

CHAPTER – I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 General Background

Men and women are considered as the two wheels of the one cart. The cart cannot move in the absence of one wheel. The contribution of both women and men are equally needed in the formulation of society. Without active involvement of women in the process of development is bound to suffer and imbalanced, has been universally accepted. Women constitute half of the population of the world. Their equal participation in the development activities is not only desirable but also essential for the rapid growth of development process. The socio-economic standard of women greatly enhances the progressive development of the nation.

Status of women is in the process of change in all parts of the world. There may be variation among the nations in nature and extent of such changes, depending upon their level of economic development, religious and social values, political situation, literacy level , means of production, administration etc. it is evident that the status of women in developing countries far below that of developed countries. The levels and degrees of integration of women into the social, political and economic life of the nation may expose the reality.

Nepal, a Himalayan country situated in South Asia, is one of the poor countries of the world. Major reason behind this is the political instability and undemocratic rule for long. Other crucial factors for being the country very poor are due to lack of awareness and access to quality education. As a result, people have superstitious beliefs, there is gender discrimination. The socio-economic status of women in Nepal is very poor. The women are being discriminated in every aspect of the society. These and so many other factors have contributed to turn Nepal a lower human development state.

Nepal is a country of great geographic, cultural, ethnic, religious diversity. Across the diversity, the majority of communities in Nepal are patriarchal. A women's life is strongly influenced by her father, husband and son. Such patriarchal practices are further reinforced by the legal system. Marriage has a great importance in women' life. The event of marriage determines the way of

her life. The early marriage generally depreciates the women's life. A woman's power to accept or reject marriage partner is evidently an index of the degree of freedom she exercises in the management of her own life, and thus also of her status. The status of women is determined by the patriarchal social system, values, and women's right preserved and protected by the state, and state policy for the development of women. Women's relative status, however, varied from one ethnic group to another. The economic contribution of women is substantial, but largely unnoticed because their traditional role was taken as for granted. ¹

As Nepalese society is male dominated, there is social discrimination for women can be observed directly as well as indirectly. Women are far behind the males in terms of education, employment, in decision-making positions, in land ownership, business etc. The traditional outlook of society towards women has not been changed. Therefore they are still in crisis. Women mainly have to perform responsibility of reproduction and household works. Actually they have no control over their own reproduction. Nepali women are daughters, wives and mothers but less recognized by their own identity. The role of women in Nepalese society is different than that in other developed countries. In Nepal, women empowerment is more talked about than done. Actually there should be some practiced changed in social cultural values of the society. It is much talked and debated about the citizenship of children and ownership of property in the context of women in Nepal (Clarke, 2003).

The status of women is the result of socio-economic and cultural practices of the society, and it has also multiple effects on social economic and demographic behavior of the society. The status of women simply refers to the living standard of women or position in relation to men, but it also covers the area of their educational attainment, occupational involvement, urban-rural place of residence, decision making power and others. Actually, status refers to women's overall position such as education, economic, health, empowerment and participation in the society. In social system and sub-system which is distinguishable from and to the same time related to other position through to its designated rights and obligations (Ghimire, 1997).

¹ <http://www.everestuncensored.org/3411/2008/12/02/status-of-women-in-nepal/>

The women empowerment have been very much emphasized by the international conference on population and development (ICPD) held in Cairo in 1994 and suggested that it is a basic tool for a country's overall development and improving the quality of people's life. The ICPD has also declared the advancing gender and empowerment of women and the elimination of all kinds of violence against women, and ensuring women's ability to control their own fertility are corner stone of population and development related program (UNFPA, 1998).

Women constitute slightly more than half of Nepal's population (50.04%). Traditionally women's status in Nepal, compared to men has always been low. They lacked proper nutrition, and were not sent to school for education. Their access to health services were very limited. Moreover, they were denied property inheritance and even reproductive rights. In recent years, things have been changing and the status of women in Nepal is also improving. Nepalese women are now advancing ahead with a distinct vision of their own aspiring to the state of physical convince, peace and happiness in a country declared as zone of peace. The role of women in national development is equally important as that of men. Women and girls constitute a little over 50 percent of the most of the countries and if their political and social participation is disproportionally low or all together lacking, it means that half population is not represented (UNICEF, 2000).

Women's participation in various levels is an essential prerequisite for the establishment of equality, development and place. The status of women is considered as one of the factors that in fluency nation's social, economic and cultural development. A major part of their labor force in the world in unrecognized. The conventional statistics do not reflect the sustainable contribution of women in labor discouraging them and help retain themselves in the lower socio-economic status, especially in low developed countries like Nepal. Gender inequality to empower Nepalese women can be justified items of the social and cultural context of the Nepalese society. It's excessive patriarchal based social structure and extended family system which restrict women to make independent choice. The majority of the women population is far from mainstreaming. As like men, women are also considered the factors who contribute in the nation's development. However, the fact is that women are oppressed and suppressed lots in our society. Thus, empower of women is an important issue for the prosperous development of the nation (Aacharya, 1997).

It is important to have an overview of how women are perceived in the eyes of the law, other citizens and the state. Hindu tradition favors a male dominated society and women are treated as sacrosanct. But in fact, many so-called norms discriminate against women. Judging by the current status of the majority of women in Nepal, one can conclude that they are being treated as second-class citizens with no identity, self-respect or esteem of their own. From childhood the girl-child is taught by her mother or parents to serve the male members of the family first, beginning with food, clothes, education, comfort, entertainment, and so on. Before marriage they are controlled by their fathers, after marriage by their husbands and during old age by their sons. For example, women do not have the inherent right to citizenship - citizenship is acquired only on the basis of the father's blood. According to the Citizenship Act 2020 (1963), children born to a Nepali woman with a foreign husband cannot acquire Nepali citizenship. The same law will apply to a divorced woman with a foreign husband or in cases where the foreign husband dies, as well as in the case of an illegitimate child. Hence, the children of such mothers are deprived of their basic human rights - the rights to education, nationality, free movement and above all the right to life and liberty. ²

There is a need of women's struggle to break the patriarchal thought, and increase the women's share in governance and political leadership. The concept on women as weaker-sex and subordinate to the man can be changed through the involvement of women in decision making level at politics, and working in the area where there is more man involvement such as army. So, to generate the strength of women movement for making just society, women organizations and activities have to unite and build solidarity to fight against all kinds of discrimination and promoting women in politics, and state governance. Socially and economically men are always considered as superior to women, breadwinner, head of the family and the care taker and this is major cause for the low participation of women in civil services in Nepal is in the transitional phase even though women are participating in the political field but it is not up to the level. In order to change the status of women in Nepal socio-cultural change is required.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Nepal is a multi ethnic nation having great social and cultural diversity. At the same time the country also characterized by widespread inequalities and discrimination in terms of ethnicity,

² <http://wgc.womensglobalconneccion.org>

gender and geography. According to the census of 2001, population of Nepal was 2,31,51,423 at the June 2001. The average annual growth rate of Population during the decade i.e. 1991-2001 was 2.25 percent. The census also revealed that the sex ratio was 99.8 (CBS, 2003).

Nepal, being a male dominated country, the women's social and economic status has been found very weak. In Nepali society, the position of women is in limited area. They are encircled with a chain so that they are suppressed by supposing that they should spend most of the time in household chores and bearing and rearing the children. Rautahat district belongs to the Terai region of Nepal. Majority of the population of the district are Terai caste. Population census of Nepal 2001 showed that the socio, cultural development of the Terai district is low. Especially women have poor condition in almost all the aspect such as literacy, health, economic, decision making, employment, empowerment, age at marriage and others. In the same district Hill caste women have better condition in the comparison of Terai caste women. Due to the so called social norms and cultural terai caste women are far behind the development. Various studies shows that Terai caste women are physically weak than other because women get secondary priority in her own house. Similarly sons get more care from their parents than daughters which results low health status of women from early stage. Similarly women's status in terms of empowerment and decision making is also low. Though many studies are done on the women issues but comparative study among the women of various cast/ethnic in the same district has not done yet. Therefore the study seeks to analyze the comparative study on caste based women's status in terms of empowerment, participation and nutrition based on BMI (Body Mass Index). These cast/ethnic are Hill caste, Terai caste, Hill Janjatis, Terai Janjatis, Hill dalits, Terai dalits and Muslims.

This study seeks the answers of these questions:-

- a. What is the empowerment status of women in terms of mobility living in rural areas?
- b. What is the Household participation of women living in rural areas?
- c. What is the nutritional status of women living in rural areas?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to analyze the overall status of women in terms of empowerment, participation and health among various cast/ethnic women living in Rautahat district.

The specific objectives are as follows:

- a. To analyze empowerment status of women in terms of mobility living specially in rural areas.
- b. To analyze the household participation status of women living in rural areas.
- c. To examine the nutritional status i.e. BMI (Body Mass Index) of women.

4. Justification of the Study

Women play a significant role in all societies, both as economic and social actors they should therefore be seen as integral partners in all development efforts. In patriarchal society, women are deprived from the participation in social, political and economic areas. Status must seek to include gender perspectives in their national development policies and should implement various programs to improve women's self-confidence. In this study, it has tried to gain information on empowerment of women in Rautahat district especially among women's related issues with various cast/ethnic groups. The importance of the study are as follows:

-) This study is important to explain socio-economic status of women.
-) It describes the relationship between ethnic and empowerment of women.
-) It develops awareness towards empowerment.
-) It may be helpful to those organizations which are working in the field to identify the situation of women and implement some welfare program to improve their status and other researchers as well to conduct further research in the same issue.

1.4 Limitations of the Study

-) This study has limited in the 41 rural areas of Rautahat district. Therefore it may not represent the overall status of women in Nepal.
-) Finding of this study may not represent the other areas. Only selected 930 households of the 41 VDCs of Rautahat district were covered by this study so that the result of this study may not generalize the status of other areas.

1.6 Organization of the Study

Chapter one deals with the background of the study, statement of the problem, objective of the study, justification of the study, limitation of the study and the organization of the study. Chapter II deals with the literature review from various books, journals, publications etc. Chapter III analyzes the methodology of the research. Chapter IV deals with the general introduction of the study area including the demographic and social characteristics. Chapter V deals with the status of women in terms of mobility, participation and nutrition. The last chapter VI presents summary and conclusion of the whole study and it also includes recommendations on the basis of the findings.

CHAPTER-II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Theoretical Literature

2.1.1 International context

The advancement of women began with the signing of the UN's founding Charter. In its Preamble, the members of the UN declared their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small. This happened 50 years ago, in October 1945, when the Charter entered into force and the UN was formally set up. Since then, the UN has been at the centre of a growing global movement for women's rights. By adopting international laws and treaties on women's rights, the UN has helped set a common standard for measuring how societies advance equality between men and women (UN, 1995).

