

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Nepal, a Himalayan Kingdom, lies on the lap of Mt. Everest, the highest mountain peak of the world. Within the boundary of 147181 square kilometers bordering between the two most populous countries of the world, India and China. It stretches 145-241 kilometers north to south and 885 kilometers west to east. Topographically, it is divided into three ecological zones - the mountainous region along the north-running like long stripes from east to the west. It is a home place of natural beauty with traces of artifacts . In the geographical diversity and varied climatic conditions, more than 101 caste/ethnic groups are accommodated in the country (CBS, 2001). Nepal, for its racial complexity is often referred "The melting pot of diverse races and tribes."

Nepal is known as of the least developed and poor country. It has been defined as a country with a multilingual, multi-religious, multi-ethnic groups of people residing within the political boundary. According to, The National Foundation for uplift of Adivasi/Janajati act 2002. The law has categorized the existence of 59 ethnic groups in the country. Which can be found in different geographical regions. It shows that 18 groups are concentrated in the mountain region, 23 in the hill region, 7 in the inner terai and 11 in the terai region (UNESCO Report, 2006).

Caste, various cultural groups and ethnic diversities are the important features of Nepal. Tharu is one of the prominent terai ethnic

group of Nepal. According to Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) 2001, they have occupied 6.8% of total Nepalese population. They have their own language, customs, distinct cultural identity and written or oral history. Tharu population is living across the tarai region since a long time so, they claim that Tharus are the native people and have settled in the Nepal tarai since time immemorial (Bista, 1987). Numerically, they rank fourth larger group of Nepal. Their number of population is highest only in four districts - Sunsari, Dang, Bardiya and Kailali. But not only in the above districts, Tharus are spread over in good number from west to east of the Nepal tarai districts (CBS, 2001). Thus, the majority of Tharu population is living in the given districts by following their own customs and are preserving their own identity and culture.

Comparatively , the status of Nepalese women is worse then that of the male, where according to CBS (2001) women's population is 50.06%. However due to male dominated society females are always given a lower status. They are exploited and dominated specially in terms of social, physical, sexual and economic aspects (UNESCO Report, 2006). Their position is defined by their reproductive abilities rather than their productive activities. Most of the time, they are involving inside the household sphere, which is socially devalued. But in the changing context the larger number of women's population is involved outside the household work, but their wage and status is lower than their male counterparts (UNESCO Report, 2006).

As Helen Hunt Jackson says, "A women, who creates and sustains a house and through whose hands children grow up to be strong and pure men and women is a creature secondly to god", (Sharma, 1991 cited in

Singh, 1996). The above statement shows that women comes at second place so, she has very low status in Nepal as well as other many countries of the world. On the other hand, everybody agrees that a women plays a very important role in setting up a good family. In fact, women have very strong character in every household. But it is bitter truth that women in Nepal mostly lag behind social, economic, political, religious aspects of life.

By tradition, women are limited in mobility and access to information and education. The status of Nepalese women has been deeply affected by various religious and traditional customs where, these practices have seriously affected the role and status of Nepalese women.

In most of the time, Tharu women are involved in household work. They have less access to education, politics, government services and high income generating activities. But in the comparison of other high caste (Brahmin/Chhetri) group, the Tharu women's household decision making power is high. But due to their unawareness and illiteracy they are being victim of social crimes like trafficking, domestic violence and sexual abuse.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Women constitute 50.06% of total Nepalese population (CBS, 2001). This statement shows that, half of the Nepalese sky has been occupied by women's population. But comparatively women's status is always lower than that of the male. They are dominated and exploited in terms of social, physical, sexual and economic aspects (UNESCO Report, 2006). Women's contribution in household and productive activities is not

less than their male counterparts, but their contribution has not been counted and recognized by society. The role of men and women are interdependent. But still women's overall burden is higher than that of the male.

Women's activities are generally connected with inside the house where, their contribution remains invisible. Beside the agricultural activities they have to perform other household activities too, such as childcare, cooking, washing, cleaning etc. But the triple burden of women is not computed in monetary terms. So, still they are discriminated in all area like health, education, economy, legal, employment and politics.

Decision making is also an important aspect, which measures the relative status of the household members. Although women have access to decision making in unimportant matters so, they still excluded from important decision making right.

In the comparison of other high caste women, Tharu women have more power in household decision making and their involvement outside the household work is high. The study will be guided by the following research questions.

- (i) What are the gender specific household activities in Tharu community ?
- (ii) What is the role of Tharu women in the decision making process in that household.
- (iii) In what household matters they have more say in decision making ?

In exploring these questions, the study has been focused over the condition of Tharu women's household decision making right. Likewise,

it has focused about who have played the dominant role inside the household decision making right.

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

The general objective of the present study is to explore and describe the women's participation in household decision making among Tharu of Dhadawar VDC, Ward No. 1, Bardiya district. The specific objectives of the study are as following.

- (i) To find out the gender specific household activities in Tharu community.
- (ii) To find out the women's role in household decision making among Tharu community in the study area.
- (iii) To analyze the major affecting factor in decision making process in Tharu community.

### **1.4 Rational of the Study**

Nepalese society is shaped by patriarchal system in which women given lower status in every spheres of society. This study is an attempt to explore and describe Tharu women's role in decision making in household level.

Number of research studies has been done on decision making process. Although, Nepalese women have been empowered in paper only. Men are the one who usually attend the meeting and make decisions. Only a few women are in the decision making capacity, which shows that male domination has continued as usual.

I would like to focus on this study specially on Tharu community where too patriarchy is dominant psychologically. Women's participation in decision making is very poor in Nepal. But it is saying that, the Tharu women's decision making power is more than other high caste women. They have some freedom in their community. So, I, would like to discuss Tharu women's condition of decision making in the household level, their household activities etc.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Literature review is an important process of research work, which helps us to bridge the gap between the existing problem and past research work in subject matter.

#### **2.1 Status of Women in Nepal**

Traditionally women's responsibilities have been restricted to the home, cooking, cleaning, child rearing and looking after the house. Women are considered to be weak, vulnerable and dependent on men (Gurung, 1999).

The status of women is the result of many factors; firstly traditional practices have perpetuated the condition. Societies look at women's role as mainly for child learning. Many countries in Asia, marry girls at young age encouraging early and frequent child bearings. Adolescent mother poses a greater risk of anemia toxemia and obstetric complications. About 5,000,000 women die from pregnancy related causes - 99% of them in developing countries including Nepal (UNDP, 2001).

Realizing the condition of women the government has felt necessary to empower rural exploited and extremely poor women through skill development programs and enhance their economic opportunity. The main thrust of empowerment programs for women in rural society is to enhance their participation in various development programs. In Nepal women's programs were launched only from the decades of 70s. However, despite of the effort of three decades, 75 percent of women were illiterate. Only 4 percent of them were represented in parliament, and only 2

percent were first class offices in civil service (Acharya, 1997). In this situation, empowerment efforts for women seem to be challenging. Only from the sixth five year plan (1980-85) the government address the issues of women's role in national development. The main policy of the sixth plan was to enhance women's efficiency through raising productivity imparting education and training. After that, every five years plan gave priority to women's participation in development program. The policy statement of the seventh five year plan was equal participation of women n the same footing as men in the process of development. The main strategy of the eight five year plan was to enhance women's participation in the mainstream of development. The main commitment of the ninth five years plan is to integrate women into the mainstream of development through gender equality and women's empowerment.

