Major laws to deal with marriage:* The following are the major laws in Nepal that deal with or are related to child marriage:

- ) The Country Code's Chapter on Marriage, 1963
- ) The Marriage Registration Act, 1971
- ) The Birth, Death and Other Personal Events (Registration) Act, 1977 (UNIFEM and FWLD, 2007).

#### **2.2.3 Child Marriage in Dhanusha District**

Nepal is one of the main countries in the world where the practice of child marriage is common. In Nepal, Dhanusha district is in ninth position where the practice of child marriage is high. 9.4 percent child marriage occurs only in Dhanusha district in a year.

Child marriage and dowry system is common in Terai region. The practice of child marriage is common in the low caste like: Mushar, Chamar, Dom, Yadav and Muslim. It is very high in Mushar and Dom community. In the study area, 45percent parents have got their children's marriage at the age of 9 to 12 years. Because of child marriage, children are deprived from education. In study area, among children who got married at 9 to 12 years of age 56 percent were illiterate, and only 8percent were literate. In that, 12percent were attended 1 to 5 class, 14 percent were attended 6 to 10 class and 10percent were attended S.L.C. In the study area, only 32 percent



parents have sent their children to school. Because of the house work, the tradition of child marriage and not having any interest towards study by many problems on them, children were not attended school and also parents not sent them to school.

The 58 percent parents have done their son's marriage at the child age to increase manpower at home. Then tradition /cultural believes and dowry is the main reason of child marriage. Dowry is the main reason of child marriage of girls'. After dowry, cultural believes and thoughts and poverty is the main reason of child marriage of girls.

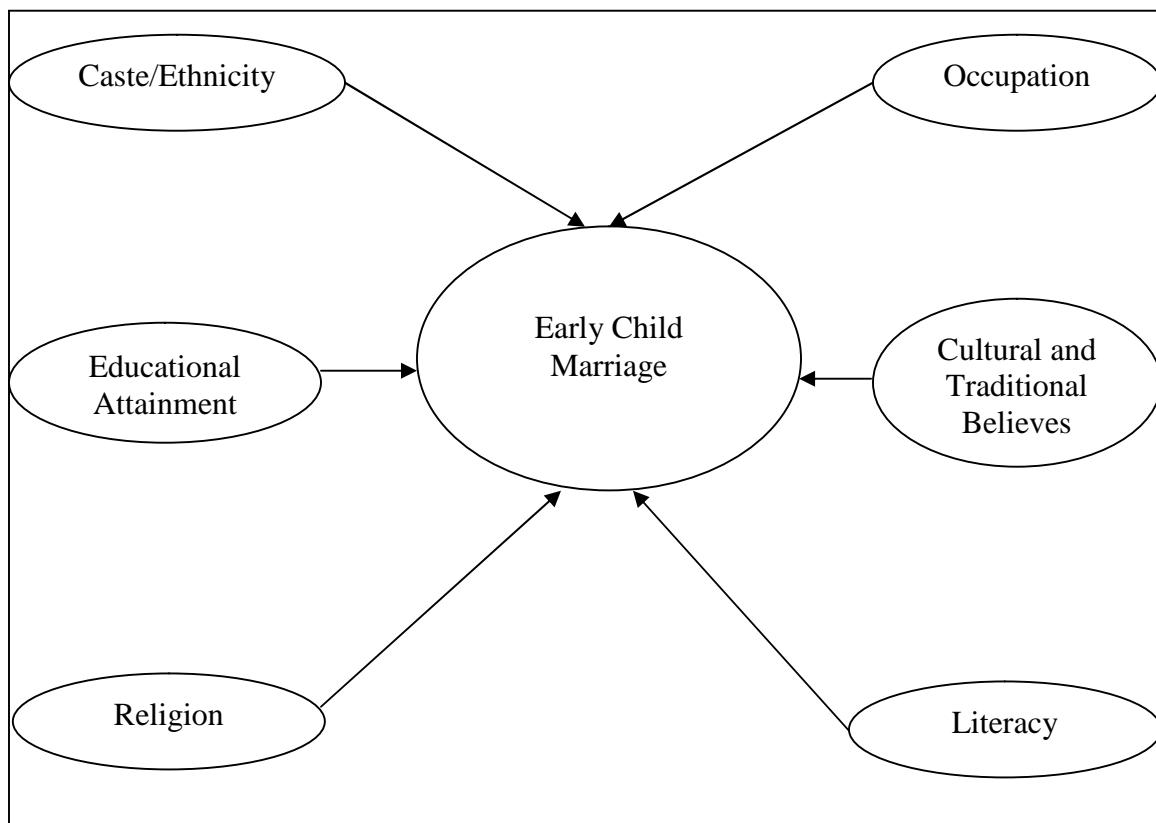
The 80 percent girls don't get care and also healthy and fresh food at their husbands' home because of child marriage, by this they have to suffer from different physical and mental diseases.

The believers of child marriage think that children are mature for marriage after the age of 12. In the result of this girls become mother at early age. They loose their important and lovely childhood. In the study area all the respondent of child marriage told that they couldn't play with their friends and they couldn't even meet their family members easily.

Because of child marriage they loose their right of education and health. There is high chances of maternal and child mortality in child marriage. 94 percent of respondent of child marriage were against child marriage but even then there is high practice of child marriage in the study area. In the respondent of child marriage, 20 percent had given birth and 40 percent were pregnant and only 10 percent married women had the marriage certificate. (Yadav, 2009)

## 2.3 Conceptual Framework

Based on the theoretical as well as empirical study of available literatures the conceptual framework for this study has been made. Caste/ethnicity, religion, literacy and educational attainment, and occupation are selected as independent variable for this study. On the basis of above variables the child marriage practice of study area has been studied. The conceptual framework of this study is given below:



*Fig. 2.1 Conceptual framework to study the early child marriage*

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY OF STUDY**

This chapter represents overall research methodology, which has been applied for this study in order to meet the research objectives. It begins by dealing with topics like background of the study area, data collection and procedures and tools, sources of data, sampling techniques, questionnaire design and data processing and techniques of data analysis.

