

Status of Women in Nepal: A Sociological Analysis of Rural VDCs of Mugu District

**A Thesis
Submitted to Tribhuvan University
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Central Department of Sociology/Anthropology
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts in Sociology**

**By
SHARMILA RANABHAT**

**Tribhuvan University
Central Department of Sociology/Anthropology
Kirtipur, Kathmandu, Nepal
May, 2009**

Tribhuvan University
Humanities and Social Sciences
Central Department of Sociology/Anthropology
Kirtipur, Kathmandu, Nepal

RECOMMENDATION LETTER

It is a great pleasure that I recommend for the approval of the Thesis entitled *Status of Women in Nepal: A Sociological Analysis of Rural VDCs of Mugu District* prepared by **Ms. Sharmila Ranabhat Baskota** under my supervision for her partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master's of Arts in Sociology. Therefore, this Thesis report is recommended for its evaluation.

.....
Chinta Mani Pokharel
Thesis Supervisor
Associate Professor
Central Department of Sociology and
Anthropology
Tribhuvan University
Kirtipur, Kathmandu

Tribhuvan University
Humanities and Social Sciences
Central Department of Sociology/Anthropology
Kirtipur, Kathmandu, Nepal

APPROVAL LETTER

The evaluation committee has approved that the Thesis report entitled “*Status of Women in Nepal: A Sociological Analysis of Rural VDCs of Mugu District*” submitted by **Ms. Sharmila Ranabhat Baskota** for the partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Sociology.

Evaluation Committee

.....
Chinta Mani Pokharel
Associate Professor
Thesis Supervisor

.....
Tikaram Gautam
Lecturer
(External Examiner)

.....
Prof. Dr. Om Gurung
(Head of Department)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Thesis report is prepared to fulfill the partial requirement for Degree of Master of Arts in Sociology. I would like to express my deep gratitude and sincere thanks to the Central department of Sociology/Anthropology, T.U, Kirtipur, for providing me an opportunity for the completion of the Thesis work.

At first, I am highly indebted to my respected teacher and supervisor, Associate Professor Chinta Mani Pokharel for his valuable guidance, feedback, advice and support in the entire period of research preparation.

I wish to express my gratitude to Prof. Dr. Om Gurung, Head of the Central Department of Sociology/Anthropology and respected teachers for their valuable advices and inspiration in the entire period of research preparation.

I would like to extend sincere thanks to my respected parents Hom Bahadur Ranabhat, Principal of Pravat Secondary School, Mugu and Indra Kumari Ranabhat, Resource person of DEO and teacher of Mahakali Higher Secondary School, Mugu for their tireless efforts and co-operation during field work in Mugu District.

Likewise, I am gratefully indebted to the teachers and staff of Mahakali higher secondary school and Pravat secondary school, Representatives of DEO, DFO, DDC, DHO, Different INGOs and NGOs working in the Mugu District.

Last, but not the least, I am thankful to my family members especially my husband Suman Baskota, lecturer, Central Department of Rural Development, who provided me lot of care, affections and elegant encouragement and supportive role in my every step of life up to this level.

Lastly I would like to dedicate this thesis work to the peoples of Mugu District, especially peoples of Shreenagar and Rowa VDC's.

Sharmila Ranabhat Baskota
May 21, 2009

Abstract

As in many South Asian countries, Nepal's entrenched religious and cultural practices give preference to boys and men. Many Hindu rituals institutionalized the denigration of women, and systematically undermine their self worth. Women are facing multiple oppressions in terms of class, ethnicity and nationality. A large number of rural women are dying in the process of giving birth to baby, which can be seen by the large number (539 per 100,000 live births and ranks among the highest in the world according to HDR 2004) of maternal mortality rate. Women are not equal to men under the law, and they are economically and socially dependent on fathers and husbands, Girls from all castes are raised with less food, education and health care as compared their brothers. They are not heartily welcomed at birth, and destine through marriage to become the possession of others. Nepal is one of the few countries in the world where women's lifespan is shorter than men. Women are working very hard and are engaged more time than men. Even though the status of women is always lower than that of male counterpart. They have more contribution in household activities in comparison to males. They have to bear extra burden so that quality of life is in vulnerable condition. In the household decision making process female members are also less involved in comparison to male members. In spite of all these things, women of any family have very high responsibility towards the family. They have to take care of the children and older members, make food for them, take care of cattle, support male members in agriculture, actively participate in the socio- cultural functions etc. But all these activities are not so noticeable and they are always in the shadows of the income generating activities.

