

CHAPTER- ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In Nepal, seventy-seven percentage of fuel energy contributed by wood. (NPC 2008: P433) The burning of wood is currently the largest use of energy derived from a solid fuel biomass. Fuel wood can be used for cooking and heating, and occasionally for fueling steam engines and steam turbines that generate electricity. Fuel wood may be available as Fuel wood (e.g. logs, bolts, blocks), charcoal, chips, sheets, pellets and sawdust. The particular form used depends upon factors such as source, quantity, quality and application. Sawmill waste and construction industry by-products also include various forms of lumber tailings.

The use of wood as a fuel source for heating is as old as civilization itself. Historically, it was limited in use only by the distribution of technology required to make a spark. Wood heat is still common throughout much of the world. Early examples include the use of wood heat in tents. Fires were constructed on the ground, and a smoke hole in the top of the tent allowed the smoke to escape by convection.

Wood may be burned in a furnace, stove, fireplace, or in a campfire, or used for a bonfire. Wood is the most easily available form of fuel, requiring no tools in the case of picking up dead wood, or little tools, although as in any industry, specialized tools, such as skidders and hydraulic wood splitters, have evolved to mechanize production. The discovery of how to make fire for the purpose of burning wood is regarded as one of humanity's most important advances.

Fuel wood is a so called renewable resource. However, demand for this fuel can outpace its ability to regenerate on local and regional level. For example in some places in the world and through history, the demand has led to desertification. Good forestry practices and improvements in

devices that use Fuel wood can improve the local wood supplies. As a Bio fuel, some consider Fuel wood to be a form of solar energy and to be relatively carbon neutral.

Women worked in fuel wood collection because such occupation is convenient, easy access, alternative one for fulfillment of their daily expenditures. According to social prestige and patriarchy system male involvement found negligible and women participation is strong in this occupation so I decided to study in this field.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Nepal is a male dominated kingdom heavily influenced by Hinduism. A large number of people do not have access to basic needs and fundamental human rights. Moreover the socio-economic status of women who cover more than half of the sky is appalling. The fruits of development are not distributed equitably & justly. The social, economic, educational, political, & socio-cultural condition of women is declining especially in the rural area which occupies more than 80% of the geography (NPC 2008). Even in the so called urban and semi-urban area some limited and clever women hold the power and are benefited in the name of poor, back warded and powerlessness. The government, NGO/INGOs & other developmental agencies have poured huge amount of money to uplift the women and other various marginalized groups who have been suffering from disease, hunger, poverty and the like but no clear and inspiring picture has been seen yet. In every walk of life we have been experienced discrimination on the ground of gender roles and responsibilities. Women play an important role in the provision of food security on both household and the national level. In rural areas women are the principal producers and prepare food for the family.

The study area is located at Kerabari VDC but if we closely look at, it picturizes a typical remote village of our country where there is

facility of drinking water, electricity, toilet and they more or less depend on nature i.e. the fuel wood which is the one & only sources of living. Every day they go to jungle to collect bundle of stick and the next daybreak they sell it to collect bread. While returning back home they buy about a kg of rice, little pulse and oil which are the bare need of living. They not only represent a small dwelling of Kerabari but a great majority of rural & urban slum dwellers who are very vulnerable, oppressed, exploited and also disadvantaged on social, cultural and economic perspective. Indeed, to uncover the miseries and hardships of those women who have passed their lives over a long history & also to create interests in these hidden truths, this study would become fruitful I have thought.

Wood has a long history of being used as fuel, which continues to this day, mostly in rural areas of the world. Hardwood is preferred over softwood because it creates less smoke and burns longer. Adding a woodstove or fireplace to a home is often felt to add ambiance and warmth. (www.google.com)

Rural sector occupies important place in Nepal's economy. However, expected growth in the rural sector could not be achieved to expectations with the implementation of the development programs in the past. Therefore, development initiatives are currently focused to the rural sector. Assessment of the total national energy consumption over past five years shows that the share of traditional energy to this consumption has been 86 percent while the share of commercial energy sources have been only 14 percent. Of the total energy needs in the country, 77 percent of the need is contributed by fuel wood, agricultural residues and dunk cake contribute 9 percent of the needs and remaining 14 percent of the needs are met from imported petroleum, coal and electricity. The per capita energy consumption in Nepal has been 343 kg of oil equivalent.

Though rural sector accounts 86 percent of the energy demand of the country, this is met largely from bio-energy sources. To date, only 5.1 percent of the populations in the rural areas have been served with alternative energy sources. Renewable energy from biological sources and imported kerosene continue to dominate in the energy used in the rural areas. (NPC 2008: P 433)

Thus statement of the problems was recognized as follows:

- What is the existing social status of women in this research area?
- Who has the prime role in income generation & its allocation?
- What are the other occupations of women apart from fuel wood collection?
- What is the social attitude towards this work?
- How do the women perceive this occupation themselves?
- What is the average income & educational status of the women who have fuel wood collection as their prime occupation?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of this study are as follows:

- To identify the socio-cultural and economic Status of the women involved in wood collection at Kerabari VDC.
- To explore the perception of women and the locals about the fuel wood collection.
- To identify the hindrance and opportunities of the occupation in the study area.

1.4 Rationale of the Study

The world has already entered into the 21st century and many miracles of science & technology have achieved and people are still stretching their arms beyond it on the one hand. On the contrary of this

vast majority of people of Africa, Latin America, and South Asia are suffering from disease, hunger, malnutrition, and poverty. They are not able to cope with the pace of development and change. In our country and particularly in the rural & urban slum areas, women are living a very difficult and miserable life due to the traditional roles and responsibilities assigned by the society and culture, lack of education & civic awareness and also the absence of helping hands. In the absence of adjustment of traditional skills with modern technology, they are gradually losing their profession as a result they are being deprived of bread. They just follow what their parents, grandparents did & have no other options apart from cursing their fate; oh this is my luck.

Lacking expected reforms in traditional social view, reform in gender discriminatory legal structure, inability of government in investing in some social sectors that are directly related to women, unfair competition brought by the globalization and of women access in their utilization, low access to economic resources and opportunity we have been experienced gender discrimination in our country. For balance and just development, women empowerment, gender equality and mainstreaming play crucial and an obligatory role. This study has the following importance even though it is not that easy to conclude in an individual attempt.

- To fulfill the partial need to pursue M. A. degree in sociology.
- No such studies directly related to the fuel wood collector women have been done so far in this study area. So it will be beneficial to cater this need.
- It has useful to create awareness & raise voice of the people reside this area and also to attract the attention of the concerned authorities to uplift the socio-economic status of the targeted women.

- It is micro level study which may not cover the situation whole nation.

Every country has made progress in developing women's capabilities, but women & men still live in an unequal world. 91.22% of women live in rural area. Economically active 92.73% of women depend on agriculture. To tackle this problem, women development program was started since 2039 in Morang district. Income generation, awareness rising, literacy program are conducted to uplift the status of women.

1.5 Limitation of the Study Area

As it is evident that every study has its own limitation similarly, the current topic of the study has also been guided by the following limitations.

- The research work is limited to the Kerabari V D C.
- Out of 80 women, 55 women are taken as sample in study.
- This study has carried out to reflect only social, economic status of fuel wood collector women in this area.
- It is micro level study which may not cover the situation whole nation.
- Therefore, emphasized was given on total interview questionnaire and observation and key information survey due to its constraints.