The tenth plan of HMG (2002-2007) identities women as the focal point for development in order to enhance human development indicators by achieving targets such as sustainable economic growth of the nation, poverty alleviation and guaranteeing development to the general people. In the this aspect, strategies on emphasizing education of women, improving women's health and enhancing women's participation at the decision making level (Tenth Plan, 2002-2007).

Still women are not allowed to go outside from the house in same communities of Terai. There is very little freedom in social movement for women in Tarai communities. Women have low degree of opportunities for their education and have hardly any access to employment. There is lack of women participation in decision making from house to the executive levels. There is no positive attitude toward women's health and they do not get appropriate nutrition even in the period of pregnancy (UNICEF, 1996). Women get married early and are considered as child



bearing machines. Due to early age delivery there is high maternal mortality shows the lower social status of women. Women have lack of economic power and also have lack of decision-making role over their fertility too (Acharya, 1995).

Nepali women constitute more than half of the countries population yet they remain discriminated and treated as second class citizens. This is due to the continuing dominance of patriarchal value system that originated from the culture that always considers women inferior to men. There has been very little change in the status of women even after the restoration of democracy in 1990. Nepalese women do not enjoy equal benefits as men in their civil, political, social and economic advancement because of the discrimination institutionalized by family, society, market and the state. As a result, women remain marginalized in their pursuit of equality with men. Various factors, ranging from socio-cultural, economic religious, political and legal have played the significant role in the status of women. In socio-cultural aspect, son plays a central role in a social setting who carry out family traditional, where as daughters are not defined lived descent in the parental family. Religion has relegated to women in lower status. But women are so influenced by religious scriptures that they consider themselves subordinate to their male counterparts. Their whole life revolves around their husbands and children and only few have individual identities. The politics of Nepal is to be controlled by '5M' "that are men, Muscle, Money, Manipulation and Mafiya. Women's economic contribution is neither recognized nor valued (FWLD, 2003).

Caste/ethnicity plays an important role in women's socio-economic conditions because the socio-economic activities are confined according to their caste and ethnicity, the extent to which women are within

individual household, however varies considerably. The most important factors here appears to be the social class of the household and to such facilities as education prevails as in many rich peasants and land owning households the chance of a greater degree of emancipation are more substantial. This, however, can be significantly affected by the conventional expectation and behaviour pattern of particular caste and ethnic groups. Thus, this is a strong tendency in high caste. Hindu families and particularly among Brahmins, for women treated more unequally and to be socially oppressed then among the tribal groups. Limbu, Magars, Gurungs, Tharus or even so called untouchables (Seddon, D. 1987).

Economically, women have no rights to parental property as well as in the husband's home. They bear 70% of the household work burden and yet have no access to economic resources. Even doing the same work, they get lower wages as most of the women work as unskilled labor in carpet and garment factories and get low paid due to illiteracy (Luitel, 1992).

The UNICEF (1990) report entitled 'Children and Women of Nepal' highlighted the women's contribution to economy and social progress is still constrained by their limited access to education and information, which restricts the full development and utilization of their intellectual and productive capacities. Many rural but literate women have loosen their skills because of low practical opportunities.

Rana (2002) mentioned in his thesis of "Women Awareness in Income Generating Activities through Education" in Ugratara Junagal, Kavere, that women had been discriminated in terms of recruitment, promotion, work assignment, overseas travel, outside job posting and

sexual harassment. The highest proportion of complaints about discrimination had been recorded as cited in the office book of personnel service.

## **2.2 Decision Making Role of Women**

Women occupied half of total population in Nepal. But they have very low participation in decision making process 70% of household related and external decision are entirely made by male member of house (Acharya, 1995).

Acharya and Bennett (1981) give a wider overview of women's status in their decision making power in household. Acharya and Bennett claim that economic factor affects women's role in decision making both directly and indirectly. If a women has a greater economic participation she has a greater power in decision making. Similarly, social and demographic factors also influences the role of decision making e.g. small size of children imply higher economic participation and consequently greater decision making power for women.

Decision making is also influenced by ethnicity. We find variation in different communities, women's decision making power is relatively high in Gurung Rai, and other ethnic population then in Brahmin and Chetri. It has been found that the weaker the Hindu value, the stronger power in both use and decision patterns (Acharya and Bennett, 1983).

The proportion of women who make decision independently in relation to matters of land transaction, borrowing/lending money and arranging marriage for their family members is only 1.9%, 6.2% and 4% respectively. The corresponding figures for males are 38.8%, 37% and

11.2% despite the male consulting with the female, the final decision will ultimately be made the man (UNESCO Report, 2006).

Women in Nepal, as elsewhere, hold the triple work responsibilities of reproduction, household and farm work. However, reproduction is not treated as work and household work is not considered as productive work by government system. Women also suffer from discriminatory practices in opportunities for education and personnel mobility, which is required among others for skill development and independent decision making (UNDP, 1995).

According to Shrestha (1994) the decision making power of women may increase with an equality of participation at all level of planning and policy making not as recipient beneficiaries, labor and input contribution and consultants but as active change agents at the concerned level. It does not mean the involvement of one or two women or the wives of the leaders but the involvement of women and men in the same proportion in decision making as their proportion in the communities at large.

According to her, the women of Nepal are so dependent to men, if the partners of members deny to give shelter to them, it is a question of basic survivals. This system has made women so helpless, houseless and dependent that without men they will not survive. So, in this inhuman system the right of survival is laid on the hearts of men.

Women's public life is culturally restricted to the degree that it is causally related to the patriarchal social system which confines them to subordinated position. Religion, ethnicity, cultures, law tradition, history and social attitudes place severe limits on women's participation in public life and also control in their private life. These factors have both shape

the cultures world view and governed individual self-image, subsequently affecting the understanding and practice of development. This fact is largely evidenced by the reality that a negligible number of Nepalese women are involved in professional, management and decision making position (Shtri Shakti, 1995).

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

Some studies have shown that even though women generally represent the oppressed group in Nepalese society. But in some communities women play a major role in decision making process. The Newar women of Bulu (Pradhan 1981), the Tharu women of Dang (Rajure, 1981), The Kham Magar of Thabang (Molnar 1981) have been represented as treated as equals in their community. The above studies shows that, the women of various ethnic group played the dominant to make decision at household level to the comparison of high caste women (Luitel, 2001).

Tharus refers to themselves as a jat, which is also the term used in the Muluki Ain. But Ramanand Singh is a rare exception, he makes a point of insisting that Tharus comprises a Samaj (society) and not a jat. Commenting on scholars who claim that Tharus belong to a number of different jats, he observed, "Everyone has interpreted us. . . The Tharus aren't a Jat; the Tharus are a society . . . We are a community without caste. Newar also were casteless, but Jayasthiti Malla brought in castes."

According to Singh, the Tharu are a tribe and not a caste. He points out that Manu treats the Sakyas as a tribe not as a caste. So, to define the Tharus as Singh does, as a society rather than as a single jat (Guneratne, 2002).

Tharu women are the second largest Janajati cultural groups of Nepal, living through the length of tarai plains. They are one of the most primitive community and landless resulting to bonded labors and Kamayais and virtually slaves sold and brought at will, which are greatly abused and exploited by fudal landlords and ruthless Zamindars (Bajracharya, 2005).

In the high caste (Brahmin/Chhetri) group, the authority structure is male dominated, women can not make their own decision and they have no independent sources of income and property. But among the Tharu people of tarai, women have more power and freedom to enjoy in the family. Likewise, their decision making power is high in the household level (Luitel, 1992).

