

CHAPTER -I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Gender roles in Nepali society have been changing gradually. Women are moved into the income-generating job. It is the result of the effort made by the Government, private sector, NGOs-INGOs, and Civil Society. However, they are still performing their traditional gender role. This study is based on the assumption that the socio-economic status of working is increasing positively but their dual role is also creating problem to them. A number of research studied have been conducted in the field of Gender and socio economic status of working women of the society. In the context of Nepal, there are few studies which are devoted to status

Despite having abundant natural resources and people resources, Nepal is experiencing a low degree of economic growth. However, the proper administration of these resources has not been guaranteed, or the Nepalese government has failed to manage it.

If we summarize the current state of the world, it is obvious that there are some areas where male and female participation is not equal. This lack of equality could also prevent male and females from having equal access to resources, which could lead to conflict between the sexes. As a result, it is believed that having access to equal opportunities is crucial for creating a peaceful, fully developed dream world.

Several talks on women rights, their empowerment and their economic independence have continued for decades but Nepalese women's plight has hardly addressed than what they were traditionally facing, in reality.

Nepalese women's problems vary according to their geographic settlement and socio-economic condition. Their problems differ and complicate in terms of the regions and areas where they live, thus, the nature of the problem of Terai woman may be much different than a woman from the hill. Similarly, the problem of a woman from Himalayan region remains just different nature from the mid hill region. The complications arising from the terrain affect their lifestyle. Economic burdens too, accordingly become heavier (Uprety, 1999).

One other aspect of Nepalese woman's economic contribution, which is often ignored, is the amount of labor both the girl children and the female members of the

family put in running the wheel of household. Unless, the girl child's contribution, who is forced to quit her school to fetch fodder and firewood, is taken into account; unless the women's looking after and managing household chores and considered not as economic activity, talks on their empowerment and economic roles cease to have any significance in Nepalese context.

The literature on women and their socio-economic status has grown with the increasing awareness that women development of society. The literature, however, appears to have covered rather narrower spectrum in dealing with specific aspects, such as ways and means of women's advancements. The principle of integrating women into all stages of development process both as participants and as beneficiaries has now become widely accepted by the governments throughout the world. And in recent years, government and non-government organizations, in most of the countries, have become increasingly interested in roles of women play in rural development. They have introduced policies towards stabilizing institutions that would facilitate and encourage their economic contribution.

The importance of women's contribution in achieving the national, economic and social objectives was first articulated at the United Nations' International Women Year Conference in Mexico City in 1975. Since then, there has been a considerable increase of interests on women issues round the world, as they began to enjoy greater freedom defying all kinds of prejudices and discrimination. Women's roles have been stressed repeatedly in national and international conferences throughout the United Nations' decade for women from 1975 to 1985. The Nairobi Conference 1985, emphasized once again that the neglecting of women in development planning have had many deleterious effects, such as declines in food productions and their forced concentration in low income occupation. As a consequence, both as well as urban households had to face difficulties.

Likewise, the Beijing conference in 1995, dealt with some existing limitations for women potential and many emerging issues for the well-being of women as a whole, and to ensure their participation in both the decision making and their say in society. The conference concluded by focusing on the advancement of women, by releasing them from household confinement and allowing them the right of franchise.

Development follows the social prudence where the effective utilization of country's human resources requires that share of all social groups are equal in the development efforts and in the distribution of benefits. The gender biasness and their

exclusion from equal participation, especially the gender group that represents the half population, forces to bear a drastic loss of human potential. Many governments as well as fully in the development process is not just a question of equity, but one of the necessities for national and international progress.

Women have been significantly contributing to the cultural and social development of the mankind throughout the history, despite their roles often been seen as secondary to those of men. Women played important roles in the advancement of civilization since the pre-historic period by their unique character in accepting the co-existence of all living beings, which perhaps led to the domestication of animals and the system of agricultural cultivation in the family or community unit. Since time immemorial, female contributions whether from household viewpoint or in the out sphere have remained significant. Even in this post-modern era, the contribution of women whether in economic or in social and political arena, have remained vital however they are systematically excluded from the National Accounting Estimation.

Women have now more influenced than ever before in the world, but for all their gains, they are still struggling for parity with men. From New York to Tokyo, women still bear most of the burden of household work and child care, though; some studies show that men also are beginning to lend a helping hand. The participation of women in economically gainful activities has increased considerably but they continue to lag behind men in wages that they earn just one-half to three quarter of man's wages (New Week May, 1988). Women are making roads, involved in politics but they still do not have an equal influence on politics. Men continue to hold the majority of parliamentary seats and key government position.

In the participation of household work, women constitute fairly high percentage that of men both in developed and developing countries. However, considerable changes have certainly acquired. Women in the third world still bear the backbreaking work burden, shoulder low or non-paying responsibilities, perform subordinate roles and are accorded lower status than man, in their family and community. They work very hard and strong for their family, community and their country. The women of third world produce half of the third world's food (an even higher proportion in Africa); hold a low paid monotonous factory jobs or works as a richer family's domestic servant. In the countryside they may spend two to three hours a day in fetching water and firewood.

In developed countries, the women status is regarded more respectable and so the occupational emancipation. They are more engrossed in economic activity accounts in the national schedule though there also exist pervasive difference in the women's salaries however the work burden is same. Women's salary is still low however the work burden is same. Women's share of total hours spent per week at housework exceeds that of men in great extent.

In the third world, women's contribution to the household economy, from fire wood gathering, water fetching to child rearing and also income generating activities such as food processing, agricultural products, trading and handicraft production is quite large, but their work is not viewed from an economic perspective (Karki, 2008). Male and female are two wheels of a same chariot, if a wheel cannot work well, only other cannot work properly, at least cannot move chariot towards predetermined destination. Hence it is an essential part of development to coordinate and make equal participation in the every sphere.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Nepalese women are underprivileged and disadvantaged in terms of their socio-economic standing compared to their male counterparts. However, the "Universal Declaration of Human Right" has crossed a half long century along with the global call for "Gender Equity". Nepalese women, who constitute even more than half of the population, are still confined within the four walls of their houses. For instance, Women's life expectancy improved from 53.5 in 1991 to 61.5 in 2001, finally surpassing the life expectancy of 60.5 for men. (CBS, 2001) since the universal figure shows the longer life expectancy of women than of man.

Much more studies addressing women's status, their participation in development endeavors, and income generation activities have increasingly been conducted by various research however, the cell confined household burden and the women involvement in this arena are not, sufficiently reported so far. They perform nearly 25 percent more hours than those of men but their consistent workload is never accounted in the National Account Estimation. The reason is they are seen as household works and lay outside the economic activity frame (boundary) which remains a key factor women under-valuation. A need arises to calculate to their social, domestic and national contributions to get a complete picture of women's economic contribution.

A civilized sense ever advocates tracing out all existing deprivation of women in the society. There is the need of equal chance in decision making authority within or outside home affairs to the women. Unfortunately, Nepalese women remain far behind from enjoying this civic situation. The core objectives of this study mainly underlines to engross women's back breaking household work burden into national valuation, recognizing this as a economic work. Improving the situation of such a deprived group, who forms the major part of the country's population, should clearly be a prime concern.

The need to uplift the women in Nepal was realized lately, and the steps to meet this need were taken only recently. Various incentive programs has been launched along with the call for greater awareness to overcome prevailing stigma-attached social plight of women. New schemes introduced to a new situation. Some of the major activities are surveying of households, formation of groups, preparing village profiles and involving women in educational, health and income generating activities both at the district and field levels. Efforts are made to develop women's social prestige, self-confidence and feelings of equality by educating them, and aiming to set their commanding status over the society as well as their family. Of course, we have come a long way but still many things remain to be done. This is however, a good initiation, though the situation is far from satisfying.

The government of Nepal has been giving a due regard to women development issue after the mid-seventies. But, we are in no position to heave a sigh of relief. Unfortunately, the condition of Nepalese women has not improved despite nearly three decades of efforts with various social and economic reform processes. This under-valued section, in fact, constitutes the over-whelming contribution to the total economic activity even if they are in weak and unhealthy physical condition. This researcher personally has seen a significant earning of women from the small and part-time working along with their day to day duties.

Most of the women in the study area have been bearing double responsibility. Household work like child care, food processing, fetching water, fuel collection and house maintenance are supposed to be their born duties and are done tacitly by them. On the other hand, their involvement in market economy make them a prime contributor of the family but the tragedy is that they have little or no say in decision making process both in intra household or out-side affairs. Despite their greater

participation both in economic or social arena, they remain de-recognized and their labor considered as non-economic activity.

With the effect of modernization and urbanization, joint family system is rapidly growing into nuclear family system. The lineage, family and ancestral identification of a person is being replaced by the profession they are involved in. The life is becoming more complex and only men's income cannot fulfill their all requirements. In this respect, women's participation in the economic activities has become inevitable. Their greater socialization, in fact is the demand of age, and the absence of such integral part will ultimately impair the whole nation building process. The more they take part in economic as well as social sectors, the more we accelerate on development strive, and thereby, the general living standard of the people as a whole. More and more interests are being diverted towards women to identify their involvement in national building endeavor, considering them as a very integral part of development of the country. But the expected outcomes regarding the women as beneficiaries has yet to be realized. In this regard, the women of Maijogmai Rural Municipality have rather fallen behind in benefiting the existing incentives and women related programs that the country have been lunching for nearly about three long decades. The researcher personally feels an urgent and pressing need to initiate certain programs regarding women's withdrawal from their intra household confinement. And these are seemed the major reason why the researcher wants to identify the existing problems and reasonable suggesting measures for women in the study area. In other words, this study perhaps is a product to value the women's unreported household contribution as well as their less reported economic activity which they undertake in small business or wage labor that women are engaged in.