The Commission on the Status on Women (CSW) is one of the first bodies established by the UN Economic and Social Council. Set up in 1946, it monitors the situation of women and promotes their rights in all societies around the world. It prepares recommendations and reports for the UN on any issue affecting women. In case of urgent problems, the Commission can press for immediate international action to prevent or alleviate violations of women's rights. In other words, CSW is the global advocate for equality between women and men. The central part of CSW's work involves setting universal standards regarding equality between women and men. It has also assumed a leading role in bringing women's concerns to the attention of the UN specialized agencies. Various UN Conventions, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, have set new standards in the area of human rights. Over the years, the Commission has dealt with issues such as women's participation in political life and in decision-making, and women's role in and contribution to development. It has put forward policy recommendations regarding women's rights in employment and in education, and their role in the economy and the environment. It has made recommendations on how to support women in their fight against poverty. Its work with regard to violence against women led to the

adoption of the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women by the General Assembly in 1993 (UN, 1995).

The 1948 Universal declaration of human Rights (UDHR) has also emphasized the legal equality of all human being but could not represent the equality condition and demand of women. All the sectors have not been equally developed and women has been weak but it has mentioned men and women of full age, without any due to race, nationality or religion have the right to marry and find the family and entitled to equal right as to marriage and its dissolution. It has also emphasized about the property rights of women (INSEC, 2002).

The UN observed 1975 as International Women's Year and held the first world conference on women in Mexico City. Subsequently, two other UN conferences were held: Copenhagen (1980) and Nairobi (1985). The need for integrating women in the development process was placed on the international agenda in 1975, when the UN observed International Women's Year. Among the many concrete steps taken in this regard after the 1975 world conference on women was the creation of two UN bodies, UNIFEM and INSTRAW (UN, 1995).

The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEWAW), adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly, is often described as an international bill of rights for women. Consisting of a preamble and 30 articles, it defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination. According to the Convention, discrimination against women is "... any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field." According to the Convention, discrimination against women is "... any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field."According to the Convention, discrimination against women is "... any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status,

on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field." CEWAW put forward condemn discrimination against women in all its forms agree to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating discrimination mainly social economic and cultural free to ensure full development and advancement of women. It stresses to eliminate the discrimination in sector, political power, education employment, marriage and maternity field, which ensure the development of women empowerment (UN, 1995).

The Convention is the only human rights treaty which affirms the reproductive rights of women and targets culture and tradition as influential forces shaping gender roles and family relations. It affirms women's right to acquire, change or retain their nationality and the nationality of their children. States parties also agree to take appropriate measures against all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of women. The Convention, which entered into force on 3 September 1981, has so far been accepted by 139 UN Member States. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was set up in 1982 to monitor the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (UN, 1995).

In December 1993, the UN adopted the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, which defined what constitutes violence against women and outlined actions Governments and communities should take to prevent such acts. Earlier, in June 1993, the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, Austria, reaffirmed that women's rights are also human rights. One of the outcomes of the Conference was the appointment of a Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women. The Rapporteur, who seeks and receives information on violence against women, its causes and consequences, and recommends means and ways to eliminate them, reports to the UN Commission on Human Rights (UN, 1995).

The 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in Cairo has also emphasized women empowerment as a basic tool for a country's overall development and improving the quality of people's life. The Conference recommends that the full partnership of both women and men is required in productive and reproductive life, including shared responsibilities for the care and nurturing of children and maintenance of the household. In all parts of the world, women are facing threats to their lives, health and well being as a result of being over burdened with work and of their lack of power and influence. In most regions of the

world, women receive less formal education than men and at the same time women's own knowledge, abilities and coping mechanisms often go unrecognized. The power relations that impede women's attainment of healthy and fulfilling lives operate at many levels of the society, from the most personal to the highly public. Achieving change requires policy and program action that will improve women's access to secure livelihood and economic resources, alleviate their extreme responsibilities with regard to housework, remove level impediments to their participation in public life, and raise social awareness through effective programs of education and mass communication. In addition, improving the status of women also their decision making capacity at all levels in spheres of life especially in the area of sexuality and reproduction (UN, 1994).

The 1996 international Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) states the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all civil and political rights to ensure the women's participation in all sectors. Every human being has the inherent right to life. This right has protected by law (UNFPA, 1998).

The fourth world conference on women in 1995 has also emphasized different aspects related to women. The Beijing Declaration considering twelve different critical areas of concern are identified as follows: i) Poverty, ii) Education and Training, iii) Health, iv) Violence against women, v) Armed conflict, vi) Power and decision making, vii) Economy, viii) Advancement of women ix) Human rights, x) Media, xi) Environment and, xii) The girl child. The platform of action (POA) recognizes that women face barriers to equality and advancement owing of various factors. The advancement of women and the achievement of equality between women and men is a matter of human rights. Moreover, it is a condition for social justice and should not be seen as isolated women's issues. It is the only way to build a sustainable just and developed society. The empowerment of women and equality between women and men are pre-requisites to achieving political, social, economic, cultural and environmental security among all (BBC, 2004).

The MDGs are eight sustainable international developmental goals with set target dates that were broadly agreed upon by nations of the world during the Millennium Summit of 2000. Drawn from the Millennium Declaration, these eight goals, which need to be completed by 2015. Gender equality must be understood as a cross-cutting theme throughout the MDG goals with

MDG 3 specifically addressing the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and MDG 5 targeting the improvement of maternal health. The MDGs cannot be seen in isolation and separate from the Millennium Declaration. The Millennium Declaration sets forth certain fundamental values that are taken to be “essential.” These include equality and more specifically that “The equal rights and opportunities of women and men must be assured. MDG 3 promotes equal opportunity for women and progress made under this goal is measured by such limited indicators as ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education, share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector, and proportion of seats held by women in national parliament. Until the elimination of gender based violence and discrimination are set as clear priorities under MDG 3, the goals of increased education, employment and political participation will remain elusive. For instance young girls in Africa are often subjected to female genital mutilation (FGM) and then child marriage, which results in their early removal from school. Unless laws prohibit FGM and child marriage in practicing countries, girls will never realize the goal of equality in education (Anantnarayan, 2005).

2.1.2 Nepalese context

The Nepalese constitution of 1990 guarantees all citizens basic human rights and fundamental freedom, but statutory laws that still discriminate against women can be found in the area of property rights and family law. The social status of women and their relative equality with men varies between different ethnic groups. Yet, in most communities, women’s position is governed by patriarchal traditions and conventional assumptions of women’s role in society are slow to change. A woman’s place is generally in the home where her main duties include childrearing and household related chores. Women’s access to education is limited and they have very few opportunities to engage in activities that would provide them with a greater degree of economic freedom.³

In Nepal, people were greatly influenced by different freedom struggles. They rose against the Rana regime. Women like Mangala Devi Singh, Sahana Pradhan started coming together, and from 1947 until 1952, several women’s organizations were born to raise the political and social consciousness among women in Nepal. In 1960, the king of Nepal subverted the democratic

³ <http://classic.wikigender.org>).

Panchayat system to an autocratic one. This put a sudden end to all associations and their activities. Women, however, remained politically active. In protest against the undemocratic royal proclamation of 1960, a group of women organizations openly waved black flags in a public procession, and were imprisoned. Later, in the people's movement of 1990, women actively participated to get rid of the autocratic Panchayat system and to usher in multiparty democratic system. Women of various regions and ideologies contributed greatly to the success of this movement. The participation and contribution of women in the people's movement of 2006 and movements for the freedom from long run was very high. However, there is very low participation of women at decision making of all sectors. Historically, women leaders in Nepal have equally contributed to establish democratic processes in Nepal. Some noted women leaders in Nepal who challenged the conventional tradition are Mangaladevi Singh, Shalilaja Acharya, Sahana Pradhan, Asta Laxmi Shakya, Others eminent leaders especially from the Peoples' Movement II have been Chhaya devi Parajuli and others (Kiran, 2008).

Nepal has entered a new political milieu with the successful completion of the Constitution Assembly (CA) election. CA election is itself a triumph in Nepali history; its significant achievement lays in electing 197 women members, which is almost 33 percent of the total seats. These women members have come from the diverse ethnic cultures, tradition, group and geographical areas. They represent the grassroots level, district and national level. We all are honored with the victory of women candidates. Their participation in Constituent Assembly will definitely bring meaningful and remarkable contribution for establishing equal and just society. We are hopeful that the victorious women will take part meaningfully in making our People's Constitution through gender perspective considerations. (Kiran, 2008).

After the success of the people's movement, the new constitution of Nepal was promulgated in November 1990 and broke new ground as far as women's rights to equality and fair-play are concerned. The State has been given the authority to legislate specific laws for the protection of the special rights of women. Although provisions were made in the New Nepalese Constitution (1990) in favor of women, the elections showed that the major parties are not prepared to improve the status of women in Nepal. Women are still treated as second-grade citizens and even like servants, as can be seen in the laws relating to property rights, family rights and sexual

rights. But Nepal has a major political problem to solve, for the country is involved in a tussle for power.⁴

From a legal standpoint, Nepal signed and ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1991 without reservation. One must bear in mind that through ratification, a country undertakes to effect positive measures, legislative or otherwise, to make sure that the rights concerned can be exercised effectively (Khatun, 2001).

After the Beijing Conference in 1995, the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare was established, thus demonstrating the government's commitment to eliminating discrimination against women. Despite this, according to the report of the Forum for Women, Law and Development (FWLD), August 2000, Nepal still has at least 118 discriminatory legal provisions, including in the Constitution. The National Code (Eleventh Amendment) Bill relating to women was presented in Parliament in 1997 and is now waiting Royal assent. The government has clearly stated that the main reason for introducing this bill is to fulfill the commitment made when ratifying CEDAW (Khatun, 2001).

The concept of the status of women in society assumed importance at the international level after the first major UN Conference on women held in 1975, and the subsequent efforts made by the world body during the decade that followed. It took stoke of the reality of women's dependence, development and problems in several countries, and devised certain measures to ameliorate their conditions and to enable them to build a proper future. Historically the main aspect did not get the attention it deserves in all the field including academics, presumably because women have a low profile in the family as subordinates and supporting hands to their husband on whom they depend for most of their needs. Their dependence shifts, initially from father to husband and finally to son throughout their life-cycle. Their all round dependence on man in the family for physical, economical and other social support has made their role only secondary in society. It is obviously on the basis of this assumption that an ancient Hindu philosopher, Manu defined the

⁴ (http://www.wikigender.org/index.php/Gender_Equality_in_Nepal)

status of women as being permanently subordinate to men at every stage of their lives. A similar code of ethics has been in existence in feudal China also according to Mao (Mahadeuan, 1989).

