

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Agriculture has been the main source of livelihood for human beings from the ancient period of time. As in other developing countries, the major source of Nepalese Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is agriculture and the majority of people depend on it for their livelihood. However, the productivity of the crops has remained stagnant and is even declining in some cases despite greater emphasis and efforts placed on the agriculture sector in almost all development plans (NPC 1995). The growth and development of the agriculture sector is, therefore, crucial for the living standard of farming households in rural areas, especially vulnerable groups, such as women farmers and reducing poverty as a whole. Women's work in rural areas is strenuous and time consuming. Besides farm activities, they are also responsible for household chores. Women farmers are responsible for more than 50 percent of global food production. In developing countries, women produce between 60 to 80 percent of the food. In Asia, between 50 to 90 percent of the work in the paddy fields are done by women. After the harvest, rural women in developing countries are almost entirely responsible for storage, handling, stocking, marketing and processing. An overwhelming majority of economically active women in Nepal, more than 80 percent, work in agriculture (Upadhaya, 2004).

But they have only limited access to resources and only limited control over those they access. Of the total land holdings, women own only 8.1 percent and the average size of their land is just two thirds that of an average man holding. Only four percent of the households have women ownership of both house and land. Marital status determines women's access to land and other property. While in the case of

agriculture land, the women ownership is hardly 4.4 percent and 8.1 percent women own less than 1 hector of land (NPC, 2002). Although women have little access to resources, they start working at an early age and in return they get little property, i.e. dowry in their marriage time. After marriage, they devote their whole life to their husband's family.

Market integration of agricultural-based subsistence economies has resulted in positive economic improvement for poor farm households. Cash cropping provides poor rural farms with new economic opportunities, reduces poverty by raising incomes from on-farm production, increases local employment, and, in case of export crops, generates foreign exchange earnings and fiscal revenues. In countries where there is an effective agricultural policy an increase in cash crop production can positively affect staple food supply, which in turn can increase nutritional levels and living standard as a whole. In sum it improves their (especially women farmer's) social and economic status in the society through their social and economic empowerment. Women continue to play a major productive role outside their work in the home, as peasant cultivators or as agricultural laborers.

Women farmer in Hemja V.D.C. Kaski, have produced vegetables for sale and earned cash income. But it is difficult to say that they are freely enjoy with this income and it upraises their status in patriarchal Hindu dominated Nepalese society. Due to the lack of gender sensitive data collection women's contributions and concerns remain invisible. Given the fact that, women are playing crucial roles but still have an inferior status in many area, this study is focused on gender aspects, women empowerment and access of women in income. In the rural areas of Nepal, the significance of women' participation in commercial vegetable farming needs to be viewed through the eyes of rural women vegetable farmers.

Hemja is one of the pocket area of Kaski district for vegetable production. Due to the availability of market and accessibility of transportation number of farmers involving in commercial vegetable farming in Hemja is increasing day by day. Especially female farmers are spending their leisure time on their farm. Being a potential area for vegetable specially potato production and selling, potato festival(aalu Mahotsav) is also organized by Hemja V.D.C. During festival time Different activities related to agriculture has been performed by farmers of Hemja and getting benefit from it. Women farmers in the study area are producing and selling different vegetables such as potato, cauliflower, cabbage, onions, tomato, garlic etc. Women are improving their economic status through empowerment level by commercial vegetable farming in Hemja V.D.C.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Agriculture production is the main economic activity of Nepal. Among various sectors in agricultural production vegetable farming is the most significant in Nepal, particularly in rural areas. There is some vegetables farming such as seasonal and off seasonal vegetable farming, which are entitled as highly valuable product. Nowadays awareness and motivation towards cash crop cultivation and economic activities among the farmer have remarkably increased. Many farmers have also commercialized their farming like vegetable production. It helps rural women in utilizing their local resources and spare time to earn cash income. Thus, it is necessary to investigate whether it empowers them socially and economically. Farmers in the urban fringe area are responding by shifting their crops to vegetables that have a higher market value. For example, in the past in the study area, potato and cucumber were cultivated for home consumption only. Now, the potato and cucumber fields are expanding so that some of the crop can be sold. Production of tomato, cauliflower, cabbage, radish, green

leaves, etc. are also increasing. In the same vein, the workload of women also has been increasing day by day. In this regard, this study investigates women's problems in commercial vegetable farming. Gender role in farming is one of the important factors. Unless farmers are empowered, they cannot have decision making power on the activities of vegetable production and marketing; their social and economic status may not be improved. Although the women farmer of different countries can play vital role to improve the living condition of families but they are not consider as a peasant. In the locality with many years of women involve in vegetable production profession, the female farmer have many practical experiences in vegetable production and some market system. Without economic upliftment women have to dependent on male. They do not have access to decision making and no participation on any social activities. Due to lack of economic accessibility women have to face the different types problems from their family and relatives. Their education level is very low and they do not have any social identity. It is the fact that increment in income level, access in resources and educational level help to increase the empowerment level of the people. This study is oriented to find out women's socio-economic status by involving in commercial vegetable farming.

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

The general objectives of the study is to access the impact of commercial vegetable farming on women's empowerment. However the specific objectives of the study are:

- ) to determine the level of empowerment before and after commercial vegetable farming.
- ) to find the problems of women in commercial vegetable farming.
- ) to access the impact of commercial vegetable farming.

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

Crops vegetable farming is known as the cash crop which has great impact on household. Modern inputs and knowledge return more benefit. In our country due to causes the most of the vegetable production is increasing every year, in the transportation and market accessible area. Modernization and innovation on agricultural sector some groups of farmers involved in commercial vegetable farming. Nepal Agriculture Research Center (NARC) has supported the vegetable production and supply program to the various potential pockets of many districts accessible to transportation and market facilitated area. Farmers, who are involved in vegetable farming have become capable to have attractive income by the vegetable production profession. To boost up the local economy and to increase the per capita consumption of fresh vegetable, production has to be increased. Gender role in farming is one of the important factors.

The rational of this study is to access of effectiveness of commercial vegetable farming to empower the rural women. This study can provide information on how existing commercial vegetable farming bring change on socio-economic status of women. This study will also useful in planning and implementation to the concerned agencies in future.

### **1.5 Rationale of the Selection of Study Area**

Hemja V.D.C of Kaski represents low hill area in western Nepal. It is one of the villages of Kaski district. This is located about 10 km far from Pokhara. According to the village profile of Hemja V.D.C. the total population is 10992, out of which 50.21 percent female and the rest 46.79 percent male, the total households in this V.D.C. are 2138, literacy rate of female is 74.67 percent and male is 89.12 percent, the total household involving in agriculture is 1085 and the total income from agriculture and livestock is 1069 Lakhs, the majority of population living in this area are Brahmin, Chhetri, Dalit, Gurung, Magar etc.

It is a semi urban V.D.C. According to Lumle Agriculture Center 800 household involving in commercial agriculture mainly in vegetable such as potato, cucumber, tomato, cauliflower, garlic, onion, broccoli, cabbage, bitter gourd, etc. are the main vegetables produced in Hemja. According to Lumle Agriculture Center the 25% vegetable demand of Pokhara city is fulfilled by Hemja. Agriculture is the main source of income in a household whereas the involvement of women in agriculture is high. So the purposed study will be oriented to the specific group of women who are busy on their professional vegetable farming and also try to find out the socio economic change in their life due to the activity. This study also tries to know the problems and prospect of commercial farming in the particular area. Innovation and modernization of agriculture play vital role in women's economic status because women play a significant role in small farmer's family.

#### **1.6 Limitation of the Study**

The present study is for the academic purpose. The study is concerned to the specific area of Hemja V.D.C. of Kaski district. Being a student of research, one will have to face time, budget man power, theoretical and methodological limitations during research. It would be better if the whole district be taken for the study but due to time and budgetary constraints it was not possible. The research site is also limited only in Hemja VDC, which is one of the 43 VDCs of Kaski district. Due to the learning stage of researcher it is impossible to apply rigorous literature review and statistical tools and techniques for this research. The finding of the study will not be applied in other cases.

## **CHAPTER –TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Nepal is one of the poorest country in the world, the Nepalese society is dominated largely by males, almost all the women after marriage are fully depended on their husband as female child hardly get education in Nepal, illiteracy makes them unfit for any government or private job. They are unaware about their own fundamental rights. Without education they can't undergo any academic based training or vocation as a result they are left helpless and dependent on their husband. Not all women are treated by their husbands will and laws. Moreover, there are several widows without any means of living as a result of 10 years insurgency, due to their native nature they are often cured forced by pimps into sex business. some women willingly get into this sort of business as they have no education, no formal trainings to help themselves for their livelihood.