For this purpose, the study has made an attempt to identify the following research questions:

- What is the socio-economic condition of women in Nepal?
- What is the source of economy in the study area?
- What is the role of women in household decision making?

1.3 Objective of the Study

The general objective of this study is to analyze the socio-economic condition of Nepalese women but specifically following are the specific objectives of this study

- To examine the socio-economic status of women in study area.
- To analyze the role of women in household decision making process.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Development is the most common discussion in the national and international arena. Mostly in underdeveloped countries, recognition of women as an urgent pillar for the total progress of the nation has been strongly realized. However, these all things have remained mere bystanders in our country. But for this situation, Nepal has been launching a number of programs in order to uplift the women's participation in such a development endeavor but the expected result is yet to be realized. Or in other words, the gained from our past attempts are not seemed exciting.

Women are remaining a disadvantaged group in our society. If we took a look at the daily activities of our lives, we would be away struck by the stark reality of the two pillars in development, men and women, the latter is rated weak, which, therefore, speaks of our highly unbalanced superstructure. In this regard assessing the importance of women's socio-economic characteristics is felt necessary. Studying the possible prospects and problems related to women, is another task of the days. And this study is the product of this intention. Keeping all these facts in view, this present study will help to identity the real problems and provide appropriate solution they're of the researcher feels.

Similarly, this present study is hoped to be a milestone for all those national and foreign economist and sociologist wishing to conduct the similar study about women. Besides, it has equally help governmental and non-governmental organizations and agencies to have a simple knowledge about the socio-economic condition of the Nepalese Women. So in this study, researcher has focused on the existing scenario of socio-economic condition of women, suggestion to uplift socio-economic condition of women. So, this study has been beneficial for the readers like students, researchers and policy makers.

1.5 Limitations of the Study

- This study is mainly concerned to women living in Maijogmai Rural Municipality Ward no 3 of Ilam District.
- This study has been used random sampling method.

- The study has taken only the economically active population of age between 15 to 59 years.
- This study only reflects the socio-economic condition of Maijogmai Rural Municipality and it may not necessary to be representative for nation.
- This study only concerns domestic household decision making, occupational status, educational status, health status, involvement in farm, and involvement in social and political activities only.
- This study has been conducted mainly on descriptive research methodology.
- This study expect
- This study is mainly based on research in maijogmai rural municipality.

1.6 Organization of the Study

This study were organized with five chapters. The first chapter concerns with introduction of the study dealing with the statement to the problem, objectives, significance, limitation of the study. The relevant literatures were reviewed in second chapter for this study. The third chapter deals with the methodology used in this study. In the fourth chapter contains an introduction to the study are and deals with the social, economic, and demographic characteristics of sample population. The fifth chapter were analyses the finding, conclusion and recommendation of the study area.

CHAPTER - II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concern on women's right, empowerment through income generation skills, their participation in development endeavors, political roles, notwithstanding, hardly any efforts are made to assess their economic contribution in terms of the total household management. High profile seminars and workshops flooded with working papers nearly always stressed on bringing them out from their household confinement and set their pace along with males.

The decades of seventies expressed concerns towards women and became articulate than ever before on women's contribution in achieving national economic and social goals was initially stressed at the United Nations International Women's Year conference in Mexico City in 1975. The considerable interest in women thereafter and the drive for women's cause in recent years, has given rise to the multitude of well intentioned, women specific projects and the welfare programs, both on governmental and non-governmental or at local and national levels (UN, 1987).

In other words, the women, since mid-seventies, have been better privileged with special package of development unveiled for them to cover multi-dimensional aspects of their life. Consequently, the participation of women in economic as well as social and political activities has increased considerably.

Several research works and literatures addressing women's participation in enhanced development, their socio-economic status in society as well as in their families' have been produced by various social elite, however, sufficient studies, focusing particularly on the women's economic contribution towards their families, have remained yet to be done, so far. Very few books or research papers are published on the issue despite the consistent concerns expressed over more than three decades about the economic involvement.

In this chapter, efforts have been made to present a brief review on some existing literatures and relevant studies concerning the issue. There have been some studies and feature articles as well as training paper concerning the women's program, both at national as well as international level.

2.1 Status of women

Human right is the right by birth being a human. Thus there should not be any biasness in ethnicity, sex, language, religion, politics, socio-economic and cultural

aspects regarding human rights. So to honor one's respect and development, UNO on 10th December 1948 announced worldwide layout about human rights.

Age is the important factor determining the working load of women. Aged women have to work more than young girls. Among men and women of same age group, women have to work much more than men. Marital status makes a woman totally dependent upon her husband because her right upon the family property is only through husband. About the women's right upon family property, Bennett wrote that "men are endowed with the right to property by virtue of the biological fact of birth. Women's right to property depend almost entirely upon the social fact of marriage (i.e. on their role as wife." Therefore women's economic security is entirely dependent on their adherence to strict social norms of proper marital behavior (Bennett, 1980, p.89).

Education is the most important factor for the development of human personality as well as for the development of a nation. As women make more than half of countries population, education of women is very important and it should receive top priority in the context of development of modern Nepal. Mahatma Gandhi said, "Educate a man and you will have a person educated but educate a woman and you will have a whole family educated".

The study undertaken by Acharya and Bennett reflects that in Nepal people express less desire to educate girls than boys. This is manifested in two ways (i) fewer people are willing to send girls to school and (ii) even among those who do send girls to school there are very few who want as much education for the girls as for boys (Acharya, 1982).

To avoid any social, economic and cultural discrimination to the women, UNO in 18 December, 1979 prepared convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women known as CEDAW. Nepal also signed this treaty in April 22, 1991

Women's health is a societal issue. Improving women's health and wellbeing improves not only their own life but also those of their children and contributes to improve households and community welfare.

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

Commenting upon the difference between pre and post 1990 years, almost all the women respondents stated that in the post-1990 days, “women have the opportunity to speak and exchange view with their husband, to participate in public forums, institutions and political parties and also get elected in different tiers of local government bodies, particularly the VDC, but they also pointed out that women still are not often encouraged to participate in socio-cultural and political activities, and when they do, their ‘character’ is questioned and, worse, the male members of their families criticize them” (Dahal et al.:1992:71).

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

“The constitution guarantees all citizens the equality before law and equal protection of law. No one shall be discriminated against on the basis of sex. Despite these constitutional and legal provisions, Nepalese women are suffering from social, economic and political discrimination. Major areas of discrimination include citizenship rights, property, employment, reproductive health rights, marriage, family relations and punishment and legal proceedings. Deep-rooted cultural norms and patriarchal values are themselves unfavorable to women. As a result, social preference for sons in schooling, neglect of women’s health needs, child marriage and unmatched marriage bigamy/polygamy are still part of the reality. And dowry and domestic violence are still other problems” (CEDAW, 1995:44-49).

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

The United Nations has defined the status of women in the context of their access to knowledge, economic resource and political power and their personal autonomy in the process of decision-making. Women from different cast/ethnic

groups have different social status in their respective communities and women from the ethnic groups seem to possess better status than the women from Hindu caste group. The dominant Hindu culture and the patriarchal value system of the country have influenced the status of women as their subordinate.

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

Women have low degree of opportunities for their education and have hardly any access to employment. There is lack of women participation in decision making from house to the executive levels. There is no positive attitude towards women's health and they do not get appropriate nutrition even in the period of pregnancy (UNICEF, 1996). Women get married early and are considered as child bearing machines (Sherpa and Rai, 1996).

Human rights are women's rights too which they should exercise. Constitution of Nepal 2047 describes all are equal and are to be treated equally.

The role of women in various farming activities is crucial not only because of the number engaged but also because of the variety of agricultural activities they perform. Women participated in all farm activities required to grow food grain, vegetables, and fruits and livestock farming. The role played by women is significant in the development of the nation, but all these workers by women are considered voluntary (Gautam, 1998).

Gender inequality still permeates Nepalese life whereby women lag far behind than men in economic, social and political positions. Women's traditionally disadvantaged status in the areas of education, health and economic participation has restricted their mobility and deprived them the basic needs/tools necessary for political participation, (Upadhyaya, 1999).

When daughter grows up, they will become wives. In other words, a laborer for another family sooner or later, moreover, if girls is not good at household and farm work owing to exposure to education, she might be looked down upon in her husband's family when she gets married. So, investment in a girl's education is discouraged.

Generally, there has been more girls' dropout than boys at the primary level. (Gurung, 1999).

“In determining the status of women, a number of factors, in fact, are at work and these are taken into consideration. Some factors such as their educational status, their participation in social, political and economic activities and their position in the various professions as well as the legal provisions play important role in ensuring women's decision making power over the family. The more they practice and participate in these sectors, the more they have their share in formal working sphere and hence their reasonable command over society. Unfortunately, Nepalese women have fallen far behind to such opportunities and they are supposed to remain a vulnerable section of total population. They have little or no role in any decision making or consulting process whether in household or outside as their consultancy is either neglected or supposed to be an unnecessary venture (“Pothi Baseko” typical in Nepali)” (Uprety, 1999).