The status of women in the context of their access to knowledge, economic resources, and political power, as well as their personal autonomy in the process of decision making. When Nepalese women's status is analyzed in this light, the picture is generally bleak. In the early 1990s, Nepal was a rigidly patriarchal society. In virtually every aspect of life, women were generally subordinate to men. The human rights of women include their right to have control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality, including sexual and reproductive health, free of coercion, discrimination and violence. Equal relationship between women and men in matters of sexual relations and reproduction, including full respect for the integrity of the person, require mutual respect,, consent and shared responsibility for sexual behavior and its consequences (Thapa, 2000).

Empowerment is the focal point of human development. It can be defined as ‘providing an individual with the means to escape the constraints that prevent the full exercise of one natural talents and abilities in order to live a life more constant with human dignity. Empowerment is a process, which challenges the existing structures of oppressions and overcomes gender inequalities. It is directed towards developing a conscious, analytical and confident personality which is cognizant with the process of independent choice making, self determination, accessing and controlling of economic, political and social resources (UNDP, 1995).

Empowerment is an all comprehensive process and difficult to define in concrete terms. One definition of empowerment says it is “the process of gaining control over the self, over ideology and the resources which determine power. It is all embarrassing, which it must address all structures of power.” It is a process which enables women to meet both their practical as well as strategic needs. Practical needs relate to immediate problems such as poverty, water, health etc. These needs may be met to a certain extent within existing social structures without challenging the integrated power relationships. Meeting strategic needs, like access to property and wealth, changing the division of labor and the system of unequal wages, and gaining control over their own bodies, on the other hand, is challenging the existing structures of oppression (Acharya, 1997).

The empowerment and autonomy of women and improvement of their political, legal, social and economic and health status are important. The equal participation and partnership of both women and men are required for both productive and reproductive life. The international conference on population and development (ICPD) held in Cairo in 1994 has emphasized women empowerment as a basic tool for country's overall development. The ICPD has declared that advancing gender and empowerment of women and elimination of all kinds of violence against women and ensuring women's ability to control their own fertility are cornerstones of population and development related programs (UNFPA, 1998).

Improving equal decision-making power of men and women result in higher gender equality and lower level of fertility. Men can play a key role in bringing gender equality and lower level of fertility. A better communication between men and women on all issues including sexuality and reproductive health ensures in the understanding of their joint responsibilities. Efforts to improve the status of equal partnership of men and women in public and private life would eventually improve the status of women resulting in desired demographic consequences (UN, 1994).

In the context of empowerment, Nepalese women have made limited gains in the last couple of decades. Women's educational status and visible economic participation have improved in absolute terms. But on the other hand, gender disparity in access to modern resources and power structure is also increasing. Traditionally, rural women have contributed sustainably to household decision-making process. But with commercialization of the rural economy, they may be losing ground vis-à-vis men because they are less equipped to cope with commercialization economy. Women have lesser access to avenues of education and modern knowledge and less mobility too. A majority of the rural households are losing access to community resources such as land and forest. Without adequate avenues of alternative employment they are losing access to food as more land gets under commercial agriculture. Rural women are therefore the greatest losers with increasing work burden and reduced access to resources (Acharya, 1997).

NGOs INGOs in Nepal are playing important roles in the social mobilization of women. In specific areas large NGOs, INGOs have made visible impact in terms of delivery of services. However, co-ordination, transparency of funding sources and methods, accountability, sustainability, and public distrust are some of the major problems encountered by these

organizations. Many NGOs and INGOs have specific women's programs, but they generally lack a broad gender perspective. Gender training, wherever they exist, seems to be limited to NGOs and INGOs staffs (Acharya, 1997).

Gender discrimination and continued gender gap as two of the most pertinent social problems facing the global community have received considerable attention during the past two decades. This process was formally initiated in the international women's year in 1975 and received a major impetus at the fourth world conference on women in Beijing in 1995. However, many remain to be done as gender gaps have narrowed only slightly in the last two decades and of the estimated 1.3 billion people below the poverty live in the world, 70 percent are females (UNDP, 1995).

Despite improvements in globalization of information and activities initiatives in the development of human rights since the Declaration on Human Rights, there has been a dramatic regression of women's human rights. In the context of Nepal, this regression is manifested in the increased trafficking in women, the growth of organized movement leading to assertions of identity such as religious, ethnic, linguistic and sectarian, and the militarization of our region, all of which have impacted on women in very specific ways (UN, 1993).

Regarding the position of women in the Nepalese society, it is very essential to review the matter in a proper sociological perspective and to know about the structure of the society. It is an acknowledged fact that the status and position of women change in a significant way only when the structure of the society itself changes. The background plays very important role in important events (Majpuria, 1982).

Despite their inherent potential as agents of change, Nepal's political parties and NGOs have taken contributions to linking women's problems and needs with formal state structures and authorities. Although women are empowering themselves through their interaction with states power structure, their participation in the decision making process yet to be properly streamlined, and they remain large excluded from politics, government and governance. Had they given fully access to formal political structure and processes their vision of the state would undoubtedly be guided more by factors like power sharing, self-channeling of resources and playing a role in

policy formulation and implementation. However Nepali women are distance from the axis of state power, as human Development index of Nepal says: “ gender empowerment in Nepal is abysmally low in relation to achievements at the regional and international level. The global GEM (Gender Empowerment Measure) is more than double that of Nepal. Women in all south Asian countries except Pakistan are more empowered than women in Nepal” (Hemchhethu and shrestha, 2002).

As soon as the male born, expectations are bestowed on him. He has certain stereotype roles waiting for him when he reaches adulthood. In Neplese society, social status of women is always thought to be that subordinate to men. A survey conducted by UNICEF on the status of women and children in Nepal reports that gender disparity starts right from the birth and continues through different stages of the girl’s life and as further depended and perpetuated through various rituals (Pyakuryal and Thakuri, 1998).

Conventional social custom is a one of the major reason obstructing women from participation fully in economic development, which results low decision making power in women’s hand. Higher the participation of women for economic development, higher will be the decision making power of women. On the other hand, the social conception that only women are responsible for the reproduction of human beings, conception, delivery and upbringing of child has made it extremely difficult for women to participate in the development process as equal member of society. Due to all these reasons their status compared to male is very low (Acharya, 1997).

Women's relative status, however, varied from one ethnic group to another. The status of women in Tibeto-Nepalese communities generally, was relatively better than that of Pahari and Newari women. Women from the low caste groups 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 planting and harvesting decisions, and determining the expenses and budget allocations. Yet women's lives remained centered on their traditional roles--taking care of most household chores, fetching water and animal fodder, and doing farm work. Their standing in society was mostly contingent on their husbands' and parents' social and economic positions. They had limited access to markets, productive services,

education, health care, and local government. Malnutrition and poverty hit women hardest. Female children usually were given less food than male children, especially when the family experienced food shortages. Women usually worked harder and longer than men. By contrast, women from high-class families had maids to take care of most household chores and other menial work and thus worked far less than men or women in lower socioeconomic groups.⁵

A direct correlation existed between the level of education and status. Educated women had access to relatively high-status positions in the government and private service sectors, and 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 woman did not necessarily hold a higher status than her uneducated counterpart. Also within the family, a woman's status, especially a daughter-in-law's status, was more closely tied to her husband's authority and to her parental family's wealth and status than anything else. The economic contribution of women was substantial, but largely unnoticed because their traditional role was taken for granted. When employed, their wages normally were 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 positions.⁶

One tangible measure of women's status was their educational attainment. Although the constitution offers women equal educational opportunities, many social, economic, and cultural factors contributed to lower enrollment and higher dropout rates 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 the early 1990s fell far short of the male level.⁷

⁵ http://womenshistory.about.com/library/ency/blwh_nepal_women.htm

⁶ <http://wgc.womensglobalconnection.org>

⁷ http://womenshistory.about.com/library/ency/blwh_nepal_women.htm

The level of educational attainment among female children of wealthy and educated families was much higher than that among female children of poor families. This class disparity in educational attainment was also true for boys. In Nepal, as in many societies, education was heavily class-biased.⁸

2.2 Empirical Literature

The United Nations fourth World Conference on Women, September 4-15, 1995, country Reports Nepal states that women constitute 50.13 percent of the total population and that 45.5 percent of females were economically active and the corresponding figure for males was 68.71 percent. Around 91 percent of economically active females were engaged in agriculture where as the figure was 75 percent for males. Slightly more than 5 percent of economically active women were in personal and community services, 2.04 percent in commerce and 1.16 percent in manufacturing. Employment of women in other sectors was negligible. Not only was the percentage of economically active women lower than that of men, women was also confined to fewer categories of economic activities. Though the women are fully involved in overall agricultural and economical development of the nation, they are never recognized as a major participator of the event. Their role is always considered as secondary factor. Due to this discrimination women are not being able to uplift their life style and become independent. In an overall scenario of the country, women's participation is mostly concentrated in the agriculture only, while as men are given chances and opportunities in almost every field of work. Since women are considered only as a secondary citizen in this context, unless and until they are given exposures of their rights and opportunities they could never fight as an equal citizen to women (UN, 1995).

Education is an important factor to raise the status of women in the society. It empowers women with knowledge, skills and self confidence. Current use of contraception increases with the increasing level of education. Literacy and educational level of women contribute to raise their age at marriage. Education further provides employment opportunities for women on equal basis with men. Thus education is a major factor to improve status of women in the society, and birth

⁸ http://womenshistory.about.com/library/ency/blwh_nepal_women.htm).

rate for educated women would be reduced by delayed marriage, use of contraception and their involvement in outside household jobs. However, only 42.5 percent females are literate in Nepal in 2001, where as the corresponding figure for male is 65.5 percent (CBS, 2003).

Women's right to move freely varies between different groups and communities. Women belonging to the Indo-Aryan group often face restrictions on their movements outside of the household, while women belonging to the Tibeto-Burman group enjoy a relative high degree of freedom. The freedom of religion is guaranteed by the constitution and there are no legal restrictions on women's freedom of dress. Muslims make up 4 percent of Nepal's population and traditions of purdah are observed in some conservative Indo-Aryan communities, requiring women to cover their at least their hair (FWLD, 2003).

National statistics shows that women's literacy rate is 30 percent while 66percent to male and the national literacy rate is projected as 40 percent. The enrollment of women in higher education is only 24.95 percent. Women' involvement in technical and vocational education is also lower than men. This is due to the social norms and culture that we follow also. As in rural areas girls are considered as "paraya dhan"(others property) and they don't get the opportunity to get education (Kiran, 2008).

A large part of women's work is not considered as economic activity. As a result only 45.2 percent of women as compared to 68.2 per cent of men are classified as economically active. Women's average work burden has increased slightly over the past 12 years from 10.8 hours per day in 1981 to 10.9 hours per day in 1995. Men's average work burden presently is 7.8 hours a day, 3.1 hours less than that of women. Women's participation in the informal sector has increased significantly in both urban and rural areas - for example vending, petty trade liquor making and vegetable selling are some of the more common employment ventures of women. In rural areas, the 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 and mostly in low-level positions (Kiran, 2008).