90 percent of Nepal's rural women work full time in agriculture and out of ten percent works in shops, trekking, and lodge or in trading. Only handful well to do not work women's task are always rigorous which consume more time. consuming as deforestation has gathered pace under the pressure of growing number of people and livestock, fuel wood is at premium and women must travel even further to collect both wood for the fire and fodder.

The improvement in the status of women could not be achieved much due to various reasons. It is because the traditional outlook of the society towards women did not improve as expected, neither expected improvement in legal framework had introduced in the gender discrimination. The government investment in some areas of social sector remained low, the emergence of competitive atmosphere in economic activities emerged due to globalization and the limited access

of women to the new technologies development and their utilization are also the contributing factor for such situation. Their access to economic resources and opportunities are also limited. Beijing Declaration and its review document including other document related to international human rights. In this context, it is but necessary to implement policy of involving women in the mainstreaming of development through transparency and women empowerment with active support from the civil society.

## **2.1 Developed Commercial Farming**

The following characteristics of the developed commercial farming

- a. High degree of specialization, full market orientation.
- b. capital intensive developed land resources.
- c. Facilities for machinery keeping maintenance and storage.
- d. Low labor inputs.
- e. High technology, high inputs level quality seeds.
- f. Sophisticated management, proper timing of activities, few constraint due tradition.
- g. High output per area labor high and quick return to cash outlays.
- h. High quality and uniform outputs.
- i. Industrial type of collecting, transport and processing, well developed marketing channel.
- j. Efficient agriculture business network.
- k. Well developed credit and banking facilities.
- l. Existence of extension advisory service, farmers organization/association.



- m. Well developed resource back up and training facilities developed early warning system (weather, diseases outbreak).
- n. Efficient communication network easy access to market information good roads and developed transport network,
- o. Relatively easy access to inputs and their fast delivery.
- p. Protected price subsidies, tax reduction facilities for investment.
- q. Access to water, electricity, sanitary facilities and
- r. Access to medical case education facilities etc.(Hossain,1997).

Accessing of various parameters of commercial vegetable farming is quite useful sustainable production.

## **2.2 Commercial Vegetable Farming**

As reported by NARC (2000) area and production of vegetable crops recorded to be 149030 ha and 1489665 mt with the productivity of 9996kg/ha during 1999-2000. The productivity trend is not sharp. It is gradually increasing. There are over 200 types of vegetable grown in Nepal. Among them 50 species are grown commercially. Due to newer technology and identification of new area for vegetables winter vegetable can be grown in summer and summer vegetables can be grown in winter. Due to diverse agro-ecological areas variety of tropical, subtropical and temperate crops can be grown in Nepal. Agriculture is the basis of National income, where as agriculture contributes 40% of the GDP, agriculture is the main occupation of more than 70% of the total population of the country. So commercialization and diversification of agriculture play significant role for national income generation, by using modern technology and refine seed agriculture production can be increase. Commercial vegetable farming means production of farm goods and services intended for mass production crops, specialization

of crop and diversification of agriculture. There are six key factors of commercial vegetable farming location, climate, raw materials, market forces, labor, transportation. Commercial farming is also known as cash crops. It is a kind of business.

Nepal is the country having geological and climatic diversity so it has many potential areas for different types of crops among different crops, vegetable farming is known as cash crops. Commercial farming means extension of farming for income generation not for subsistence. To commercialize the vegetable production farmers have to invest more on farming to purchase agriculture inputs. Commercialization of vegetable farming include full market oriented vegetable production, product marketing, good facility of transportation and access of modern technology.

NARC (2003) explained that off season vegetable production is one of the major activities conducted by in various districts. Which has been very effective in raising the economic status of participating small farmers. In the recent years the area under vegetable crops, number of farmers engaged in off season vegetable farming and number of vegetables marketers has been sharply increasing due to high income. It is also observed that educated and uneducated women are found engaged in vegetable farming.

## **2.2 Women Empowerment Related Studies**

Silwal (1998) writes that women are unable to play active role in public and political sectors due to social, cultural religious and economic obstacles. To bring positive change in women's status, women empowerment is most essential.

Tharan (1997) defines empowerment in this way: Empowerment is a creative and enabling powers the power to able to do something. Empowerment to accomplish something is being able to actively solve

problems, understand how something works, and learn new skills. When people are organized and united by a common purpose, they feel empowered.

Empowerment is the power of tackling problems collectively and solving them. We have this power at the individual level, within ourselves. This leads to self acceptance and self respect, which then extend to others. Tharan (1997) further states that with empowerment comes a new understanding, the ability to acquire new skills, confidence in solving problems, conflict resolution skill in strengthening organization ,individually and collectively. we are talking of empowerment not as power that is hierarchical, exploitative but a power that leads to democratizing, building new mechanisms for collective responsibilities, decision making and accountability.

Dhakal and Sheikh (1997) have expressed that women and empowerment in Nepal is bound up with social, cultural and economic factors that influence all aspect of women's lives. This has consequences not only for the women themselves, but also for the well being of their children. They further write that Nepalese women's lives are complex webs of constraint obligation and sacrifices, many of which are determined from the day of her birth. The caste or ethnic group, in which she is born, determines her position, status and freedom.

Acharya (1996) clearly shows the picture of women's empowerment in Nepalese context and says that empowerment of women presumes the quantitative and qualitative participation of women in the total governance process of the county. In the context of empowerment, the Nepalese women have made limited gains over the last decades; women's educational status and visible economic participation have improved in absolute terms. But, gender disparity in access to resources and modern power structure is also increasing. Traditionally, rural women have contributed substantially to household

income and participated substantially in the household decision making process. But with commercialization of the rural economy, they may be losing ground relative to men because they are less equipped to cope with the commercialized economy. The majority of the rural household are fast losing access to community resources. Such as land and forest, without adequate means of alternative employment, they will not have access to food as more land gets under commercial agriculture. Rural women are the greatest losers with increasing work burden and reduced access to resources.

The civil code (11<sup>th</sup> amendment) has been passed in an effort to abolish discrimination against women. The amendment was positive in respect of women's right to property, abortion, sexual exploitation, minimum marriage age and marriage and divorce. The high level committee constituted for review of all types of legal discrimination against women has already submitted its report.

Bhasin (2000) says, women are expected to remain in the private domain while men are free to public. These two separations were not marked before the industrial revolution. Most productions took place within the household and all members participated in it. Everyone was a 'breadwinner'. There was co-operation between men and women. Women's skills knowledge and their ability were highly valued because they were indispensable for survival. Gradually, the practices remained no more and it started that the 'economic man' moved out of the household and the 'domestic women' left going out in it. Boys went to schools and universities to acquire knowledge and skills for operating in the outside world, while girls remained at home acquiring skills for the household work.

10<sup>th</sup> periodic plan has taken to increase women participation at all level of political, administrative, technical service, as well as in constitutional bodies and committees including group operation and

management, etc. Also steps have taken to launch actions and programs. Such as, motivating employers to increase female labour participation. checking sexual misbehavior in work places, attracting women in the foreign jobs. Necessary co-ordination has established with the concerned ministries for arranging special programs for instance, free education to female students upto cover secondary level, special scholarship to female students, informal female education, technical and vocational education including training, course books and curriculum, increase gender sensitivity in training materials and increase women participation in sports to development working for conducting trainings with a view to develop leadership quality, skill enhancement and capacity building for women empowerment. Scholarship/stipend arrangement has made for the female students belonging to the ethnic groups, oppressed and backward communities for giving them opportunity to get higher education. Some legal and institutional base was set up to mainstream women in the development process. The priority of the tenth periodical plan is poverty alleviation, women's empowerment and gender mainstreaming. This plan mentioned the importance of the many faces of poverty and they are focusing on economic growth, distribution of resources, human resource development, social balance, empowerment and government.