Traditionally the house chief is exempted from ploughing and his wife from pounding, if possible. Tharu women have their own personality. They are not mere shadows of their husbands, as they are in a Hindu society. Their interests and suggestions are also considered when making any household decision. A husband tries to keep his wife happy and satisfied, otherwise she might take another husband or run away to her parents. The newly married wives, who are more sentimental and emotional have a greater tendency to do thus (Rajaure, 1977).

Relation among the house wives in a Tharu family, are generally speaking better than comparison in Hindu families. Relations between mother-in-law and her daughter-in-laws are usually cordial and peaceful.

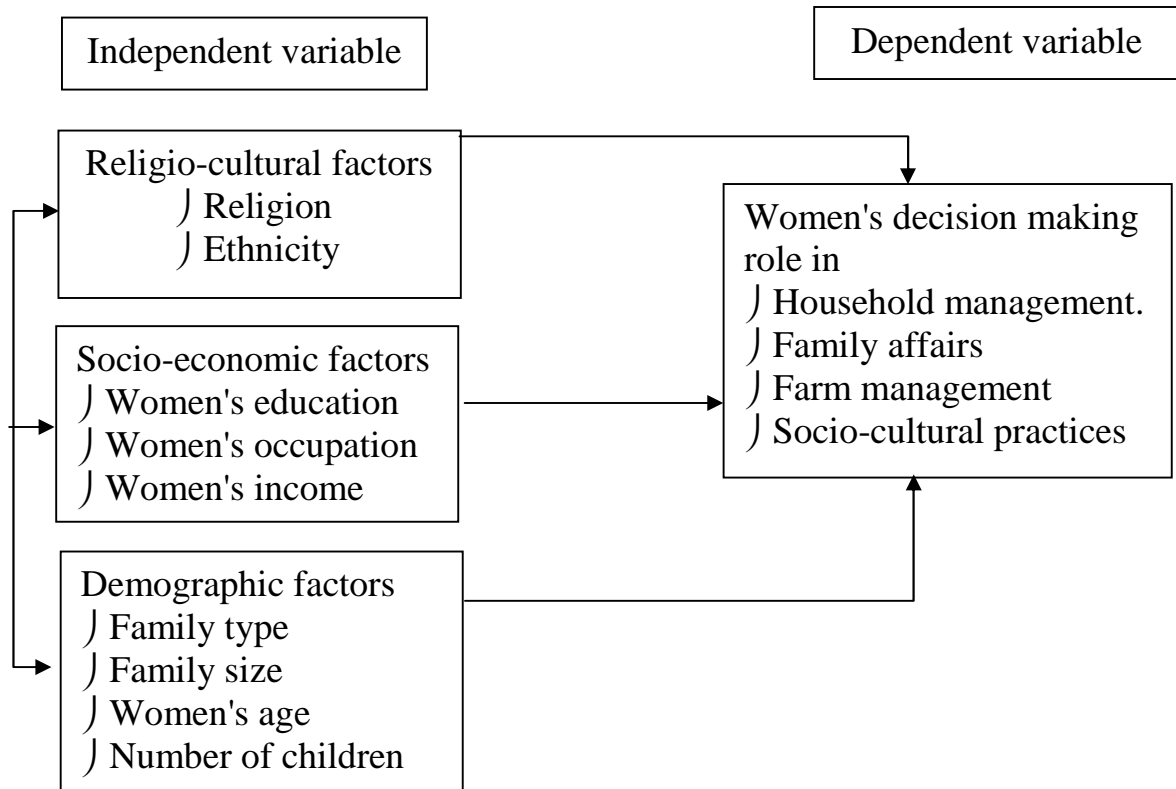
A mother-in-law does not misbehave or do injustice to her daughter-in-law, for she fears that in retaliation the same treatment will be meted out to her own daughter or whatever other girl from her own household was given in exchange for the daughter-in-law. Moreover, in joint Tharu families, there is often more than one daughter-in-law in a house. So, it is not so easy for a mother-in-law in a house to dominate or be unfair to a daughter-in-law. Again, making a daughter-in-law unhappy results not only in dividing her a way but her husband also and he is one of the most important earning members of the family. An unhappy daughter-in-law might convince her husband to move away or split off from the family; this means a severe blow to an agrarian Tharu family (Rajaure, 1977).

### **2.3 Conceptual Framework**

Based on the review of the available literature, an attempt has been made to develop a conceptual framework for the present study by identifying possible factors affecting the decision making power of Tharu women. Then framework includes religion, caste/ethnicity, economic status of households, women's education, their occupation etc. These have been taken as independent variables which directly influences the dependent variable.

The review of some of the relevant studies suggest some factors that affect women's decision making power at household levels. There are cultural, social, economic factors which affects the decision making power in Tharu community.

Conceptual framework for analysis of women's decision making role.





## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

A research needs to be equipped or a set of methods that has to be followed as guiding principle in a scientific study. It gives guidance to a researcher. Thus, this study has been conducted by adopting following methodology to accomplish the objectives of the study.

#### **3.1 Selection of the Study Area**

As mentioned earlier main objectives of the study has tried to describe the decision making role of Thru women at household level. For this purpose, ward No. 1 of Dhadhawar VDC of Bardiya district has been selected for the study.

The research has tried to analyze the Tharu women's decision making role at household level. There are so many books, magazines and research studies about Tharu community, but none of them has discussed about women's decision making role as a sociological study in Tharu community of this VDC about Tharu women's decision making process. So, the researcher took the Tharu women of Dhadhawar VDC Ward No. 1 to verify the general impression about them. So, I selected this area to study the Tharu women's decision making role at household level.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

This study is a case study of Dhadhawar VDC Ward No. 1 of Bardiya District. Keeping in view the problem formulation, more particularly, the objective of the study, the design of the study has been chosen as a descriptive survey design. This would cover a sample of the

women and description of the issues related to the levels of their decision making role at household level.

### **3.3 Nature and Source of Data**

The study has been included both primary and secondary source of information. The primary information has been taken through interview and observation that has played a vital role to find out necessary information. Likewise, the secondary data has been taken from published and unpublished literature such as books, journals, articles, research report etc.

### **3.4 Universe and Sample**

The research study has been from Dhadhawar VDC Ward No. 1 of Bardiya District, where 177 household have been settled. Among them 138 household are Tharu women belong different popular cluster's has been randomly selected as sample for this study.

This study has been conducted through purposive research methodologies for ward no. 1 of Dhadhawar VDC, Bardiaya. About 30 questionnaire has been filled up with in 18-55 age group women respondents.

### **3.5 Methods of Data Collection**

Different kind of instrument has utilized to collect data and information from the field level. In order to meet the objectives of this study, the researcher has used to collect data like direct participant observation, interview, focus group discussion, questionnaire etc.

### **3.5.1 Interview**

Interview agenda has been collected information on roles and responsibilities carried out by men and women among Tharu community. Both structured and unstructured interview has been used to gather information.

### **3.5.2 Observation**

Observation has been used to collect the observable information such as women's participation in day to day activities, their role in household activities, their relationship with the members of the family. Specially, this method has been used when respondents couldn't ready to answer because of their shyness and so on.

### **3.5.3 Focus Group Discussion**

This method has conducted with the both male and female members of the related households. The focus group have prepared as necessary mixed or separately. Each focus group session has included 6-10 respondents, who have above 35 years age group. Discussion has been focused upon who makes major decision etc.