#### **3.1 Study Area**

##### **Nepal**

Nepal is a multi-lingual, multi-religious and multi-ethnic society. She lies between 26° 22' to 30° 27' North latitude and 80° 4' to 88° 12' east longitude with elevation ranging from 90 meters to 8,848 meters. The country is sandwiched between the two most populous countries of the world, India to the east, south, and west and China to the north. Nepal is rectangular in shape and stretches 885 kilometers in length (east to west) and 193 kilometers in width (north to south). The total land area of the country is 147,181 square kilometers. According to the 2001 Census, the population of Nepal is just over 23 million (CBS, 2003). Nepal is divided into three distinct ecological zones, mountain, hill and Terai. Nepal is categorized into five development regions and 75 districts. The Mountain ranges from 4,877 meters to 8,848 meters above the sea level. According to 2001 census, the region accommodates 7.3 percent of the total population. Hill region lies between the altitudes of 610 meters to 4,877 meters above the sea level. The Terai region lies in the southern part of country. The Terai, being an extension of the Gangetic plains of India, forms a low flat land. It accommodates 48.4 percent of population in 2001 (CBS, 2007).

## **Dhanusha District**

The area selected for the study is Janakpur Municipality of Dhanusha District. The district has a total area of 1180sq. km. The total population of Dhanusha district is 6,71,364 (2001 census). The researcher currently living in the Kathmandu Valley. In the valley, the problem of child marriage is negligible. It has come to know from various sources that such problem is widely occurring in the Terai region of the country. The researcher is seeking to know the status of child marriage in different ethnic groups in a sample place. In this regard the study site, Janakpur Municipality is selected because in this area there are more ethnic groups have been living.

## **Janakpur Municipality**

The Janakpur Municipality is only Municipality in Dhanusha District. The total population of Janakpur Municipality according to 2001 census is 74,192. The total household is about 15,530. About 66.1Percent are literate in Janakpur Municipality. Janakpur got municipality status in 2019 B.S. It has its own vision developed as “To develop Janakpur as Historical religious and tourism town”. Janakpur is famous religious and historical place of central Nepal. Janakpur is surrounded by Machuwa VDC in the east, Mohottari District in the west, Benga Peprahi VDC in the north and Debpura Rupaidha VDC in the south. The main inhabitants of the municipality are Hill Brahmins followed by Sudhis, Yadavs, Telis, Muslims and Chamars etc. Maithili language is spoken in the municipality in great number. It has a number of famous ponds Ratnasagar, Dhanushasagar, Ganga sagar and temples like Janaki mandir, Ram Mandir, Janak mandir, Sankat mochan mandir etc.

*Fig 3.1: Map of Nepal*

*Fig 3.2: Map of Dhanusha District*

*Fig 3.3: Map of Janakpur Municipality*

The Janakpur municipality is divided into 16 wards. The study areas for this study are ward no. 14 and 16. According to 2001 census the total population of ward number 14 and 16 is 6,699 and 5,922 respectively. In ward number 14, female population is 3,202 and 2,769 in ward number 16 (ISRC, 2008).

### **3.2 Research Design**

This study is an exploratory and descriptive in nature. This study makes an initial attempt to describe and document about the early child marriage in Janakpur municipality of Dhanusha District. The research design has been designed in such a way that objectives can be fulfilled set forth in this study to exam the characteristics of study population.

### **3.3 Nature of Data**

The early child marriage of women has been analyzed from quantitative method that is why this study is quantitative in nature. Sources of data were collected from primary method. Structured questionnaires were used for data collection. Some quasi-structured questions were post-coded after the completion of field survey.

### **3.4 Sampling Technique**

There are 16 wards in Janakpur municipality. The 16 wards were considered as 16 clusters. Among 16 clusters 2 clusters were selected by using lottery method. After using lottery method ward number 14 and 16 are chosen. After selecting the

2 cluster using probability sampling method, sample size has been determined by using non-probability sampling method. In which purposive sampling method was utilized because there is an infrequent chance of getting case of early child marriage in each household of selected clusters.

### **3.4.1 Sample Size**

It is very difficult for us to find the case of early child marriage in every household of the study area. Though the researcher tried hard to find out the household where the child marriage has been taken, some households where the case of child marriage occurred but guardians/parents denied participating in survey and they avoid their daughter-in-laws to answer the question as well. So, 127 households are visited to collect the required information.

The households where the female of that household got married before getting the age of 18 years are interviewed. The parents of girl/women are also interviewed for collecting information on their views on early child marriage.

## **3.5 Questionnaire Design**

### **I. Household Questionnaire**

### **II. Individual Questionnaire**

Two sets of questionnaires were prepared. Household questionnaire was used to collect some socio-economic and demographic information of household population. From individual questionnaire other required information was collected which are important for the study of early child marriage.

## **3.6 Data collection Technique**

### **3.6.1 Collection of Information**

In each sampled household, every currently married woman of 10-35 years was interviewed. The data were collected by asking questions based entirely on the questionnaire. Questions were asked by following face-to-face interview method.

### **3.7 Data Analysis Tools and Techniques**

Information collected from field survey was analyzed in various ways. By using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) 16 program, simple frequency distribution, percentage distribution as well as cross-tabulation were prepared. Almost all data were tabulated with simple percentage. The mean is also calculated to examine the female age at marriage and male age at marriage.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **HOUSEHOLD POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS**

In this chapter, the basic information on socio - economic and demographic characteristics of the household population of study area is presented.

#### **4.1: Demographic and Socio-Economic Characteristics**

##### **4.1.1 Age-Sex Composition of the Household Population**

The age-sex composition of a population is very important in demographic analysis. A population's age and sex composition is considered as a map of its demographic history. The various demographic events differ in different age and sex. So, age-sex composition is important in every sector.