Many NGOs in Nepal are implementing social mobilization work among women by establishing saving and credit groups and co-operatives. They have contributed significantly to raise women's economic status. There are over 25 thousand NGOs are registered in the country and half of them are actually operating and one fourth are making a difference. In many NGOs savings and credit activities for women are introduced, and economic activities only are used as substitute for empowerment. Economic power often creates independence and leadership. This is an important step towards real empowerment (Acharya,2003)

**The Main Activities of The Ministry of Women Children and Social Welfare** are as follows:

Gender Mainstreaming	Establishment of Gender Information Centre.
	Gender analysis of all policies, programmes and the budget of sectoral agencies.
	Formulation of the National Plans of Action on CEDAW and BPFA and strengthening sectoral agencies for their implementation.
	Facilitation to enhance women's participation in political, administrative and economic sectors from the central level to the village level.
	Coordination and capacity building of 'Gender Focal Points' in sectoral ministries
Gender Equality	Strengthening of the National Commission for Women with legal provision to improve the present status of gender equality.
	Gender sensitization of all concerned and at all levels about women's rights by mobilizing NGOs, CBOs and the civil society.
	Revision of discriminatory laws to ensure gender equality on the basis of international commitments.
	Advocacy to bring 20% women in decision making.
Women's Empowerment	Ensuring women's access to employment, entrepreneurial technology and other productive resources; in local level poverty alleviation programmes.
	Providing skill training and opportunities for self employment to conflict affected, displaced and singled women through the provision of micro-credit.
	Enhancing women's employment by providing incentives to employers who hire women in larger number and combating the violence against women in the workplace; and launching programmes to encourage women for foreign employment.
	Facilitating women's networking for leadership and skill development training.

*Source: Tenth five year plan (2003-2008)*

## **2.4 Women and Agriculture**

Feminization of agriculture is depicted by women comprising a greater proportion of the agricultural labor force, greater proportion of women engaging in agriculture, women, performing majority of the agricultural task and women spending majority of working hours in agriculture. APP has given highest priority to agriculture and rural development and has taken a comprehensive approach for easing constraints, by emphasizing progressive private sector involvement. Private sector involvement will be in input marketing and output marketing, provision of critical public infrastructure and services and devolution of rural services by mobilization of the private sector and NGOs as partner service provides on a contract basis. Furthermore, public sector extension services will be devolved to local bodies. Transfer of veterinary services to the private sector on cost basis will be done and promotion of cooperatives will be in commercial milk and vegetable production and marketing.

Feminization of agriculture in Nepal is characterized by increasing trend of women in the agricultural labor force and majority of women engaging in agriculture. Experts states that Nepalese agriculture is characterized by a heavy involvement of women as agriculture labor force. Historically the out migration of men from the rural area has feminized the agriculture system. In addition, the present conflict situation and exodus of men from villages have contributed on women having to take the sole responsibility of agricultural production. They are involved in labor intensive and natural resource based farming system.

The tenth plan states that the extension training activities will be field-based targeted to women and the disadvantaged group of farmers. Extension will be geared to enhance their livelihood through knowledge extension and skill development. However, critiques say that women are excluded from extension activities of maintaining grassland, fodder,

trees and other resource management. Experts say that traditional extension system based on single commodity extension often fail to consider agricultural activities. Which women are involved in a holistic way. Community of rural extension in contrast by cover the board spectrum of women's activities but do not have the expertise to treat specific agricultural task. So expert recommended harmonizing the agriculture, environment and technology nexus in extension services for women farmers (Lohani andK.C.,2005).



## **CHAPTER-THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Universe and the Sample**

For the study, it would not be possible to get the information from all female farmer of Hemja VDC so, only the executive members of women's group and representative of female vegetable farmers were selected using purposive sampling method.

Total female population in Hemja VDC is 5519 in which 1085 women are involving in commercial vegetable farming being a student it is difficult to take large sample size so out of 1085 commercial vegetable farmer, 50 women were selected randomly. Assuming that, They represent the whole VDC.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

The exploratory and descriptive research design has been followed in the study. This study has focused mostly the qualitative data although some useful quantifiable data are also collected. Primary data are collected from field study by personal, contact, interview, group discussion, checklist and observation of the field. Secondary data are obtained from various publications. It described changing socio economic condition i.e. empowerment level of women in the study area and explores the extent of their empowerment with their involvement on commercial vegetable farming.

#### **3.3 Nature and Sources of Data**

Data collection is the important part of any property collected; any study cannot be completed and satisfactory. For this study also, data have been collected through various techniques. Both primary as well as secondary data are used to collect information for this study. This study is basically based on primary data. Primary data have been

collected personally by the researcher. secondary sources of data i.e. research report, book ,articles, published and unpublished reports and documents from the different agencies are also used.

### **3.4 Techniques of Data Collection**

For the collection of data following data collection technique were used.

#### **3.4.1 Household survey**

Questionnaires were used for household survey. The survey was taken from sampled members of selected female vegetables farmers by adopting door- to- door approach.

#### **3.4.2 Focus group discussion**

The focus Group Discussion was conducted in each selected female farmers. In the discussion, researcher tried to participate all members of concerned group as far as possible. The major issues of discussion were focused on active participation of women in commercial vegetable farming and its impact on their livelihood and their level of empowerment.

#### **3.4.3 Key informant survey**

Key informants survey was used to collect additional information about the impacts of empowerment program on women and change of women's status in relation to awareness, capacity building, decision-making, conflict-resolution, future plan etc. These were also major agendas for key informant survey. VDC authorities and social workers were taken as key informants.

#### **3.4.4 Observation**

The observation is one of the methods under which exact data can be collected from the field. There are two types of observation participatory and non-participatory. Non-participatory observation is used in order to observe their behaviors in the organizations where they are involved.

### **3.5 Tools of Data Collection**

For the collection of data, following data collection tools were used.

#### **3.5.1 Household interview questionnaire**

All the necessary information is collected through a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was prepared to generate the realistic and accurate data from marginalized women of the study area .The respondents were requested to fill up the questionnaire. In case of respondents were unable to read and write, the researcher helped to fill up the questionnaire.

#### **3.5.2 Key informant interview questionnaire**

The data were also collected from key informant interview. The researcher prepared the questionnaire for key informant before going to the field. The respondents of such interview were especially renowned persons of the study area such as local leader, VDC authority and social workers etc.

#### **3.5.3 Observation checklist**

Observation is also a major tool of data collection. Women's status of decision-making process, participation, resource mobilization and capacity building of women were directly observed during the field survey.

### **3.5.4 Case Study**

The case study method is an intensive study of project to give in depth understanding of the real events of life. This method involves systematic gathering of sufficient information about a particular person, event or group to permit the researcher to effectively understand how it operate and functions. The approach of case studies varies significantly from general field studies or from the interview of an individual or group. In such Study any research topic would be considered as an individual unit and its all related aspect are studied as well. Therefore, it is a methodology in which data are collected by considering research topics as an individual unit carries out a detailed study on the impact of project intervention.

### **3.6 Data Processing**

The collected primary data from the various sources were edited and entered in the computer and processed by using computer software SPSS. Different tables were formed to meet solution of the research questions.

### **3.7 Analysis of Data**

The processed data from the computer software were analyzed using simple statistical tools. Some result of the analysis were shown in bar diagram ,and line graphs. The qualitative data were analyzed in systematic text form. The location map of the study area has been included.

## **CHAPTER-FOUR**

### **INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY AREA**

Hemja is one of the 43 VDCs of Kaski district, which lies on western Nepal. Kaski district lies in 28<sup>0</sup>06' to 28<sup>0</sup>36' North latitude 83<sup>0</sup>40' to 83<sup>0</sup>84' east longitude. Lamjung and Tanahun are on its East, Syanja and Parvat West, Manang and Myagdi North and Syanja and Tanahun south. It is situated at 450 meters to 8091 meters above sea level. Hemja V.D.C. is the study area of this study. It lies in the north western part of district headquarters.

#### **4.1 Location And Physical Feature**

Hemja VDC is 10 km away from Pokhara. It lies on the northwest part of kaski district with 2138 households and a population 10992 (5519 female and 5473 male) according to VDC profile 2067 B.S. This is one of the city oriented VDC. The research site is plain area and it has fertile land on the bank of Yamdi river. Agriculture is the main economic activity followed by other income generating activities like service, small industries etc. The study area has experienced rapid development of vegetable farming since 1993 after construction of the Pokhara Baglung highway, and improved irrigation facility.

There are six primary, one lower secondary and five secondary schools among them two government schools and three private schools. One higher secondary and one campus in the V.D.C. total literacy rate of the VDC is 82.33 percent.

#### **4.2 Language**

Nepali is the main language for communication among the people of different ethnic groups. All the ethnic group Brahmin, Chhetri, Dalit, Newar, Gurung, Magar, Chhantyal etc speak Nepali language in public place. But ethnic language is also used in family environment.