CHAPTER-TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURES

2.1 General Review

Since the long history women individually as well as collectively have been fighting against the patriarchal values, norms, and traditions for the causes of unequal social relations in the society. During the 18th and 19th century, women in Europe and America had raised their voices against the social injustices they were subjected because of their position as women. However, prevailing historiography totally suppressed it. Until the last half of the 20th century, most of the society in the world was dominated by patriarchal ideology.

According to Rai on his dissertation, the mainstreaming theories under Sociology & Anthropology like: evolutionism, functionalism, conflict, and other till the early 1970s were gender blind. Women encountered gender based discrimination problems in family, community, state and everywhere. The unequal relations prevailed between male & female in economy, politics, religion and other marginalized and made invisible in the mainstream practices of sociology and anthropology. Therefore, these problems particularly male biased in Sociology and Anthropology began to questioned and challenged after 1960s and 1970s.

According to Acharya in her article, "role of women in economic development" (1975), opines that women play an important role in the economic development of society. In the modern age of equity, social justice, and economic equality, it is not possible for half of the society to keep the half in slavery. A social concept that only women are responsible for reproduction of human being; conception, delivery and upbringing of the child, has made it extremely difficult for women to participate in social development process as equal member of the society.

Because of women's socialization, lack of control over productive resources and drastically lower levels of literacy, they are related to this world and the entire development process in mainly through the mediation of men. Female entrepreneurship, cultural & economical conditions which foster it, appears to among the most important factors affecting inter community variation in women's status.

The importance of women's contribution to life is not simply family life but also community and national life. According to Germaine, "...throughout the ages women have been performing task in their homes and taking part in various economic activities whether remunerated or not. Women's working day is longer than their husbands. And yet statistics in working population are still silent on the subject of their unpaid women's work. More and more women are becoming wage earners for a variety of reasons (personal, vocational, the desire for self-fulfillment or economic independence, the need to improve the family income or to support the household, etc.). However, owing lack of sufficient information, sound guidance and adequate vocational training, they are frequently channeled into unskilled employment or work not commensurate with their skills for which they are poorly paid".

In a paper published by UNDP, Women in Nepal, as elsewhere, hold the triple work responsibility of reproduction, house holding, and farm work. However, reproduction is not treated as work and house holding is not considered as productive work by the government system (2008). Women also suffer from discriminatory practices in opportunities for education, personal mobility, which is required among others for skill development and independent decision making.

FWLD (2003) found that despite the growing acceptance of the importance of the full participation of women in decision-making body at

all levels and the gap between de jure & de facto equality persists. Women continued to be underrepresented at legislative and ministerial level as well as at the highest level of corporate sector and other social & economic institutions. The negative attitude of women's involvement in public activities in one hand and the double burden of work in and outside house on the other hand negated active participation of Nepali women in public and political field. In these circumstances, it is quite difficult for them to compete with their male counterparts who are already in advantageous positions.

2.2 Economic Determinism

Karl Marx often sounded like an economic determinist; that is, he seemed to consider the economic system of paramount importance and to argue that it determined all other sector of society – politics, religion, idea system, and so forth.

Although Karl Marx did see the economic sector as preeminent, at least in capitalist society, as a dialectician he could not have taken a deterministic positions, because the dialectic is characterize by the notions that there is continual feedback and mutual interaction among the various sector of society. Politics, religion and so on cannot be reduced to epiphenomenon determined by the economy because they effected by economic just as they are affected by it. Despite the nature of the dialectic, Marx steel is being interpreted as an economic determinist.

Agger (1978) argue that economic determinism reached its peak as an interpretation Marxian Theory during the period of the second Communist international, between 1889 and 1914. This historical period is often seen as the apex of the early market capitalism, and its booms and boosts lead to many predictions about its imminent demise. Those

Marxist who believe economic determinism show the breakdown of capitalism as inevitable. In their view, Marxism was capable of producing the scientific theory of this breakdown (as well as other aspects of capitalist society, with the predictive reliability of the physical and natural sciences. All an analyst has to do was examine the institutions of capitalism, especially the economic structure. Built into these institutions was a series of processes that would inevitably bring down capitalism so it was up to the economic determinist to discover these processes.

The economic structure of capitalism that determined individual thought and action were the crucial element. These interpretations also lead to political quietism and therefore were inconsistent with Marx's thinking. Why should individuals act if the capitalist system was going to crumble under its own structural contradictions? Clearly, given Marx's desire to integrate theory and practice, a perspective that omits action and even reduces it to insignificance would not be in tradition of his thinking.

Sociological conflict theory is largely a synthesis of two distinct traditions of conflict theory in classical works: the power relations tradition of political philosophy and tradition of comparative struggle in classical economics. But the modern conflict theory has essentially incorporated primary class society. Karl Marx is its leading architect. Marx's concept of endogenous conflict socio-economic condition of the deprived class in the society.

Throughout the analysis of class struggle and social conflict, Marx has hinted that the unequal distribution of resources, the importance of the private property properly supported by the concept of economic determination has created a wide gap in the society.

The analysis of the condition of the fire wood collector women can be properly understand in term of the deprivation of their access to resources and the lack of proper opportunity for their personal and social betterment.

2.3 Gender Discrimination

There are many problems with this term, but the important one to note here is that it conflates sex and gender by treating a biological category as social one: women and men are treated as pre –constituted groups in the description of patriarchy, and the biology of procreation is often used in the explanation of it.

On a lighter note ‘gender ‘has been criticized as a prudish way of avoiding the word ‘sex’. This is clearly not the case when it is use correctly in sociology, but it is true that it has inter everyday speech in this sense, when people talk about “ the opposite gender”. Some sociologist, too, are guilty of this when they refer to ‘gender roles’ or ‘gender discrimination’.

This concept - which is common uses means simply, ‘treating unfairly’ – occurs most commonly in sociology in the context of theories of ethnic and race relations. Early sociologist viewed discrimination as an expression of ethnocentrism – in other words a cultural phenomenon of ‘dislike of the unlike’.

The interpretation consistent with studies of stereotyping which is show how relations between ethnic and racial groups are affected by the socially derived beliefs each holds about the other. However, must sociological analysis of discrimination concentrate on patterns of dominance and operations, viewed as expressions of struggle for power and privilege?

In recent years, the concept of discrimination has also been applied widely in the study of the relation between sexes. Where parallel of sorts of arguments have often been give deployed. Thus researches suggest that women are more likely to be located in the secondary sector of split labour market, and may even from an industrial reserve army.

According to Heidi Discrimination is the result of a long process of interaction of between patriarchy and capitalism. Discrimination cannot end without the eradication of the sexual division of labor.

Dictionary of Sociology written by William P Scoot the unequal treatment of individual or groups on the basis of some, usually categorical, a tribute such as racial ethnic, religious or social class member ship. It is active or over aspect of negative prejudice towards a personal group.

2.4 Empirical Studies on Fuel Wood Collector Women

Shrestha deals with gender issues in fuel wood collector women. This study highlights the constraints on maximum female participation in fuel wood collection and focus on possible ways for solving the problems faced by women in fuel wood collection. She argued that ‘socio-cultural problems limited women’ active participation in fuel wood collection. The study concluded that gender issues should be taken in to consideration in both planning and implementation state of fuel wood collection.

According to Gurung, 1987 deals with women’s participation in fuel wood collection. The study reveals that different factors such as awareness of the problems and religious have an important role in determining the success and failure of fuel wood collector women.

According to Chhetri and Nurse, 1992 Deals with equity in fuel wood collector women group. They concluded that equity in allocation of resources is more complex process. More equitable allocation of fund may only be achieved by selling fuel wood as they become stronger, experienced and more effective in the course of time.