Economically, women have no rights to parental property as well as in the husband's home. They bear 70 percent of the household work burden and yet have no access to economic resources. Even doing the same work, they get lower wages than male as most of the women work as unskilled labor in carpet and garment factories and get low paid due to illiteracy (Luitel, 2000).

According to the preliminary report of population census 2001, in Nepal, women constitute more than 51 percent of the total population in the country (CBS, 2011).

“Discrimination between males and females starts in the family. Females are not included in the decision making process and the opportunities and benefits available in the society are monopolized by males. Women's participation in socio-cultural and political activities depends upon the attitudes of their husbands/fathers/parents/male relatives” (Human Rights in Nepal, 2003:70).

Though there are some work practices within the country to empower the women, they are less appreciable. Increasing literacy, low birth rate, age at marriage are the milestones of women's empowerment and progress. Women's participation in restriction to drug and alcohol right to parental property and society of women in favor of changes plays vital role in the outstanding progress and development of women.

“It is contended that currently there are more than 100 legal provisions in 54 different laws, including the constitution, that discriminate against women” (Human Rights in Nepal, A Status Report, 2003:76).

Although women who comprise half of the population of the country and have always have been involved in national development, they are still marginalized from the opportunities such as economic resources, e.g. property, income, employment as well as other resources. Illiteracy, unhealthiness, poverty and conservative social taboos have been the fate of Nepalese women in general.

Women in Nepal, as elsewhere, hold the triple work responsibilities of reproduction, house holding and farm work. However, reproduction is not treated as work and house holding is not considered as productive work by government system. Women also suffer from discriminatory practices in opportunities for education, personal mobility, which is required among other for skill development and independent decision-making (UNDP, 2007).

Girl’s trafficking for prostitution is tremendous in our society due to illiteracy and poverty. It makes them victims of sexually transmitted disease and in the long run causes psychological depression. Until and unless women are made equal partners in the development process of the nation, no improvement can ever be made in the socio-economic situation of the country. In order to fulfill the commitment made by HMG to resolutions passed by the world women’s conference held in Beijing in 1995 and to ensure women’s equal involvement in the development process in parallel with their male counterparts, the women’s empowerment aspect has been emphasized in the Ninth Plan (NPC, 2007).

2.2 Review of Literature

Women’s relative status varied from one ethnic group to another. The status of women on Tebeto-Nepalese communities generally was relatively better than that of Pahari and Newari women. Women from low cast groups to also enjoyed relatively more autonomy and freedom than Pahari and Newari women. The senior female member played a commanding role within the family by controlling resources, making crucial planning and harvesting decisions and determining the expenses and budget allocations. Yet women’s life remained centered on their traditional roles; taking cares of most household chores, fetching water and animal fodder, and doing farm work. Their standing in society are mostly contingent on their husband’s and

parent's social and economic position. They had limited access to market, productive services, and education, health care and local government. Malnutrition and poverty hits women hardest. Female children were usually given less good than male children, especially when family experiences food shortages, women usually worked harder and longer than men. By contrast, women from high-class families has maids to take care of most household chores and other menial work and thus worked far less than men or women in lower socio-economic groups. The economic contribution of women was substantial but largely unnoticed because their tradition role was taken for granted. When employed, their wages were normally 25 percent less than those paid to men. In most rural areas, their employment outside the household generally was limited to planting, weeding and harvesting. In urban areas, they were employed in domestic and traditional jobs as well as in the government sector, mostly in low level position (<http://womenshistory.about.com>).

One tangible measure of women's status is their education attainment. Although the constitution offers women equal educational opportunities, many social, economic and cultural factors contributed to their enrollment and higher dropout rate for girls. Illiteracy imposed the greatest hindrance to enhancing equal opportunity and status for women. They were caught in a vicious circle imposed by the patriarchal society. Their lower status hindered their education and the lack of education, in turn, constricted their status and position. Although the female literacy rate has improved noticeably over the years, the level in early 1990s fell far short of the male level. The level of educational attainment among female children of wealthy and educated family was much higher than that among female children of poor family. This class disparity in educational attainment also true for boys. In Nepal, as in many societies, education is heavily class biased (<http://womenshistory.about.com>).

In early 1990s, the direct correlation existed between the level of education and status. Educated women had access to relatively high status position in the government and private service sectors as they had a much higher status than uneducated women. This general rule was more applicable at the societal level than at the household level. Within the family, an educated women did not necessarily hold a higher status than her uneducated counterpart. Also within the family, a women's status, especially a daughter-in-law status, is more closely tied to her husband's authority and to her parental family's wealth and then anything else (<http://womenshistory.about.com>).

There is a publication “The Statistical Profile on Nepalese Women” by Acharya Meena, which describes the statistical research and analysis about the Nepalese women and their condition in the context of existing policies. According to this research paper, the work burden of various economic strata seems to be equal however; the women in middle income strata have longer working hours because the poor women lack opportunities for employment due to the limited size of family farm and seasonal character of the demand for agricultural labor. Likewise women in higher economic strata may hire from outside. The work load of women is seemed to be increased in every passing course of time. Nepalese women are devoting more time to conventional economic activities in 1993 than 1978, but the contribution to household decision making process has declined from 60.8 percent in 1978 to 48.6 percent in 1992. The book describes that the Nepalese women ever remains outside from the National Labor Estimation. In 1991 census, only 48.1 percent of rural women are reported economically active but the tragedy is that a large number of women labor seeking out a living for their family still goes unreported. The female labor especially in industrial sector, are employed as an unskilled and as always temporary workers and thus, they are deprived from regular salary and other related benefits.

Different credit programs for women lunched by the government such as, Small Families Women Development Program and PCRW Program have created a positive effect among the women entrepreneurship, however, such credit program have reached to only a small portion of rural women. Likewise, there seems a commensurate increase in the female education level during the last 20 long years. Thus the female literacy has increased some six more folds in this period and also socially, the status of Nepalese women have been improving gradually than twenty years back, except their legal status. In the legal sector Nepalese women are still far behind from their male counterparts.

Exclusion of women performance from the economic activity frame is the main problem in estimating their contribution in the statistical profile. “Domestic work is rarely included in the earning activity, that is to say, economic activity. Domestic work is nowhere defined hence, people who are receiving the same income outside the domestic activity had high chance of being automatically included in the economically active labor force, while those working without direct payment had always a chance of being excluded. Women are more likely to be excluded from the active labor force because if they are working within the household economy, they do

not consider themselves to be receiving any income. This is confirmed by the fact that only 7.16 percent of active female population declare themselves as helpers in family enterprises. This is also confirmed by the fact that 57 percent of women declared themselves inactive because they were housewives. Activities such as post harvesting operations which are performed in the field in the courtyard are usually included in agriculture work. The rest of the work involving food processing from cleaning the grain to cooking is included in the category of the domestic work. This is not justified because there is no reason to consider the preparation of rice pudding as an economic activity when performed for others, and similar activity when done within the household should fall in the category of domestic activity (Acharaya, 1982).

Along with the worldwide women concerning wave of the decade seventies, the Nepalese authority too, showed interest on the issue of women uplift by introducing “policy of women’s participation in development program” in the national planning schedule. Many other studies have also been accomplished to identify women’s problem and their social status in the national level. Considering women as an inevitable part of the development process, the sixth and the seventh plan had set the goals of educational and employment opportunities for women and their further involvement in the national development endeavors. The eight plan, that stressed on women’s participation in the mainstream of the development, set additional objectives to improve women’s status in every aspect of life i.e. economic, political educational and legal. Likewise, the ninth plan had two-prong strategy; poverty alleviation and human resource development. Considering the need of enhanced participation of women in national development stream, the ninth plan has a policy to empower and to extend the institutional structure for the women development with effective co-ordination to related sectors.

Development follows social upgrading where the status of women needs to be equally regarded. Since the women are such integral part of the society, their social status is directly related to the existing social norms, values and their liberty and equity command over the community, which reflect the level of civilization of any society. Many studies, in practice, show the pathetic status of women in Nepalese society whether it be in the educational or the economic fronts or the decision making in their own family. The situation is still vulnerable in the case of their legal status, especially those who once are convicted in illegal offenses. According to Dahal Prakash, “The young mothers who are convicted of abortion or infanticide or

domestic crimes have, indeed long life to go, but they can hardly see a ray of hope for a dignified life even after they are freed and the young women unlike man, are considered black sheep in their family, are ostracized by their community after they are jail-released. No penal code in any country can convict an individual twice for a single crime. They already serve jail sentence for their crimes and once they are released, they fall victim to social hatred and rejection. Who should be held accountable for the hatred and social obstacle they receive after jail-release. The women who lead a dignified life fell victim to circumstances mostly by intrigue, insist or rape, are landed in the prison and the life become unbearably tortuous after they are released as they are socially discarded by the family” (Dahal, 1998).

Pande has submitted a thesis ‘Socio-economic Status of Women Engaged in Vegetable Production in Nepal; a case study of Kumpur VDC of Dhading District’. The objective of this study was to assess the socio economic status of women engaged in vegetable production as well as to find out the role of women in household decision making pattern. The study is descriptive as well as exploratory in nature.

In this study, the researcher has stated that as women constitute more than 50 percent of total population of the country, their development contributes to the overall development of Nepal. But women are still forced to live insecure life because of poverty, illiteracy and gender discriminations. Their lives are dominated by immediate survival issues and heavy domestic workloads. In Nepal, women bear triple work responsibilities in their houses such as: reproduction, household works and outside work or employment. In developed or developing countries, reproduction is not regarded as work and household work is not considered as productive work. In Nepal, the work burden of women is high in global scenario. Thus, the socio-economic status of women in Nepal is not satisfactory. She further says that the status of women in their family is improving in comparison to past now days. The participation of women in decision making practice is also found positive.