### **4.3 Settlement And House Pattern**

The settlement pattern is compact in the highway side and ethnic community. But settlement pattern of places away from highway in the rural area are scattered. Most of the houses are cemented or pacca house which are made of block, wood, tin concrete roofs. Now concrete building is more popular all over the VDC.

### **4.4 Economic Activities**

The main economic activity of the people of this VDC is agriculture. Majority of the population of this VDC is involving in farm activities for their livelihood. People are also involving in off farm activities like shop keeping, service, small industry, wage labour and others.

### **4.5 Agriculture**

Agriculture is the primary base of the people in VDC. Agriculture is the most important economic activity of the people in the study area. Food crops and vegetable farming occupy the dominant position in agriculture livestock farming has been taken as an integral aspect of agriculture.

### **4.6 Population Composition**

The population composition of the district is heterogeneous. There are various caste and ethnic group within the district and in the migrated people. According to the national census 2001 the total population of Kaski district is 380527 (184995 male and 195532 female). Human index is 0.593, average literacy rate is 72.13 percent. The demographic scenario is shown in table.

**Table No. 4.7.1: Population Composition**

<b>Particulars</b>	<b>Nepal</b>	<b>Kaski</b>	<b>Hemja</b>
Total population	23151423	380527	10992
Male	115639 21	184995	5473
Female	11587502	195532	5519
No. of HHs	4253220	85075	2138
Average HH size	5.44	4.47	5.14
Area(sq.km.)	147181	2017	19.71
Population density	157	189	557.69

*Source: CBS, 2001.*

#### **4.7 Socio-economic Characteristics of the Respondent**

Women's role and participation in terms of socio-economic activities have been institutionalized in everyday.

The study is emphasized on women so that group of women were selected for the study' out of different women's group fifty women were interviewed as respondent. In this way important characteristics of caste/ethnicity of the sample respondents have been seen here under.

##### **4.7.1 Respondents by Caste and Ethnicity**

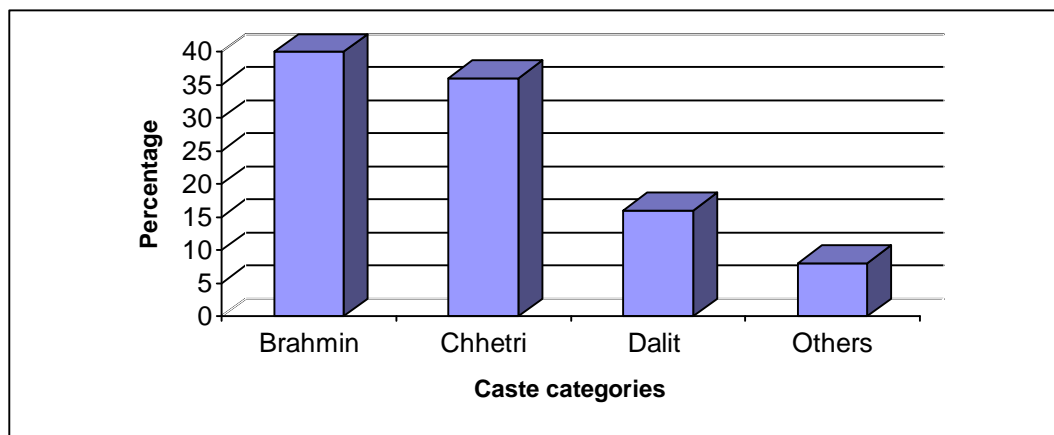
Most of the respondents of the study site are belonged to the Brahmin and Chhetri followed by Dalit and other (Gurung, Newar, Magar etc.) respectively. The ethnic Composition of the respondents is presented in the table 2.

**Table No. 4.7.2: Caste/Ethnic Categories of the Respondents**

Caste Categories	Respondent	Percent
Brahmin	20	40
Chhetri	18	36
Dalit	8	16
others	4	8
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2011.

**Figure No. 4.1: Caste /Ethnic composition of Respondents**



Source Field: Survey, 2011

Table 4.2 represents the ethnic composition of respondents. It can be seen that a majority of 40 percent of the respondents are Brahmin where Chhetri and Dalit occupied 36 and 16 percent respectively. The representation of Chhetries is higher than Dalit and other.

#### **4.7.2 Land ownership pattern of the respondents**

Being a patriarchal society all the respondent do not have sufficient land on their own.



**Table No. 4.7.3: Land type and ownership**

Range of land (Ropani)	Own land		Rented land	
	Wet Land	Dry Land	Wet Land	Dry Land
0-5	6	-	5	-
5-10	22	3	3	-
10-15	15	-	-	-
>15	7	2	-	-
Total	50	5	8	-

*Source: Field Survey, 2011.*

Out of 50 respondent all respondent have their own land, but 6 respondent have low range of land. Only 7 respondent have more than 15 ropani of land. Similarly 22 respondent have 5-10 ropani of wetland. Likewise they are also engaged in rented land. respondent having land less than 5 ropani are also engaged in rented wetland. while wetland mean land with irrigation facilities. In the field survey it is noticed that land ownership is varies in caste and monthly income of the family.

#### **4.7.4 Family Composition of the Respondent**

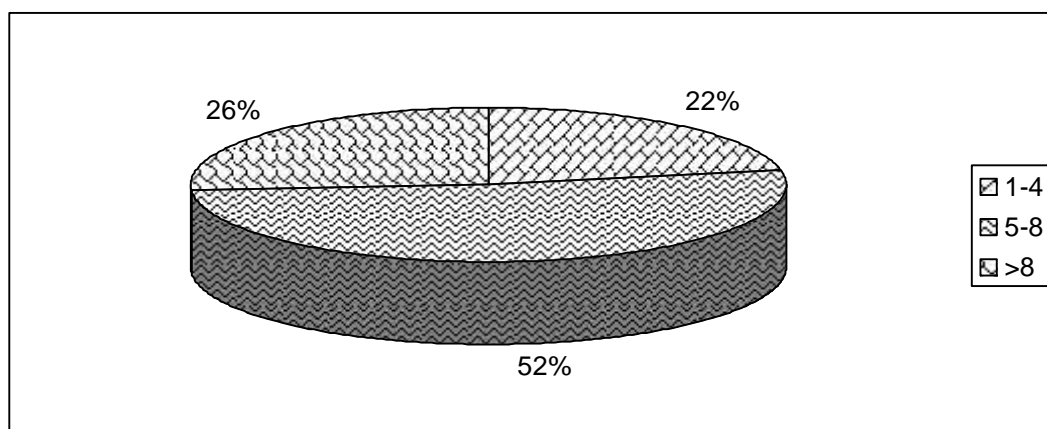
It has been always noticed that the family size of the average. Nepalese people is always relatively large. This has come into existence due to certain tradition beliefs and the unawareness about the consequences prevalent in those communities.

**Table No. 4.7.4: Family Composition of the Respondent**

Family size	No. of households	Percent
1-4	11	22
5-8	26	52
>8	13	26
Total	50	100

*Source: Field Survey, 2011.*

**Figure No.4.2: Family Composition of the Respondent**



*Source: Field Survey, 2011*

From the data given in table 4.7.4, we can see that out of 50 respondent 26 (52%) of them have a family size consisting of 5 to 8 family members, 13 (26%) of them more than 8 people where as 11 (22%) of them have families constituting of one of four family members. It is clearly shows that family size is very large due to lack of knowledge about family planning.

#### **4.7.5 Respondents by Age Marital Status and Family Composition**

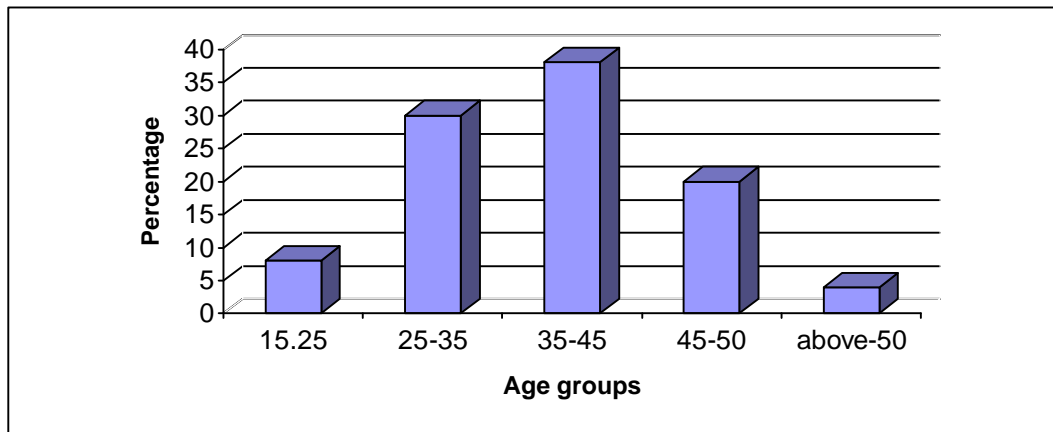
Apart from ethnic composition, occupation, annual income etc. The respondents were also analyzed by age marital status to show the involvement of women of different age groups.