Keeping in mind, the above mentioned situation, two VDC's of Mugu district, Shreenagar and Rowa were selected for the study of the status of rural women. The study has been based on primary data collected from Shreenagar and Rowa VDC's of Mugu. For this purpose 54 households were selected randomly. The general objective of the study was to analyze the status of rural women and the specific objectives were to analyze the women's responsibilities in household activities, to explore the economic role of women in income generating, to explore the involvement of women in community works, to

analyze the situation of rural women in decision making and to analyze the situation of rural women in decision making.

The primary information has been collected through interview, observation, key informant interview and focus group discussion. The questionnaire have been constructed as closed and open ended types and administered in Nepali language. Basically the primary data has been used in this study; however, secondary information has also been used to fulfill the objectives of the study.

The study found that women have more contribution in household activities in comparison to men. They have great responsibilities in household activities like preparing food (100%), fuel wood collection (47.07%), water collection (96.29%), taking care of children and elderly people of family (88.88%), cutting and carrying grass for livestock (85.18%) and grinding food grains, pounding grains (75.92%) etc. Male members have very nominal roles and responsibility in these issues. Both male and female are practicing income generating activities such as labour work, weaving radi pakhi and baskets, animal husbandry, poultry farm, selling milk, vegetables, fruits, firewood, collecting Yarshagumba, mushrooms and other herbs, tea shop and sewing clothes etc. Participation of female in different CBOs, GOs, NGOs, and other organization is hopeless however some female members can be seen but it is only due to the govt. policy. In decision making process at household level, major decisions in family like, decision about land selling, purchasing, children's education, getting health services, general marketing of daily foodstuffs, marketing of expensive things family planning and number of children are taken by male members either husband or father in law. Only in the case of daily necessary food preparation and crushing, grinding food grains female members of the family have major role.

It is concluded that the responsibility of rural women in different household activities is higher with maximum working load comparatively with her male counterpart. Similarly, women have great contribution in income generating activities. Women are working very hard and more time than man. Even though the status of women is lower than that of male counterpart.

CONTENTS

<i>Title</i>	<i>Page No.</i>
RECOMMENDATION LETTER	ii
APPROVAL LETTER	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iv
ABSTRACT	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
LIST OF TABLES	x
LIST OF FIGURES	xi
LIST OF BOXES	xi
LIST OF ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATION	xii
CHAPTER I : INTRODUCTION	1-7
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	3
1.3 Objectives of the Study	5
1.4 Rational of the Study	5
1.5 Limitations of the study	7
1.6 Organization of the Study	7
CHAPTER II : REVIEW OF LITERATURE	8-25
2.1 General overview	8
2.2 Policy, Priorities and Approaches to Women and Gender Issues	15
2.3 Status of women in Nepalese Context	20
2.3.1 Educational status of women	20
2.3.2 Health status of women	21
2.3.3 Labour force participation	21
2.3.4 Contribution in Agriculture and non-agriculture sector	22
2.3.5 Women's representation in public office and their access to other decision making positions	23
2.3.6 Legal status of women	23
2.4 Conceptual Framework	24

CHAPTER III : RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	25-31
3.1 General background of the study area	26
3.2 Reasons for the selection of study area	26
3.3 Research Design	27
3.4 Methods of collecting data	27
3.4.1 Primary Sources Data	28
3.4.2 Secondary Sources Data	28
3.5 Universe and Sampling	28
3.6 Techniques and tools of data collection	29
3.6.1 Techniques	29
3.6.1.1 Household survey	29
3.6.1.2 Observation	29
3.6.1.3 Key informant interview	30
3.6.1.4 Focus group discussion.	30
3.6.2 Tools	30
3.7 Data Processing, presentation and Analysis	30
3.8 Variable and their Operationalization	30
CHAPTER IV: INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY AREA	32-50
4.1 Position	32
4.2 Climate	34
4.3 Land use	34
4.4 Population	35
4.4.1 Economically active population	35
4.5 Land holding	37
4.6 Migration	37
4.7 Transport	38
4.8 Power	38
4.9 Education & Training	39
4.10 Resources	39
4.10.1 Agriculture	40
4.10.2 Horticulture	43
4.10.3 Forest	44
4.10.4 Herbs and forest products	44

4.11	Gender	45
4.12	Overall Composite Index of Mugu District	47
4.13	General Description of Shreenagar and Rowa VDCs.	49
CHAPTER V : DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION		51-74
5.1	Caste/Ethnic Composition	51
5.2	Age composition	52
5.3	Marital Status	53
5.4	Family Size	54
5.5	Educational Status	54
5.6	Occupational status	56
5.7	Other income generative activities	57
5.8	Ownership of Livestock	58
5.9	Livestock population	59
5.10	Land ownership	60
5.11	Main agricultural products	60
5.12	Food sufficiency	61
5.13	Household activities	62
5.14	Agricultural activities	64
5.15	Involvement of women in Community Based Organization	66
5.16	Participation in traditional and social entertaining program	67
5.17	Decision making process	67
5.18	Health situation	70
5.19	Major problems	73
CHAPTER VI : SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS		75-81
6.1	Summary	75
6.2	Conclusion	78
6.3	Recommendations	80
REFERENCES		82-85
ANNEXES		86-96