In addition to these some, key informants have been provided information on related subject and these key informants have been included political leaders, senior men and women of their village, teachers, social workers etc.

### **3.5.3 Questionnaire**

Questionnaire was also an important tool of data collection. So, I have prepared the questionnaire schedule before going to field for the

information about the household activities of Tharu community, women's decision making role within household level and the affecting factors over decision making in study area etc.

### **3.6 Data Analysis**

The collected data has been analyzed through various statistical tools as per need. The collected data has tabulated manually. Qualitative analysis also has been used through case study and questionnaire method.

### **3.7 Limitations of the Study**

Following are the limitations of the study

- (a) Due to the time and resources constrains this study covers only the small group of the Tharu society.
- (b) Due to the very low literary rate of the target group, it is difficult to get the actual data even if we use the questionnaire method to collect the data.
- (c) In review of literature not only the literature related to Tharu women but also the literature related to Nepalese women are reviewed.
- (d) Only the limited literature of concerned topic is available.

## **CHAPTER - IV**

### **PARTICIPATION AND DECISION MAKING ROLE OF WOMEN IN THARU COMMUNITY**

#### **Location of the Study Area**

This chapter presents a brief introduction to the study area. In this chapter, an attempt has been made to describe the geographical, cultural, socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the people covered by the present study. As mentioned above, ward No. 1 of Dhadhawar VDC of Bardiya District was selected as a case for the present study. Obviously, the findings of this study very much characterized by the setting of the study area and the people taken as sample. In view of this, a brief introduction of the area and the description of the sample characteristics have been presented in different sections of this chapter. The first section presents an overview of Bardiya district. The second section is about the Tharu of Ward No. 1 of Dhadhawar VDC in general and the third section describes the socio-economic characteristics of the sample households.

#### **4.1 Bardiya District: An Overview**

Bardiya district lies on the mid western part of Nepal. It is spread over the west terai region of Nepal. It is one of the five districts of veri zone in the mid western development region of the country. The district is bounded on the east by Bankey district, on the west by Kailali district, on the south by India and on the north by Surkhet and Salyan districts. There are 31 VDCs in the district. The headquarter of district is Guleriya.

Geographically, Bardiya lies between 28<sup>0</sup>17' to 28<sup>0</sup>39' north latitude and 81<sup>0</sup> 3' to 81<sup>0</sup>41' east longitude. The altitude of the district ranges from

138 meters to 1279 meters above the sea level. The famous national park Royal Bardiya National Park is in this district. The climate of this district is hot.

There are 76,981 households in the district. The total population of the district is 464253 among them 232900 (50.16%) are male and 231353 (49.83%) are female.

The population of the district consists of different caste/ethnic groups. They include Brahmin, Chhetri, Magar, Tharu, Thakuri, Muslim, Gurung, Kami, Damai and Sharki. The ethnic groups have their own culture, tradition and languages. By religion people of the district are Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim and Christian.

### **Ward No. 1 of Dhadhwar VDC: A Brief Introduction**

This part of the report presents a brief introduction of ward no. 1 (Dhadhwar village) of Dhadhwar VDC, which was selected as a case for the present study. This village is located in the north side of the VDC. It is connected to Mahendra Highway by gravel road. There is no bus service. From the bus stand, it takes approximately one hour walk to reach to the research site area.

The village is situated in the plain area according to the division of land. The climate of this village is hot summer and cool winters.

## **4.2 Population**

There are 2588 households in the VDC. The population of the Dhadhwar VDC according to the VDC secretariat is as follows:

**Table 1**  
**Population of Dhadhawar VDC**

Sex	Number	Percentage
Male	8848	50.04
Female	8831	49.95
Total	17679	100.00

Source: VDC, Record, 2063.

The Table 1 helps to observe the total population of the Dhadhawar VDC which is seventeen thousand six hundred seventy nine. In which eight thousand eight hundred and forty eight (50.04%) are males and eight thousand eight hundred and thirty one (49.95%) are females. From this, the number of population of both male and female are almost equal in the Dhadhawar VDC. But in the total percentage, males is higher than females.

The population of ward no. 1 (Dhadhawar village) of Dhadhawar VDC, according to the VDC record 2063 as follows

The study area was Dhadhawar village (Ward No. 1). There are altogether 177 households and the total population of this village is 1453. The table below shows the statistical data of this entire village.

**Table 2**  
**Population of Ward No. 1**

Sex	Number	Percentage
Male	741	50.99
Female	712	49.00
Total	1453	100.00

Source: VDC, Record, 2063.