The several studies and research worked has been carried out in the fuel wood collection. But there is still lack of single study on fuel wood collector women and role in fuel wood collection in the Morang district. Thus, there is a need for conducting separate studies on fuel wood collection women which would be very useful for the development of the women participation in the fuel wood collection.

CHAPTER-THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Research methodology is the process of arriving at the solution of problems through a planned and systematic dealing with the collection, analysis, and interpretation of the facts and figure. In simple words, research methodology refers to the various sequential steps to be adopted by a researcher in studying a problem, with certain objectives in view.

3.2 Research Design

The research design depends on the nature, objectives, complexity, and further more need of the study. This study was prepared as a non-doctrinal research. Most of the information was collected by field visit, questionnaire, and observation. However, doctrinal aspect of research work was also incorporated as per the necessity. Mainly descriptive approach were adopted in this study in order to find out gender relation of people where women mainly have the occupation of fuel wood collection for making livelihood of the whole family.

In descriptive approach, caste/ethnicity, marital status, education, religion, family structure, size of family, spend earning, land ownership, housing facilities, family income & expenditure, types of houses, whereas in analytical approach, social attitude towards fuel wood collection occupation and self-perception on the occupation were employed to furnish the study.

3.3 Universe and Sample

Kerabari VDC has been selection for this research because the women of this area are more involved in this occupation in compare to others VDC of Morang District. In Kerabari VDC Ward no. 7 was chosen purposively for the study and the total population of this ward was

universe and 80 nos. of women are sample. Among 80 nos. of women I have chosen two-third of them which was 55 nos. for my study.

3.4 Nature and Source of Data

The nature of the data in the study is both quantitative and qualitative and the sources of data were both primary and secondary.

Primary data was collected when I was in field survey, filed observation and Secondary data was collected from related journals, reports, books, and published and unpublished documents from various offices.

3.5 Data Collection Technique

I had been applied various techniques such as: interview, questionnaires, observation, focus group discussion, etc. methods to collection of information for my study.

3.5.1 Questionnaire

I prepared the questionnaire to collect the pertaining information to fulfill the objectives of the study. In this study, structured questionnaire has been prepared and asked the women whose prime occupation is fuel wood collection. While preparing questionnaire, it was aimed to draw both qualitative and quantitative information from the respondents. The questionnaire was used to obtain all the necessary information about the respondents' socio-economic status like: household and total number of population, linguistic composition, literacy, economically active population and population by major activity and occupation, population by caste/ ethnicity, population by age and sex group, social attitude towards their work, etc.

3.5.2 Interview

I used interview technique during my fieldwork. In this study, 55 respondents having fuel wood collection as their prime occupation were interviewed and they opined basically on gender roles; income generation

and its allocation, decision making process & access and control over resources of the women in this study area, mobility of women, social attitude towards them and also intra/inter- community relationships. Along with 3 ex-fuel wood collector women & 2 people from other community & occupation were also interviewed and inquired to find out the relationship and their attitude towards the fuel wood collector women and their occupation and their existing living standard after taking up other occupation.

During my interview I request to Loklaxmi Rai to tell me about her background and introduction then she told me she is 40 year old married women born in Dharan. She has been working in the fuel wood collection for about 16 years. She is married to a man who is working in Yatayat Sewa in Biratchowk. She lives in Kerabari-7, and her family is nuclear family. Her family size is only 3 which include one son. She and her family believe in Hindu religion. Her husband is the head of her family. She had attained primary education and she can read and write. She knows the importance of education in human life and hence providing a good education to her son in a boarding school.

She has half Kattha land and a house in it. She used to sell fuel wood in Kerabari Bazaar and earn Rs 250 to Rs 300 daily income. And her husband earns around 4000 in a month. The monthly expenditure of her family is an around 6000. Sometimes she dose works. Her family status is not bad in reality. Her husband gets bonus, Dashain allowance and other facilities. So, she is satisfied with her work and income. She is very happy to earn something for her family.

3.5.3 Observation

During my observation, I observed related to the structure of houses, living standard, housing facilities, hygiene & sanitation, working hours and working load, practices and perception of women and local in

this occupation and also observed hindrances and opportunities of such job in public life, etc. were observed by simple observation method.

3.5.4 Group Discussion

I pay my attention in group discussion to find the facts and real version of fuel wood collector women. During discussion every one speaks their voice without any hesitation. At that time I requested to Bhanu Kumari Darji to tell us about her involvement in this occupation then she says, she is a 36 year old married woman born in Kanchanpur. She has been working the fuel wood collection from last 15 years. She is married to a man who is a Tailor. She lives in Kerabari-7 and her family is nuclear family. Her family size is 6 which include four children, two sons and two daughters. She and her family believe in Hindu religion. Her husband is the head of her family. She was never enrolled in any school. So she is illiterate. But she has a positive reaction about educating her children. She making her children study well and says that as far as possible she will give good education to all of her children. She worked in the wood collection for a long time. She used to sell fuel wood in Kerabari Bazaar and Rs 250 to Rs 300 daily income. She has 1 Kattha land and a small house on the land. But the land is in Sukumbasi Area. Her family status is very poor. The income of her husband is not fixed and is somewhere around Rs 4500 per month. The monthly expenditure of his family is around Rs. 7000. She is actually not satisfied with her income since the price of everyday necessary goods is increasing. Even then she is happy as fuel wood collection is providing employment to her and she is able to play a significant role to increase the earnings and hence to support her family.

CHAPTER-FOUR

GENERAL INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY AREA

4.1 The Physical Setting

Morang district lies in Koshi zone of the Eastern development region of Nepal. It has been named through its famous river Koshi. The district is situated at the latitude of 87° 16 ' East to 87° 41' East and at the longitude of 26° 20' North to 26° 53' North and 60m to 2410m from sea level . The total area of the district is 1855sq.k.m. Among the total area, about 105270 ha is cultivated land, forest land area 55500 ha, mountain 11793 ha and rivers areas 4069 ha, other area 4412 ha and irrigated areas only 3713 ha. The district is bounded by Jhapa and Ilam district in east, Dhankuta and Pachthar district in north and west, Sunsari and India is in south. For political and administrative purposes, 65 VDCs. Biratnagar is headquarter of the district. According to the district profile of 2064, total population of this district is 960252. Among the total population, 482325 are male and 477927 are female. Likewise, the total number of households is 167875. Agriculture is the main occupation and major source of livelihood of the people of this district. (Source: District Profile: 2064)

4.2 Introduction of the Kerabari VDC

Kerabari VDC lies in the electoral constituency no 9 of the Morang district. The VDC is situated north side of the National highway. The climate is mid-temperature. Kerabari VDC is one there are 65 VDC in Morang districts. It is situated north from the Birat Chowk. It is in inner terai.

Kerabari VDC placed on Chure hills, the east, Dangi, Budhabare road to the north, the south and west Sundarpur VDC. The VDC is around 70 km far from it's headquarter. The total area of the total VDC area is 25.03 sq km and out of total VDC area the forest area is 2257 ha total cultivated land is 2606 ha. (Village Profile, 2008).

Agriculture is the main occupation and the main source for the livelihood of the VDCs people. According to the village profile about 76 percent people are directly engaged in agriculture, 4.55 percent engaged in small own business, 4.47 percent engaged in governmental/non governmental service and 5.83 percent engaged in others different kinds of work. There is not even a single industry in the VDC. Unemployment in the non farm season is common. People, especially youths go to the different parts of the country and foreign countries for job (Village Profile, 2008). A forest area of 326 hectors forest was handed over to the FUG on 2055/056B.S. The FUG is situated in ward no 8 of the VDC. At the formation it included 190 household including 526 men and 469 females.