**Table No. 4.7.5: Age Groups and Marital Status of Respondents**

Age Groups	Respondents	Percent	Marital Status
15-25	4	8	Married
25-35	15	30	Married
35-45	19	38	Married
45-50	10	20	Married
Above 50	2	4	Married
Total	50	100	

*Source: Field Survey, 2011.*

**Figure No.4.3: Age Groups and Marital Status of Respondents**



*Source: Field Survey,2011*

From the table 4.7.5, it is observed that out of 50 respondents, all respondent are married i.e. married women are involving in commercial vegetable farming. Table also shows that involvement of the respondent in the farming is fluctuate by age group. The age group of 35-45 are depending on agriculture is comparatively seen high than other age group.

#### **4.7.6 Educational Status of the Respondents**

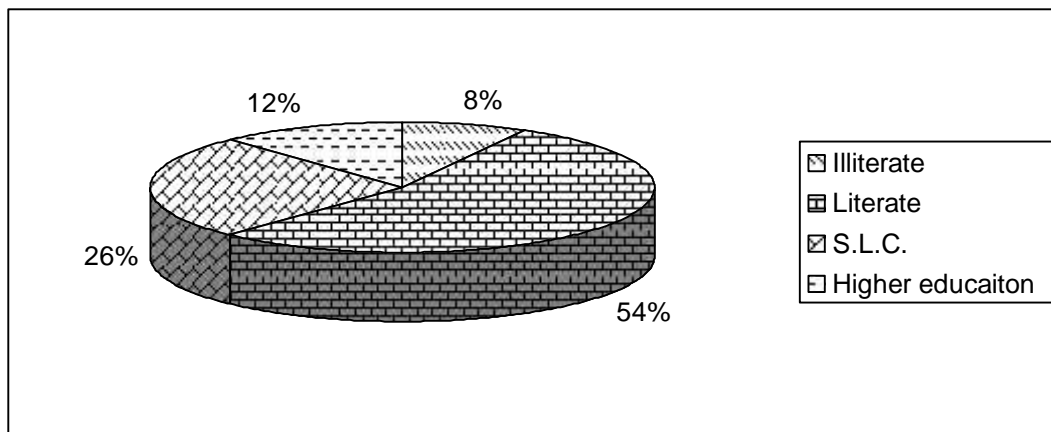
Literacy is one of the pre-requisite steps for the overall development of individuals as well as a community. The experience working in the field of social mobilization particularly in women groups suggest that the success and failure of the program depend on the literacy levels of the members. Literacy is one of the symbol of empowerment.

**Table No. 4.7.6: Educational Status of the Respondent**

<b>Educational Status</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Illiterate	4	8
Literate	27	54
S.L.C.	13	26
Higher education	6	12
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2011.

**Figure No.4.4: Educational status of the respondent**



Source: Field Survey, 2011

Most of the respondent 46 (92%) are literate. However, only 6 (12%) respondent have higher education. Most of the respondent 27 (54%) are only literate. 13 (26%) respondent are found to have attended S.L.C. level. But 8 percent of the respondents are found to be illiterate. In Nepal 51 percent of female population is literate so the educational status of women in the study area is comparatively good.

#### **4.7.7 Income Source of the Respondents**

Most of the people of Kaski district as well as Hemja V.D.C. are depend on agriculture. Cultivation is the main source of income of majority of the respondent. In the field survey it is seen that more than

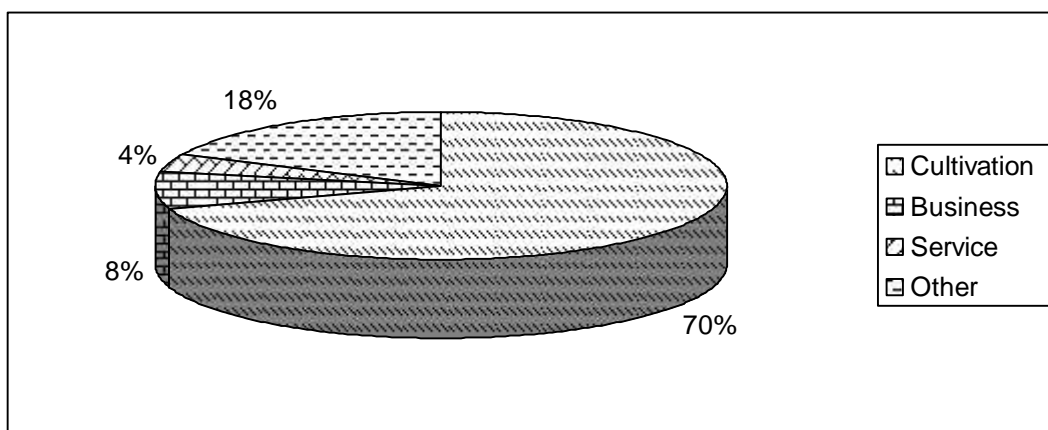
20 percent of the respondent have service, business, remittance, wage labor are main source of income as well as farming in side.

**Table No. 4.7.7: Income Source of the Respondent**

Income Source	Respondents	Percent
Cultivation	35	70
Business	4	8
Service	2	4
Other	9	18
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2011.

**Figure No.4.5: Income Source of the Respondent**



Source: Field Survey, 2011

From the data given in the table 4.7 we can see that most of the respondent 70 percent depend on agriculture i.e. cultivation is the main source of their income. Similarly (8%) respondent have their own business. 2 of them have service and 9 of them are engaged in other (wage labor, remittances etc.). Since Hemja is renown as potato village, most of the women in the V.D.C. are involving in farm activities.

## **CHAPTER - FIVE**

### **COMMERCIAL FARMING AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT**

#### **5.1 Women's Participation in Commercial Vegetable Farming in Hemja**

The research site Hemja, a city oriented V.D.C., is situated on the northwest of pokhara sub-metropolis of Gandaki Zone at kaski District in western region of Nepal which is one of the 43 arming River. The Study area has experienced rapid development of vegetables farming since 1993 after construction of the Pokhara Baglung high-way. The highway passes through the center of this V.D.C. and connect the rest part of the country. Production of vegetable has been increased with the construction of Pokhara Baglung highway, Hemja Irrigation project and pokhara agricultural product market. High demand of vegetable in Pokhara city, improvement in the traditional method of vegetable farming such as tomato cultivation in plastic tunnel and establishment of Governmental Organization (GOs) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and their involvement in the area, have also contributed to its rapid development .Due to the facility of well irrigation system, both women and men farmers in the study area have been benefited a lot from the vegetables and paddy production. Good irrigation system has made farmers easy to grow vegetables in all seasons.

Unquestionably, women play significant and crucial role in all realm of life throughout the country like Nepal. In addition to farm work, in which they are actively involved with men, the burden of almost all the household chores falls on them. But despite the global consensus as to their vital role both on the farm and in the household, their importance in and contribution to agriculture are not adequately

reflected in the available statistics which perhaps obscure more than they reveal (Das1995).

In Hemja VDC, vegetable cultivation appears as one of the productive enterprises. The main vegetable crops grown in the study site were potato, tomato, cucumber, cauliflower, cabbage, radish leaves, bitter gourd, beans, etc. Majority of the farmers reported that they commercialize their vegetable farming between 8 to 12 years ago. Vast majority of the women farmers were satisfied with this farming which clearly indicates that this occupation is very sound for rural women. majority of the farmers cultivated off seasonal vegetable and earn more than the seasonal vegetable farming. most of the Dalit women did not cultivate off-seasonal vegetable because of landlessness. But they can get a little income from selling this production as vendors. Majority of the women have their own land for farming and they are full time farmer. some of women who did not have land they are working in the field as wage labor.