The information on age and sex of each household are obtained from all age and marital status of women. In 127 sampled household, the total population is 932 with 467 male and 465 female populations.

*Table 4.1: Distribution of Household Population by Age and Sex*



Five year age Group	Sex						Sex Ratio
	Male		Female		Total		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
0-4	60	12.8	56	12	116	12.4	107.1
5-9	60	12.8	58	12.5	118	12.7	103.4
10-14	40	8.6	38	8.2	78	8.4	105.3
<b>Below 15</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>34.2</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>32.7</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>33.5</b>	<b>105.3</b>
15-19	26	5.6	44	9.5	70	7.5	59.1
20-24	42	9	56	12.1	98	10.5	75
25-29	58	12.4	58	12.5	116	12.4	100
30-34	43	9.2	36	7.7	79	8.5	119.4
35-39	37	7.9	13	2.8	50	5.4	284.6
40-44	18	3.9	13	2.8	31	3.3	138.5
45-49	8	1.7	16	3.4	24	2.6	50
50-54	11	2.4	21	4.5	32	3.4	52.4
55-59	21	4.5	28	6	49	5.3	75
<b>15-60</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>56.6</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>61.3</b>	<b>549</b>	<b>58.9</b>	<b>92.6</b>
60-64	15	3.2	15	3.2	30	3.2	100
65-69	19	4.1	6	1.3	25	2.7	316.7
70-74	6	1.3	4	0.9	10	1.1	150
75 +	3	0.6	3	0.6	6	0.6	100
<b>60+</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>9.2</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>153.6</b>
Total	467	100	465	100	932	100	100.4

Source: Field Survey, 2009.

In the study area the male population is higher than the female population .The majority of the population is found in age group 5-9 years (12.7%) and lowest in age group 75 and over years (0.6%). The proportion of female population is highest in age group 5-9 years (12.5%) and 25-29 years (12.5%) and followed by age group 20-24 years (12.1%) and age group 0-4 years (12%). The lowest proportion of female population is found in age group 75 and over years (0.6%) and followed by age group 70-74 years (0.9%). Similarly, the highest proportion of male population is found in age group 0-4 years (12.8%) and 5-9 years (12.8%) and followed by age

group 25-29 years (12.4%). The lowest proportion of male is found in age group 75 and over years (0.6%) followed by age group 70-74 years (1.3%).

The economically active population ‘independent population’ age 15-60 years is found 58.9 percent in the study area and economically inactive population age below 15 years and 60+ years is found 33.5 percent and 7.6 percent respectively (Table 4.1).

#### 4.1.2 Population Pyramid

In general population pyramid is a type of bar chart which graphically represents the population. The detail picture of the age-sex structure of the study area is presented below:

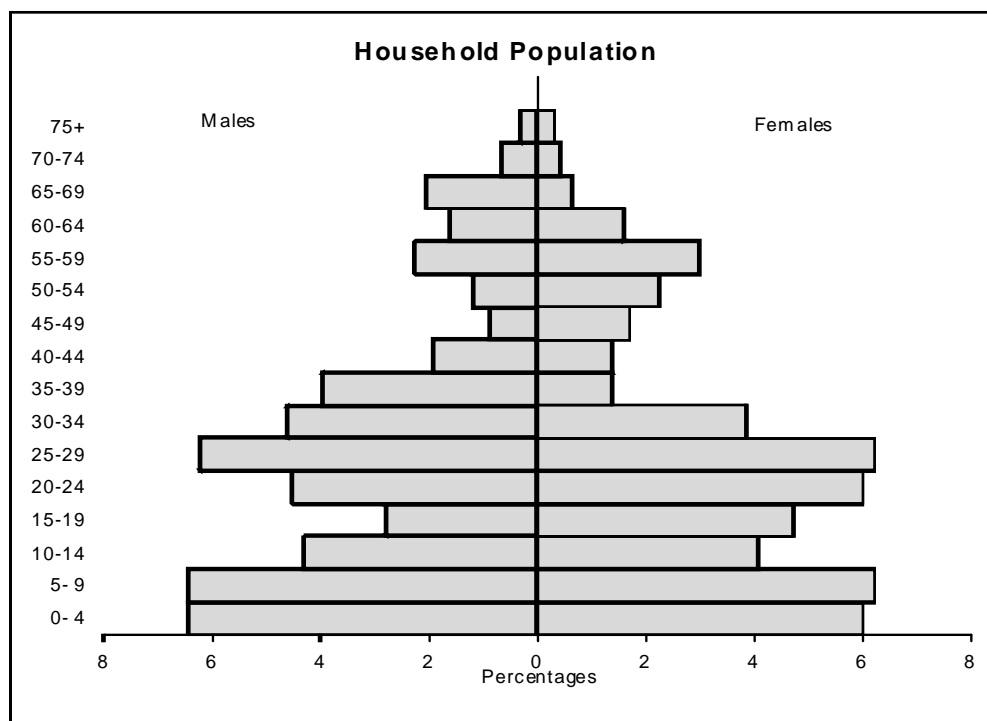


Fig 4.1

Population Pyramid of the Household Population

The pyramid of the study area represented that, the overall sex ratio in the study population is found high (100.4) compare with 2001 census of Nepal, which is

99.8. This indicates that the number of male is higher than the female in study area. The above pyramid also shows that the independent population is higher than the dependent population, which means that the economically active population is high in study population. This pyramid also shows the number of male olds is higher than the female olds.

#### 4.1.3 Household Head and their related Population by Sex

Nepal is male dominated society. There are most of the males are head of the household in Nepal. In the study area also male head of the household is higher than female. Even though female is managing all tasks of house and their male counterpart is in foreign country, they preferred their male as a household head. And only in some cases widow females are found as a head of the household.