4.2.1 Caste Wise Population of Kerabari VDC

People began to live in the present Kerabari VDC from 2015 B.S. Among the people who came to live here at Limbus during the Panchyat Rule, received this land from Ranas as "Kipat" in Illam. Then the Limbus is migrated to the Kerabari. After 1997 B.S, other races such as Rai, Kumal, Dimal, Satar, Rajbanshi Tamang, Kami, Magar, Newar and Chhetris and Bhahmans also began to live here.

According to the District profile Updated 2064, the total population of Morang district was 960252. Out of them, women comprised 477927 and the male population was 482325. To go to this particular study area, the total population of Kerabari V D C is 20,619 in which women comprise 10783 nearly half of the total population. In ward no. 7 where the study area lies has 6,114. The male-female composition is 3,460 and 2,654 respectively.

Table No 4.1
Caste Wise Population of Kerabari VDC

SN	Caste	Number	% per
1	Limbu	4624	22.42
2	Rai	1575	7.64
3	Kumal	585	2.84
4	Dhimal	1314	6.38
5	Satar	620	3.01
6	Rajbanshi	1546	7.50
7	Tamang	742	3.60
8	Kami	814	3.94
9	Damai	734	3.56
10	Magar	1160	5.62
11	Newar	1237	6.00
12	Chertri	2453	11.90
13	Brahman	3215	15.60
Total		20619	100.00

Source: Kerabari VDC Morang 2066.

The major crops there are paddy, wheat, maize, and mustard. The northern half of the each ward contains comparatively less of the population because the land cannot yield much there. They grow in these part different crops such as Millet, Maize, Jute, Junelo, Sweet Potato, Simal Tarul, and Banana. They also keep livestock. The Major percentage of the people of this VDC is economically middle class people and educationally backward.

In this VDC there are concrete road and graveled .The roads constructed are wide enough for vehicles walking, cycling and for

bullock carts. The local people go to Kerabari and other parts for shopping.

4.2.2 Caste/Ethnic Composition

Caste/ethnicity has vital role in one's socio-economic condition especially to the women's life because the socio-economic activities are guided according to their caste and ethnicity. Caste/ethnicity is mainly Brahmins, Chhetris, Damai, Kami, Dhimal, Rai, and Magar & Limbu which are as follows:

Table No 4.2
Composition of Caste/ethnicity

SN	Caste/ethnic groups	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Rai	4	7.27
2	Limbu	5	9.09
3	Damai	15	27.27
4	Brahmin	3	5.45
5	Chhetris	5	9.09
6	Kami	12	21.81
7	Magar	7	12.72
8	Dimal	4	7.27
Total		55	100%

Source: *Field Survey*, 2009

Table no. 5.1 shows the caste/ethnicity of the respondents who are mainly. Brahmins, Chhetris, Damai, Kami, Dhimal, Rai, Magar & Limbu. In this study, majority of the respondents were Damai and Brahmin are minority.

Most of them have been living there for a long time since the early settlement in Kerabari after the eradication of malaria. But their socio-economic status is quite poor in comparison of the other caste and ethnic

group. Therefore, we can conclude from the table that fuel wood collection has become the one and only medium of living for the women.

4.3 Economy

The economy is mainly based on agriculture; animal husbandry is also practiced to supplement agricultural income. The households having agriculture is the main occupation of the local people. The economically active population is 12097 and economically inactive population is 8522 in the Kerabari. But economic development is not running smoothly on the other hand social development is also not as it accepted.

Table No 4.3

Population of Economic Activity in Kerabari

SN	Types of status	SEX		Total
		Male	Female	
1	Economically Active	5999	6098	12097
2	Economically inactive	3412	5110	8522
Total		9411	11208	20619

Source: District Profile: 2064

The above table shows that the economically active population is 12097 and economically inactive population is 8522 in the Kerabari. But economic development is not running smoothly.

4.4 Educational Status

In this Kerabari V D C 12199 people are literate, they are read and write. 5335 population cannot read and write. 2787 people can read only.

Table No 4.4
Population of Literacy Status in Kerabari VDC

SN	Types of status	SEX		Total
		Male	Female	
1	Can't read and Write	1693	3641	5335
2	Can read only	1346	1441	2787
3	Read and write	6642	5557	12199
4	Not stated	155	144	299
Total		9836	10783	20619

Source: Kerabari VDC Morang 2066

The above table shows that the literacy rate of the people is more than the national literacy rate. Among the surveyed population, 2787 cannot read and write. Likewise, 5557 women are can read and write. Likewise, according to the table, 1693 male are still illiterate in the study area which is below than female illiteracy rate.

Education is one of the most important determinants of women's position form family to the society. The aggregate literacy rate in our country, Nepal is 53.7% (Division of Education, 2009). Out of them, only 42.5% of women are literate in comparison with 65% men. Education is often seen as a corner stone for leading a better life. Education is an important variable which plays vital role to decide future of people. Education offers considerable help in effort to make women's life fuller and filled with more choices and vice-versa. Education of respondents was sadly classified into four groups which are illiterate, literate but no formal education, up to class five and seven.

Table No 4.5
Composition of Education

SN	Education Acquired	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Illiterate	25	45.45%
2	Literate but no formal education	20	36.36%
3	Up to class five	8	14.54%
4	Up to class seven	2	3.63%
Total		55	100%

Source: *Field Survey, 2009*

Table shows the educational status of the fuel wood collector women in Kerabari of Kerabari, Morang. The finding shows that nearly half of the total respondents (45.45%) are illiterate, 36.36% of the respondents are literate but they didn't get formal education at school but they were literate through adult education programmed and 14.54% of the respondents have passed up to class five whereas 3.63% of the respondents have passed up to class seven.

We can conclude that the fuel wood collector women in this study area, do not have access and affordability to get education. Because of poor educational status they are unable to enjoy their life and are also back warded.

4.5 Religion/Culture

It is quite obvious that Nepal is a country of multi-caste/ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-cultural nation located between two huge countries. Religious harmony & tolerance is one of the original identities of our country. To go to this particular study area, majority of the people (98%) believe in Hinduism, a few others follow Buddhism. In this area, people celebrate Dashain, Tihar, Teej, and Chaite Dashain with great joy and

enthusiasm. Celebration of cultural programmes, participation on cultural rituals like: death rites are seen co-operative and harmonious.

Religion is also one of the important indicators of a person's position in a society. Up to the immediate past, Nepal was a Hindu kingdom and still Hinduism has dominant role in our social system, its' norms, values and the like. In Hinduism, women, as stated by Lynn Bennett, have dual roles i.e. sacred and profane. Religion is divided into two groups which are Hindu and Buddhist. No people of other religion were found during this study in total target population.

Table No 4.6
Composition of Religion

SN	Religion	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Hindu	50	90.90
2	Buddhist	5	9.10
Total		55	100%

Source: *Field Survey, 2009*

The above table and figure shows the religion of the respondents. Religion is divided into two groups' viz. Hindu & Buddhist. Almost all of the respondents (90.90%), out of total target population were Hindus and only about 9.10% were Buddhists. Because they were the followers of Hinduism, women of old generation think that it was their profession followed from their predecessors and it was also their luck.

But respondents of the new generation believe that the existing condition can be transformed and improved towards prosperity if due attention is paid to them by the government and other pro-people agencies/developmental partners. On the basis of the findings, we can conclude that traditional norms, values and thoughts are also somewhat responsible to slow the progress and transformation of the people and respective society.