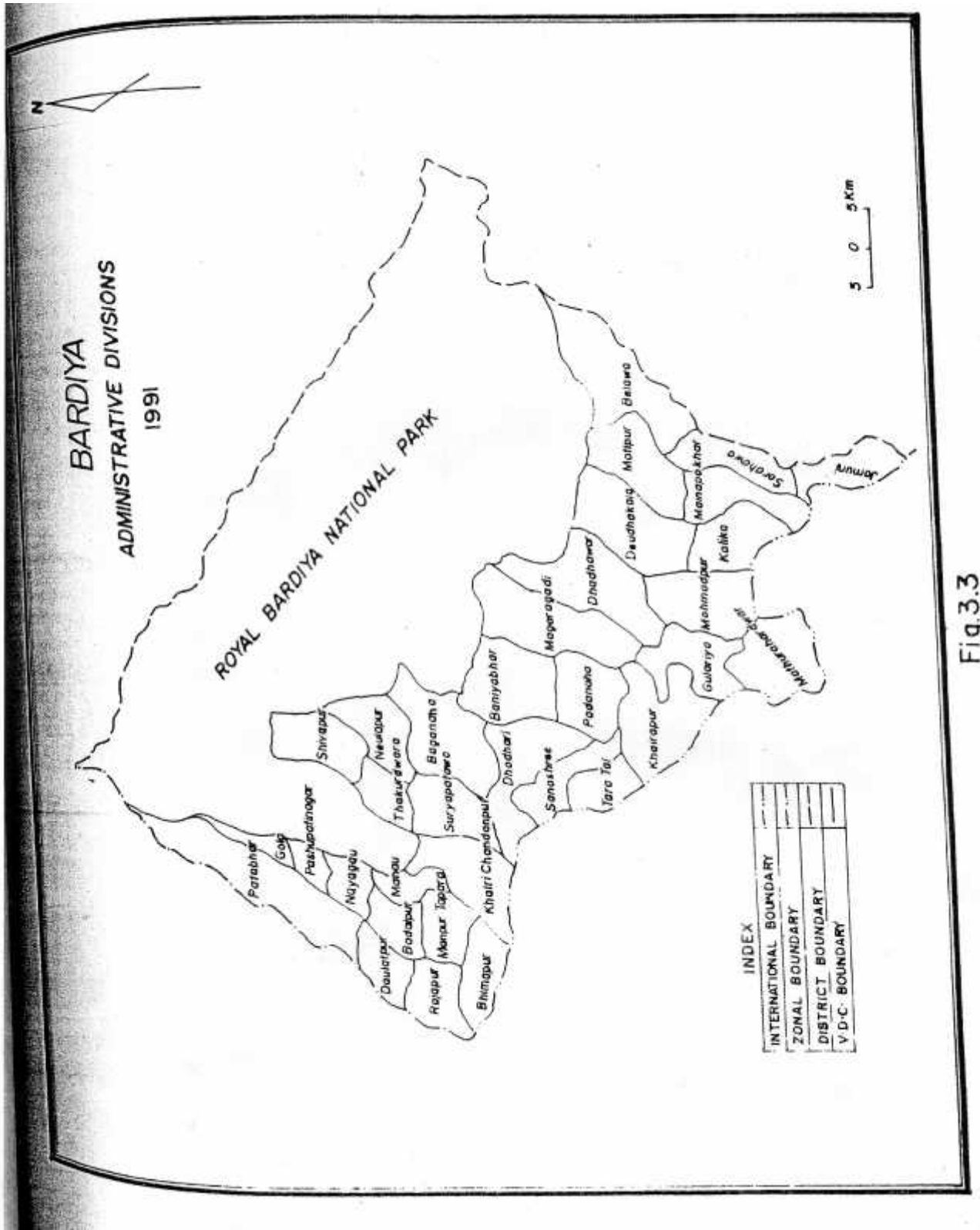


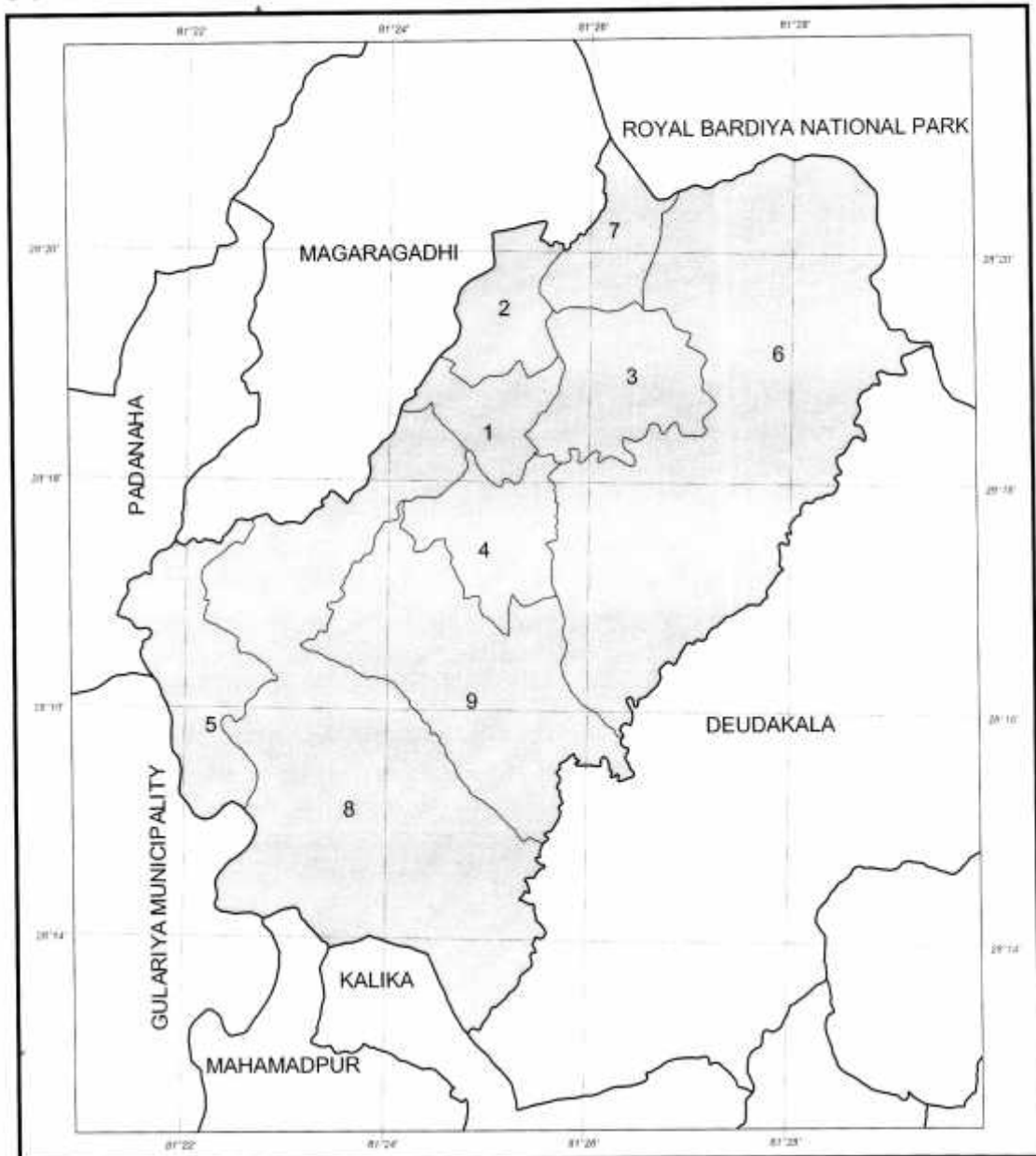
Fig.3.3



# DHADHAWAR VDC

DISTRICT : BARDIYA

VDC Code : 58008



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SCALE 1 : 92500

BARDIYA DISTRICT  
VDC Location Map

LEGEND	
	VDC Boundary
	Ward Boundary
<b>BUKHEL</b>	VDC Name
<b>5</b>	Ward Number

DHADHAWAR VDC  
Area :89 Sq.Km.(Approx.)

1850 0 1850 3700 Meters

**HORIZONTAL DATUM**

Spheroid Everest 1830  
Projection MUTM  
Origin Longitude 84° E., Latitude 0° N  
False coordinates of origin 500 000 m. Easting, 0 m. Northing  
Scale Factor at Central Meridian 0.9999

Map compiled from National Topographic Database at scales 1:25,000 and 1:50,000, 2002. Internal administrative boundaries are not demarcated on the ground. Map produced by the Survey Department, National Geographic Information Infrastructure Programme, (NGIIP), Kathmandu.



Likewise in Ward No. 1 of Dhadhawar VDC, the research site, the total population is one thousand four hundred and fifty three In which seven hundred and forty one (50.59%) are male and seven hundred and twelve (49.00%) are females. In the total percentage of sex ratio, male is higher than female in the study area. There are altogether 177 households in Dhadhawar village.

### 4.3 Caste / Ethnic Composition

The caste system in Nepal is an important part of ancient Hindu tradition. Portuguese travelers who came to India in the 16<sup>th</sup> century first used the term caste. Caste comes from the Spanish Portuguese word "Casta" which means "race", "bread" or "lineage". Nepalese use the term "Jati" each related to a specific occupation.

**Table 3**  
**Caste / Ethnic Composition of Ward No. 1**

S.N.	Female Total	Number	Percentage
1	Tharu	138	77.96
2	Chhetri	16	9.03
3	Kami	10	5.64
4	Damai	7	3.95
5	Brahmin	6	3.38
	Total	177	100.00

Source: VDC, Record, 2063.

Like other villages in Nepal, the Dhadhawar VDC is a caste stratified society and people belonging to these castes reside here. Mainly Tharu, Chhetri, Kami, Damai and Brahmin resides here in Dhadhawar VDC. In Ward No. 1, the research area or the community is mainly of Tharu. So, Tharus are an overwhelming majority the others include Kami,

Damai, Brahmin and Chhetri. They constitute 77.96% of the total household in the study area. The Tharus speak their own language and mostly follows Hindu socio-religious practices. The Chhetries constitute 9.03% of the total household. The untouchables are the people of different occupational groups. In the study area Kami and Damai simultaneously constitute 5.64% and 3.95% of total household. Likewise, Brahmins constitute 3.38% of the total household in the study area.