There are very few women working in professional work in Nepal. They may study the law, but few are able to enter the profession. Women's representation in the bureaucracy is also very low. Only one woman so far has served as ambassador. After 1991 not a single woman has been

placed in the diplomatic corps. Limited participation in politics, bureaucracy and judiciary does not stop women from making a remarkable contribution in the decision-making process at the household level. Women serve as decision-makers in farm management, domestic expenditure (food items, clothes and other expenses), the children's education, religious and social travel, household maintenance and also capital transactions. However, women's decision-making roles seem to have declined in recent years. Although some 42 percent of the Nepalese women are literate, and 60 percent of them are said to be economically active, participation of women in politics is negligible. Women excluded economically, socially and politically in Nepal. Those women who are in the frontline and may be working in high profile may be benefited, but they are very few and their voice is rarely heard (ADB, 2005).

The Directive Principles of State Policy in Constitution of Nepal (1990) states that all kinds of economic and social inequalities should be removed by the State. Nepal has ratified United Nations Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against women (1999) and Convention on Political Rights of Women (1966). Any discrimination is defined as “any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any field. Nepal has also signed United Nations Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discriminations under Minority Rights Declaration. The number of women members of Parliament is quite small and it appears it is due to provision in the Constitution (1990) requiring at least 5 percent reservation for women rather than change in society. On the other hand, there is no such requirement for Dalits which has resulted in the lower house of Parliament not having even a single member. Political parties have not given tickets to Dalits for elections to Parliament. On the other hand, the fact that Nepal has adopted a system of universal adult franchise for all its citizens according to 1990 Constitution is a very significant development historically. In the country considered to be “mother of democracy”, Great Britain only 1.8 percent of the population had right to vote in 1832 and 12.1 percent in 1884. It was only in 1930 that universal adult franchise was adopted after women were given right to vote. In the United States, Blacks were theoretically given right to vote in 1870 after the end of Civil war, but it was only a century later in 1970 that this was implemented fully. Women in the US were given right to vote only in 1920 . Proposals made by Government during third round of talks with the Maoist insurgents in August 2003 included provision for reservation for Dalits in popular representation, education, health, administration and other fields of employment in

proportion of population for a limited time. Similarly, the proposal also included 25 percent reservation for women in all representative institutions and also for reservations in education, health, administrative service and other fields of employment (Raj, 2003).

Satnam Kaur (Women in Rural Development, A case study; Mittal Delhi; 1997) emphasis upon the female decision making especially in the areas of home and farm affairs among the rural families. She goes on to emphasis on education of women as an important factor in the matter of decision making process. In her words “Educated women are better placed as compared to their illiterate counterparts.”She has reported that she has never seen women as final decision makers in many household matters except for cases for food and nutrition of children. The financial activities are solely done by then male members of the family. She claims that women has grater input in household decision making if they are from medium status. She also claims that the socio-economic status is closely linked with women power of decision making.

Nepal’s constitution accords equal rights to both men and women. Nepal has amended many laws to improve the human rights of women. The Ministry of Women and Social Welfare is an important step in the institution building towards women’s power and decision making. Moreover, during 2002 HMG organized a National Commission for Women. The government’s commitment to general mainstreaming and several others programs such as micro-credit are bringing women to the mainstream of the economy. Nepal’s commitment to this is fully reflected in attempts to bring about a change in legal provision, budgetary efforts to gender equality (MOPE, 2002).

Women in Nepal are generally less educated than men at all levels of education. However the gender gap has narrowed in recent years. Nevertheless, more than one in two women aged 15-49 have never been to school, compared with one in five men in the same age group. Although female employment is high in Nepal, with 71 percent employment in the 12 months preceding the survey, the majority (86 percent) are employed in agriculture sector. Thirty-seven percent of currently married women participate in all four important household decisions which are: - own health care, major household purchases, purchase of daily household needs, and visits to her family or relatives. 32 percent don’t participate in any decisions. Although one in five women report that they alone make decisions on their own health care, one in three says that her husband

makes such decisions mainly by himself. Data from NDHS 2006 indicate that there is positive relationship between use of contraceptive and participate in household decision-making (MOHP, 2007).

The participation in decision making inside the household sphere was found to be equal for men and women of Tamang community. The percentage of decision-making authority constituted 40.26 percent of the total. However the female participation in decision-making authority for outside the household sphere was found to be dominated by male decision-making authority (Limbu, 1997).

In Nepal, 19.6 percent of households are headed by females. Among development regions, the west region has the highest proportion of female headed households (28.7 percent), while the central has the lowest (15.7 percent). Among ecological zones, Hill has the highest proportion (24.3 percent), while the Mountain has the lowest (15.1 percent). Differences between rural urban areas are smaller compared to intra-rural differences (NLSS, 2003/04).

A Village case study from Bajhang showed that about 20 percent of female headed households were landless as compared to only about 9 percent of male headed households. Slightly more female headed households were in the marginal former category. No women were found in the category of medium and large farmers. All female headed households in this sample had income below poverty level (NPC, 1992).

According to Shakya, 50 percent of women were at risk of having poor nutritional status, while more than 12 percent had poor nutritional status. Majority of women get pregnant before reach nineteen years and had more than four children. More than ninety percent of them did not have any antenatal check up or health care available during birth of child. This points to need for special attention to be given to the mother's health and nutritional status (Shakya, 2000).

It is interesting to note that there are 3915 VDCs, 58 municipalities in the country. There are women members in each of ward committees of VDCs as required by law. Many of them are Dalits and were elected. On the other hand, there are DDCs in 75 districts of Nepal. There were no elected members of any DDC in the country who were Terai Dalit Women. However, there

were some Dalit males and non-Dalit women who were elected. Many of the elected non-Dalit women were from the hills. Not a single Dalit woman was elected as Chairman, Deputy-chairman of any of the VDCs in the country. It was also found that out of 963 women elected at elections in 1994 for 44 VDCs, one municipality and District Development Committee, there were only 60 Dalit women. Only one Dalit woman was chairman of Ward Committee. Similarly, out of 1388 women elected in Kathmandu district, there were only 30 Dalits (5). The conclusion from the above analysis is that there are extremely few candidates and no winners among Terai Dalit women at DDC level (Raj, 2003).

Women's health is a crucial part of the status of women. The health status of women in Nepal is poor. Every indicator of health status whether it is maternal mortality and morbidity, female life expectancy, female infant mortality shows a fundamental gender inequality. According to 1991 census data, life expectancy of women is 53.4 years compared to 55.9 years of men. But a little progress in 2001, life expectancy of women is 62.2 years and 61.8 years of men (Singh, 2001).

The nutritional and health condition of Nepalese women and adolescent girls is extremely poor. It is generally manifested in the inadequate intake of calories and protein and in poor access to health services. Many studies have shown that the height and weight of the Nepalese women are subsequently less than that of women in developing countries. Nearly two third of women in reproductive age is anemic, while this proportion increases to 75 percent among pregnant women. This high proportion of anemia among Nepalese women results in high maternal morbidity as well as mortality. Moreover, the days lost due to sickness were found to be greater for women than men. The health status of Nepal's people is one of the lowest in the South Asian region and this is particularly true for females. One fifth of women get married in the early age of 15-19. As a result of their premature pregnancy the deaths of women have been occurring in a very high. High birth rates, low life expectancy, high infant and maternal mortality rates and high death rate indicate the poor health status of women. (MoPE, 2002).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction to the Study Area

Among the five districts of Narayani zone, Rautahat is one. The district has covered around 1,126 square Kilometers. The neighboring districts are the Sarlahi in the east, Bara in the west, Makwanpur in the north and India's Bihar state in the north. This district comprises six electoral constituency, 96 Village Development Committee and one Municipality. The headquarter of the Rautahat district is Gaur Municipality which is the border of India. The total population of the district is 545,132 which is 2.23 percent of the total population of the nation. Sex ratio of the district is 107 and Population density is 484. The major caste/ ethnic groups living in this district are Muslims, Yadav, Teli, Kurmi, Koiri and others.

Rautahat District is situated in the Terai region. Many studies shows that the status of women residing in Terai region is comparatively poor than those women residing in Hill and Mountain. In this District majority of the population have accepted Islam religion. It has still an opinion that girls should marry in early ages which affects the overall status of women. Girls can not complete their education, they should give birth in early ages, can not involve in income-generating activities and others. All these terms affects the empowerment, participation and nutritional status of women in her life. Therefore, it was essential to examine the actual status of women in the district. Thus the district has selected for the study that can be very important in the development process of the nation.

3.2. Sampling Method

The data used for the study secondary data which is taken from Monitoring and Evaluation Baseline Survey 2007. The PAF baseline survey is based on multi-stage quasi-randomized sampling design. The World Bank determined a sample size of 3,000 households from 6 districts for the survey. Sample size was determined by using 'power calculation' method. Three stages were involved to select 3,000 households.

First, 6 out of the 19 districts were selected. The six districts were chosen specifically on the basis of rank that is lowest in the composite index of socio-economic development and representation of all three ecological zones (mountain, hill and Terai).

Second, there are about 2,782 rural wards in six selected districts. Ward is the smallest administrative unit in Nepal and it is considered as 'primary sampling unit' (PSU) for sampling. The total wards were divided into two strata, experimental and control wards. Wards having PAF programme intervention were designated as 'experimental wards' and the wards that were already selected for the intervention but the programme were yet to be started were the 'control wards'. Following the procedure adopted in the baseline survey of 2006, a sample of 15 households was allocated to represent a population from each PSU. In order to enumerate 3,000 households, a total of 200 wards or PSUs is required. Two hundred PSUs were further equally divided into experimental and control wards with 100 PSUs for each. Finally, 200 wards were selected with the help of probability proportional to size (PPS) technique. A weighting factor was computed as 0.7 and assigned to the wards where concentration of marginalized population is relatively higher in order to make sure that they have a higher chance of being selected.

Third stage is the final stage of sampling to select households for enumeration. The selection of households was carried out at the field level. When field survey team reached the selected wards/PSUs, field supervisor with the help of enumerators prepared a listing of households in consultation with knowledgeable local level stakeholders. Preparation of household listing in the field becomes more precise and reliable in that it ensures listing of households that are actually available at the PSU. From the list, supervisors selected 15 households in each PSU by using systematic random sampling technique.

Among these six districts Rautahat is one. Total 865 wards are selected and among the selected wards 930 households are taken for sampling. Almost all the wards are from rural areas. Total population is 6008 among which 3138 are males and 2870 are females. This study take these parts of the information which it requires on need basis.