CHAPTER-FIVE
SOCIO-CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC STATUS OF WOMEN
INVOLVED IN FUEL WOOD COLLECTION

It is an obvious fact that the socio-economic characteristics of the people reflect many aspects of their lives. The socio-economic background taken into consideration in this research includes caste/ethnic composition, religion/culture, linguistic composition, educational-level, population by age and sex group, population by major activity (occupation), economically active population, family structure, marital status, land-ownerships, housing facilities, family income and expenditure.

5.1 Age and Sex Composition

This study concerned with economically active 15-49 population of fuel wood collector women. Given below is the information collected on the age group of women worker presently working in this sector.

Table No 5.1
Age Group Distribution of Respondent

SN	Age group	No of Respondent	Percentage
1	15-19	7	12.72
2	20-24	7	12.72
3	25-29	13	23.65
4	30-34	17	30.91
5	35-39	8	14.55
6	40 +	3	5.45
Total		55	100.00

Source: *Field Survey, 2009*

The distribution of the women by age group showed that out of 55 women collector 12.72 % are from 15-19 age groups. 12.72 % from 20-24 age group, 23.65 % from 25-29 age group, 30.91 % from 30-34 age

group which is large age group of total. Similarly 14.55 % from 35-39 age groups and least percentage of collector's women are found in age group 40 cross whose percentage is 5.45 %.

5.2 Marital Status

Marital status has been one of the influential and important variables of an individual's position in a society. Marriage especially in Hinduism has a vital role in relation to social prestige, honor and it is marriage through which women change their status of daughter to daughter-in law. In this study, the marital status is grouped into four categories i.e. married, unmarried, widow and separated. It is shown in the following table.

Table No 5.2
Distribution of Respondents by Marital Status

SN	Marital Status	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Married	50	90.90%
2	Unmarried	1	1.81%
3	Widow	3	5.45%
4	Separated	1	1.81%
Total		55	100%

Source: *Field Survey, 2009*

The above table shows the marital status of the respondents. Out of 55 women, 50 are married which makes 90.90 percentage of the total target population of the study area. In this way, 1.81% of the respondents were unmarried, 5.45% were widow and 1.81% was separated (living separately but not divorced legally). This finding reflects that most of the women who have been involved in collection of fuel wood as their prime occupation for the survival are married and it is their obligation to do so for the livelihood of the family as well as for themselves.

5.3 Family Structure

In this study, family is classified into two categories e.g. nuclear and joint family. Small and nuclear families are often found in the urban areas while joint families and big families are popular in the rural areas but in this study area, because it is located in urban-slum zone, the majority of the respondents were found from the nuclear family and few from joint one. In my opinion, the volume of family size whether it big or small also depends upon the caste/ethnic group and the particular communities. During the study, family consisting husband, wife and their unmarried children were categorized into nuclear and husband, wife, children and their in-laws living together were taken into joint family.

Table No 5.3

Distribution of Family Structure of Respondents

SN	Family	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Nuclear	42	76%
2	Joint	13	24%
Total		55	100%

Source: *Field Survey*, 2009

The above table states the type of family of the respondents. The great majority of the respondents were found to be lived in nuclear family which was 76% and 24% of the respondents lived in joint family. No extended family was found during the course of the study.

This finding indicates that women who are taking fuel wood collection as their prime occupation prefer living in nuclear family because it doesn't require group work as farming, cattle rising, etc. They can just go to jungle with other colleagues and fetch fuel wood and sell it to the bazaar. They want to work separately and independently. In nuclear family, they can work according to their own choice and they also have an authority to make decision for their family and household works. In

this kind of family structure, they have fewer burdens of household chores in comparison with joint and extended type of family structure.

In this study, only 24% of the total target population lived in joint family. Joint family structure is also found in most of the rural areas of our country, Nepal. Women living in joint family had both positive and negative experiences and feelings. According to them, while working in joint family, all members of the family work together and share and carry out the responsibilities collectively. It was easier for the mothers having small kids as their other family members take care of the children while working outside homes. Socialization process was also easier for the children with the joint families.

On the other hand, they also had problems while living with joint families. There were problems in labour division, carrying over responsibility, decision making related to personal and family affairs, etc. Indeed, conclusion after this study can be drawn that now-a-days people prefer living in nuclear family because it grants individual freedom to every affairs closely related to their immediate family members and for oneself.

In our Nepalese context, even in the nuclear family, there are more than five members or more. There is a Nepali saying "more manpower, more money." People, who lack education and awareness of the potential problems and suffering due to the big number of family members, have more children. It also affects the economic condition of the family and in turn this will affect an individual, too. In this study, the size of the family is divided into four group's i.e. family consisting 2 members, 3-4 members, 5-6 members and 7 or above.

Table No 5.4

Distribution of the Respondents by their Size of the Family

SN	Size of family	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	2	3	5.45%
2	3-4	12	21.81%
3	5-6	30	54.54%
4	7 and above	10	18.18%
Total		55	100%

Source: *Field Survey, 2009*

The above table reflects that only 5.45% of the total respondents had 2 members in their family, 21.81% of them had 3 to 4 members, majority (54.54%) of the respondents had 5 to 6 members living together in their family. 18.18% of the total respondents had 7 and more than 7 family members living together. This finding shows that people in this profession have some awareness towards family planning and the potential problems of big number of children.

5.4 Economic Status

Family income is one of the prominent indicators to enjoy the relative socio-cultural status in the society and also for the family welfare. To support the family, women work and they must work in this study area as men rarely go to the bazaar to sell the fuel wood. The following table shows the family income of the respondents. It is classified into four groups i.e. Rs. 5000 & below, Rs. 5001-7000 and Rs. 7001 – 8000, and Rs 8001 and above.

Table No. 5.5

Distribution of Respondents by Monthly Family Income

SN	Income	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Rs. 5000 & below	15	27.27%
2	Rs. 5001-7000	30	54.54%
3	Rs. 7001 - 8000	5	9.09%
4	Rs 8001 and above	5	9.09%
Total		55	100%

Source: *Field Survey*, 2009

Table shows the monthly income of the respondents. 27.27% of the total respondents had Rs. 5000 & below of their monthly income, majority (54.54%) of them was found Rs. 5001 to 7000 income per month and 5 of the total target population had Rs. 7001 to 8000, and the 5 respondents are Rs 8001 and above monthly income. So it concludes that most of the family had very low monthly income in comparison with their family size as it is previously stated that only 27% of the total respondents had four or less than four family members.

As everyone has to earn for the family welfare, expenditure is also inevitable for making a livelihood. Here respondents were asked about their family expenditure to find out the differences between income and expenditure. Family expenditure was categorized into three groups viz. Rs. 5000 - 6000, Rs. 6000- 7000 & Rs. 7000 and above per month. Given table shows the information about it.

Table No 5.6

Distribution of Respondents by Monthly Family Expenditure

SN	Expenditure	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Rs. 5000-6000	16	27.27%
2	Rs. 6000-7000	31	54.54%
3	Rs. 7000 and above	8	18.18%
Total		55	100%

Source: *Field Survey*, 2009

Similarly table displays the monthly family expenditure of the respondents. 27.27% of the total target population spent Rs. 5000- 6000 in monthly household expense, majority (54.54%) of them spent Rs. 6000-7000 and only 18.18% spent 7000 and above per month. It was not the accurate income and expenditure of the household because only women were interviewed and they replied from their male counterparts' side.

The above finding states that majority of the respondents are living a quite miserable and pitiful lives as the just have below Rs. 7000 income per month. It is quite difficult for them to send their children to school even for primary education and also to allocate money for sickness, performance for socio-cultural rituals, etc.