She has concluded that socio economic status of women farmer on vegetables production at Kumpur VDC of Dhadaing is getting better, women are able to contribute for the betterment of their family both socially or economically women have multi-dimensional roles and responsibilities in their family. Their work burden is higher but most of their time is spent in their household activities, which is not counted as income generating works. They work only for the purpose of family use.

Most of the women have to depend upon their family in socio-economic sector. Only few women are involved in community decision. A number of women farmer are unaware of the new technology generated and using traditional technology which is reflected by low productivity and lower living standard of majority of women farmers.

She has recommended that economic status is yet low. In order to develop their economic status, government and other organizations should conduct skill development programs which build up the confidence in the women. There should be equal property right of men and women in paternal property. It should also be brought into practice. Women should be encouraged to work outside by their family members. Women spend more time in domestic works which is not counted as economic activity. So they seem dependent on their family. Therefore domestic or households contribution should be valued as economic activities. Various programs have been run by NGOs, INGOs, and human right organizations to uplift the social status of women in national level. But these programs are only confined within cities and headquarters. They should be practiced at the grass root level. Then only the aim to improve the status of women and to bring equality among male and female can be achieved. As women's decision making power is low, for promotion of this, women's participation in decision making power, government and other organizations should provide awareness programs for women to highlight the importance of education, economical and social participation for women, so that there can be gender equity for the overall socio-economic development. Similarly, to promote women's mobility level, their family counterpart should be conscious about women right for freely going and coming outside the home where they need. She further recommends that as heavy domestic workload of women reduces their available time for more productive activities, the family members including their male counterparts should support domestic works of women. As women face the problems of knowledge and skills, they should be given the technical, operational and management training for vegetable production (Pande, 2009).

CHAPTER -III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study tries to throw light on the ‘Socio-Economic Status of Women’ of economically active women, aged between 15-59 years, in terms of their household decision making, employment status, educational status, involvement in farm and involvement in social activities, aiming to obtain some remarkable finding related to their social life.

The present study has been conducted mainly on descriptive research methodology which can be supposed the basis of this study. Some statistical tools and its interpretation was used in this thesis to make the research more empirical. In other words, information and data have been collected and analyzed using descriptive method with tabulated data. In addition to this special attention will be given in collecting in-depth data and emphasis was also given to the cultural and religious variables.

3.2 Universe of Sampling and Sample Selection Method

The present study includes only the economically active women between the ages 15 to 59 years, living in Maijogmai Rural Municipality. There are 250 women in this community. Among them 50 women i.e. 20% were chosen as the basis of simple random sampling method

3.3 Selection of the Study Area

Maijogmai Rural Municipality is one of the Local Body of Ilam district. Despite some urban influences, the village is saturated with some rural characteristics. It was its own peculiar costumes and tradition. As the researcher was touched to observe the existing condition of women, during the short visit. It were endeavored to conduct a study on those women living in this RM focusing on their economic and social aspects. 20 household of respondents were selected for the study using simple random basis.

3.4 Nature and Sources of Data

Data collection is an important part of any research work. Until and unless the data are properly collected, any study cannot be completed satisfactory. For this study also, data has been collected through various techniques. The data, which are used in this study, are of two types, primary and secondary. Primary data was collected by the researcher personally conducting the field survey through the help of a well-structured pre-tested questionnaire and also a checklist to obtain information from the people besides the actual responding whereas the secondary data was taken from various published and unpublished books, email/internet, DCC records, articles and writings of the other people.

3.5 Tools and Techniques of Data Collection

In this study, the first attempt was made to understand the socio-economic condition of the respondent's family. And subsequently, economically active women of aged 15 to 59 years of the sampled household were personally, separately visited while collecting the data. Initially, perhaps, due to the fear and hesitation, they found quite reluctant to answer the question. Only after repeated efforts to mix up with them and participate, they became quite open to the researcher and responded. Thus in this study, all the techniques mentioned above have been applied to get as much information as possible which are discussed below. The following techniques have been employed to collect the data in this study.

3.5.1 Primary Data

Under this the following techniques have been applied.

3.5.2 Household Survey

To generate the actual data firstly, the study area questionnaire tool was applied to sample households. It was both opened and closed questions according to the capacity of respondents.

Similarly structured questionnaire were prepared to generate the realistic and accurate data from the respondents. The respondents were requested to fill up if they could and if they could not their answers filled up by researcher.

3.5.3 Field Visit and Observation

Each households and respondent selected on the sampling were visited and observed frequently during the study, field visit and observation has been conducted to the target people.

3.5.4 Key Informant Interview

Since this study has been based on the exploratory in the nature, key informant interview has been held to those target people. The key informants of this study were targeted community local people and women of the same community.

3.5.5 Focal Group Discussion

To accumulate more information for the study, group interactions on the topic were performed. The quantitative information necessary for the research were collected. The main objective of discussion was to obtain more detail information about the activity of target communities. The discussions were conducted with the women of the target community, teachers, farmers and leaders of the community gathering from similar. Backgrounds or experiences together to discuss a specific topic of. Interest. It is a form of qualitative research where questions are. Asked about their perceptions attitudes, beliefs, opinion or ideas.

3.5.5 Interview Schedule: A questionnaire was prepared which helped to obtain information about economic and social aspects and condition of these women. After a consistent endeavor; researcher successfully performed the task of obtaining answers from the respondent women because of which as much information has been gathered regarding above mentioned aspect of these women.

3.6 Secondary Data

Data were collected for this study from the secondary sources especially from the the published as well as unpublished books, articles and writings. Mostly, was derived from the different write ups about women economic contribution in Nepal as well as the other countries.

3.6.1 Data Processing and Analysis

Data collection was used to describe a process of preparing and collecting data. The purpose of data collection is to obtain information to keep on record to make decision about important issue to pass information into other. Primarily data was collect to provide information regarding a specific topic. Various techniques like table, graph, charts, statistical tools, computer software etc. was employed during the research st

CHAPTER-IV

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction to the Study Area

Maijogmai is a rural municipality out of six rural municipality located in Ilam District of Province No. 1 of Nepal in Ilam District. There are a total of 10 local bodies in Ilam in which 4 are Municipality and 6 are Rural Municipality. According to Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development Maijogmai has an area of 172.41 square kilometers (66.57 sq. mi) and the total population of the municipality is 21044 as of Census of Nepal 2011. To form this new Rural Municipality Naya Bazar, Jogmai, Namsaling Soyang and Pyang were merged, which previously were all separate Village development committee (local level administrative villages). Fulfilling the requirement of the new Constitution of Nepal 2072, Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development replaced all old VDCs and Municipalities into 753 new local level body (Municipality). The rural municipality is divided into total 6 wards and the Naya Bazar is the Headquarter of this newly formed rural municipality. (<https://maijogmaimun.gov.np>)

4.2 Land Ownership

As agriculture is the main occupation of Nepalese, this study conducted in Maijogmai Rural Municipality also depicts the same result. But the cultivation pattern a little bit different as found in nationwide cultivation pattern, that is, several studies have shown that farmers do not get their own land for cultivation rather landlords occupies most of the land and farmers get land in rent. But in this RM, cultivation pattern in land is done by own landowner.

Table No. 4.1

Percentage Distribution of Land Ownership of Sampled Households

S.N	Ownership	Number of Household	Percentage
1	Cultivated by Own	12	60
2	Rented	5	25
3	As a Tenant	3	15
	Total	20	100

Source: field Survey, 2078

The table no, 4.1 reveals that the sampled households, 60 percent of household cultivate their own land, 25 percent of sampled household cultivate land taking in rent. Similarly, 15 percent of sampled household cultivate land but as a tenant.

4.3 Source of Family Income

There are different sources of income to survive for human beings. Some chooses agriculture some chooses service, some live their life with business some with others. Any way for the betterment of the life everybody have to choose a professional occupation which creates some sort of income. The level of income varies from one population group to another. Particularly Dalit people hardly earn income for their survival. Income level in Dalit community is found to be lower than others.

Table No.4.2
Family Income Source

S.N	Income Source	No. Respondents	Percentage
1	Agriculture	10	50
2	Service	4	20
3	Business	2	10
4	Others(Business, Cottage)	2	10
	Total	20	100

Source: Field Survey, 2078

The table No. 4.2 Shows that the main sources of income is agriculture 50 percent of household who are fully dependent upon the agriculture sector for their hand to mouth. In the same area, there are 10 percent of households who are operating their own business for their income. Similarly, agriculture and business, agriculture and cottage, service and business, agriculture is 10 percent.

4.4 Monthly Income of Family

Income is a variable which shows the status of an individual as well as family in society. It determines the economic status of everyone. Therefore an attempt has been made to find the monthly income of the sampled households.