3.3. Type of Questionnaire

As the study is based on secondary source of data taken from PAF M & E Survey, according to PAF, the baseline survey involved two types of questionnaire that were prepared by CDPS/PAFS/WB for PAF M & E Baseline survey in 2007 – multi module structured household questionnaire and community questionnaire.

The household questionnaire was administered to each selected households. It includes questions on socio-economic, demographic, and participation and empowerment issues, especially focused on women, Dalits and Janjaties.

3.4 Selection of Respondents

The respondents for enumeration were mainly head of the household. In the case of the absence of household head, either de-factor household head or an adult member of household aged 18 years or above, who could respond to the survey questionnaire, were the respondents. Self women were the respondents of the female related questionnaire.

3.5. Data Processing and Analysis:

In this study collected raw data from PAF has been processing by using software package SPSS and excel. Descriptive analysis of the collected data has done by using methods such as frequency distribution, cross tabulation, and average and percentage distribution as per required.

CHAPTER IV

INTRODUCTION TO STUDY POPULATION

This chapter presents the demographic and social characteristics of study population. Demographic characteristics contain age and sex distribution, marital status. Similarly Social characteristics contain caste/ethnicity composition, education level by sex of the study population.

4.1 Household Characteristics

4.1.1 Age and Sex Composition of Household Population with Sex Ratio.

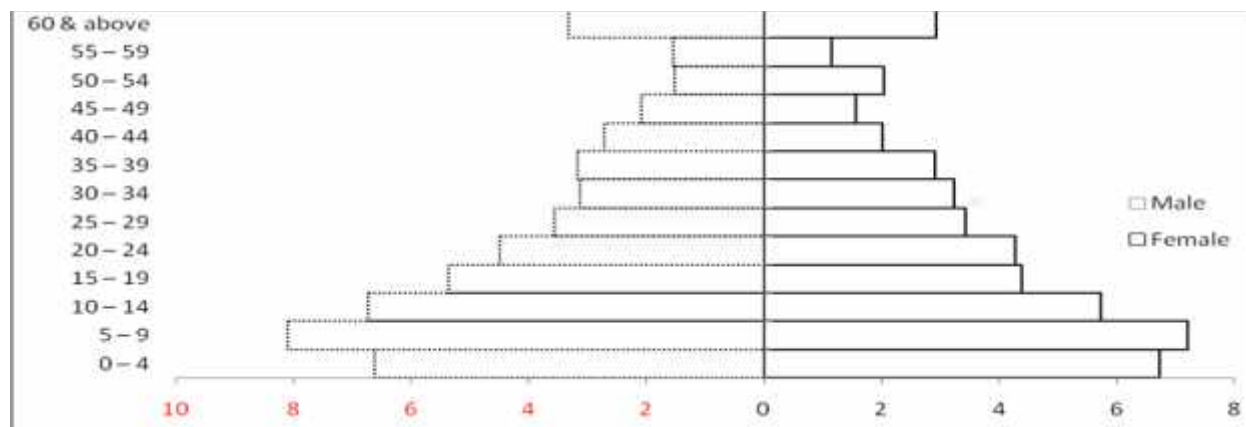
The age and sex composition of the population is presented in five-year age group such as 0-4, 5-9, 10-14, 15-19.....and the all the ages over the sixty are addressed in sixty and above age group. Out of total 6008 populations, 3138 were males and 2870 were females. The higher proportions of the population were found in age group 5 -9 years (15.31%). The lowest proportions of the population were in age groups 55 – 59 year (2.70%). The proportion of both male (15.49%) and female (15.12%) was highest in age group 5 – 9. the percentage of women in age group 15-19. Age and sex composition of the study population is also presented by pyramid which is given below. The sex ratio of the study area had high sex ratio which is higher than that of national figure. Similarly, we compare sex ratio among different age groups if was found that the sex ratio was highest in age group 40-44 and lowest in age group 50-54. In overall male population was more than female population. But the numbering status of women in reproductive ages was higher than the male population of the same age group. (Table 4.1)

Table 4.1: Percentage distribution of Household Population by Age and Sex with Sex Ratio.

Age group	Male		Female		Total		Sex Ratio
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
0 – 4	397	12.65	405	14.11	802	13.35	98.02
5 – 9	486	15.49	435	15.12	920	15.31	111.98
10 – 14	404	12.87	345	12.02	749	12.41	117.10
15 – 19	322	10.26	264	9.02	586	9.75	121.97
20 – 24	270	8.60	258	8.99	528	8.79	104.65
25 – 29	214	6.82	207	7.21	421	7.01	103.38
30 – 34	187	5.96	195	6.79	382	6.36	95.50
35 – 39	190	6.05	175	6.10	365	6.08	108.57
40 – 44	162	5.16	122	4.25	284	4.73	132.79
45 – 49	125	3.98	95	3.31	220	3.66	131.58
50 – 54	90	2.87	123	4.29	213	3.55	73.17
55 – 59	92	2.93	70	2.44	162	2.70	131.43
60 & above	199	6.34	177	6.17	376	6.26	112.43
Total	3138	100.00	2870	100.00	6008	100.00	109.34

Source: PAF Monitoring and Evaluation Baseline Survey, 2007

Population Pyramid



4.1.2. Marital Status of Population

In developing countries like Nepal, marriage is one of the universal social institutions, which determines the social roles and responsibilities of people. It is necessary for legitimate birth. After marriage female role in the family has also increases. Among total population about 54 percent were married, followed by 41percent unmarried, 4 percent were widow/widower. Remaining all marital status people were less than one. Among the total female population 57 percent were married, about 37 percent were married, 6 percent were widow and less than one percent was divorce/separated. The table shows that percentage of married women were more than that of married male. The percentage of widow was almost double than that of widower indicates that the women were not remarried after the death of the husband (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2: Distribution of Population by Marital Status

Marital Status	Male		Female		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Married	1413	51.6	1411	57.0	2824	54.2
Unmarried	1238	45.2	908	36.8	2146	41.2
Widow/Widower	66	2.4	137	5.6	203	3.9
Divorced/ Separated	20	0.8	9	0.4	33	0.7
Total	2741	100.00	2465	100.00	5206	100.00

Source: PAF Monitoring and Evaluation Baseline Survey, 2007

4.2. Social Characteristics

Some social characteristic of study population are presented in this section which includes education, cast/ ethnicity aspects of population.

4.2.1. Caste/ethnic Composition of Population:

Nepal is multi cast/ethnic country. Various cast/ethnic people are residing in the country. In the study cast/ethnicity were divided in eight different categories which were Hill caste, Terai caste, Hill Janjati, Terai Janjati, Hill Dalits, Terai Dalits, Muslims and other not stated group. Hill caste includes Chettri,Brahmin (Hill), Thakuri, Sanyasi and like that, similarly Terai cast includes

Yadav, Teli, Koiri, Rajput, Brahmin (Terai), Kayastha, Sudi, Kanu, Kalwar, Baniya and like that, Hill Janjati includes Newar, Rai, Magar, Gurung, Limbu, Terai janjati includes Tharu, Hill Dalit includes Kami, Sarki, Damai and like that, Terai Dalit includes chamar, Musahar, Dusadh, Dom, Halkhor. Muslim were those who accept Islam religion and other all castes that were unidentified were kept in other not stated group (PAF, 2006).

Highest proportion of population were from Terai Caste (40.3) and lowest from Hill Janjati (3.7%). Muslims constituted second position (18.8%) of total population. Similarly the proportion of Terai Janjatis, Terai Dalits, Hill Caste and Hill Dalits were almost 13 percent, 14 percent, 5 percent and 4 percent respectively. The proportion of caste /ethnicity by sex was almost same for both male and female in all caste/ethnic groups (Table 4.3).

Table 4.3: Caste/Ethnic Composition of Population by Sex

Caste/Ethnicity	Male		Female		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Hill Caste	143	4.6	150	5.2	293	4.9
Terai Caste	1281	40.8	1140	39.7	2421	40.3
Hill Janjatis	112	3.6	110	3.8	222	3.7
Terai Janjatis	397	12.7	380	13.2	777	12.9
Hill Dalits	136	4.3	131	4.6	267	4.4
Terai Dalits	433	13.8	380	13.2	813	13.5
Muslims	589	18.8	540	18.8	1129	18.8
Others /NS	47	1.5	39	1.4	86	1.4
Total	3138	100.00	2870	100.00	6008	100.00

Source: PAF Monitoring and Evaluation Baseline Survey, 2007

4.2.2 Educational status of the Population

The education plays important role in all round development of the nation and it also plays the vital role on decision making. Table 4.4 shows the educational status of the study population by sex. About two third of the population (65%) have primary education followed by secondary

level (23.6%). About 4 percent population have the education level Intermediate and above. When we analyze educational status by sex it seems that high percentage of female were gain primary education than male. But it was low than male in other levels such as Secondary and Intermediate. The educational status of women in the study area has almost same as that of male but it seems to improve to enhance the overall status. (Table 4.4)

Table 4.4: Distribution of Population 6 years and above by Level of Education and Sex

Level of Education	Male		Female		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Primary	704	63.2	657	67.0	130	65.0
Secondary	276	24.8	218	22.2	494	23.6
S.L.C. Passed	90	8.1	69	7.0	159	7.6
Intermediate and above	44	3.9	37	3.8	81	3.9
Total	1114	100.00	981	100.00	2095	100.00

Source: PAF Monitoring and Evaluation Baseline Survey, 2007

This chapter has presented the general introduction of the study area. Age and sex distribution of the study area has showed that there is excess of male population over female population. Beside this, Population Pyramid has also presented the clear picture of the age and sex distribution of the study population. Among the various marital statuses, most of the women were married and the percentages of widow were higher than widower. Almost ninety percent population were from Terai origin and remaining were from Hill origin. There was not much difference between the educational status of male and female.

CHAPTER V

STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE STUDY AREA

This chapter deals with the basis situation of women in terms of freedom, participation and role in the society. It includes the freedom of mobility of women to visiting maternal home, visiting the local market, visiting the temple, safely of travel during the day and night. It also includes the participation in decision making process such as Household decision making Decision in household properties, control over household income.

FREEDOM OF MOBILITY

5.1. Freedom of Mobility:

There are various cultural values and norms in our society. Most of the females are engaged in domestic work. They are restricted to go outside and take part in social activities. To analyze the empowerment status of women in terms of mobility two types of questions were asked to the respondents. First they were asked whether they can able to go their maternal home alone. If the women's maternal home is in the same village it may affect the situation, therefore it again questioned that how many of them have maternal home in the same village. After that they were further asked whether they can visit their maternal home without permission.