In Nepalese society, woman is not a breadwinner. It places her on the optional category to work outside the four corners of the house in order to contribute the family income & expenditure. But here, in this study zone, women are the primary breadwinner for the family as man rarely are involved in fuel wood collection and selling work especially to go to market to sell it.

Table No. 5.7

Distribution of Respondents by Spend Earning

SN	How to spend	No. of respondents	Percentage	Remarks
1	Spend all money for family	50	81.81%	
2	Put some money on bank	5	18.18%	Nominal amount on Saving & Credit Cooperative Ltd.
Total		55	100%	

Source: *Field Survey*, 2009

The given table shows how the fuel wood collector women spend their earning which is broadly categorized into spend all money for the family and put some money on the banks or saving status.

Most of the respondents (50 respondents) spent all their earning for the family expenditure. Only 5 respondents of them put very small amount of money on local Saving & Credit Co-operative Ltd. This finding reflects that women have a great contribution for the family rearing & caring. The money they earn from the fuel wood is not enough for the whole family maintenance. So they want to transform their occupation to the other types which provides better economic possibilities.

5.4.1 Land Holding

Because of patriarchal society, in our country, property is passed from one generation to other through the male hands. Sons are considered as the legal and authorized persons to inherit ancestral property although recently a bill was passed in favor of women and girl child. In this study, respondents were inquired whether they had land in their own name or not.

Table No 5.8

Distribution of the Respondents on the Basis of Land Holding

SN	Land in their own name	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Yes	48	87.27%
2	No	7	12.72%
Total		55	100%

Source: *Field Survey, 2009*

The above table reflects the land holding of the respondents. The minority of the respondents 12.72 % out of total target population has no land in their own name and 87.27% of them had land. So it concludes that majority of the women are deprived of having land in their own name. The given table shows that the land pattern of the respondent.

Table No 5.9

The Size of Land by Farm Group

Size of landholding	No of HHs	Total land in Kattha	Percentage
Land less	7	0	0
Marginal up to 1 Kattha	5	5	4.03
Small 1-4	16	64	51.61
Medium 4- 7	4	35	28.22
Large above 8 Kattha	2	20	16.13
Total	55	124	100

Source: *Field Survey, 2009*

The above Table shows that distribution of land holding among different farm group i.e., landless, marginal, small, medium and large. Among 55 sample households, 16.13 percent of the total area is owned by large farm group, 28.22 percent of the total land is occupied by

medium group of farm, marginal farm group own 4.03 percent of total land, the 51.61 percent of households are small group of total land.

The respondent are not fulfill their basic need from fuel wood collection only. So they are involving other occupation like animal husbandry, daily wages, agriculture worker and local alcohol making and selling, which are presented in given table.

Table No 5.10
Occupational Distribution

SN	Occupation	No of Respondent	Percentage
1	Fuel wood +Agriculture worker	15	27.28
2	Fuel wood +Animal husbandry	13	23.63
3	Fuel wood +Daily wages	20	36.37
4	Fuel wood +Local alcohol making and selling	7	12.72
Total		55	100

Source: *Field Survey*, 2009

From the table, there are 27.28 percent of the respondents are involving on agriculture worker, 23.63 percent are joining animal husbandry, 36.67 percent are going to daily wages and finally 12.72 percent respondent are engaged in Local alcohol making and selling. The table crystal clear that, the fuel wood is not only supported their basic need and but other occupation make easy to living standard.

5.4.2 Living Condition

Although this study was carried out in Kerabari V D C, this particular study area represents like a remote area of our country where there is not proper road, electricity and drinking water facilities, toilets, etc. During this study, respondents were asked whether they had basic housing facilities or not and the following findings were traced.

Table No 5.11

Housing Facilities of the Respondents

SN	Facilities	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Electricity	10	18.18
2	Toilet Proper	5	9.09
	Toilet Rough	15	27.28
3	Radio	20	36.36
4	T.V.	5	9.09
Total		55	100

Source: *Field Survey*, 2009

The above table shows the basic housing facilities of the respondents. The picture is quite appalling as only 18.18 % of the total target population has electricity and furthermore most of them have shared line of electricity from their neighbors. 9.09 % of them have toilet.

Many of them rough toilet (27.27%) and only 9.09 % of the people have proper toilets which were built from the assistance of NGOs. 36.36 % of the respondents had radio and only 9.09% of them had television. So one can easily draw a conclusion that the women in this study area have been living their lives in a vicious circle of poverty and they have the problems of joining hands and mouth.

House is one of the most important indicators to uncover the economic status of individuals furthermore what type of house they possess either is rough, proper, cemented, etc. When I visited the study area, it was obviously easy to observe the kind of houses the respondents had. Houses are classified into hut (very small with thatched roof), tinned & slate which is as follows.

Table No. 5.12

Distribution of Respondents by Types of Houses

SN	Type of house	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Hut	47	86%
2	Tinned	4	7%
3	Slate	4	7%
Total		55	100%

Source: *Field Survey, 2009*

The table shows the sorts of houses the respondents possess. The great majority (86%) of the respondents had very small and congested house which is termed as "hut". It was built of wood mudded in both sides & sometimes of stone and mud with thatched roofs. 7% of the total respondents had tinned house comparatively wide and spacious and the other 7% of them had slate houses.

So conclusion from the above figure can be drawn that great majority of the respondents of this study area have to live in a very low standard of houses where there is no separate kitchen, living and bed rooms but a single or double room for the whole family members. Only a few percentages of people have a bit good houses having kitchen and separate rooms for living and bed rooms. As a whole the respondents of this area have a house just to avoid partial sun and rain.

CHAPTER-SIX

PERCEPTION OF WOMEN AND THE LOCALS ABOUT FUEL WOOD COLLECTING OCCUPATION

The study area is located at Kerabari VDC, if we closely look at, it picturizes a typical remote village of our country where there is facility of drinking water, electricity, toilet and they more or less depend on nature i.e. the fuel wood which is the one & only sources of living. Every day they go to jungle to collect bundle of stick and the next daybreak they sell it to collect bread. While returning back home they buy about a kg of rice, little pulse and oil which are the bare need of living. They not only represent a small dwelling of Kerabari but a great majority of rural & urban slum dwellers who are very vulnerable, oppressed, exploited and also disadvantaged on social, cultural and economic perspective. Indeed, to uncover the miseries and hardships of those women who have passed their lives over a long history & also to create interests in these hidden truths, this study would become fruitful I have thought.

6.1 Women Perception

The study has made it clear that these women are not enjoying with their occupation but a compulsion to survive. Besides some old women, they had expressed during the study that it is becoming an out-dated occupation just to depend on fuel wood collection and selling it to market. They usually set off to the market even two hours before daybreak to sell it so that they can returned back home before the city get up. That is to say they do not really want to expose it to the people apart from their buyers. In conclusion, interview and especially the discussion revealed this occupation is not their choice but an obligation and want to change it. Actually women of Kerabari were not interested to do such job but there are no any other alternatives for them. If they discontinuation of such job how they live? Such type of works is their painful job. If

government, social workers, NGOS and INGOs provided them livelihood program then they discontinue such type of Job.

Majority of the women involved in fuel wood collection as their prime occupation wanted to change it if there is possible alternative way of living. They really want support from the government, bilateral agencies, NGOs and CBOs etc.