In the present study, caste has been taken up as one of the socio-cultural characteristics of the population. This is because the gender roles and responsibilities differ in dichotomous and non-dichotomous societies (Acharya et al, 1979). In the later chapter, caste will also be considered to find out the differing work pattern and whether or not this variable affects gender participation in decision making process in a household.

#### **4.4 Educational Status**

Education is one of the prime factor for the development of society. In Dhadhawar village out of total sample household population 31.34% are illiterate including both male and female. The educational condition of this place is as given below.

**Table 4**  
**Educational Status**

S.N.	Educational status	Number	Percentage
1	Illiterate	79	31.34
2	Literate	46	18.25
3	Children at primary level	106	42.06
4	SLC pass	18	7.14
5	10+2 (IA) pass	2	0.79
6	Studying Bachelor level (B.A.)	1	0.39
	Total	252	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2009.

From the above table, we see that the school going children in Dhadhawar village is one hundred and six (42.06%). There is a vast gap between literacy and illiteracy in the study area. From the study of this place, equal education for girl also was not prevalent which seems to be present now. The above table shows that, out of two hundred and fifty two members. Among them seventy nine (31.34%) are illiterate and forty six (18.25%) are literate. In the context of literacy, there was not vast gap between both male and female which is good in village context. However, the overall literacy rate is lesser to the comparison of upper caste people like Brahmin and Chhetries. The main reason of their educational backwardness was poverty, lack of awareness, impact of socio-cultural practices etc.

#### **4.5 Family Size and Structure**

Nepalese society is dominantly patriarchal and the Dhadhawar village is governed by these norms. Traditionally senior males are accorded the headship of the family and daughters after being married; go to live in their husbands house. The sons live with their parents until they have offspring. Some prefer to stay separately and lead their own life having children. According to the villagers usually after parent's death the brother live separately. Generally, there are two common practices for the location of new residence. If the present's house is big enough then the son's have their own separate kitchen within their parents house. or build their independent house in their share of the family's land. If one has two or more sons, they divides their parent's property equally. The old parents almost prefer to live with their youngest son's family. The family size of the sample households is as given below.

The family is divided into two categories i.e. Nuclear and joint family. Both family system are prevalent in Nepalese society. Nuclear family means the family with husband, wife and their unmarried children living together and joint family included husband, wife and their married and unmarried children living together and having meal in same children. Some of the caste/ethnic group still live in joint family, which is still alive in Tharu community of Dhadhawar village. But in present context most of them like to live in nuclear family.

**Table 5**  
**Family Size of the Sample Household**

S.N.	No. of household	Number of family member	Percentage
1	1	11	18.33
2	1	10	16.67
3	2	4	6.67
4	4	5	8.33
5	4	9	15
6	7	8	13.33
7	8	6	10
8	9	7	11.67
	Total	60	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2009.

Joint family system is very common in Tharu culture. In some cases, it is found that 2-3 generations are living together, but due to the fragmentation of land and other changes in social and economic system, the trend of living in nuclear family is also increasing.

Size and structure of the household is taken as another variable affecting gender roles and relations. Out of 36 sample household, there are eleven households (30.55%), who are living joint family and the rest of twenty five households (69.44%) are living in nuclear family. In joint families, they have substantially less work burden than men and women of nuclear families (Bennet, 1983). But in the decision making process, the women's of nuclear family have more role than the women of joint family.

#### **4.6 Marital Status**

Marital status makes difference in women's status, because it is through marriage that the women change their status from the status of daughter to daughter-in-law, which increases their responsibility regarding the decision making. In the Nepalese context, marriage leads a women to child bearing. With increasing role expectations the married and unmarried have different status due to this position in Nepal. In the life of women, marital status is an important indicator.

Marriage has a significant place in the Tharu community of Dhadhawar village. The practice shows that they have arranged marriage system mostly in their community as it is socially accepted and also considered as the holy marriage. Somewhere, there is still practice of exchange marriage in the community. Due to the system of exchange of girls of marriage to avoid bride price, there sometime difference of 15 to 20 years' between the ages of bride and bridegroom. In rare instances, if the girl to be given in exchange is too young (5 or 6 years old) for her would be husband, she may be reserved for marriage to be held in future.

**Table 6**  
**Marital Status of Tharu Women**

S.N.	Marital status	Number	Percentage
1	Unmarried	4	11.11
2	Married	31	86.11
3	Widow	1	2.77
	Total	36	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2009.

The above table shows that, about 86% of the sample respondents are married, 11% are unmarried and 2.77% of the total respondents were widows. Except an unmarried one all these are household heads of the sample households. The unmarried girls were 15 to 18 years of age, which were respondents from their house because their parents were absent at the data collection time.

#### **4.7 Occupation**

Traditionally the Tharus main occupation is cultivation and Kamaiya Partha. Now a days, Kamaiya Partha has been abolished from the constitutional level but agriculture is still the main occupation of Tharu. Beside agriculture the Tharu take on the occupation like business, labour, government service, livestock etc. The occupation distribution of the sample households are as follows:

**Table 7**  
**Occupation Distribution of the Sample Households**

S.N.	Occupation	Number	Percentage
1	Agriculture farming	24	66.66
2	Business	2	5.5
3	Labour	7	19.44
4	Service	3	8.33
	Total	36	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2009.

The table 7 shows that agriculture farming was found as a main source of income for about 67% of the sample households. Business was the main source of income for about 5.55% of sample household. The other sources of income include labour, service etc.

#### **4.8 Land Distribution**

Nepal is an agricultural country. More than 80% of it's people are dependent in agriculture. Land was found to be the main source of livelihood in Tharu community too. A person is called wealthy or rich who posses large size of land. Social prestige is related with the size of land holding. Not only economically, but also socially he has a high position. But there is a greater number of those who have less sufficient land. So, there are not large landowners in the sample household.



**Table 8**  
**Distribution of Sample Households by Land Distribution**

S.N.	Land	Number	Percentage
1	1-5 (Kattha)	8	22.22
2	6-10 (Kattha)	10	27.77
3	11-19 (Kattha)	6	16.66
4	1-2 (Bigha)	7	19.44
5	2 above	5	13.88
	Total	36	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2009.

As mentioned in table 8, about 22% of the sample households has less than 5 kattha. About 28% of the sample households have the land of 6 to 10 kattha. About 17% of sample households have 11 to 19 Katha. Likewise, 19.14% of the households have 1 to 2 Bigha land and about 14% of the households have above 2 Bigha land in the study area.

### **Cropping Pattern**

Agriculture is the subsistence economy of Nepal, characterized by low productivity. Likewise, agriculture is the main occupation of the study area. The cropping pattern of sample households of the study area is given below.

**Table 9**  
**Cropping Pattern of Sample Households**

S.N.	Months	Crops
1	Ashad-Kartik	Paddy (rice)
2	Mangsir-Chaitra	Wheat
3	Ashad-Bhadra	Maize
4	Ashoj-Magh	Mustard

Source: Field Survey, 2009.

The principle crop grown here is paddy. Wheat maize and mustard are also grown here. Besides, various vegetables are also grown here. Land in Nepal is divided by two types. Khet and Bari. But in the Dhadhawar village Bari is very less. There is irrigation facilities in khet, where mostly they grown paddy, maize, wheat etc.

From the above table, agricultural works starts from the month Ashad until Mangsir in winter. Paddy is firstly cultivated in Ashad and harvested in Kartik. Wheat cultivated in Magnsir and harvested in Chaitra. Likewise maize is cultivated in Ashad and harvested in Bhadra lastly mustard cultivated in Ashoj and harvested in Magh.