The given table shows the distribution of female population according to whether they can go to maternal home alone. About 64 percent women respond that they can go to maternal home alone. Highest percentage (76.1%) of Hill caste women had respond that they can visit their maternal home alone followed by Terai Janjati (75.6%), Tarai Dalits (72.1%), Hill Janjati (67.7), Muslims (67.7), Terai caste (57.1%). Lowest percentage i.e. only about 36 percent Hill Dalit women responded that they can go their maternal home alone. Data presented in the table states that most of the women were felt themselves empowered to visit the maternal home alone (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1: Distribution of Respondents According to whether they can go Maternal Home Alone

Caste/Ethnicity	Yes		No		Not Applicable		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Hill Caste	35	76.1	11	23.9	0	0.0	46	100.0
Terai Caste	206	57.1	150	41.6	5	1.4	361	100.0
Hill Janjatis	21	67.7	10	32.3	0	0.0	31	100.0
Terai Janjatis	90	75.6	25	21.0	4	3.4	119	100.0
Hill Dalits	15	35.7	24	57.1	3	7.1	42	100.0
Terai Dalits	93	72.1	35	27.1	1	0.8	129	100.0
Muslims	111	67.7	51	31.1	2	1.2	164	100.0
Others /NS*	7	53.8	6	46.2	0	0.0	13	100.0
Total	578	63.9	312	34.5	15	1.7	905	100.0

Source: PAF Monitoring and Evaluation Baseline Survey, 2007

* Not Stated

Similarly, women were also asked about where is their maternal home, in the same village or not. Maternal home of women in the same village make easier to visit because of short distance. About only 13 percent women have their maternal home in the same village. High Percentage of Hill Janjati women (32.3%) have their maternal home in the same village followed by 18 percent Muslim women, 16 percent Terai Janjatis, almost 11 percent Terai Dalits, 10 percent Terai caste, and around 9 percent Hill caste. But no any Hill Dalit women have their maternal home in the same village. Most of women have not their maternal home in the same village, though they can visit the place alone states that they felt themselves as empowered as nobody should needed to move with them for visit from one place to another (Table 5.2).

Table 5.2: Distribution of Respondents Whether their Maternal Home is in the Same Village

Caste/Ethnicity	Yes		No		Not Applicable		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Hill Caste	4	8.7	42	91.3	0	0.0	46	100.0
Terai Caste	36	10.0	322	89.2	3	0.8	361	100.0
Hill Janjatis	10	32.3	21	67.7	0	0.0	31	100.0
Terai Janjatis	19	16.0	96	80.7	4	3.4	119	100.0
Hill Dalits	0	0.0	39	92.9	3	7.1	42	100.0
Terai Dalits	14	10.9	115	89.1	0	0.0	129	100.0
Muslims	30	18.3	132	80.5	2	1.2	164	100.0
Others /NS	2	15.4	11	84.6	0	0.0	13	100.0
Total	115	12.7	778	86.0	12	1.3	905	100.0

Source: PAF Monitoring and Evaluation Baseline Survey, 2007

Respondents were further asked whether they can go maternal home without permission, in response majority of them replied no (78.5%). Only 20 percent women can go to their maternal home without permission of household head or male family members in the household. High percentage of Terai Janajati, Muslims and Hill Janjatis can go to maternal home without permission which was 24 percent, 23 percent and 23 percent respectively. Lowest percentage (7 %) of Hill Dalit women responded that they can go their maternal home without permission. The table states that most of the women could not take decide herself for the visit of maternal home. They should always took permission from the household head means they have low status in terms of taking decisions for the movement (Table 5.3).

Table 5.3: Distribution of Respondents according to whether they can go to Maternal Home without Permission

Caste/ Ethnicity	Yes		No		Not Applicable		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Hill Caste	8	17.4	37	80.4	1	2.2	46	100.0
Terai Caste	67	18.6	289	80.1	5	1.4	361	100.0
Hill Janjatis	7	22.6	24	77.4	0	0.0	31	100.0
Terai Janjatis	28	23.5	86	72.3	5	4.2	119	100.0
Hill Dalits	3	7.1	36	85.7	3	7.1	42	100.0
Terai Dalits	26	20.2	102	79.1	1	0.8	129	100.0
Muslims	36	22.0	126	76.8	2	1.2	164	100.0
Others /NS	3	23.1	10	76.9	0	0.0	13	100.0
Total	178	19.7	710	78.5	17	1.9	905	100.0

Source: PAF Monitoring and Evaluation Baseline Survey, 2007

5.2. Freedom of Visiting the Local Market

Freedom of visiting the local market includes freedom of visiting the local market alone and freedom of visiting the local market without permission of household head and other male members. Higher percentage of Terai Janjatis (91.6%) can go to local market without permission followed by Hill caste (84.8%), Terai Dalits (82.9%), Hill Janjati (80.6%), Muslims (73.8%), Hill Dalits (71.4%). Lowest percentage of Terai caste (67.6%) responded that they can go to local market alone. Overall about 75 percent women were responded that they can go to local market alone. In comparison of freely visit to maternal home (63.9 %), high percentage of women (75.4 %) could visit the local market alone states that they have much empowered for the visiting the local market alone than visiting the local market (Table 5.4).

Table 5.4: Distribution of Respondents according to whether they can go to Local Market Alone

Cast/ Ethnicity	Yes		No		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Hill Caste	39	84.8	7	15.2	46	100.0
Terai Caete	244	67.6	117	32.4	361	100.0
Hill Janjatis	25	80.6	6	19.4	31	100.0
Terai Janjatis	109	91.6	10	8.4	119	100.0
Hill Dalits	30	71.4	12	28.6	42	100.0
Terai Dalits	107	82.9	22	17.1	129	100.0
Muslims	121	73.8	43	26.2	164	100.0
Others /NS	7	53.8	6	46.2	13	100.0
Total	682	75.4	223	24.6	905	100.0

Source: PAF Monitoring and Evaluation Baseline Survey, 2007

Table 5.5 presents distribution of respondents in case of permission, reporting of going local market decreased in comparison of reporting of going local market alone. Only about 35 percent women responded that they can go to local market without permission.. Freedom of mobility is relatively higher among Hill caste (58.7%) than among other cast groups in terms of visiting the local market without permission. Similarly about 52 percent Hill Janjati, 43 percent Hill Dalits, 40 percent Terai Janajati, 32 percent Terai Caste respondent reported that they can visit the local market without permission. Only about 29 percent Terai Dalit women responded that they can visit the local market without permission. Overall high percentage of women should take permission for visiting the local market also same as that for visiting the maternal home. It states their low mobility status in the of visiting of the local market (Table 5.5).

Table 5.5: Distribution of Respondents according to whether they can go to Local Market without Permission

Caste/ Ethnicity	Yes		No		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Hill Caste	27	58.7	19	41.3	46	100.0
Terai Caste	116	32.1	245	67.9	361	100.0
Hill Janjatis	16	51.6	15	48.4	31	100.0
Terai Janjatis	47	39.5	72	60.5	119	100.0
Hill Dalits	18	42.9	24	57.1	42	100.0
Terai Dalits	37	28.7	92	71.3	129	100.0
Muslims	49	29.9	115	70.1	164	100.0
Others /NS	5	38.5	8	61.5	13	100.0
Total	315	34.8	590	65.2	905	100.0

Source: PAF Monitoring and Evaluation Baseline Survey, 2007

5.1.3 Safe Travel

The information given in table 5.6 shows percentage distribution of women who can safe travel during the day and during the night in the village. Almost 97 percent of females respondents have reported that they feel safe to travel in the day but only 6 percent female reported that they felt safe travel even at night. Higher percentage i.e. about 13 percent Hill Janjatis females reported that they felt safely to travel even at night. Whereas only 5.3 percent Terai caste females reported that it is safe to travel at night for them. Higher percentage of women from all caste/ethnic could safe travel mostly at day than night. Travelling during the day and night time has also affected by the security status of the related place. As we know the security situation of Nepal is miserable during some years which also affects women's travel because there has been more risky especially during night time. The table has indicated that most of the felt secure during the day travel but few of them felt safe during night travel (Table 5.6).

Table 5.6: Distribution of Female Respondents according to Safely Travel During the Day and at Night (Yes only).

Caste / Ethnicity	Could Travel Safely During the day		Could Travel Safely at night	
	N	%	N	%
Hill Caste	45	97.8	3	6.5
Terai Caste	353	97.8	19	5.3
Hill Janjatis	30	96.8	4	12.9
Terai Janjatis	118	99.2	7	5.9
Hill Dalits	37	88.1	2	4.8
Terai Dalits	126	97.7	8	6.2
Muslims	154	93.9	12	7.3
Others /NS	12	92.3	1	7.7
Total	875	96.7	56	6.2

Source: PAF Monitoring and Evaluation Baseline Survey, 2007

5.2.4. Freedom of Visiting the Temple

Almost 84 percent females could go to temple alone. Nearly 94 percent Hill caste female could go to temple alone whereas the only 79 percent Hill Dalits females could go to temple alone followed by Terai Dalit (87.6%), Terai caste (86.1%), Hill Janjati (83.9%), Terai Janjati (79.0%), Muslims (78.7%). Lowest percentage of Hill Dalit respondents reported that they can visit religious institutions alone. In terms of visiting of three places that is maternal home, market and religious institutions, highest percentage of women (84.1 %) responded that they can visit the religious institutions alone. Hence, women's mobility status has better in terms of visiting the religious institutions alone (Table 5.7).

Table 5.7: Distribution of Respondents in terms of Visiting Temple Alone

Caste / Ethnicity	Yes		No	
	N	%	N	%
Hill Caste	43	93.5	3	6.5
Terai Caste	311	86.1	50	13.9
Hill Janjatis	26	83.9	5	16.1
Terai Janjatis	94	79.0	25	21.0
Hill Dalits	33	78.6	9	21.4
Terai Dalits	113	87.6	16	12.4
Muslims	129	78.7	35	21.3
Others /NS	12	92.3	1	7.7
Total	761	84.1	144	15.9

Source: PAF Monitoring and Evaluation Baseline Survey, 2007

Almost 51 percent female could visit the temple without permission which is quite lower than those respondents who responded that they can visit the temple alone. The table shows that higher percentage (78.3%) Hill caste female could go to temple etc. without permission but only 45 percent Muslim women can do so, which clearly shows that the security system for the females is very strict. Whereas Terai Janjatis females have also more restriction to go temple by permission which was proved the above data, around 35 percent Terai Janjatis women could go to temple without permission. (Table 5.8)

Table 5.8: Distribution of Respondents according to whether they can go to Temple/Masjid/Church without Permission

Caste / Ethnicity	Yes		No	
	N	%	N	%
Hill Caste	36	78.3	10	21.7
Terai Caste	179	49.6	182	50.4
Hill Janjatis	20	64.5	11	35.5
Terai Janjatis	41	34.5	78	65.5
Hill Dalits	24	57.1	18	42.9
Terai Dalits	76	58.9	53	41.1
Muslims	73	44.5	91	55.5
Others /NS	9	69.2	4	30.8
Total	458	50.6	447	49.4

Source: PAF Monitoring and Evaluation Baseline Survey, 2007

PARTICIPATION IN HOUSEHOLD DECISION MAKING

5.2.1. Household Decision-Making

The given table shows the distribution of respondents based on decision making process in household based on who in the family decides about household matters has been sought in the study. Highest percentage women have responded that spouse of the household are the principal decision makers of household matters. For example almost 38 percent women responded that head of household are the main person in the household matters. Around 3 percent women responded that other male member is main decision makers where as the figure of other female decision maker for household matters is around 1 percent only. Around 15 percent women responded that all family members have decided household related matters. Spouse (Husband/wife) at household head is the dominate in decision maker in household matters among Hill (Caste (47.8%), Terai caste (45.2%) Hill janjatis (48.2%), Hill Dalits (45.2%), whereas it is the head who is dominant to decide on household matters among Tarai Dalits

(44.2%) people including Muslim. In most of the households both spouse involved in family decision making but only few female member can do so states the lower status of women independently take decisions of family related issues (Table 5.9).