6.2 Local Perception

The study depicts that the social attitude to the occupation "fuel wood collection" was found acceptable. People of other profession and community responded indicating those people that "they do as they know". But some of the social workers, intellectuals and politicians suggested that they should be educated, awareness should be created and new ways of income generation should be initiated to follow so that their socio-economic status could be uplifted on the one hand.

On the other hand, the natural resources could be preserved to contribute sustainable development. The above finding was the result of observation, interview and group discussion.

Local people views found not positive but there is no option for the live and to close mouths and hands. So if they have no any alternative or option till that they continued such works which is better one. This is not best job in the sense of local people but not any other way for their live.

CHAPTER-SEVEN
HINDRANCES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF FUEL WOOD
COLLECTING OCCUPATION

Since there exists no sufficient source of earning other than selling fire wood, ladies where are compelled to earn through the business that the largely depends upon fuel wood. After the competition of households chores, they are found to be involved in their daily routine with an axe and Doko (a traditional Nepalese basket like container made of bamboo) towards the forest where they go on to cut fire wood making sure that those who inspect the jungle never takes notices of it. To carry the fire wood prepared by them, they are accompanied by their children too.

Since jungle is quite a distance away, they could just manage to bring two trips only, which will be then sold for amount between Rs 150/- to Rs 200/- per trips. This way they managed to earn between Rs 300/- to 400/- after the selling the fuel wood they return home after purchasing basic commodities like salt, oil, vegetable, rice, pulse and medicine etc, the amount earn by these women are spent not just to fulfill the domestic demands but also educate their children and personal expenses of their husband. It is a very sorry fact that their husbands don't contribute even a penny because their daily routine involving gambling, drinking and wandering.

This way, after carrying out the entire responsibilities of the family, these women save little amount which is they deposit combining manage by some group. These women also engaged themselves in facilitating compromise between quarrelling groups, construction of village, roads and managing water to irrigate their fields.

They also make themselves engaged in group to discuss how festivals are to be organized keeping minds the continuations of tradition and culture 55 women who collect fire wood belong to the backward

classes. Brahmins, Chhetris also from a percentage but little. 5 among them are also aware of the political activity.

Apart from selling fuel wood they are also engaged in works for which they are paid on daily basis and animal husbandry. They also prepare and sale local alcohol in the local market. Since they selling the fuel wood provides them amount in bulk, they remain attached to this. Due to the numerous obstructions as hurdles on their way, they are now seeking on alternative to earn their living. What they have been doing now is not their interest but compulsion. If the concerned don't turn deaf ear and pay of little attention to their grievances, the lifestyle these women can indisputably up lifted.

7.1 Hindrances

In this study area women were found uneducated and they have no good job. Due to illiterate and conservative patriarchy system women were not involved in outer-door system. They have obstruction to outer-door activities due to their conservative thinking of community or society. Women have lack of political knowledge, formal education and have no good access of external mobility.

The jungle is being distant from the collector's houses/ colony/ locality. They face the fear of forest guard and other official staff. Lack of cooperation from the side of husband and other family member respondent carry out this type of burden. Wood used for fuel is declined because people use of LP gas, Bio Gas and Kerosene. Lack of other income source, female must participate for carrying fuel wood.

They spent 4 to 5 hrs time to collect fuel wood. They carry 1or 2 trips a day, from Kerabari surrounding jungle.

7.2 Opportunities

In this study areas, no development of domestic enterprises and industries. So there is no other better occupation for their live. Even society is suffers from oppression, exploitation and illiterate, so there is

no possibility of good job. Government, NGOs, INGOs were not involved in this VDC, so many women of this area have lack of knowledge and training of skilled manpower. This location is no far from district headquarter and it is near the national highway, even-though due to lack of proper management, lack of policies, rules and regulation of country, the people of this area are still away from the resources of nations. For that situation such jobs are also good opportunity for them.

They sell fuel-wood in local market. Which was sold for amount between Rs 150/- to Rs 200/- per trips? This way they managed to earn between Rs 300/- to 400/- after the selling the fuel wood they return home after purchasing basic commodities like salt, oil, vegetable, rice , pulse and medicine etc, the amount earn by these women are spent not just to fulfill the domestic demands but also educate their children and personal expenses of their husband.

There are many possibilities of economic development in this area if the people have education and awareness. As most of the people depend on daily wages i.e. fuel wood collection & selling, cutting stone, farm laboring, and other. People who have involved in agriculture are just doing substance farming not professional one. So if we can bring develop agricultural sector bringing new and modern technology, improved seeds and use of fertilizer, income generation's activities like: goat keeping, poultry farming, etc. the economic development of this area is certainly bright. For that government sector as well as non-governmental sectors' support is inevitable because this areas' backwardness.

From this work women earn money in daily basis and they also manage family expenditure, daily expenditure which is one of the opportunity of them. Women catch some money in their life from this work. Such jobs are more useful if people stay near forest area and they have good access in forest and also to be convenient market for sold fuel wood.

CHAPTER-EIGHT

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Summary

Nepal is a small developing country on the lap of Himalayas in south Asia. From the very beginning, Hinduism and patriarchal social system has domination. Women have always been given a secondary position to that of man in our traditional society.

According to Human Development Report, Nepal is lagging behind even lower position than poor and developing country in the globe. Furthermore, gender disparity remains very wide and dreadful.

Nepali women make an important contribution on the agricultural activities of the country but their work is not considered productive from economic point of view. So their contribution is not included in the national static.

Most of the works done by women remains unrecognized and undervalued. This has a negative impact on the socio-economic status of women, access on resources, opportunities, participation and overall walk of life.

From the family through society to national level, gender imbalance and gender-blindness exists. In order to drive the country ahead in human and sustainable developmental path, men and women should have active and parallel participation. Gender balance should be optimum.

This study tries to dig out the social and economic status of women who have been following fuel wood collection as their prime occupation to make a living in Kerabari area of Kerabari VDC, Morang.

Indeed, the specific objectives of this study is to reflect social, economic role and status of fuel wood collector women in the light of gender roles and responsibilities i.e. income generation and its allocation,

decision making process & access and control over resources, to find out social attitude towards their work. Furthermore, to determine the changes taken place in the present era.

The Main Findings of the Study

- A large number of respondents (45.45%) were illiterate and 36.36% of the total target population was literate but they had no formal education and only 3.63 % of them had passed grade five to seven.
- Majority of the respondents (81.81%) spent all money for the family rearing and caring which indicates that they are unable to save money for the future. There are 48 of the respondents had land in their own name.
- While examining the housing facilities of the respondents, it was found quite pitiful. Only 18.18 % of the respondents had electricity facilities even that was shared line (81% of them had shared line). 37% of the respondents had toilets. Among them 27% had very rough latrines.
- This is prominent evidence that their life standard is very low. To look at the average income per month it was found very low which causes very uneasy to make a living.
- While examining family expenditure, it was found imbalance. Expenditure was more than income consequently they were obliged to take loan for the family survival.
- Majority of the respondents (86%) had very small house with thatched roofs. Only 7% of each had tinned and slate house. Family headship was found discouraging as only 9% of the respondents had family headship. Most of them were widow and living separately.

- Social attitude towards the occupation "fuel wood collection" was found acceptable "they do as they know". But some of the social workers, intellectuals, and politicians suggested that they should be educated, awareness should be created, and new ways of income generation should be initiated to follow so that their socio-economic status could be uplifted on the one hand. On the other hand, the natural resources could be preserved to contribute sustainable development.
- Majority of the women involved in fuel wood collection as their prime occupation wanted to change it if there is possible alternative way of living. They really want support from the government, bilateral agencies, NGOs and CBOs etc.