Majority of women in the study site reported them as full time farmers and key person who was involved in this farming and some of them also added that their husband assist them. Most of women farmers send 8 to10 hours per day for vegetable farming during the vegetable farming seasons. In the study site, there is still gender inequality in wage labor between men and women. Men work as a Bause (hoer) and get Rs.500 with one time meal and breakfast in a day. But women work as a Khetali (weeding, planting work) and being women, they get only Rs. 250 with breakfast in a day. These data shows that gender inequality, unequal gender division of labor and practices still exist in Nepal.

Factors such as landlessness, size of landholding, farming system, land management practices, labor market forces, and the age marital status of women influencing the extent of women's participation

in agriculture. Women in study site, who used to stay at home during the off-season of farming, have effectively utilized income- generating activity such as vegetable production. The participation of women in vegetable farming and marketing is greater than that of men. They play predominant role in almost all activities. Majority of them play a vital role in marketing and market related decision-making. Women have played a major role in manure carrying and dispersing, chemical fertilizer application, seeding, planting, weeding, and marketing. Men, however often assist in land preparation, harvesting and irrigation facility. Only they need to open irrigation channel. This is a direct result of our patriarchal society.

In this study, quantitative data suggest that women workload has been increased because of commercial vegetable farming. In other hand qualitative and quantitative data suggest that their workload has been decreased slightly in household chores. The social and cultural values of the Nepali society do not encourage women to work outside the home. Traditionally ,household chores were women business. But in study site, their role has been diverted from domestic work to productive and communal work to some extent.

## **5.2 Duration of Respondents Participation in Commercial Vegetable Farming**

It can see here that the time duration of women involvement in commercial vegetable farming.

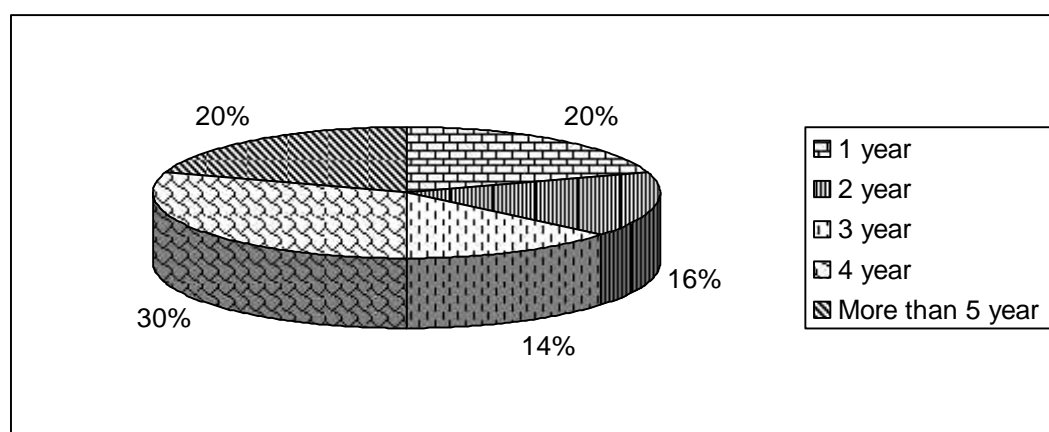


**Table No. 5.1: Duration of respondent participation in commercial vegetable farming**

Participated from (year)	No. of respondents	Percent
1 year	10	20
2 year	8	16
3 year	7	14
4 year	15	30
More than 5 year	10	20
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2011.

**Figure no. 5.1: Duration of respondent participation in commercial vegetable farming**



Source: Field Survey, 2011

Figure number 5.1 indicates the duration of respondent's participation in the commercial vegetable farming. It can be observed from the given data. The majority of the (30%) respondents have been continuously participating in farm activities for 4 years and 20 percent of them have been participating in commercial vegetable farming for 1 year. Thus, we can see that these respondents have been well aware of the benefit from commercialization of vegetable farming and the

concerned activities from more than five years and it is still increasing at a remarkable rate in study area.

### **5.3 Women's Participation in Decision Making**

In Nepal, since the social system is predominantly patriarchal, men also control women's mobility. It is often found that women are traditionally discouraged in education, restricted in legal rights and meaningful participation in every step of the decision-making process. Despite their very high contribution in agriculture and household chores, they have no say over decision-making in all spheres of life. Social norms and taboos restrict women from speaking freely to outsiders. However, the degree of freedom depends on the caste system, level of education, and control over resources. In the underdeveloped rural society, women are bounded by traditional norms and the power of authority to participate in outside work. They do not have any decision-making process. Women in the study site have participation in the decision-making process due to their involvement in commercial vegetable farming, which improves their economic status. Improvement in income allows them to make more investment in education, which makes women aware of their rights.

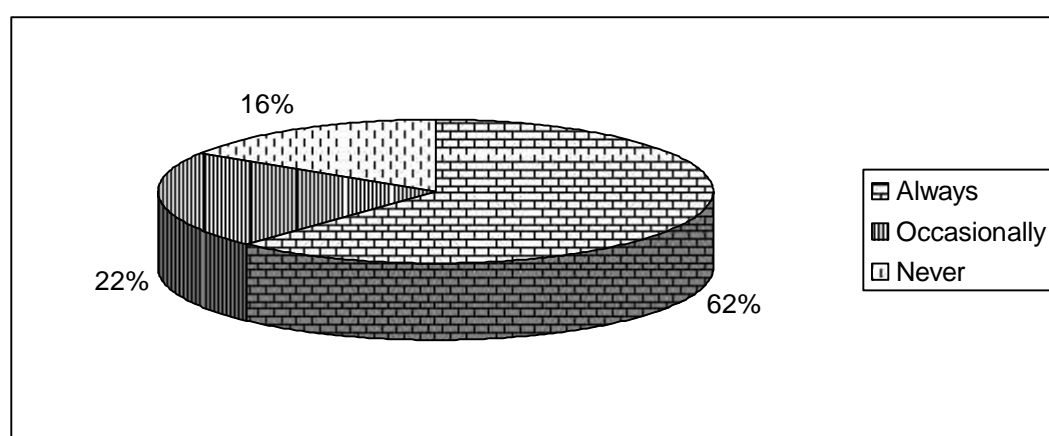
In the underdeveloped rural society, women are bounded by traditional norms and the power of authority to participate in outside work. They do not have any involvement in any decision-making process, which has a great impact on their lives. In this context, the following data provides information about the decision-making level of the respondents in the study site.

**Table No. 5.2: Participation of the respondents in decision making**

Participation	No. of respondents	Percent
Always	31	62
Occasionally	11	22
Never	8	16
Total	50	100

*Source: Field Survey, 2011*

**Figure no. 5.2: Participation of the respondents in decision making**



*Source: Field Survey 2011*

Above table shows that most (62 percent) of the women participate on their household decision making. Twenty two percent of them participate occasionally and sixteen percent of the respondent never participate household decision making. in the study area it is seen that education level and access of women in communication directly proportional to the decision making level. it is also seen that Widow women make decision themselves.

#### **5.4 Women's Access to Income Generation**

Economic status is an important and determining component of social change and development. Positive changes in economy, health education and women's position/status are often regarded as the

hallmarks of social development of a country. Therefore, the study aimed to explore the women's access to income generated by commercial vegetable farming. Less access to income meant that they had very little choices in what they wanted such as meals, clothes, decisions etc . Lack of adequate income means less access to health, education and the perpetual domination of women in the society. Unpaid women labourers have become commercial vegetables producers in study area.

Before adopting this farming they had no productive work and used to assist in household agriculture as unpaid labourers. women farmers feel that this farming and earning has been of tremendous help in making their lives easier. Brahmin women earn more income from vegetable then chhetri and dalit women. In comparing to so called high caste women, majority of so called low caste women earned less. In general, commercial vegetable farming has helped raise women's status in the society through their social and economic empowerment component. It was revealed that before adoption of this farming, the majority of women in the study site did not have any income source and used to work as unpaid family labour. Only some farmers used to sell some cereal crops to local people if it was surplus.

But, now, women farmers have access to financial resources. More importantly, access to financial resources can have substantial positive impact on food security and household nutrition, especially for women and children nutrition. The trend of vegetable consumption increased among the farmers own and family's nutritional intakes. Majority of the women mentioned that they have ownership in saved money. The awareness among farmers about saving was found increased in the study site. They further said proudly that previously they had to take loans to celebrate ceremonies, festivals, and household need.