Table 5.9: Distribution of Respondents according to who is Main Person in Family Decision Making

Cast\Ethnicity	Head		Spouse		Other Male member		Other Female member		All member		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Hill Caste	16	34.8	22	47.8	1	2.2	1	2.2	6	13.0	46	100
Terai Caste	129	35.7	163	45.2	13	3.6	4	1.1	52	14.4	361	100
Hill Janjatis	9	29.0	15	48.4	2	6.5	0	6.0	5	16.1	31	100
Terai Janjatis	41	34.5	49	41.2	1	0.8	1	0.8	27	22.7	119	100
Hill Dalits	17	40.5	19	45.2	1	2.4	0	0.0	5	11.9	42	100
Terai Dalits	57	44.2	47	36.4	7	5.4	2	1.6	16	12.4	129	100
Muslims	68	41.5	63	38.4	4	2.4	4	2.4	25	15.2	164	100
Others /NS	5	38.5	8	61.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	13	100
Total	342	37.8	386	42.7	29	3.2	12	1.3	136	15.0	905	100

Source: PAF Monitoring and Evaluation Baseline Survey, 2007

5.2.2. Decision in Household Properties

Given table shows the participation in buying and selling of household properties. Almost 82 percent of female respondents reported that they were asked in buying and selling of household properties. Participation of women in household, decision making is highest in hill janjati (90.3%) women followed by Hill Dalis (85.7%), Terai Dalits (85.3%), Terai caste (83.9%), Hill caste (80.4%) and lowest among Tarai janjatis (72.3%). The participation of women in buying and selling of household properties is high. Therefore it can be said that their status is better but not satisfactory in household economic activities (Table 5.10).

Table 5.10: Distribution of respondents participating in selling and buying of household properties

Caste / Ethnicity	Yes		No		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Hill Caste	37	80.4	9	19.6	46	100.0
Terai Caste	303	83.9	58	16.1	361	100.0
Hill Janjatis	28	90.3	3	9.7	31	100.0
Terai Janjatis	86	72.3	33	27.7	119	100.0
Hill Dalits	36	85.7	6	14.3	42	100.0
Terai Dalits	110	85.3	19	14.7	129	100.0
Muslims	128	78.0	36	22.0	164	100.0
Others/ NS	12	92.3	1	7.7	13	100.0
Total	740	81.8	165	18.2	905	100.0

Source: PAF Monitoring and Evaluation Baseline Survey, 2007

5.2.3 Control over Household Income

Given table also displays the information on women's control over household income. About 76 percent female respondents reported that they keep the household income. As stated above highest percentage of Hill janjati women have reported that they kept their household income is asked in buying and selling household properties, the situation is similar in this case also. That is almost 87 percentage Hill Janjati women were reported that they keep give to keep income whereas the lowest percentage of Terai janjatis women give to keep household income. Most of women in the study area have control over household income indicates better status in participation of household income. (Table 5.11)

Table 5.11: Percentage Distribution of Female Respondents Keeping the Household Income.

Caste/ Ethnicity	Yes		No		Total
	N	%	N	%	
Hill Caste	33	71.7	13	28.3	46
Terai Caste	285	78.9	76	21.1	361
Hill Janjatis	27	87.1	4	12.9	31
Terai Janjatis	80	67.2	39	32.8	119
Hill Dalits	33	78.6	9	21.4	42
Terai Dalits	94	72.9	35	27.1	129
Muslims	124	75.6	40	24.4	164
Others/ NS	12	92.3	1	7.7	13

Source: PAF Monitoring and Evaluation Baseline Survey, 2007

NUTRITIONAL STATUS

Nutritional Status of women is considered an important indicator of overall health and as a predictor of pregnancy outcome. So, in order to assess health and Nutritional status of women in reproductive age, anthropometric data were collected from all even married women 15-49 years. The basic members to assess nutritional status by the survey are height and weight of woman and the combined (Height and weight) Body Mass Index (BMI). The values of BMI in between 18.5 and 24.9 indicate a normal nutritional status among women, while the value of BMI less than 18.5 indicates that women are suffering form chronic energy malnutrition. Similarly, women with a value of 25 and over are considered overweight or obese.

Maternal height is an indicator of past nutritional history during childhood and adolescence. The women's height in the range of 140 – 150 centimeter is considered as nutritional risk. The mean heights of the mother were 150.32 centimeter, which is almost similar to the national figure. The mean height of mother was highest in Terai Janjatis (152.54 cm) other social group. Similarly the mean height of Terai Dalit have lowest (149.31cm) in comparison of other social groups (Table 5.12).

The mean weight in reproductive ages including those who were pregnant at the time of the survey is about 45 Kg. The Hill caste women have over weight (48.58 kg) in comparison of other social groups whereas Muslims women have low weight (44.41 kg) than others. The table states that Muslim and Terai Dalit women have poor nutritional status (Table 5.12).

Table 5.12: Distribution of Respondents by Mean Height in CM and Mean Weight in KG of Women by Caste/ Ethnic Group.

Caste / Ethnicity	Weight		Height	
	Mean	N	Mean	N
Hill Caste	48.58	52	152.40	52
Terai Caste	44.77	378	149.73	378
Hill Janjatis	47.75	35	152.02	35
Terai Janjatis	46.54	136	152.54	136
Hill Dalits	45.02	42	151.55	42
Terai Dalits	43.30	138	149.31	138
Muslims	44.41	157	149.60	157
Others /NS	45.55	10		10
Total	45.09	948	150.32	948

Source: PAF Monitoring and Evaluation Baseline Survey, 2007

The value of BMI seems varies among the different cast/ethnic groups. Among the hill caste 65 percent women had normal BMI and 25 percent were less than 18.5 and about 10 percent have over weight. Among the all cast/ ethnic groups highest proportion of Terai janjati women (74.3%) had normal BMI i.e. BMI between 18.5-24.9. Similarly in the thin category i.e. BIM less than 18.5, highest propositional for the Terai Dalit women as like, in the over weight category i.e. BMI over than 25, highest for the hill caste women. So the data shows that the hill cast women have better nutritional status than the others and Terai dalit women have poor nutritional status in the study area. (Table 5.13)

Table 5.13: Distribution of Respondents on the basis of BMI by Cast/Ethnicity

Caste/Ethnicity	BMI							
	<18.5 (thin)		18.5-24.9 (Normal)		<25 over weight		Total	
Hill Caste	13	25.0	34	65.4	5	9.6	52	100.00
Terai Caste	114	30.2	242	64.0	22	5.8	378	100.00
Hill Janjatis	6	17.1	26	74.3	3	8.6	35	100.00
Terai Janjatis	32	23.5	100	73.5	4	2.9	136	100.00
Hill Dalits	12	28.6	29	69.0	1	2.4	42	100.00
Terai Dalits	46	33.3	88	63.8	4	2.9	138	100.00
Muslims	50	31.8	96	61.1	11	7.0	157	100.00
Others NS	2	20.0	7	70.0	1	10.0	10	100.00
Total	275	29.0	622	65.6	51	5.4	948	100.00

Source: PAF Monitoring and Evaluation Baseline Survey, 2007

Among the three category of BMI, 29 percent women fall in the less 18.5 i.e. this, 66 percent women fall in 18.5-24.9 i.e. in normal category and only 5.4 percent women fall in the more than 25 i.e. over category. When we analyze the mean BMI according to age group we found that almost the highest percentage (35%) of women were in thin category related to the age group 35-39. Similarly among normal BMI highest percentage (72%) of women were from the age group 40-44. table clearly shows that most of the women in the age group 20-24 maintain have their body but after the 40 women got over weight. (Table 5.14)

Table 5.14: Distribution of Respondents according to Age Group and Mean BMI

Age Group	BMI							
	<18.5 (thin)		18.5-24.9 (Normal)		>25 over weight		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
15-19	16	23.9	47	70.1	4	6.0	67	100.00
20-24	44	24.2	131	72.0	7	3.8	182	100.00
25-29	53	31.5	104	61.9	11	6.5	168	100.00
30-34	47	27.5	119	69.6	5	2.9	171	100.00
35-39	55	35.0	92	58.0	10	6.4	157	100.00
40-44	30	26.5	75	66.4	8	7.1	113	100.00
45-49	30	33.3	54	60.0	6	6.7	90	100.00
Total	275	29.0	622	65.6	51	5.4	948	100.00

Source: PAF Monitoring and Evaluation Baseline Survey, 2007

This chapter has presented the status of women in terms of mobility, participation and nutrition of the study area. Majority of women could visit their maternal home alone. However, only about one-fifth could visit without permission from responsible persons in the household. Terai and Hill Janjati are relatively free than other social groups to visit their maternal homes without permission. The statistics are self explanatory that higher the proportion of visit alone and without permission, higher the freedom of mobility of women and vice versa.

Majority of female respondents could visit the local market alone but most of them have to take permission from the responsible member of the family. Most of the Terai Janjatis women could visit the local market alone and most of the Hill Janjatis women could visit without permission.

Majority of women could visit the religious institutions alone and without permission. Lowest percentage of Hill Dalits and Muslims can go to religious institutions alone. Lowest percentage of Terai Janjatis can go without permission. Traveling for women during the day to be safer than at night in all social groups.

Household head are dominant in making of household matters. However, majority of women reported that they were asked while deciding to buy and sell household properties. A considerable majority of female respondents also reported that they were kept the household income.

The value of BMI is normal among most of the Hill Janjatis. Terai Dalits and Muslim women suffer from life time nutritional energy deficiency.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The major purpose of this chapter is to summarize the major findings of the study related to the empowerment of woman in household and their participation in household decision making. And also summarize the nutritional status of women in the Rautahat district. It also includes conclusion and recommendation of the study.