#### **4.9 Sufficiency of Food Production**

The main economic source of Tharu in the Dhadhawar village was also found as agriculture as Nepal's economy as a whole has dominance of agriculture. Over 80% of people work in the agricultural field. But about 50% of the people do not have sufficient food from agricultural production. When the fooding sufficies, then men can play attention for children's education and health etc. But when their hard work does not suffix fooding, their attention is only for fooding and they can not pay attention for education and health. And this condition not only troubles the family but also notion and affects national economy, social, cultural and political aspects. From the field study area, the condition of food sufficiency of the sample households was as follows:

**Table 10**  
**Distribution of Sample Households by Sufficiency of**  
**Food Production**

S.N.	Months	Number	Percentage
1	1-3	4	11.11
2	3-6	5	13.88
3	6-9	12	33.33
4	9-12	9	25.00
5	12 above	6	16.66
	Total	36	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2009.

From the table 10, we see that about 17% of the sample households they have enough food products having their own land. Likewise, 25% of the households have enough food products but they have no sufficient land. So, they work other landlord's land. Likewise, rest of the households they have very less land so, they worked landlord's land and some young males goes to India as a seasonal labour and most of the member both male and females goes to their landlord's house as daily wage labour.

The distribution of land is unequal. Most of Tharus have either little land. But there are some Tharus who have more then 2 Bigha of land. Those who have little or no land, either they do work as Adhiya (Battaiya) system, in which the product is shared equally between the tenant and the landlord.

## **4.10 Decision Making Role of Women**

In this chapter, it has been tried to find out the role of women in decision making at household level. To find out the role of decision making of women, this chapter is divided into three parts. In the first part, I have tried to deal with women's activities which has been studied in gender segregated method to find out women's participation in household activities, family affairs, farm management and social cultural activities. In the second part, the decision making role of women has been studied in the household activities, family affairs, farm management and socio-cultural activities through the means of gender segregated method. In the third part, I have tried to find about what are the affecting factors to make decision at household level activities.

### **4.10.1 Household Activities**

In Nepalese society, men's work and women's work are socially and culturally differentiated. Almost all the household works are women's work. This is also because men go to work outside home. In this section, an attempt has been made to see the participation of men and women in different activities at household level.

#### **4.10.1.1 Women's Participation in Household Activities**

By tradition, women in Nepal engage heavily in household activities which includes cooking, child caring, cleaning, washing cloths, fetching water and collecting firewood. Which was no different among Tharu women Generally, man do not pay attention in these household activities. Men's work is in the activities that need physical strength.

Distribution of sample households even the major gender disaggregated household activities are given in the following table.

**Table 11**  
**Women's Participation in Household Activities**

Household Activities	Dominant Participation			Total
	Women	Men	Both	
Food preparation	21 (58.33)	2 (5.55)	13 (36.11)	36 (100)
Fetching water	19 (52.77)	2 (5.55)	15 (41.66)	36 (100)
Collecting firewood	9 (25)	7 (19.44)	20 (55.55)	36 (100)
Child care	25 (69.44)	-	11 (30.55)	36 (100)

Note: figures in parenthesis show percentage distribution.

As revealed by table 11, in about 58 percent sample households food preparation was found predominantly women's work. Likewise, about 36 percent of the sample households food preparation was found both men and women. In the remaining 5.55 percent of households, the housewives were not at home and children were small, so food preparation was found by men members.

The above table shows that about 53% of the sample households fetching water was predominantly done by women. Water fetching was found as the job of men in less than 5 percent households and in the remaining 41.66 percent households the job was performed by both men and women. It was also found that in those household, where there were no women and children were too small to take the responsibility men used to fetch water. But the large fetching water has been conceived as the job of women in study area.

As shown by the table, about 55.55 percent of the sample households the work of collecting fire wood was found done by both man and women. In the 25 percent of the household, the work was done by females and the work was done by men only 19.44 percent. In other words, in the work of fetching fuel-wood, men's participation was almost equal. The reason of men's dominant participation in fetching fuel-wood, men's participation was almost equal. The reason of men's dominant participation in fetching, fuel-wood was the long distance between the house and jungle where fire wood could be found and women's being busy in households work.

From the same table it has become clear that, in about 69.44 percent household, the work of child care was done by women and in about 30.55 percent households the work was done by both men and women together. There was not even a single households in which men alone took up this job.

#### **4.10.1.2 Women's Participation in Family Affairs**

Some of the activities in the household are related with performing the role expectation of the family rather than the households itself. Such activities as schooling of children, treatment of family members in case of sick, family planning etc. To find out the level of women's participation in family affairs, it would be quite revealing to see the gender disaggregated role expectations in these activities. In the distribution of the sample households the major gender specific family affairs are presented in table 12.

**Table 12**  
**Major Family Activities**

Activities	Participation			Total
	Women	Men	Both	
Family planning	7 (38.88)	11 (61.11)	-	18 (100)
Children education	6 (16.66)	11 (30.55)	19 (52.77)	36 (100)
Health concern	10 (27.77)	9 (25)	17 (47.22)	36 (100)

Note: figures in parenthesis show percentage distribution.

The above table shows that, out of 36 sample household 18 couples who had adopted family planning. Among them 39 percent of sample household, there was women's participation in family planning and 61 percent household there was men's participation in family planning. Lastly, rest of the sample households, they had not adapted family planning, they did not know about family planning.

More than 50 percent of the cases, activities related in the children education was found jointly by both men and women. In the remaining 47.21 percent cases the activities were taken up either by men alone or by women alone.

The above table shows that 47.22 percent of the sample household, seeking treatment was dominantly done by both men and women discussing with each other. Likewise 28 percent of the households seeking treatment was done by women and 25 percent of the household's seeking treatment was done by men.

### 4.10.1.3 Women's Participation in Farm Management

The people of the field area participated and were found interested in agriculture; because the main occupation of them is agriculture. Women pay special attention for managing form. But men also pay attention for the work. A lot of human resources is needed for agricultural work, i.e. ploughing and digging, use of fertilizer, sowing, harvesting and proper care an attention in proper times. In present study, it has been tried to see gender disaggregated activities in farm management. The farm management activities here include planting, seed selection, use of fertilizer and harvesting.

**Table 13**  
**Farm Management**

Activities	Dominant Participation			Total household
	Women	Men	Both	
Planting	5 (13.88)	9 (25)	22 (61.11)	36 (100)
Seed selection	11 (30.55)	8 (22.22)	17 (47.22)	36 (100)
Use of compost	5 (13.88)	13 (36.11)	18 (50.00)	36 (100)
Harvesting	6 (16.66)	7 (19.44)	23 (63.88)	36 (100)

Note: figures in parenthesis show percentage distribution.

Table 13 above shows that, 61.11 percent of total sample households planting was predominantly done by both men and women. Planting of crops was found as the job of men in 25 percent of households. And in the remaining 14 percent households the job was performed by women. Men's alone participation in planting job because these was absence of female members and some were old in the family,



and participation of women alone because some of their husband had gone to India and some were old in family.

In more than 45 percent of the sample households, seed selection was done by both men and women discussing with each other. In the remaining 30.55 percent of households the job was done by women and 22.22 percent of household the job was performed by men. The reason for the greater participation of women then men in seed selection was found that women were more experienced then men in seed selection.