Table 4.2 Household Head and their related household members by sex

Relation to the Head of the Household	Sex				Total	
	Male		Female			
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Household head	118	92.9	9	7.1	127	100.0
Wife/husband	1	0.9	115	99.1	116	100.0
Son/daughter	206	71.0	84	29.0	290	100.0
Son-in-law /daughter-in-law	7	5.4	122	94.6	129	100.0
Grandchild	100	55.2	81	44.8	181	100.0
Parent	6	17.6	28	82.4	34	100.0
Brother/sister	17	77.3	5	22.7	22	100.0
Brother in law/sister in law	2	13.3	13	86.7	15	100.0
Niece/nephew	9	52.9	8	47.1	17	100.0
Other relative	1	100.0	-	-	1	100.0
Total	467	50.1	465	49.9	932	100.0%

Source: Field Survey, 2009.

According to NDHS 2006, 77 percent of the households are headed by males only 23 percent by females (MoHP et al, 2007:14). In the study area 118 households are male headed and only 9 households are female headed which occupies only 7.1 percent to the total number of sampled households (Table 4.2).

#### 4.1.4 Marital Status of the Household Population

Marriage is universal. Marriage determines the social roles and responsibilities of the people. Therefore it is called social institution. In our society, giving birth to a baby can only be accepted while the individual get married from legal and social institution. The marital status of the study population is given below.

*Table 4.3 Marital Status of Study Population*

Marital Status	Sex				Total	
	Male		Female		N	%
	N	%	N	%		
Unmarried	71	20.5	43	12.3	114	16.3
Married	269	77.5	273	77.7	542	77.7
Widowed	5	1.4	34	9.7	39	5.6
Separated	2	0.6	1	0.3	3	0.4
Total	347	100.0	351	100.0	698	100.0

*Source: Field Survey, 2009. N= Number, %= Percent*

The 4.3 table shows the current marital status of people who are of 10 years old and above. In that case, majority of the population (77.7percent) are married. In married population male and female have equal condition (male 77.5 percent and female 77.7 percent). The portion of unmarried people covers 16.3 percent to the total population. In unmarried population number of male is higher than the female (male 20.5 percent and female 12.3 percent). The contribution of remarriage can be seen in the case of widowhood. There are 5.6 percent widowed people. The table shows that, female widowed is higher than the male widowed which is 9.7 percent for female and only 1.4 percent for male out of the total population. In study area the cases of separation is found insignificant (Table 4.3).

#### **4.1.5 Religion of the Household Population**

Before 2065 B.S. Nepal was a Hindu nation. Now, Nepal is a secular Nation. Although, the majority of the population is in Hindu religion. Nepal is a multi-caste/ethnicity, multi-language and multi-religious country. Two religions are found practiced in study area.

*Table 4.4 Distribution of the household population by religion*

Religion	Number	Percent
Hindu	837	89.8
Islam	95	10.2
Total	932	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2009.

In the household population, the majority of the population (89.8 percent) is in Hindu religion. And then Islam, which is 10.2 percent. Among the 127 household populations other religion are not found (Table 4.4).

#### **4.1.6 Caste /Ethnicity of the Household Population**

Caste/ethnicity is the most important identity in the context of Nepal. Now about to restructure of the states based on caste/ethnicity also. The seats are preserved for the backward caste/ethnicity in every mechanism of the nation. The caste/ethnic composition of the study area is shown below.

Table 4.5 Distribution of the Population by Caste/Ethnic Groups

Caste/Ethnicity	Number	Percent
Terai Brahmin/Kshetriya/Kayasth	81	8.7
Sudhi	84	9.0
Yadav/Guhar	169	18.1
Teli	55	5.9
Muslim	95	10.2
Terai Dalits	233	25.0
Terai Janajati	215	23.1
Total	932	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2009.

In the study area, Dalits and Janajatis are high in number than other caste/ethnic groups which is 25.0 percent and 23.1 percent respectively. Terai Brahmin/Kahetriya/Kayasth are less (8.7 percent] than other caste/ethnic groups. Yadav/Guhar are the third highest caste /ethnic group in the study area which is 18.1 percent. Muslims are 10.2 percent in the study area (Table 4.5).

#### **4.1.7 Literacy Status of the Household Population**

Education is one of the most influential factors affecting an individual's attitude. Education is most important for the development of the people, nation and the

world. Education plays the vital role to bring changes in socio-economic status of the people, nation as well as the world. Education enhances the ability and capacity of human being. The higher educational status affects the people's participation in socio-economic, development as well as in policy making level.

In the study population, the question regarding school attendance is asked to the people five years and above. Generally parents use to send their children to school while they get around five years of age.

In 816 eligible populations, 504 (61.8 percent) attended/attending school while, 312 (38.2 percent) persons have not attended/attending school. Male population (72.2 percent) is higher than the female population (51.5 percent) in attended/attending school. And in case of not attended/attending school female population (48.5 percent) is higher than males population (27.8 percent).

Table 4.6 Distribution of the population by educational status age 5 and above

Ever Attended School	Sex				Total	
	Male		Female		Number	Percent
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent		
Yes	293	72.2	211	51.5	504	61.8
No	113	27.8	199	48.5	312	38.2
Total	406	100.0	410	100.0	816	100.0
Educational Groups						
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Primary	97	32.9	86	41.0	183	36.2
Secondary	69	23.4	53	25.2	122	24.2
Higher	129	43.7	71	33.8	200	39.6
Total	295	100.0	210	100.0	505	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2009.

By knowing the school attendance history only, the literacy status of population can not be identified. Therefore the educational attainment in formal education system is divided into three levels a. primary b. Secondary and C. Higher. According to this level of attainment 39.6 percent people higher education, 24.2 percent have secondary and 36.2 percent have primary education. Due to the imbalance of total number of male and female, the degree of educational attainment can not generalize the real situation (Table 4.6).

#### **4.1.8 Occupation of the Household Population**

Economic condition of a person depends on his/her occupation. In the study area people have started working at ten years of age. So people from ten years of age are involved in this category.