Major Findings

This study analyzes the woman's empowerment, participation in household making and nutritional study in the Rautahat district. The required information were collected form 930 households of the Rautahat district .The study is mainly focused upon the women's empowerment status , participation in household decision making their nutritional status . The major findings of the study are as follows:

-) Among the total 930 households the total population was 6008, among which 3138 were males and 2870 were females.
-) The age-group 5-9 had contain highest population and 0-4 age group had second highest population.
-) Population Pyramid of the study population is about as same as Pyramid of Nepal.
-) The sex ratio is 109.34 which is higher than that of national figure.
-) Majority of the respondents were from the Terai caste, Muslims, Terai Dalits and Terai Janjatis.
-) About 54 percent respondents were married, 41 percent were unmarried and 4 percent were widow/widower.

Mobility Status

-) It was found that 64 percent females can go to maternal home alone but only 36 percent Hill Dalits and 57 percent Terai cast women can go to maternal home alone

- J Similarly, only 20 percent females can go to maternal home without permission. The figure is highest (24 %) for Terai Janjati women and lowest (7%) for Hill Dalit women.
- J Majority of women can go to local market alone, in which lowest 71 percent for Hill Dalit and highest 92 percent for Terai Janjatis.
- J Only 35 percent women can go to local market without permission in which 59 percent Hill caste women and only 29 percent Terai dalits can do so.
- J Majority of women i.e. 97 percent could travel safely during day time and only 6 percent could travel safely at night.
- J Almost 84 percent females can go to temple alone in which highest 94 percent Hill caste women and lowest 79 percent Hill Dalit can go to religious institution alone.
- J Almost 51 percent women can go to temple without permission in which lowest 45 percent Muslim women and 78 percent Hill caste women can go to religious institutions without permission.

Participation in Household Decision Making

- J Majority of the spouse were the head and main decision maker of the household among Hill caste, Hill Janjatis and Hill dalits.
- J Similarly, in Terai dalits and in Meslims household head were main person in household decision making.
- J Almost 82 percent women were made decision in household properties, among which lowest 72 percent Terai Janjatis and highest 90 percent Hill Janjatis women take decision in household properties.
- J Only 67 percent Terai Janjatis women have control over household income whereas Terai caste (78.9%) percent women have control over household income.
- J Overall 76 percent women have kept control over their household income.

Nutritional Status

- J When we compared the range of weight between different caste/ethnic groups we can found that Hill caste women have weighty (48.58 kg) than and the Terai Dalit women have less weight among all caste/ethnic women.

-) Similarly when we compared height, women from Terai Janjatis have tallest (152.54cm) and Muslim women have lowest height (149.31 cm) among all caste/ethnic women.
-) The weight was not much difference among various age groups.
-) Similarly the women of age group 40-44 have highest height(151.02 cm) and women of age group 15-19 have the lowest height
-) Among various caste/ethnic groups low percentage (61.1 percent) of Muslim women have normal BMI, where as highest percentage (74.3) of Hill Janjati women have normal BMI.
-) Similarly, among various age group women, highest percentage (72.0) of women aged 20-24 have normal BMI and the lowest (58.6 percent) women aged 35-39 have normal BMI.

Conclusion

This study has focused to analyze the women's empowerment status in terms of mobility, participation in household decision making and nutritional level. The major respondents were Terai caste, Muslims, terai dalits, terai Janjatis and others were Hill caste, Hill Janjatis, Hill dalits and others.

Empowerment status of women in respect of mobilization is almost same for all caste/ethnic women. Though Hill origin women are more empowered to mobilize than Terai origin women. The study has concluded that more Hill Janjati women participate in household decision making where as lowest Terai Janjati kept control over household income.

Nutritional status of Terai origin women especially Muslim women seems very poor, generally they have low BMI where as Hill Janjati women have better nutritional status than others. Cultural factors is seems crucial factor affecting the health status of women. Because in Islam religion people not have the freedom to use contraception. Therefore women should have give birth of children until her reproductive age which cause the low health status of Muslim women. Similarly Terai oriented women have also comparatively low health status than Hill oriented women. Overall, it is essential to improve women's ability and capacity to empowered, participation in decision making and nutritional status.

Recommendation

Women's status generally reflects the clear picture of the nation's socio-economic development. Because if women have better status in socio-economic aspect, it helps in the growth of the nation's productivity. In this study some important aspects of women's status such as empowerment in terms of mobility, participation in household decision making and nutritional level have described. In all the three aspects women's status is well but not satisfactory especially among Terai origin women.

Therefore to enhance the status of women we should change some of our religious thoughts. Dowry is major barrier for the lower status of females in the terai district which directly affects the girl's education. Therefore, government as well as society should give the punishment to both of them who offer the dowry and who take it. Girls from backward community should be prioritizing to gain upper level of education. Involvement of women in economic activities can help them into the self-capacity to sustain their lives. Hence, opportunities of income generating activities should be provided by governmental and non-governmental agencies.

To improve the nutritional status of women further research should be done in the rural areas. Implement income generating activities as well as personal hygiene and sanitation program would be beneficial. Women should be encouraged to visit health post as frequently a possible for check up. For this more health workers should be assigned in the villages.

In our country, women's related programs are generally city based. Major participants of the women's conferences, seminars, and workshops are only urban females not rural. If we actually want to improve women's status, development programs should be village oriented with the active participation of rural women. Rising awareness by such development activities should be helpful to enhance the status of women

Recommendation for Family Members

-) Provide equal opportunity to female member to enhance their lives.

-) Encourage them to participate in social and development activities.
-) Male should have participated in household chores.
-) Provide social security to women and make them aware for their rights and responsibilities.
-) Education is the essential for the increment in the empowerment and participation so daughters should have get equal opportunity for education as sons.
-) Should avoid these cultural aspect which are the barrier of development of the society.

REFERENCES

- Acharya, Meena 1997. "Statistical Profile of Nepalese Women: A Critical Review", *The Status of Women in Nepal* Vol. I, Part I,(Kathmandu: CEDA) 33-57.
-, 1997, *Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women- A Study Report Submitted to UNFPA* (Kathmandu: UNFPA).
-, 2003, "Changing Gender Status Achievements and Challenges" *Population Monograph of Nepal Vol. II* (Kathmandu: CBS) 217-250.
- Anantnarayan, Laxmi, 2008, *The MDGs and Advancing Women's Human Right* (Mumbai: Himalayan Publishing House).
- Asian Development Bank (ADB), 2005, *Women in Nepal* (Kathmandu: Program Development of Environment and Social Development).
- Beyond Beijing Committee (BBC), 2004, *Nepal Beijing and Beyond Beijing Country Report 2004* (Lalitpur: BBC).
- Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), 2003, *Statistical Pocket Book 2003* (Kathmandu: CBS).
-, 2004, *Nepal living Standard Survey, 2004 vol. I* (Kathmandu: CBS)
- Clark, J. y., 2003, *Empowerment of Women; Partners in Population and Development- A South Initiative* (New York: UN).
- Forum for Women legal and Development (FWLD), 2003, *Special Measures for Women and Their Impact* (Kathmandu: FWLD).
- Ghimire, Durga 1997, "Status of Nepalese Women" *Women and Development* (Kathmandu).
- <http://wgc.womensglobalconnection.org>
- [http://www.wikigender.org/index.php/Gender Equality in Nepal](http://www.wikigender.org/index.php/Gender_Equality_in_Nepal)
- <http://classic.wikigender.org>
- [http://womenshistory.about.com/library/ency/blwh nepal women.htm](http://womenshistory.about.com/library/ency/blwh_nepal_women.htm)
- <http://www.everestuncensored.org/3411/2008/12/02/status-of-women-in-nepal>).
- Informal Sector Service Center (INSEC), 2002, *Compilation of UN Conventions, Resolutions and Declarations* (Kathmandu: INSEC).
- K.C., Bal Kumar, Y. B., Gurung, K. P., Adhikari., P., Pradhan, and P.L., Joshi, 2006, *Monitoring and Evaluation Baseline survey Report 2006* (Kathmandu: CDPS, T.U.).
- Kaur, Satnam, 1997, *Women in Rural Development: A Case Study Mittal*, (Delhi).

- Khatun, Aisha (2001), *Obstacles to improving status of women* (Kathmandu :The Kathmandu Post).
- Kiran, 2008 “*Status of Women in Nepal*” (Kathmandu: Everest Uncensored)
- Limbu, Laxmi 1997, "The status of Tamang women and their reproductive Behaviour” *Nepal Population Journal* Vol. 5 (Kathmandu: Population Association of Nepal)
- Ministry of Population and Environment (MOPE), 2002, *Nepal Population Report* (Kathmandu: MOPE).
- Mahaoderen K. 1989, *Women and Population dynamics perceptive from Asian countries* (Indian: sage publication).
- Majupuria, Indra, 1982, *Nepalese Women* (Kathmandu: Tecpress)
- Ministry of Health and Population (MOHP) [Nepal], New Era and Macro International Inc. 2007, *Nepal Demographic and Health Survey, 2006* (Kathmandu: MOPH, New ERA, and International Inc.).
- Nepal Planning Commission (NPC), 1992, *Children and Women of Nepal – A Situation Analysis* (Kathmandu : NPC).
- Pyakuryal, Sucheta and Thakuri Reshari, 1998, *Feminism to Hailor to Ridicule* (Kathmandu: The Rising Nepal).
- Raj, Prakash, 2003, *Terai Dalit Women-Violation of Political Rights* (Paper presentation in Seminar).
- Shakya, Subodha, 2000, *Nutritional status of the women of reproductive ages and children under 5 years - A Baseline Survey Report* (Kathmandu).
- Shrestha, I., and Krishna Hecchethu, 2002, *Women and Governance-Re imaging State from a Perspective Nepal Chapter* (Kathmandu: ShtriiShakti).
- Singh, Mrigendra Lal, 2003,”Aging of the Population of Nepal”, *Population Monograph of Nepal* Vol. II (Kathmandu: CBS) 251-278.
- Thapa, EK Maya, 2000, *Gender Disparity in Nepal*, an unpublished MA Dissertation submitted to Central Department of Sociology/Anthropology T.U. (Kathmandu: Central Department of Sociology/Anthropology T.U.).
- United Nations (UN), 1993, *Women in Politics in Asia and the Pacific* (New York: UN).
-, 1994, *Report of the International Conferences on Population and Development* (New York: UN).
-, 1995, *United Nation and Status of Women* (New York: UN)

....., 1994, *Report of International Conference on Population and Development* (New York, UN).

United Nations Development Fund (UNDP), 1995, *Nepal Human Development Report* (New York: Oxford University Press).

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), 1998, *South Asia Study on Population Policies and Program in Nepal* (Kathmandu: UNFPA).

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 2000, *Children and Women in Nepal: A Situation Analysis* (Kathmandu: Nepal).