Table No.4.3

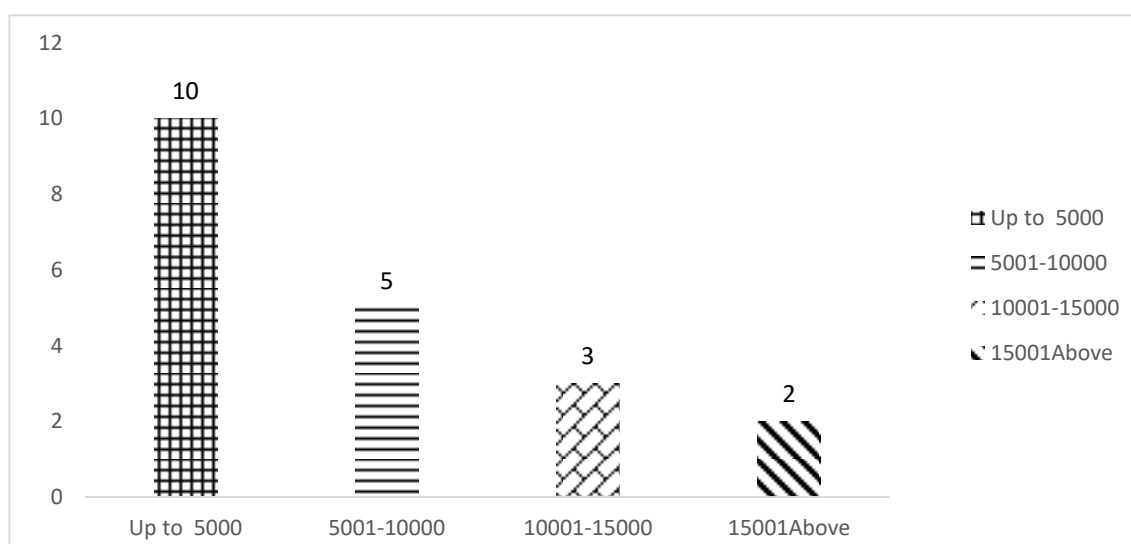
Monthly Family Income of Sampled Household

S.N	Income (in NRS)	No. Respondents	Percentage
1	Up to 5000	10	50
2	5001-10000	5	25
3	10001-15000	3	15
4	15001Above	2	10
	Total	20	100

Source: Field Survey, 2078

The table no. 4.3 demonstrate that the table 20 sampled household 50 percent of respondent earn up to 5000/- NRS per month, 25 percent of the total respondents earns between 5001 to 10000 NRS Per Month for their survival, 15 percent of the participants of the survey replied of earning monthly between 10001 to 15000 and 10 percent of the total surveyed population replied as earning 15001 to above and above 20000 respectively. Thus, economic condition is seemed to be quite satisfactory in Nepalese context.

Fig no. 4.1 Monthly Family Income of Sampled Household



4.5 Livestock Pattern

Livestock are the most important and integral part of Nepalese economy. Farming and livestock raising are interdependent in the agriculture system of Nepal. Majority of

households keep livestock for different purposes such as earning income, providing food and manure etc. Cattle are the common livestock of Rural Municipality. People have kept livestock for the same above-mentioned purposes. For many families, they have become main source of income. Especially the people of Maijogmai Rural Municipality Ward no.3 earn income by selling the milk of cow.

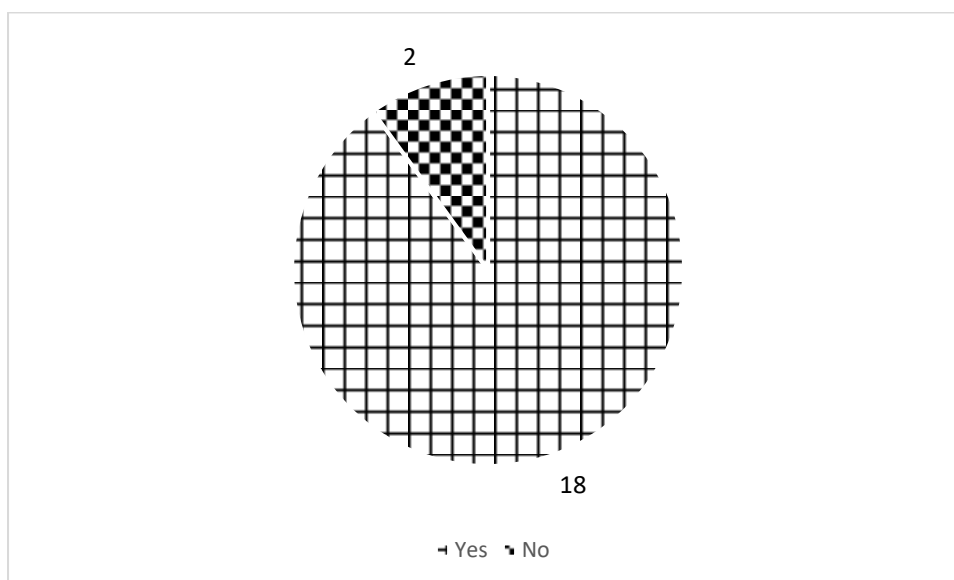
Table No. 4.4
Livestock Pattern of Sampled Household

S.N	Cattles	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Yes	18	90
2	No	2	10
	Total	20	100

Source: Field Survey, 2067

The table no. 4.4 shows that in the sampled area; 90 percent of the population hold cattle and 10 do not. This shows that more than half percent of the respondent are earning income through their livestock.

Fig. no 4.2 Livestock Pattern of Sampled Household



4.6 Family Composition

Family is a social institution and the most important primary group of the society as well. It is the first and the most important intermediate social environment to which a child is exposed and where a child develops its basic attitudes. Along with the wave

of modernization and urbanization, the traditional family system has been changing its shape. Traditional joint family system is gradually fading away replacing by the nuclear family system. Less of the household is found living jointly.

**Table No. 4.5
Structure of Sampled Household**

S.N	Family Structure	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Nuclear	8	40
2	Joint	12	60
	Total	20	100

Source: Field Survey, 2078

The table no. 4.5 indicates that the existence of Nuclear family constitutes fairly high percentage that is 60 percent than that of joint family 20 percent. As the structure of Nuclear family is increasing everywhere, this study also shows the increasing trend of Nuclear family in the study area.

4.7 Caste/Ethnicity

Caste is one of the main factors that influence the social life of an individual. To a great extent, the status of women is determined by the caste. Feasts and festivals, norms and values of the society, magnitude of freedom, decision making powers etc. are some of the elements that are affected by the caste and ethnicity.

**Table No. 4.6
Women by Caste/Ethnicity**

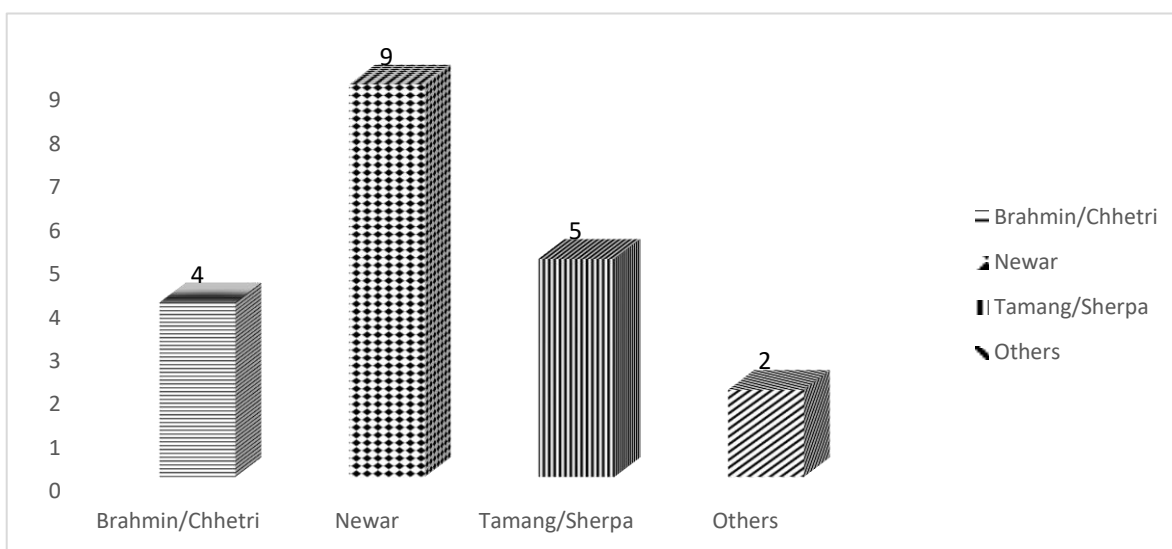
S.N	Caste/Ethnicity	No. of Respondent	Percentage
1	Brahmin/Chhetri	4	20
2	Newar	9	45
3	Tamang/Sherpa	5	25
4	Others	2	10
	Total	20	100

Source: Field Survey, 2078

The Table no. 4.6 shows that the number of Newar i.e. 45 percent is the largest in distribution as this is the largest settlement in this area. Then comes the number of Tamang/sherapa which constitute 25 percent out of the total population followed by

Brahmin/ Chhetri which figured about 20 percent and other caste constitute 10 respectively out of the sampled population.

Fig. no. 4.3 Women by Caste/Ethnicity



4.8 Age Distribution of Respondents

Age is an important demographic characteristic. Roles and responsibilities, ownership of land/property, decision making power of a woman are affected by their age. In this study, the age of the respondents ranged from 15 to 59 years.