Table 4.7 Distribution of the population by occupation age ten and above

Occupation	Sex				Total	
	Male		Female		Number	Percent
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent		
Agriculture	30	8.1	41	12.5	71	10.1
Labour	47	12.7	42	12.8	89	12.8
Business	58	15.7	19	5.8	77	11.2
Service	43	11.6	12	3.7	55	7.9
Fish farming	6	1.6	-	-	6	0.8
Study	47	12.7	42	12.8	89	12.8
Foreign employment	82	22.2	1	0.3	83	11.9
House work	2	0.5	119	36.3	121	17.3
Driver	3	0.8	-	-	3	0.4
Mechanic	7	1.9	1	0.3	8	1.0
Physically disable/dependant	41	11.1	39	11.8	80	11.5
Cottage industry	1	0.3	11	3.4	12	1.7
Doing nothing	3	0.8	1	0.3	4	0.6
Total	370	100.0	328	100.0	698	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2009.

In the study population higher proportion of household populations' age ten and above are involve in house work activities (17.3 percent). Female population 119 (36.3 percent) is higher than the male population 2(0.5 percent) in house work activities. Broadly populations are engaged in non agricultural activities including service, labor work, foreign work, business, study and housework. From 698 working population 71(10.2 percent) persons are involved in agriculture. In the study population, 12.8 percent persons are involved in labor work followed by study population which is also 12.8 percent. It is also found that the higher proportion of male is in foreign employment which is 22.2 percent (Table 4.7).



## CHAPTER FIVE

### CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

This chapter describes the demographic and socio-economic profile of respondents interviewed during field survey. The married women of 10-35 are eligible women to collect information about early/child marriage. The field survey collected basic information on respondents' age, level of education, religion, and ethnicity, age at marriage, knowledge on family planning and husband's age at marriage.

#### 5.1 Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondents

##### 5.1.1 Caste/Ethnic and Religious Composition of Respondents

*Table 5.1 Caste/Ethnic and Religious Composition of Respondents*

Serial Number		Number	Percent
<b>A</b>	<b>Caste/Ethnicity</b>		
1	Brahmin/Kshetriya/Kayasth	15	11.8
2	Sudhi	13	10.2
3	Yadav/Guhar	21	16.5
4	Teli	8	6.3
5	Muslim	12	9.4
6	Dalits	30	23.6
7	Janajati	28	22.0
	Total	127	100.0
<b>B</b>	<b>Religion</b>		
1	Hindu	115	90.6
2	Islam	12	9.4
	Total	127	100.0

*Source: Field Survey, 2009.*

Among eligible women in study area high proportion of respondents are belong with Dalits and Janajatis, which is 23.6 percent and 22.0 percent respectively. Low proportion of respondents is Telis which is 6.3 percent. Brahmin/ Kshetriya/Kayasth, Sudhi, Yaday/Guhar and Muslims are 11.8 percent, 10.2 percent, 16.5 percent and 9.4 percent respectively.

In study area significant numbers of respondents (90.6 percent) are following Hinduism, while 9.4 percent are following Islams (Table 5.1).

### 5.1.2 Educational Characteristics of Respondents

Among total respondents 79 are literate (62.2percent) and 48 (37.8percent) are illiterate. The level of education is divided into three groups which are shown below:

*Table 5.2 Educational Attainment of Literate Respondents*

Level of Education	Number	Percent
Primary	13	10.2
Secondary	26	20.5
Higher	40	31.5
Total	79	62.2

*Source: Field Survey, 2009.*

The 5.2 table shows that most respondents (31.5 percent) have completed SLC (School Leaving Certificate) and other higher studies. Only 10.2 percent respondents have attained primary education, while 20.2 percent respondents have completed secondary education (Table 5.2).

### 5.1.3 Occupational Characteristics of Respondents

The occupations of the respondents are simplified into six categories.

*Table 5.3 Economic Activity of Respondents*

Occupation	Number	Percent
Agriculture	6	4.7
Labour	21	16.5
Business	9	7.1
Service	8	6.3
House work	78	61.4
Cottage industry	5	3.9
Total	127	100.0

*Source: Field Survey, 2009.*

The 5.3 table shows that doing household coarse all the day is the main field of involvement to the respondents. To the total number of respondents, 61.4 percent are housewife and doing house-work. 16.5 percent respondents are doing business and 6.3 percent are involved in service. Out of the total respondents, in

agriculture and cottage industry only 4.7 percent and 3.9 percent respondents are involved (Table 5.3).

## **5.2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

### **5.2.1 Age Composition of the Respondents**

*Table 5.4 Age Distribution of Respondents in Five Year Age Group*

Age Group	Number	Percent
10-14	1	0.8
15-19	22	17.3
20-24	29	22.8
25-29	47	37.0
30-34	23	18.1
And 35	5	3.9
Total	127	100.0

*Source: Field Survey, 2009.*

The 5.4 table shows the number of respondents in five broad age groups. Among respondents most are of 25-29 age and then 20-24 age followed by age 15-19 years. Age group 10-14 has only one respondent (0.8 percent) (Table 5.4).

### **5.2.2 Age at Marriage of Respondents**

Age at first marriage is one of the important factors for women's life. The age at first marriage in single year age distribution is presented below.

*Table 5.5 Age at first marriage of Respondents*

Age at Marriage	Number	Percent
8	1	.8
9	1	.8
10	4	3.1
11	6	4.7
12	10	7.9
13	14	11.0
14	22	17.3
15	21	16.5
16	16	12.6
17	19	15.0
18	13	10.2
Total	127	100.0

*Source: Field Survey, 2009.*

Among the total respondents, most (17.6 percent) first got married at 14 years of age followed by age 15, 17 and 16 [16.5 percent, 15.0 percent and 12.6 percent respectively). From age 8 to 15, 62.2 percent respondents got married (Table 5.5).