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1	Distribution of economically active population by occupation and Sex in Nepal, 1981-2001(%)	22
Table 2.2	Agriculture and non-agriculture occupation by sex in Nepal	23
Table 3.1	Allocation of sample size of respondents	29
Table 4.1	General Description of Mugu District	34
Table 4.2	Land use	35
Table 4.3	Occupation of economically active population of Mugu district	36
Table 4.4	Land holding size	37
Table 4.5	Education & Training	39
Table 4.6	Production of Crops	41
Table 4.7	Condition of Food Supply by the Govt. in Mugu District in 2055-2060	42
Table 4.8	Food balance and food availability and requirement of cereals (unit in mt)	43
Table 4.9	Horticulture	43
Table 4.10	NTFPs exported from Gamgadi & revenues collection (Qty in kg)	45
Table 4.11	Ever married women by number of children ever born (10-19 yrs) 2001	46
Table 4.12	Female ownership in livestock (2001)	46
Table 4.13	Female ownership in Fixed Assets (2001)	46
Table 4.14	Age at First Marriage (By 5 Years Age Group (2001)	47
Table 4.15	Overall Composite Index of Mugu District	48
Table 4.16	General Description of Shreenagar and Rowa VDCs	50
Table 5.1	Caste/Ethnic Composition of the respondents	51
Table 5.2	Age distribution of the respondents	52
Table 5.3	Distribution of the respondents by occupational status	56
Table 5.4	Livestock population and status of respondents by livestock holding per household	59
Table 5.5	Distribution of respondents by duration of food sufficiency	61
Table 5.6	Distribution of the respondents by different roles in household activities	63
Table 5.7	Distribution of the respondents by different roles in agricultural activities	65
Table 5.8	Participation of respondents in different CBO's	66
Table 5.9	(a) Decision making process in household at macro level	68
Table 5.9	(b) Decision making process in household at Micro level	69

LIST OF FIGURES

Fig 2.1	Dualistic ways of perceiving and describing society	19
Fig.2.2	Conceptual Framework	25
Fig 4.1	location map of Mugu District	32
Fig 4.2	Map of Mugu District	33
Fig 4.3	Map of Shreenagar VDC	49
Fig. 4.4	Map of Rowa VDC	50
Fig 5.1	Distribution of the respondents by marital status	53
Fig 5.2	Distribution of the respondents by their family size	54
Fig 5.3	Educational status of the respondents	55
Fig 5.4	Respondents holding livestock	59
Fig 5.5	Distribution of the respondents by land ownership status	60
Fig 5.6	Respondents participation in entertaining program	67

LIST OF BOXES

Box 1:	Schooling of children	55
Box 2:	Income generating activities and livelihood	58
Box 3:	'Food' important than education	62
Box 4:	Livestock rearing	66
Box 5:	Ridiculous Superstition	72
Box 6:	Women's health situation	73
Box 7:	Tough lifestyle	74

ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATION

ADB	:	Asian Development Bank
AIDS	:	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes
ANC	:	Antenatal Care
ARI	:	Acute Respiratory Tract Infection
CBOs	:	Community Based Organizations
CBS	:	Central Bureau of statistic
CDR	:	Central Development Region
DDC	:	District Development Committee
DEO	:	District Education office
EDR	:	Eastern Development Region
FUG	:	Forest Users Group
FWDR	:	Far-western Development Region
GAD	:	Gender and Development
GDP	:	Gross Domestic Product
GOs	:	Government Organizations
HDI	:	Human Development Index
HDR	:	Human Development Report
HIV	:	Human Immune-deficiency Virus
ICIMOD	:	International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
INGOs	:	International Non Governmental Organizations
MMR	:	Maternal Mortality Rate
MWDR	:	Mid-western Development Region
MWSC	:	Ministry of Women and Social Welfare
NFC	:	Nepal Food Corporation
NGOs	:	Non Government Organizations
NLA	:	National Labour Academy
NPC	:	National Planning Commission
NTFPs	:	Non Timber Forest Products
PCRW	:	Production Credit for Rural Women
PNC	:	Postnatal Care
SNV	:	Netherlands Development Project
TU	:	Tribhuvan University
UMN	:	United Mission to Nepal
UN	:	United Nations
UNDP	:	United Nation Development Programme
UNDP	:	United Nations Development Programme
VDC	:	Village Development Committee
WAD	:	Women and Development
WDR	:	Western Development Region
WID	:	Women in Development
WSCC	:	Women's Social Coordination Commission