### **Case Study 1: Houseless to house owner Radha Nepali**

*A Dalit landless farmer is 43 years and has been married for 19 years as a second wife. When she got married, her father did not give her a piece of land. She has only one son aged 12 and now studying in class 6. After two years of her marriage, her husband left her and lived with his first wife. But when he left her, he did not give her a piece of land to work and to live on. Wage labour and selling other vegetable were only the means of livelihood for her before adopting this farming. As she did not have her own land, she had not cultivated vegetable before. Somehow, she obtained 3 ropanies of land from her neighbor for potato cultivation. landowner provided land for potato cultivation without any sharing of crops or money because they would get more profit from cereal crops that grow after potato cultivation. Now she also cultivates cauliflower, cabbage, radish etc in leased land. Besides her own production, she also collects and sells vegetables and fruits grown by other farmers as a vender. She has earned a little more from working others land during peak agricultural seasons as a wage labour She earns average 40 to 50 thousand rupees annually. Last year she earned about 50 thousand rupees from potato cultivation. She also made profit of about 10 thousand rupees from marketing the cauliflower and potato produced by other families. With the saving of income from the sale of vegetables, she has built a small cemented tin's house with three rooms and toilet. Her father in-law gave this land to her, which also belongs to him. She spent about 2 lakhs for building this house. She also spent a lot for her son's education. Being disadvantaged caste, she has not got training from any organizations and she did not get a chance to any exposure visit organized by VDC and farmers groups. But due to this farming, now she has become a member of women's group (Aama Shamuha, women farmers Group).*

*Source: Field Survey, 2011*

According to key informants, focus group participant and local people, most of the women got first hand money by selling vegetables. Most of them keep money themselves and some of them give it to their male counterparts or household heads Key informants further said that women firstly spend their money earned from Vegetable selling whether they like as need base, especially households essential things and if remain they give it to household heads. In the case of control over

income earned from vegetables, some of the women controlled their income and most of them jointly controlled over it with their men. Majority of the women mentioned that the earned money has been spent on different household activities by mutual understanding of household members. Majority of the women were fully independent to spend money earned from vegetable selling and some of them are independent to some extent. Extra skills in farming and marketing have been developed due to this occupation and women farmers, external exposure has been also increased. Women farmers visited other several areas outside their home and village, sometimes as a visitor and sometimes as a seller. Women farmers have become cash earners and due to this earning they also have become independent this income has reduced women's dependency to their counterparts, which ultimately has improved their conjugal relationships. Their family members and relatives were positive towards their engagement in this farming and marketing. They did not only consume vegetable themselves. But also they were able to give gift to their relatives and neighbors, which have improved their social relationship.

Since, women marketed the product, they were able to hold the purse and some utilized the savings for their own shake. Despite improvement in their nutritional intake, marginalized and women-headed households were able to ensure their food security. Some women farmers have successfully demonstrated how the landless can be involved in commercial vegetable farming. Some landless or small landowner families were able to purchase land with the income generated from vegetable selling. Some women were able to build new houses (case study). Many others are also starting to intensify their crops, replacing traditional cropping system with the more productive technique. Because of earning from vegetable selling, their household struggle and conflict was reduced and it has created peaceful

environment in their home. Commercial vegetable farming has increased prestige from vegetable production.

## **5.5 Women Empowerment**

The centrality of the notion of empowerment is located in the dynamics of the legitimating sharing ,distribution and redistribution of power. In the sociological sense of Max Weber, provides an o power is one's capacity to have control over others; and as such, when this capacity to control is legitimized it becomes authority (Roy,2001). In Nepal, decision-making has traditionally been regarded as men's domain. This has been happening not only in national level but also in local level and households level earlier literatures show that regarding agricultural and household decisions, mainly men control over it. therefore, the participation of in power and decision-making is very low. Increasing women's participation in all sectors is still a challenge.

Responsibilities, income distribution is largely governed patriarchal ideologies favoring men prerogatives. But this occupation provides an opportunity for rural women. As a result commercial vegetable farming help them in terms of capacity building and decision-making at both household and community levels. Of the total 50 respondents one third of the women reported that they had received different kinds of training from various agencies. This data indicates that training opportunity was not satisfactory in the study site. Majority of the respondents were engaged in farmers organizations/groups. But Dalit women were found deprived in these facilities. Women were also able to establish self-help saving–credit groups. This farming has improved their bargaining power decision-making roles in household as well community and ultimately builds their capabilities and skills.

## **Case Study 2: Improved Bargaining Power Sarada Paudel**

*Chairperson of Gaurishanker Mother Group, told me that these group activities have increased women's bargaining power. She reported that in her first phase of commercial vegetable farming. She went to local market i.e. Millon Chowk to sell her vegetable products. In the mean time one of the local women threaten her not to sell vegetable in that place because it was her own place to sell. After that, she come back home with vegetable. Now she laughs recalling her past and said proudly 'I am able to talk with you openly and learn many things from this occupation'. The women are now more open with others people They engage in argument easily and without any shyness.*

*Source: Field survey,2011*

Solving problems through collective actions become a kind of activity that the women favor most in study site. Particularly in terms of alcoholism, regulating domestic violence, undertaking the improvement of trails, roads and drinking water facilities, temple etc. This has raised their status in family, community and village life. Men have started to consult their women counterparts before making a decision in household as well as in community level. This suggest that economic independence can not only bring change in gender division of labour but also trigger shift in power relations. Although women farmer of the study site faced many problems Viz. lack of technical skill, lack of men co-operation in farm, and lack of improved seeds and fertilizer but they were satisfied with their occupation. They are regarded as model commercial vegetables farmers by other farmers, who are looking forward to replicate the model in their communities. This farming has increased women's access to, and control over resources. Women's confidence and self-reliance has increased through the earning from this farming. It has also increased social prestige, decision-making power, organizational activities, and exposure. women took part in every kind of village level meetings and raised their voices. These, in aggregate, have empowered them significantly. Women were found



empowered socially, technically and economically through the commercial vegetable farming activities.

### 5.3 Awareness Level

Meeting among similar interested members help to identify common issues and problems and provide a chance to discuss and exchange their experiences and problems in their daily life and make them more aware about the situation.

The access to communication to rural community is one of the powerful means for creating and enhancing empowerment process. In rural community, many of women and people do not have such opportunities except limited media such as radio. But after adopting the commercial vegetable farming and increasing income level bring change in their livelihood. Better access to information sources, Now they Become aware about their right, responsibility, and their legal rights of government services, legal rights of children and women, financial services including property rights and marketing information. As a part of empowerment process, women were given different opportunities such as training, exposure visit.

**Table. 5.3 Change in Awareness Level**

Response	No. of respondents	Percent
Yes	30	60
NO	13	26
Moderate	7	14
Total	50	100

*Source: Field Survey, 2011*

Table no 5.3 shows that 60 percent of the households women are found to be expectantly aware empowered and organized. Only 14 percent of them are found to have not brought any change into their awareness level, whereas 26 percent of them are still verge of it.

#### **Case Study 4: A Model Women Farmer Muga Devi Timilshina**

*A hardworking women, is 46 years and has three children. They also act as her regular assistants in the farm while they are free from their schools .Her husband is a school teacher and he also shares work in the farm with his family while he has leisure time after teaching. She left her school while studying in class 5. Previously, she hardly had enough food for her children ; needless to talk about other expenditures as she relied on her husband's salary. Before adopting commercial vegetable farming, she only cooked meal for her family and used to stay at home during agricultural off-season time. But now she not only cooks meal but also cultivates seasonal and off-seasonal vegetable all year round. Although pokhara is the main market place for her and every farmers in Hemja, but sometimes she sells her vegetable products far from the home i.e. Muglin in Chitwan district ans Kushma, Dimua in Parbat District with her neighbors, women farmers. She reported that 'Now, my living condition has improved as I made about Rs.300 thousand last year. I am no more relying on my husband salary.' With earning ,she bought two milking buffalos and also sell milk in pokhara city. She earned about Rs . 100 thousand from selling milk. She also sell cereal crops product. With the help of vegetable farming , her family built cemented two-storied house and also bought 4 Ropanis of land in Hemja VDC. She took part in many training, exposure visit programme, etc She was rewarded as a model women vegetable farmer, especially for cultivation of cauliflower, by DADO, Kaski. She received certificates with cash prize from DADO in 2063-4-9 B.S. as model farmer. She feels proud of being vegetable farmer and says, 'I have gained social prestige from vegetable farming.*

*Source: Field Survey 2011*

## CHAPTER - SIX

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

#### 6.1 Summary of Findings

Considering the traumatic socio economic condition, gender disparity and lack of women's access to and control over resources, commercial vegetable farming trend before 6 to 7 years bring drastic change such as education, awareness level, capacity building, and empowerment level. It is helpful to reduced gender disparity, raised the socio economic status of women. commercial vegetable farming also support to eradicate rural poverty and empowering the poorest and marginalized women in the study site.