6.2 Conclusion

So from the findings of the study, it may be concluded that the socio-economic status of the fuel wood collector women was very miserable and dreadful. Even though it lies in Kerabari V D C, the study area is far from the minimum facilities that should be available in the municipality.

Diversity in demographic composition is seen in this area but women solely depend on fuel wood collection rested on the people including minority of Chhetris and Brahmins. Looking at the gender perspective, target women in the study area could be placed relatively on higher position because they are the breadwinner in the family and it also can be the various ethnic communities and different geographic, religion and cultural regions exhibits a wide variety of social values that also have an impact on the situation of Nepali women. That sometimes can have positive and other time negative impact. Likewise there seems the gender biased distribution of power and resources in the family as only a few

percentages of women possess land on their own name; mobility of women is also not quite high.

From the research it was uncovered that the huge number of target women in this area is illiterate and fuel wood collection as a prime occupation is transferred from generation to generation. It is because they have no other way to join hand and mouth and they also have no other ideas than this for living.

The study also reflects that these women has decisive role in income allocation as they replied during study "As we earn the money, why should we not allocate it?" On the other hand, there has been experienced wide domination of patriarchal society and its social system because very few women were found to be family head, holding land on their own name. Mobility was also observed not as appreciative as women often should get permission to go out for public affairs like: attending meetings, gatherings, etc. The comparative education level was found quite dreadful and despaired.

Indeed, to sum up, the study depicts that the socio-economic status fuel wood collector women in Kerabari of Kerabari is typical to majority of rural women who have been passing their lives in non education, hunger, poverty, scarcity. They can be termed as "the suffers of the suffers".

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APPENDIX-I

DISTRICTS COVERED BY DIFFERENT DONORS

NARMSAP CDANDA 38 DISTRICTS

Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, Lalitpur, Rasuwa, Nuwakot, Sindhuli, Dhading, Makwanpur, Kaski, Syangja, Tanahu, Gorkha, Lamjung, Manang, Gulmi, Argakhanchi, Palpa, Jumla, Humla, Mugu, Dolpa, Kalikot, Dailekh, Surkhet, Jajarkot, Achham, Bajang, Doti, Dadheldhura, Baitede, Darchula, Ilam, Panchthar, Taplejung, Solukhumbu, Khotang, Udayapur.

GTZC (German) 3 districts (Udayapur, Saptari, and Siraha)

NSCFP (Swiss) 3 district (Dolakha, Ramechhap, Okhaldunga)

CFP (UK) 15 Districts

(Baglung, Parbat, Myandhi, Dhankutta, Terathum, Sakhuwasambha, Bhojpur, Dang, Salyan, Pyuthan, Rukum, Rolpa, Rupandehi, Kapilvastu, Nawalparasi)

SAGUN (USA) 5 DISTRICT

(Banke, Bardia, Kailali, Dhading, Dolpa)

NARCMIP (AUSTRALIA) 2 District

(Sindhupalchock, Kabhrepalanchok)

APPENDIX - II
BASIC CHECK LIST FOR ANALYSIS OF FUEL WOOD
COLLECTOR WOMEN

1. Information About the Area

Name of fuel wood collector women.....
District
Range post
Ward no.
No. of households
No. of users
No. of members in committee
Male Female

1.1 Social and Resource Map

House settlements
Temples
Caste wise placements
Schools
Health posts
Ponds
Roads
Rivers
Forest
Way

APPENDIX-III

Questionnaire

The information given the following queries will be kept highly confidential and will be used for academic purpose only. Therefore, the respondents are requested not to hesitate in providing the correct information.

Name of the respondent:-.....
Address.....
Age.....
Religion: Hindu.... Buddhist.... Muslim..... Christian.....
Others.....

Please, tick or say/write short answer

1. What is your marital status?
 - a. Married
 - b. Unmarried
 - c. Divorced
 - d. Separated
 - e. Widow
 - f. Other
2. If married, number of children.....
 - A. male.....
 - B. females.....
3. What is your family type?
 - a. Nuclear
 - B. Joint
 - C. Extended
4. How many family members do you have?
 - a. Under 5
 - B. 5 To 15
 - C. Above 15
5. How much land do you have in your own name?
 - A.Bighas
 - B.Katthas
 - C.Dhur
 - D.....No Land
6. Are you literate or illiterate?
 - A. Yes
 - B. No

If literate, a. just literate

 - b. Academic Degree.....
- 7.

- What is The Main Sources Of Income?
8. How Much Do You Earn A Day?
 9. What is your religion?
 - a. Hindu b. Muslim c. Christian
 - d. Buddhist d. Other
 10. Does your family (husband) consult you for making important decision?
 - a. Yes b. No c. Sometimes
 - d. No opinion
 11. Please, mention your family income (approximately)
 12. Please, mention your family expenditure (approximately).....
 13. How do you spend your earning?
 - a) Spend All Money On Myself B) Contribute To Family
 - C) All Give To Husband D) Put the Money on the Bank Account
 14. Have you saved your money for future?
 - a. Yes b. No
 15. Do you have the following housing facilities?
 - a. Radio b. T. V.
 - c. availability of latrine/ bathroom d. Phone
 16. Caste/ ethnicity:
 - a. Brahmins/Chhetry /Magar/ Rai/ Limbu/ Dhimal /Damai/Kami
 17. Do you use fuel wood for domestic use or for making money?
.....
 18. What are other main occupations?
 - a. Agriculture b. animal husbandry
 - c. local wine making and selling d. other daily wages
 19. Do take part in public meetings?
 - A. Often B. Sometimes C. Rarely D. No

20. Do you find the society positively support women to take part in public meeting & other affairs?

A. Yes B. No C. Only For Sometimes

21. Do you invite people from other community in celebrating festivals and performing other rituals?

A. Sometimes B. Often C. Rarely D. No

Thank you very much for your kind cooperation and good understanding.

APPENDIX-IV
NAME OF RESPONDENT

SN	Name of Respondent	SN	Name of Respondent
1	Dhana Maya Limbu	29	Nirmala Karki
2	Rita devi Rai	30	Thulimaya BK
3	Bishnu Maya Limbu	31	Dillimaya pariyar
4	Pabitra Nepali	32	Parmila Kalakheti
5	Bina Bhusal	33	Phulmaya BK
6	Sita kumari Darji	34	Bhimakumari Limbu
7	Chandra Maya Limbu	35	Tulasha Pariyar
8	Bishnu Maya Dhimal	36	Dilmaya Dhimal
9	Rachhya Nepali	37	Janani Kumari Darji
10	Sharmmila Pariyar	38	Chitramaya Darji
11	Laxmi Magar	39	Devi BK
12	Debaki Darji	40	Archana kumari BK
13	Radhika Pariyar	41	Daulat kumari Rai
14	Gayatri Limbu	42	Ambika Dhimal
15	Indira BK	43	Bimala Pariyar
16	Keshari BK	44	Kausial BK
17	Bhanu Kumari Darji	45	Loklaxmi Rai
18	Binita BK	46	Rita Kumari Sundash
19	Mina Magar	47	Ratnamaya BK
20	Ambika Magar	48	Sunita Devi Rai
21	Dhanamaya Magar	49	Mankumari Darji
22	Harimaya Pariyar	50	Jiya BK
23	Sudha Kumari K C	51	Priya BK
24	Goma Devi Magar	52	Monika Dhimal
25	Pabitra Limbu	53	Bimala BK
26	Guna Devi Pariyar	54	Ranu Kumari Magar
27	Durga Bhattraï	55	Rekha Kumari Poudel
28	Mina Magar		