Table No. 4.7

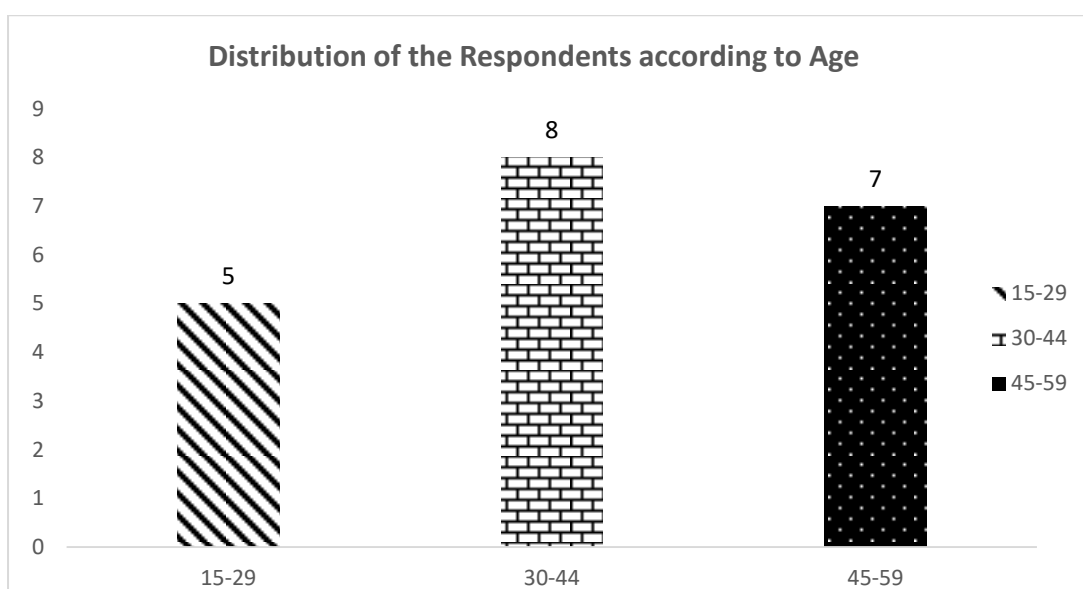
Age Distribution of Respondents

S.N	Age (group years)	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	15-29	8	40
2	30-44	5	25
3	45-59	7	35
	Total	20	100

Source: Field Survey, 2078

The table no. 4.7 elaborate that the age distribution of the sampled women has been presented under 3 age groups. Highest percentage of respondents was of 15-29 years age group that is 40 percent. 35 percent of the respondents fall under the age group of 45-59 years and 25 percent of the respondents fall under the age group of 15-29 which is lowest percent of the respondents.

Fig. no 4.4 Age Distribution of Respondents



4.9 Education Levels of the Respondents

Education is one of the major factors to measure the social status of any community. Education is potentially an agent for awareness and change, and therefore it is central to the process of women’s empowerment. Education is often seen as a stepping stone for leading a better life. Generally, the level of the education is the indicator of the social status of women. Accesses to job opportunity, economic independency, decision making power etc. of the women are evaluated in terms of education of the women.

Table No. 4.8

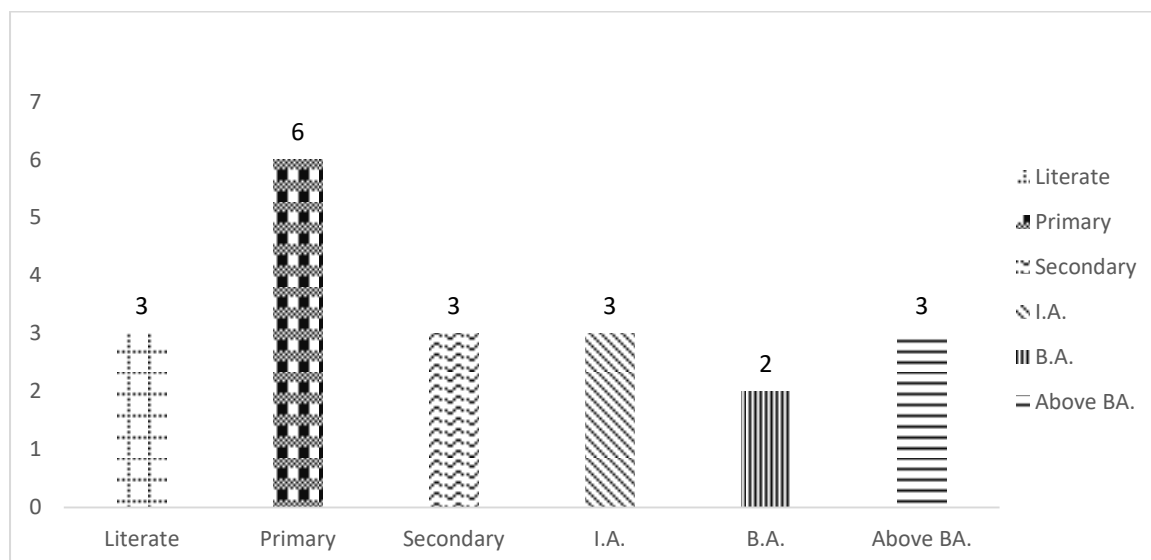
Percentage of Education of Respondents

S.N	Education Level	No of Respondent	Percentage
1	Literate	3	15
2	Primary	6	30
3	Secondary	3	15
4	I.A.	3	15
5	B.A.	2	10
6	Above BA.	3	15
	Total	20	100

Source: Field Survey, 2078

The table no.4.8 shows that the 30.65 percent of the respondents were found literate, Regarding the respondents who can only read or write as literate, the literacy rate of the the percentage of women with the education under S.L.C. was 15 where as 15 percent were I.A. passed, 15 percent were B.A. passed and only 15 percent of respondents hold Master's degree.

Fig. no 4.5 Percentage of Education of Respondents



4.10 Religion of the Respondents

Religion has a great impact of life. The social and religious tradition has greatly influenced the life of women basically Hindu and Buddhism are the main religions of the study area. Mostly Brahmins/Chettri, most of the Newars and lower caste untouchables follow Hinduism whereas Lama and Rai believes in Buddhism. Beside these religion, follower of other religion that is Christian are very small in numbers. Most of the people believe in Hindu religion. The following is the religion wise distribution of the respondent women of this area.

Table No. 4.9

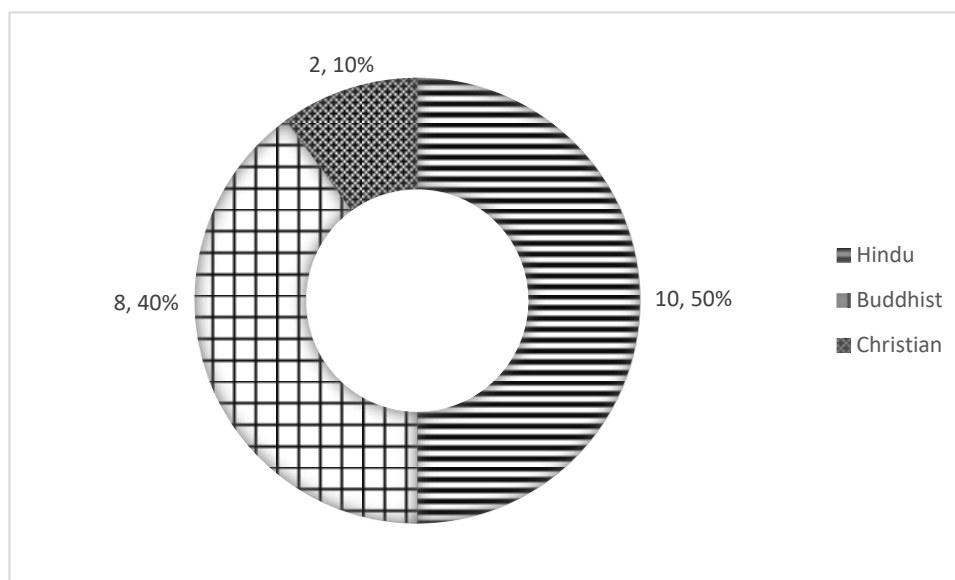
Percentage Distribution of Religion of the Respondents

S.N	Religion	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Hindu	10	50
2	Buddhist	8	40
3	Christian	2	10
	Total	20	100

Source: Field Survey, 2078

The table no. 4.9 Hindus constitute most of the sampled respondents. The followers of Hindu religion are figured as 50 percent out of the total number. Buddhism is able to place a second position composing 40 percent out of the total respondent women. Similarly, Christian religion shows only a 10 percent of followers which is the smallest percent among the currently practiced religion.

Fig. no. 4.6 Religion of the Respondents



4.11 Respondents' Children's Size

The health status of the women is also affected by the number of children she had reproduced. Hence, this study tries to find out the children size of the sampled women.