### **5.2.3 Age at Marriage of Husband**

The age at marriage of husband plays the vital role in the female life. The similar age between husband and wife and how many differences between them is the most important factor for the couple life.

*Table 5.6 Age at marriage of Respondents' Husbands*

Age Group	Number	Percent
10-14	6	4.7
15-19	52	40.9
20-24	45	35.4
25-29	24	18.9
Total	127	100.0

*Source: Field Survey, 2009.*

The 5.6 table shows that the age at marriage of respondents' husbands, 40.9 percent of the respondents' husbands' age at marriage is between the age group 15-19 years. Only 4.7percent of the respondents' husbands' age at marriage is between the age group 10-14 years (Table 5.6).

## 5.2.4 Family Planning

To identify the knowledge of various contraceptive methods and discuss the past and present use of contraception, questions were asked to the respondents.

### 5.2.4.1 Knowledge about Contraceptive Methods

Before using any method of contraception, one should have the knowledge on it.

*Table 5.7 Knowledge on Contraceptive Methods*

Knowledge about Contraceptive Methods	Number	Percent
Yes	92	72.4
No	35	27.6
Total	127	100.0

*Source: Field Survey, 2009.*

*Table 5.8 Sources of Information on Contraceptive Method*

Sources of Information	Number	Percent
Radio	2	2.2
Television	1	1.1
Husband	13	14.1
Friends	12	13.0
Health worker	10	10.9
Health post /hospital	8	8.7
School	46	50.0
Total	92	100.0

*Source: Field Survey, 2009.*

Among the total respondents, 72.5 percent have the knowledge on contraceptive methods and 27.6 percent are still unknown about the contraceptive methods. Respondents who have the knowledge about contraceptive methods got the information from School, husbands and from friends which is 50.0 percent, 14.1 percent and 13.0 percent respectively (Table 5.7 and 5.8).

### 5.2.4.2 Ever use of Contraception

Ever use refers to use a method at any time, with no distinction between past and present use. In the study area, 32.3 percent respondents ever used any method of contraception and 67.7 percent hadn't used any method.

### 5.2.4.3 Current use of Contraception

Current use of contraception is defined as the proportion of women who reported the use of a family planning method at the time of interview.

*Table 5.9 Current use of Contraception*

Currently Using Contraception	Number	Percent
Yes	48	37.8
No	79	62.2
Total	127	100.0

*Source: Field Survey, 2009.*

*Table 5.10 Number of Current Users using Various Contraceptive Methods*

Contraceptive Methods	Number	Percent
Pill	12	9.4
Condom	8	6.3
Female sterilization	6	4.7
Injection	22	17.3
Total	48	37.8

*Source: Field Survey, 2009.*

The 5.9 and 5.10 table shows that 48(37.8 percent) respondents are using a method of family planning and 79(62.2 percent) respondents are not using any method. From the respondents who are currently using a method of family planning, injection is most popular which is 17.3 percent and then pill which is 9.4 percent. Condom and female sterilization users are 6.3 percent and 4.7 percent respectively (Table 5.9 and 5.10).

While asking with non users of family planning method the reasons of not using any method are like these:

*Table 5.11 Reasons of not using any Method of Family Planning*

Reasons Behind not using any method of Family Planning	Number	Percent
Culture and Religious believes	7	8.8
Currently not together	24	30.4
Desire of children	4	5.1
Husband not interested	7	8.8

Do not know	19	24.1
Lack of awareness	18	22.8
Total	79	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2009.

The 5.11 table shows the reasons for not using any method of family planning. From 79 non users respondents, 30.4 percent respondents said the reason as currently not together ( currently husband is not with her).24.1 percent respondents' reason is as don't know, which means they don't know why they are not using any method. Because of lack of awareness about family planning method 22.8 percent are not currently using any method. The above table also shows that because of cultural and religious believes and on desire of children 8.8Percent and 5.1percent respondents are not using any family planning method. There are also some respondents are the study area whose husbands are not interested in using any method of family planning. 8.8percent respondents are not using any method because their husbands are not interested (Table 5.11).

### 5.3 Reasons of Early child marriage of girls

While asking the reasons of early child marriage of girls to the respondents, the reasons are presented as:

Table 5.12 Reasons of early Child Marriage

Causes of early child marriage	Number	Percentage
Tradition/Cultural believes	26	20.5
Poverty	20	15.7
Dowry	23	18.1
Discrimination	12	9.5
Insecurity	8	6.3
Society	18	14.2
Illiteracy	20	15.7
Total	127	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2009.

Among the total respondents, most of the respondents (20.5 Percent) say that one of the main reasons of early child marriage is traditional /cultural believes. 18.1 percent respondents say another reason of early child marriage of girls is dowry

system. 15.7 percent respondents say the reason as poverty and illiteracy. Because the discrimination between son and daughter is still common in Terai, 9.5 percent respondents say the reason of early child marriage is discrimination (Table 5.12).



## CHAPTER SIX

### ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The main objective of this chapter is to examine the relation of various socio-economic and demographic variables to early child marriage.

#### 6.1 Age at Marriage

In the overall context of Nepal, the legal minimum age at marriage for both male and female have set at 18 years with parental consent. If the boys and girls want to marry on their own then the minimum age at marriage for both boys and girls is 20 years.

*Table 6.1 Distribution of mean and median age at marriage for women and husband*

Age at marriage	Women	Men
Mean age at marriage (Years)	14.5	20.5

*Source: Field Survey, 2009.*

Mean age at marriage of males and females in the study population of the study area is found to 20.5 and 14.5 years respectively, which was calculated by using simple arithmetic mean (Table 6.1).