The study was carried out in Hemja VDC. It is located 10 km northwest from the district headquarter, Pokhara. The majority of the settlement are Brahmin followed by Chhetri, Dalit, Gurung ,Newar and others. Out of 1085 women farmers of the VDC only 50 women farmers were selected purposively. The respondents represent whole women farmer of the V.D.C.

The main objectives of the study was to access the women empowerment level through commercial vegetable farming of rural women and its impact on their livelihood. This study aimed to know the types of vegetable production, commercialization of vegetable and its impact on women.

The study was based on exploratory and descriptive research design. The qualitative and quantitative data were collected using both primary and secondary sources. Field study was undertaken using questionnaire, group discussion, checklist, and 50 women were interviewed.

Literacy is one of the prerequisite steps for the overall development of individuals and community as well. In general, women's literacy rate is poorer comparative to men. Eighty eight percent are literate. Only fifty four percent can just read and write. But only eight percent attained higher education than S.L.C. However, the situation in literacy has been improving over time due to introduction of female adult literacy program, which is specially focused to illiterate women's group. Women's literacy rate is also increasing due to their involvement in commercial vegetable farming.

Nepali social norms and taboos discourage women for decision-making in all sphere of life especially for rural women. They have lesser power in decision in decision making in all sphere of life. Among the 50 respondent forty six participate in their household decision-making. But twenty four percent of them never participate on household decision-making process. This data reveals that the participation of women in household decision-making is increasing together with their economic due to their involvement in commercial vegetable farming.

Gradually, commercial vegetable farming bring a positive result on women's livelihood on the basis of education, economic access, awareness level. commercial vegetable farming give house to houseless. Social status and identity to the rural women farmers.

## **6.2 Conclusions**

Women participation in commercial vegetable farming activities is very high than their male counterparts in almost all the activities. Women are able to contribute to the betterment of their family both socially and economically. Due to the lack of proper land, Dalit women were expected regularly to seek paid work for the support of their families. There have been positive changes in the economic status, health condition, education situation and the position of women in the study site. This farming has helped to raise women's status in the

society through their social and economic empowerment. This occupation provides an opportunity to generate income for rural women. This eventually helps them in terms of capacity building and decision-making at both household and community levels. Women in study site, now can raise their voice and opinions clearly. Women ownership and control over saved money was very resonance. Their living conditions have been improved and they no more rely on their male counterparts. The increased income level of the women as changed e life style and thinking pattern.

The self-help saving-credit groups and mother groups provide a platform for women for sharing experiences, making plans, increase social network, improve self esteem, raise confidence and ultimately empower them. This farming and marketing offered them a chance to acquire certain rights and knowledge, their integration into society and market, a sense of personal worth and self confidence, and greater respect in the community as well as family too. Women have more frequent contact with a wider range of sources of information ,which ultimately increase their awareness.

A greater participation of women in farming has increased food security, including improved access to and control over resources. Since women are more involved in vegetable farming and marketing, they have access to the cash generated from the vegetable selling. This improves their bargaining power. Their participation in saving/credit group and mother groups, meetings and interactions among various agencies and groups has helped them build their capabilities. It has also increased social prestige, decision making power, group and institutional activities, exposure visit and marketing activities and ultimately empowered them. The women who used to be shy talking with outsiders are now found bargaining and selling their products in the market. This is obviously a positive situation. Therefore, we can

conclude that women were empowered socially, technically and economically through the commercial vegetable farming activities.

Despite the fact that commercial vegetable farming fostered women's decision making power and empowerment, it is over generalization to forget the significant variation between high caste and Dalit women. Among the three caste women, the problems are more serious among Dalit women. Most of them have small or no land for cultivation of vegetable. Their choices are extremely limited, both by lack of asset and powerlessness to negotiate with both formal and informal institutions. They have a less access in training and organizations than Brahmin and Chhetri women. They did not get any chances to participate in exposure visit or tour so they were less satisfied with this farming than so called upper caste women. In sum, women in high caste i.e. Brahmin and Chhetri have been more empowered than the women in so called low caste i.e. Dalit. It is clearly indicates that various socio-economic variables are inextricably related to the process of women's participation in social organization and empowerment through the commercial vegetable farming.

### **6.3 Recommendations**

On the basis of the findings of this study, following recommendation are made to raise awareness level, decision making process and participation of women in development.

- Adult literacy classes should be arranged by the government to the women of the study area to make them literate.
- Encourage and support women's participation in social and development activities.
- Saving mobilization, entrepreneurship development along with capacity building training should be provided to strengthen and empower women by government agencies, NGOs, INGOs.

- Agriculture credit should be made easily available to improve yields from farming and uplift the position of women in society.
- Regular training about new technology should be provided by government.
- Market facility, agricultural product selling cooperative should be available.
- Irrigation facility should be made regular and reliable.
- Chemical fertilizer, improved seed should be made easily available to farmers.
- Every year farmers are hit hard by natural disasters so, crop insurance should be adopted by the government.
- The government should facilitate farmers by introducing price fixing policy.
- To inspire women for regular saving, women saving group should be institutionalized.
- To gain new ideas and boost up confidence exposure visit should be managed by farmers groups.

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## ANNEX-I

### QUESTIONNAIRE

#### Commercial Vegetable Farming and Its Impact on Women

#### Empowerment: A Case Study on Hemja VDC Kaski

##### Personal Background

1. Name:
2. Age:
3. Sex:
4. Caste:
5. Address:
6. Are you married?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
7. How much land do you possess? Please tell in ropani.
  - a. 0-5
  - b. 5-10
  - c. 10-15
  - d. above
8. Which type of land do have? own land or rented land?
  - a. Wetland
  - b. Dry land
9. How much was the total yield from your farmland last year? Could you please tell me in quantity.
  - a. Paddy
  - b. Maize
  - c. Wheat
  - d. Potato
10. What is the main source of income of your family?
  - a. Cultivation
  - b. Business
  - c. Service
  - d. Other
11. How much do you earn from vegetable farming each year?
  - a. 20000
  - b. 40000
  - c. 80000
  - d. < 80000
12. How much land do you use for vegetable farming? please tell in ropani.
  - a. 0-5
  - b. 5-10
  - c. 10-15
  - d. above
13. What type of training did you attend?
  - a. Vegetable farming
  - b. Empowerment
  - c. Legal rights of women
  - d. Other
14. Are fertilizers, improved varieties of seeds, instruments and plants available on time?

- a. Difficult to get
  - b. Not sufficient
  - c. Easy to get
  - d. Other
15. Are you a member in any social organization?
- a Yes                      b. No
16. Would you please tell me about your academic qualification?
- a. Illiterate      b. literate      c. S.L.C.      d. Higher education
17. How often are you participated in a decision making process at home?
- a. Always      b. Occasionally      c. Never
18. How long have you had this profession?
- a. No. of years .....
19. What are the major crops produced in your farm? Please indicate by priority.
- a. ....
  - b. ....
  - c. ....
  - d. ....
20. How much budget do you allocate for vegetable production every year?
- .....
21. How do you manage to sell your products?
- a. Through farmer's group/co-operative
  - b. Yourself
  - c. Through collectors
  - d. Others
22. In which sector do you spend the amount you earn from agricultural products?
- a. For more investment in agriculture
  - b. For quality education of children
  - c. Deposit at a bank
  - d. Manage household expenditure

e. All

23. Do you have saving account in cooperatives?

- a. Yes
- b. No

24. What was your occupation before starting commercial vegetable farming?

- a. Household worker
- b. Labour
- c. Foreign employment
- d. Other

25. Have you faced any problem in course of your commercial vegetable farming? Please specify.

.....  
.....

26. How much are you satisfied with your initiative?

- a. Very much
- b. Not very much
- c. Not satisfied
- d. Difficult to say

27. Has the society's attitude of society on you changed after you started farming?

- a. Yes
- b. No

28. Do you expect any help from the government?

- a. Agricultural subsidy
- b. Market facility
- c. Regular training and technology
- d. Crop insurance
- e. all

29. How much are you supported by your family?

- a. Very much
- b. Not at all
- c. Satisfactory
- d. Not satisfactory