Table No. 4.10

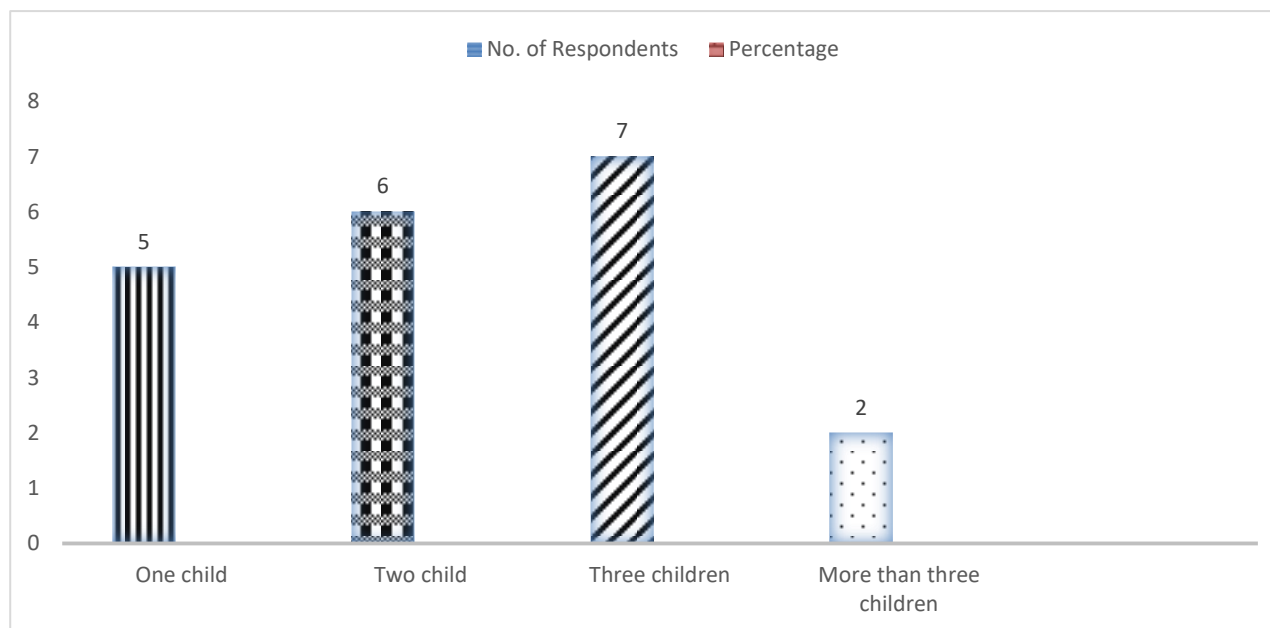
Percentage Distribution of the Respondent by Children Size

S.N	No. of Children	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	One child	5	25
2	Two child	6	30
3	Three children	7	35
4	More than three children	2	10
	Total	20	100

Source: Field survey, 2078

The table no. 4.10 reveals, the percentages of the women possessing only one child were 25 percent. In the same way, 30 percent of the respondents bear two children, 35 percent with three children and 10 percent with more than three children .

Fig. No. 4.7 Respondents' Children's Size



4.12 Decision Making Process

Decision making power of Nepalese women is very low. Because most women being illiterate, their male counterparts do not believe in their capacity of decision making and hence women's participation in decision making remains low. The degree of decision making of rural women is much lower than that of urban women. A woman who is considered as a housewife has to perform almost all domestic works. In the study area, a clear division of works between male and female can be seen. Decisions for domestic matters such as what food to cook, when to cook, how to care children, how to look after livestock, which breed of livestock to select, how many livestock to keep and how to celebrate festivals etc. are generally made by women. Women are confined to a limited circle of domestic sphere inside the home. It is because their exposure to the outer spaces is considered to malpractice according to the social beliefs. On the other hand, on the matters those are regarded as serious and complicated decisions are made often by males. The matters like arranging marriages, taking and giving loans, buying and selling property, choosing jobs, managing education for children etc. lie in the sphere of male.

In the category of domestic expenditure decision, women are seemed to lead men which, perhaps, because of their high input on subsistence and domestic sector. But by contrary, in deciding about the disposal of household production and major capital transaction, man hold a leading role. Men dominance in decision making process is observed symmetrically high in each community but the difference is found in terms of extent; women are involved in such activity. In addition to this, some social as well as demographic factors such as literary status of female, age, employment, economic exchange at marriage, educational achievement, gender stereotype and women's political and social conscious heavily affects the decision making command over the family. From the observation, cash earning women have indeed a greater say in household decision but still they are not sufficiently consulted while allocating the capital resources.

Table No. 4.11
Respondents in Terms of Final Decision Making

S.N	Activities	Final Deciding Authority			Total
		Percentage			
		Male	Female	Jointly by all member	
1	Buying/Selling food	13.44	55.38	31.18	100
2	Buying/Selling cattle	25.74	47.52	26.74	100
3	Buying/Selling Land	60.75	5.38	33.87	100
4	Buying Clothes	9.68	48.92	41.4	100
5	Celebrating festivals	20.97	16.67	62.37	100
6	Arranging Marriage	51.08	5.38	43.55	100
7	Investment Activities	32.8	6.45	60.75	100
8	Lending/Borrowing Activities	73.26	5.38	21.36	100
9	Children Education	19.35	14.52	66.13	100
10	Cropping Pattern	4.05	63.51	32.44	100

Source: Field Survey, 2078

The table no. 4.11 clears that some fundamental characteristics of decision making practice within the household of the research area. The final decision making share seems greater in women especially in category of household affairs while in the question of resource allocation and in the disposal wealth and capital, men have excessively reserved the ultimate decision right.

The condition of women in terms of social status whether in Brahmin/Chettri or other ethnic groups is expected to be rise because of the modernization and urbanization trend. The study shows their greater influence in firm management. The final authority to decide anything is seemed to be reserved to men observed.

4.13 Political Involvement

The participation in politics also shows the status of women in society. The level of participation in politics in respect of women in Nepal is low. It is thought that the place of women is at home and not in politics. Politics like other factors is a major factor determining women status. It makes women aware of their rights and helps them to raise voices against all kinds of injustice and violence that they have to face. Only a few women have political know-how and are involved in politics directly or indirectly in rural areas. This study has attempted to assess the political status of the respondents. The table shows the same.

Table No. 4.12

Political Involvement of Respondents

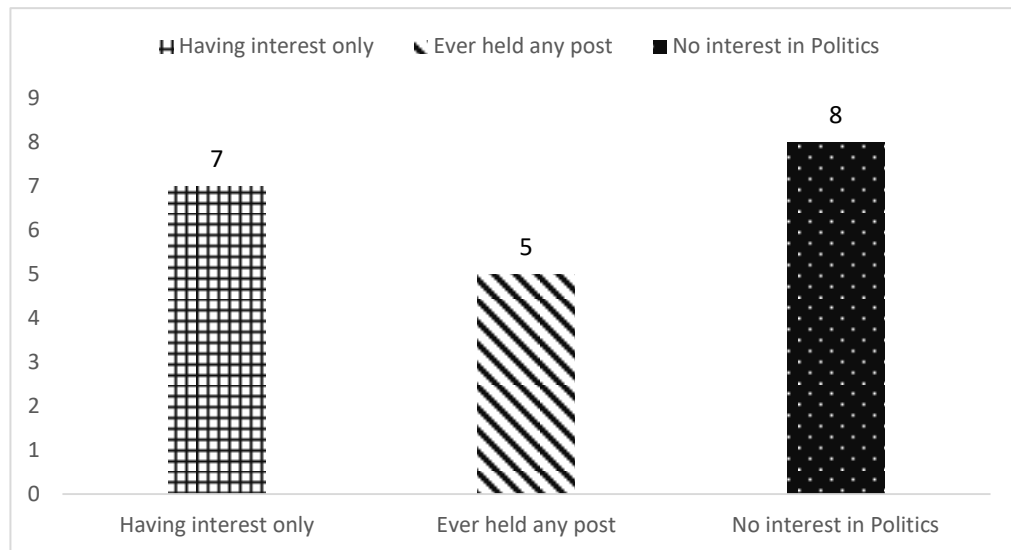
S.N	Political status	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Having interest only	7	35
2	Ever held any post	5	25
3	No interest in Politics	8	40
	Total	20	100

Source: Field Survey, 2078

The table no. 4.12 displays that the majority of respondents 40 percent had no interest in politics, 25 percent of them had ever held posts of any kind, such as ward committee member, member of school management committee, member of political

party etc. 35 percent of the respondents had only interest in politics but they had never held any posts due to many reasons.

Fig.no. 4.8 Political Involvement of Respondents



CHAPTER-V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

The majority of the population in Nepal is made up of women, however despite this; they still have limited access to many possibilities that could improve their overall status. The contribution of rural women to the household economy in terms of gathering firewood, fetching water, caring for children, and also income-generating activities like food processing, agricultural products, trading, and handicraft production is quite significant, but their labor is not seen from an economic standpoint. Despite the unwavering understanding that women's larger participation is necessary for the growth of the country, a number of social and cultural issues, which fairly are indigenous, have been remaining the major setbacks impeding the women potential for years. Internalized cultural previsions, gender bias conception, traditional down looking compel them to think themselves as a weak and unfortunate section of the society.

One another aspect of Nepalese women problems and also their economic support over their family varies according to their geography of their settlement. It includes also the cultural variation and its relation to their economic and social life. Their problems also differ and complicate in terms of the religion and areas they live in. when seen strictly, in economic terms, the nature of the problem of the rural women differs from that of the urban. But the gradual increase of their awareness and their economic performances, women have now more influence than ever before. From the beginning of the 6th plan to onwards, the woman uplifting programs are on the rise and now various study reveals that the women have greater say in household management both as laborers and as managers.

The methodology used for this study is descriptive research. It exclusively includes economically active women who are between the ages of 15 and 59 because the study's primary objective is to evaluate the economic contributions of women and their socioeconomic standing within households. Approximately one in ten people in each ward of the Rural Municipality were chosen at random to participate in the survey as responders. In order to learn more about their economic, social, religious, and health conditions, the study was done using interviews and a standardized

questionnaire. Analyses of their habitat, food, clothes, manners, and methods of life have also been done through observation.

While studying the social aspect of the women living in Maijogmai Rural Municipality, analysis has been conducted on the basis of caste, age, marital status and educational details.