#### 6.1.1 Caste/Ethnicity and Age at Marriage

*Table 6.2 Age at Marriage by Caste/Ethnicity*

Caste/Ethnic Group	Grouped Age at Marriage									Total		
	Less than 10			Less than 15			Less than 19			N	Col %	Row %
	N	Col %	Row %	N	Col %	Row %	N	Col %	Row %			
Brahmin/Kshetriya and Kayasth				1	1.8	6.7	14	20.3	93.3	15	11.8	100
Sudhi				4	7.1	30.8	9	13.0	69.2	13	10.2	100
Yadav/Guhar				14	25.0	66.7	7	10.1	33.3	21	16.5	100
Teli				3	5.4	37.5	5	7.2	62.5	8	6.3	100
Muslim				9	16.1	75.0	3	4.3	25.0	12	9.4	100
Dalits	2	100.0	6.7	11	19.6	36.7	17	24.6	56.7	30	23.6	100
Janajati				14	25.0	50.0	14	20.3	50.0	28	22.0	100

*Source: Field Survey, 2009. N=Number, %=percent*

The pattern of age at marriage in different caste/ethnic group found varying. Two Dalits got married before reaching the 10 years of age, which is 7 percent to the total dalit respondents. Most Yadav/Guhar and Janajatis have got married above 10 years of age and not reaching 15 years of age. The condition of Brahmin/Kshetriya and Kayasth has been found good as compared to other caste ethnic group, because among total respondents from this group 93 percent got married before age 19 (after 15 years of age). Every 3 in 4 women got married in Muslim society before reaching 15 years of age (Table 6.2).

### 6.1.2 Religion and Age at Marriage

*Table 6.3 Age at Marriage by Religion*

Grouped Age at Marriage	Religion				Total	
	Hindu		Islam		Number	Percent
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent		
Less than 10	2	1.7			2	1.6
Less than 15	47	40.9	9	75.0	56	44.1
Less than 19	66	57.4	3	25.0	69	54.3
Total	115	100.0	12	100.0	127	100.0

*Source: Field Survey, 2009.*

The 6.3 table shows that the followers of Hindu religion is high than the followers of Islam in the study population. it is also because only one particular caste/ethnic group is following Islam religion in the study area. Beside Muslims all other community are following Hindu religion. Every 3 in 4 respondents got married before 15 years of age who are following Islam religion. And other remaining got married after 15 years before reaching 19 years of age in this religion. Among Hindu most respondents got married before reaching age 19 years (57%) (Table 6.3).

### 6.1.3 Literacy and Age at Marriage

Literacy also plays an important role in determining age at marriage.

Table 6.4 Age at Marriage by Literacy Status

Grouped Age at Marriage	Ever Attended School				Total	
	Yes		No		Number	Percent
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent		
Less than 10			2	4.2	2	1.6
Less than 15	23	29.1	33	68.8	56	44.1
Less than 19	56	70.9	13	27.1	69	54.3
Total	79	100.0	48	100.0	127	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2009

The age at marriage in above mentioned categories, literate respondent has got married in the later age group (less than 19). Among literate respondents 71 percent have got married after 15 years of age before reaching 19 years of age. But only 27 percent respondent of illiterate group got married in same age group of literate respondent (less than 19). Most respondents (69 percent), who are illiterate, got married after 10 years of age and before getting 15 years of age (Table 6.4).

### 6.1.4 Level of Education and Age at Marriage

The level of education is a key factor associated with processes of socio-economic development. The effect of educational attainment in age at marriage was found negatively correlated. The inverse correlation between women's schooling and their age at marriage is one of the most remarkable and resilient finding of social science in the latter half of the twentieth century.

Table 6.5 Age at Marriage by Educational Attainment

Grouped Age at Marriage	Broad Education Group						Total	
	Primary		Secondary		Higher		N	%
	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Less than 15	8	61.5	7	26.9	8	20.0	23	29.1
Less than 19	5	38.5	19	73.1	32	80.0	56	70.9
Total	13	100.0	26	100.0	40	100.0	79	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2009. N= Number, %= Percent

A woman who has higher level of education got married in the latter ages of her life. Among women who have higher level of education 4 in 5 women (80 percent) got married after 15 years of age before getting 19 years of age. The remaining got married after 10 years of age before getting age 15 years. As the level of education decreases the age at marriage of women increases, which can be seen in the above table. Among women with primary level of education, 62 percent women got married before 15 years of age. The pattern of marriage is more or less similar within women having secondary and higher level of education. Among women with secondary education 73 percent women got married after 15 years of age before getting 19 years of age. The age at marriage of women with primary education is low as compared with secondary and higher level of education (Table 6.5).

### 6.1.5 Occupation and Age at Marriage

Table 6.6 Age at Marriage by Occupation

Occupation	Grouped Age at Marriage						Total	
	Less than 10		Less than 15		Less than 19		Number	%
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%		
Agriculture			5	8.9	1	1.4	6	4.7
Labor	1	50.0	10	17.9	10	14.5	21	16.5
Business			4	7.1	5	7.2	9	7.1
Service			3	5.4	5	7.2	8	6.3
House work			33	58.9	45	65.2	78	61.4
Cottage industry	1	50.0	1	1.8	3	4.3	5	3.9

Source: Field Survey, 2009. %= Percent

Most of the respondents are doing house work (61 percent) followed by labour (17 percent). Most women (65 percent) who are doing housework got married after 15 years of age and before getting 19 years. Women who are doing agriculture and

labor got married when they are less than 15 years of age than another group (less than 19 years of age). The woman who is doing labour and cottage industry got married before reaching 10 years of age (Table 6.6).

## **6.2 Impact of Early Child Marriage**

Impact of early child marriage is found in respondents' education as well as in their freedom. While asking with 79 respondents who used to go school before marriage only 15 respondent continued their education after marriage. In the reason of not continuing their education they said that their laws didn't give permission, they have to work at home and have to look after their family members. Another impact of early child marriage is found in respondents' freedom. They were not free to go out with their friends and even they could not meet their friends. Among 127 respondents, 64.6 percent respondent lost their freedom.

## **6.3 Parents View Related With Early Child Marriage**

Some questions were also asked to the respondent to examine what they think about early child marriage and what they know about it. Based on these information following sections has been created.

### **6.3.1 Parent's Attitudes on Early Child Marriage**

While asking with 93 parents of the respondents their attitudes towards early child marriage is found different, this is shown in below table.

*Table 6.7 Parents attitudes towards early child marriage*

Attitude	No. of Parents	Percentage
Good	51	54.8
Bad	22	23.7
Don't know	20	21.5
Total	93	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2009.

Among 93 parents, more than half (54.8) percent think that early child marriage is good and 23.7 percent think it is bad. 21.5 percentage parents don't know whether early child marriage is good or bad (Table 6.7).

### 6.3.2: Knowledge about Early Child Marriage

As we know early child marriage is illegal in Nepal, the question is asked to the parents also. While asking with the parents that if they know early child marriage is illegal in Nepal, their views are like this.

Table 6.8 Parents' perception on child marriage practice

Knowledge about Child Marriage	Number	Percentage
Legal	10	10.8
Illegal	28	30.1
Don't know	55	59.1
Total	93	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2009.

Most of the parent (59.1 percent) says that they don't know anything about this that Early child marriage is illegal or not. 30.1 percent parent says it is illegal and 10.8 percent parent says that it is legal which is not correct (Table 6.8).

# **CHAPTER SEVEN**

## **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **7.1 Summary of Findings**

The main objective of this study is to see the trend of early child marriage in Janakpur Municipality. The currently married women of aged 10-35 and their parents were interviewed in field survey. Household and individual questionnaires were administered during survey. The main findings on household and respondent's characteristics are as follows.

#### **7.1.1 Households Population Characteristics.**

- ) 127 households were visited during field survey. Among 932 household population, 467 are male and 465 are female. The highest percentage of population is in age group 5-9(12.7 percent) and lowest in age group 75 and above years which is 0.6 percent.
- ) The sex ratio is high(100.4) in the study population.
- ) Most of the male (92.9 percent) are household head and only 7.1 percent female are household head.
- ) The majority of the populations are following Hindu religion (89.8 percent) and only (10.2 percent) are following Islam.
- ) 77.7 percent people are married and 16.3 percent are unmarried to the total population. In which married number of male and female are quite equal but in the case of unmarried population female are 12.3 percent and male are 20.5 percent.
- ) Out of the total household population, (5 years and above) 61.8 percent are literate and 38.2 percent illiterate where 39.6 percent have higher level of education. It is 24.2 percent and 36.2 percent for secondary and primary level of education female attainment is low than male in education.

- ) Among the population (10 years and above) most (17.3 percent) are involved in household work followed by population involved in study and labour (12.8 percent). Another high proportion of populations are in foreign recruitment which is 11.9 percent.
- ) In the household population most are Terai Dalits (25 percent) and Janajatis (23.1 percent).

### **7.1.2 Respondents' Characteristics**

- ) Among total respondents 62 percent are literate and 38 percent are illiterate. Among literate population 31.5 percent have received higher level of education and 20.5 and 10.2 percent received secondary and primary level of education respectively.
- ) 61 percent respondents are doing household activities. 16.5 are doing labour work, 7.1 percent are doing business and 6.3 percent are in service. Out of the total respondents only 4.7 percent and 3.9 percent are involved in agriculture and cottage industry respectively.
- ) Most of the respondents are from age group 25-29 followed by 20-24 years.
- ) The mean age at marriage of the respondents is 14.7 years and their husbands' mean age at marriage is 20.5 years
- ) Nearly three in four (72 percent) respondents have knowledge on contraceptive methods.
- ) Almost half respondents out of total respondents got knowledge on contraceptive methods from school followed by husband (14 percent), friends (13 percent), and health worker (11 percent) respectively.
- ) Among respondents 68 percent hadn't used any method of contraception ever.



- ) In study area 38 percent respondents are currently using any method of contraception.
- ) Among current user of contraceptive methods most respondents (46 percent) are using injectables as a method of contraception followed by pill (25 percent), condom (16.67 percent) and female sterilization (12.5).
- ) Due to temporary separation 30 percent respondents are not currently using any method of contraception. One in four respondents doesn't have any idea on why they aren't using any method of contraception.
- ) Traditional and cultural believes and dowry are found major cause of child marriage in study area.

## **7.2 Conclusions**

The field study on early child marriage in selected wards of Janakpur Municipality showed that traditional and cultural believes as well as the dowry systems are the main cause of early child marriage. Female age at marriage is lower than male age at marriage. Mostly Terai Dalits and Janajatis are found involved in early child marriage practice. Among Terai Brahmin and Kshetriyas and Kayasth this practice is in declining pattern. Parents do not have proper knowledge on early child marriage that this practice is harmful for her daughter and illegal from the laws of state as well. Parents and even the respondents never saw any legal action against these practices. Though our law and policies on marriage are said very well, the implementation mechanism is very poor. More than half respondents are literate. Very few respondents have ever used the method of contraception. Among current user injectable is the most famous method of contraception. According to respondents, they became deprived from their right of education and even their freedom lost after early marriage. Early child marriage is bad tradition we are following in our society, it should be alleviated. The positive glimpses have been observed through times.

### **7.3 Recommendation**

- ) Marriage behavior is clearly not affected by socio-economic factor alone. Religious, ethnic and other cultural factor also shape marriage norms so it should be altered by changing or developing these norms and values.
- ) Emphasis on female education should be given.
- ) Investment from the government in education should be increased so that people of low economic status also can get chance to be educated.
- ) From the study the gap between male age at marriage and female age at marriage is found six years (i.e. 20.5 years of male and 14.5 years of female). So, the gap should be minimized. It should be not more than five years.

#### **7.3.1 Recommendation for Future Research.**

- ) This research was limited only in selected wards of Janakpur Municipality. Thus, it doesn't reflect the reality of whole urban area of Nepal and rural area as well. So such types of research should be done on both rural and urban areas of the country to exam the overall situation of early child marriage.

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