Likewise the economic aspect is analyzed comprising their occupational details, land ownership patterns, their involvement in gainful activities and their working hour. Special consideration is also given to the cultural patterns and the female economic participation. Women's decision making participation is included which help to after the women's status over the family or community. Similarly, one of the variables which measure the status of women, health status, is also included.

- Numerous castes and ethnic groups, including Brahmin, Chettri, Newar, Tamang, Sherpa, Rai, and other castes, can be found in the area where this study was conducted.
- The population is active and primarily dependent on agriculture and the subsistence economy.
- Rural women perform the majority of the economic and domestic labor, thus they also make a considerable financial contribution to the family.
- Women are found to have concentrated mainly on household and kitchen chores coupled with substance farm management.
- In comparison to men, women are seen as having less access to social and economic opportunities.
- While women's participation in the service and economic sectors is unsatisfactory, it appears that their participation in social organizations is. This demonstrates the respondents' cooperation. According to the survey, there are extremely few women involved in politics.
- Women have nominal share in property ownership and its disposal and allocation process which subsequently lesser their say in household and out spheres. The more, the property ownership pattern of woman is found increased as their age increased.

- The more participation of women in market economy and employment the more will be the decision making power within the household and vice versa.
- It has been determined that the low educational attainment of women has a long-lasting impact on their ability to improve their socioeconomic situation.
- There seems greater say of women in household and domestic management process and hence they enjoy the greater decision making role but it is found they need final approval of their male head of the household on this process. In this regard, women are seemed the manager rather than the controller over this process.
- As women get older, they have more decision-making responsibility.

5.2 Conclusion

Nevertheless, despite national, governmental, and non-governmental efforts, Nepalese women's status and their acknowledgment as an indispensable economic contributor have yet to be fully realized in Nepalese society as a whole. In comparison to their male counterparts, Nepalese women still experience hardship, under achievement, and denigration. Women have been constrained to stay within a limited socioeconomic range due to historical discrimination against them, as well as conventional down-looking, opportunity deprivation, enduring stigmatization as the weaker sex, and de-recognition of their potential.

More-over, women folks have been deprived of any role in decision making and strategic planning on the implementation stage. Their role is expected only as labor forces that too, non-economical. This study, therefore, portrays more vividly the Nepalese women's economic contribution, both in agro-based economy and in the market oriented economy, and also deals on how they have been marginalized in national economic index.

Empowering women has been global concern and Nepal remains no exception. The ninth plan too, talks loudly about it. Poverty and no access to economic generating activities coupled with illiteracy and unawareness have rendered Nepalese women helpless mass. Empowering women through their economic independence is a positive step, however, the data gathered in course of study shows a gloomy picture. Out of the total women taken to survey, only 16.13 percent of women have property

in their own name, hence, women's share in terms of property holding remains of no significance. The observation revealed that the more property they have in possession, the louder their voices are in the family. Another interesting finding is that most of the property owning women is old-aged. In other words, the property owning women are seemed to be determined by their age. The older they are, their possibility of property owning is more.

The standard by which a person's place in society is judged is still their social status. The study demonstrated how illogical and superstitious attitudes toward women have given rise to a variety of perversions in society. Women have also historically been viewed as the lower sex. It was discovered that the girls had learned to be silent observers since they were little. It is anticipated that they will ask fewer questions and be less inquisitive. They have been hearing gender-bias lessons since they were young, which has caused them to lose their self-esteem and confidence. Eventually, they are forced to believe that they are a weak and disadvantaged group in society.

5.3 Recommendations

- The general literacy rate should be raised, with a focus on encouraging greater levels among women. This could be accomplished by holding adult literacy sessions and offering rewards to encourage more girls to enroll in school. The idea behind this is that educating women entails giving them more power and elevating their standing within the family. Since they would then be viewed as capable of making effective decisions by their male counterparts, their educational position would also grant them the household decision-making rights on crucial topics.
- Another strategy to improve their socioeconomic situation is to include more women in the market economy. In order to mobilize women as agents of social, economic, and political change at the local, regional, and national levels, cooperative forms of social organization such as credit societies, marketing cooperatives, and mother's clubs should be fostered.
- Steps should be taken to make men and the rural society itself aware regarding the capability of women as effective decision makers on important issues as well. The mobility and the freedom to partake in income generating and

community activities should not be restricted by the male members of the family.

- It is important to provide educated women and girls with employment options in order to promote their economic participation and raise their status in the home.
- Promoting massive national campaigns can also be an effective step to change the traditional attitudes and sex role ideologies that limit women's options in the family the community and society at large government leaders, in particular, have to take an unequivocal stand in favor of abolishing the existing laws, customs, regulation and practices which are discriminatory against women and to established adequate legal protection for equal rights of men and women.
- • One should act independently in order to be empowered and to participate concurrently in every field. Therefore, women must perform the necessary tasks for their own benefit.
- The Nepalese constitution of 2072 makes it plain that women must make up at least 30% of decision-making bodies.

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ANNEX-I
Questionnaire
Socio-economic Status of Women
A Case Study of Maijogmai Rural Municipality ward no, 3
In Ilam District, Nepal, 2022

Household No:.....	Date:.....
District:	Ward No.
RM :.....	
Name of Respondent:.....	
NO. of Respondent:	
Total Family No:.....	Male:..... Female:.....

1.1 What is the structure of your family?

Nuclear Joint

1.2 Do you have some land in your family?

Yes No

1.3 If yes, what type of ownership you have?

Cultivated by own Rented As a tenant

1.4 What is the main income source of your family?

Agriculture Cottage Service
Business Wage Labor Other

1.5 What is total monthly income of your family?

Up to 5000 5001 to 10000 10001 to 15000

15001 to 20000 above 20000

1.6 Do you have latrine in your home?

Yes No

1.7 If yes, what is its type?

Cemented Water Seal Bathroom

1.8 Do you have drinking water facility?

Yes No

1.9 If yes, which of the following you have?

Pipe Supply Tube Well Well
Natural Founta O

1.10 Do you have cattle in your family?

Yes No

Individual Questionnaire

1.1 Full Name

1.2 Age..... caste/ethnicity.....

1.3 Birth of Place.....

1.4 Religion: Hindu Buddhist Christian Others

1.5 Marital Status: Married Unmarried

Widow Separated

1.6 Education: Illiterate Literate Primary level

Secondary Level SLC IA or equivalent

BA or equivalent Above BA

1.7 Occupation: Agriculture Cottage Service

Business Wage Labor Household work

Student Other

2.1 How many hours do you work generally?

Hour/day Hour/week

2.2 How much do you earn monthly from this work?

Up to 5000 5001 to 10000 10001 to 15000

15001 to 20001 2001 to 2500

2.3 How do you spend the money you earn?

Give to the family

Buy food items

Save

Spend for the Children Education

Other

2.4 Do you save some money?

Yes No

3.1 Do your husband or other male counterpart assists you in your work?

Yes No

3.2 Do you enjoy freedom at home?

Not at all little freedom complete freedom

3.3 Who decide in buying or selling food in your family?

Myself Husband Jointly

Father/Mother in-law Father/Mother Whole family

3.4 Who decide in buying or selling cattle in your family?

Myself Husband Jointly

Father/Mother in-law Father/Mother

Whole family

3.5 Who decide buying/selling land in your family?

Myself Husband Jointly

Father/Mother in-law Father/Mother

Whole family

3.6 Who decide in buying clothes in your family?

Myself Husband Jointly

Father/Mother in-law Father/Mother

Whole family

3.7 Who decide celebrating festivals in your family?

Myself Husband Jointly

Father/Mother in-law Father/Mother

Whole family

3.8 Who decide arranging marriage in your family?

Myself Husband Jointly

Father/Mother in-law Father/Mother

Whole family

3.9 Who decide investment activities in your family?

Myself Husband Jointly
Father/Mother in –law Father/Mother
Whole family

3.10 Who decide in lending/borrowing activities in your family?

Myself Husband Jointly
Father/Mother in –law Father/Mother
Whole family

3.11 Who decide in children education in your family?

Myself Husband Jointly
Father/Mother in –law Father/Mother
Whole family

3.12 Who decide the cropping pattern in your family?

Myself Husband Jointly
Father/Mother in –law Father/Mother
Whole family

4.1 Have you ever fallen sick?

Yes No

4.2 Where do you go for treatment, while falling sick?

Doctor Herbalist Fortune taller
Other

4.3 How many times you go fro medical check-up?

Once in a month once in a year
Only in the period of sickness Never

4.4 Do you have access to these health facilities?

Antenatal Care Yes No
Postnatal Care Yes No
Delivery at home Yes No
Delivery at hospital Yes No

4.5 Have you ever used any contraceptive?

Yes No

4.6 If yes, who have used this contraceptive?

Husband Myself

4.7 Who decide to use this contraceptive?

Husband Me Jointly

4.8 Have you children?

Yes No

4.9 If yes, how many children do you have?

One Two Three
More than three

4.10 Who decided for the child?

Husband Me Jointly

4.11 Who is preferred as your first child in your family?

Son Daughter Both

5.1 Do you have involved any social organization?

Yes No

5.2 If yes, what type of organization?

.....

5.3 Are you benefited from this involvement?

Yes No

5.4 If yes, in which way you benefited from this involvement?

.....

6.1 Are you interested in politics?

Yes No

6.2 Are you involved in any political party?

Yes No

6.3 If yes, what is your designation?

.....

7.1 At last, would you like briefly to tell something you wish to tell?

.....