About 50 percent sample households, use of fertilizer was found the work of both men and women. In the remaining 36 percent sample households the work was dominantly performed by men and 14 percent households by women.

As revealed by the table, in 64 percent of the sample households, the work of harvesting was done by both men and women. But men's alone participation was found in 19 percent of sample households and the women's participation was found in 17 percent of the sample households.

Therefore going observations make clear that in planting, seed selection, harvesting and use of fertilizer, both men and women's were found involved. The participation of Tharu women in above activities is higher than the other caste group in the study area.

#### **4.10.1.4 Women's Participation in Socio-Cultural Practices**

It is well known that Tharus are very rich in culture. They have different types of customs and ritual practices. Their rituals and practices are very expensive. But now they are realizing the extravagance of their

culture and customs that they want to modify slowly without losing the core value of their culture. They think, poverty, impact of modernization etc. are the affecting factors to losing their ceremonial functions.

It is obviously seen that Tharus have been greatly influenced by Hindu culture and rituals. Tharu people do not celebrate birth as marriage and death because they do not give important attention to birth as other groups of people give. But children are highly desired by Tharus with very less discrimination between boy child and girl child to the comparison of upper Hindu caste. Tharus take children as their helping hands in agricultural works. So, still the birth rate is higher in Tharu communities.

In the naming ceremony, there is no particular time and rule for giving name to a new born child. They still practice of giving name on the basis of event, festival, days and places etc. Such as in the marriage ceremony, they have arranged marriage system mostly in the Dhadhawar village which is socially accepted. But some of the old families still practiced on exchange marriage. However, comparatively love and arrange marriage system is increasing in Tharu community.

Death is also considered as one of the major event in Tharu society. The rituals of death differ from their place of habitations. In the last moment of ill person, they give gold water. They bring the dead body outside i.e. in front of courtyard through east door. They take the dead body on the same day if not possible they do on the next day. The dead body is always kept making the head to north and legs to south.

Socio-cultural activities are the main base for social recognition. Each caste/ethnic group has their own tradition, norms values and morals. The member of a caste/ethnic group has own identity flourished by the

respective culture. The Tharus under study have their own social, cultural practices, while celebrating feasts and festivals, marriage, birth, death rituals and religious ceremonies.

The given table shows the participation of men and women in the activities like festival celebrating religious ceremony etc.

**Table 14**

**Women's Participation in Festival and Religious Ceremony**

Activities	Participation			Total
	Women	Men	Both	
Festival celebrating	6 (16.66)	5 (13.88)	25 (69.44)	36 (100)
Religious ceremony	6 (16.66)	8 (22.22)	22 (61.11)	36 (100)
Weeding ceremony	5 (13.88)	8 (22.22)	23 (63.88)	36 (100)

Note: figures in parenthesis show percentage distribution.

As revealed by table 14, in about 69 percent sample households festival celebrating was found by both men and women together. In the remaining 17 percent sample household the work was predominantly performed by women and 14 percent of the sample household the work was performed by men only. The participation of women alone in festival celebrating was because of the absence of men and women in their family.

As shown from the table 14, about 61 percent of the sample household's religious ceremony was found by both men and women. Likewise, 22 percent of sample households religious ceremony was performed by men only and 17 percent of household's religious ceremony

was performed by women. The main reason of women's participation was due to the absence of men and the men in their family.

The table also shows that, in about 64 percent household the work of wedding ceremony was done by both men and women together. In about 22 percent households the work of wedding ceremony was done by men and 14 percent of households wedding ceremony was done by women.

#### **4.10.2 Role of Women in Decision Making**

By and large involvement of women in decision making at household's activities has remained low as compared to that of men. However, women's involvement in decision making is not the same for all cultural group. The review of existing literature clearly indicates that role of women in decision making differs with their caste/ethnicity.

The role of decision making of women is less in caste group than in ethnic groups. In view of this, an attempt has been made to look decision making role of women in the Tharu community. The decision making role has been analyzed in terms of the decision making in household management, family affairs, farm management, socio-cultural practices and the affecting factors to make decision in above activities.

##### **4.10.2.1 Decision Making in Household Management**

In this sphere, women's role in households money keeping and marketing are obvious. Women generally do not have access to markets except within their village itself. In Dhadhwar village like other villages household head does the decision-making. In patriarchal system senior

most male or the household head keeps money and controls household and agriculture. This being the household head, landholding is also in control of the head of the family. As he has total control over the household.

The families where the male member has gone to other places, women herself is acknowledge acting head of the household and thus the decision maker. After returning to the home male takes charge as a household head. In the patriarchal system like Nepal, husband has been functioning as a head of the household. After the absence of father, the elder son does the decision making.

The finding of the study shows that, the total sample household of the study area, Tharu women were heavily participate in local market activities and are also more involved in the market economy as agricultural labours, so they have more access in socio-economic status then the other high caste groups (Acharya and Bennet, 1983).

This household management part deals with the purchases of domestic goods, borrowing, lending money, sale of agricultural product etc.

**Table 15**  
**Decision Making Role of Women in Sample Household Management**

Activities	Participation			Total
	Women	Men	Both	
Purchase	6 (26.08)	7 (30.43)	10 (43.47)	23 (100)
Borrowing	4 (20.00)	7 (35.00)	9 (45)	20 (100)
Lending	2 (15.38)	5 (38.46)	6 (46.15)	13 (100)
Sale of Agricultural product	3 (23.07)	3 (23.07)	7 (53.84)	13 (100)

Note: figures in parenthesis show percentage distribution.

As shown in the table 15, 43 percent of the sample household decision makers on purchasing were both men and women. Remaining 30 percent of the sample households the work of decision making was done by men and the rest of the 26 percent of the households were done by women.

In the case of borrowing, 45 percent of the sample household the work of decision making was done by both men and women jointly. 35 percent of the household the decision makers were men and 20 percent of the household the decision makers were women. From the above table men have more power in decision making in borrowing.

About lending decision, men have more power. There were 13 households only who did lending. About this 45 percent decision were dominantly made by both men and women. Somewhere, the single heads were there as a lending decision maker because there was absence of the next counter parts.

As revealed by the table, the decision making about the sale of agri-product were made mutually. In remaining 23 percent sample households the decision making was done by women and in equal cases the decision making was done by men.

#### **4.10.2.2 Decision Making in Family Affairs**

In family affairs activities like seeking treatment schooling for children and use of family planning measures, the role of men and women differs in each aspect. In this study the decision making role of men and women is seen in the study area.

**Table 16**  
**Decision Making Role in Family Affairs Activities**

Activities	Decision maker			Total
	Women	Men	Both	
Seeking treatment	7 (19.44)	6 (16.66)	23 (63.88)	36 (100)
Schooling of children	8 (25.80)	7 (22.58)	16 (51.61)	31 (100)
Use of family planning	2 (11.11)	2 (11.11)	14 (77.77)	18 (100)

Note: figures in parenthesis show percentage distribution.

As shown in the table 16, about 64 percent of sample households, the decision making about seeking treatment was done by both men and women together. In the remaining, 16 percent was done by mean and 19.44 percent was done by women. In this case the decision was generally made mutually. Single head's decision was made when there was absence of the others.

As revealed by the some table, 52 percent of the sample household, the decision making about children's education was done by both men and women. Likewise, 23 percent of the sample household the decision making was done by men and the rest of the 25 percent of the household, the decision making was done by women.

As shown by the same table, it is clear that in 78 percent sample household use of family planning, the decision making role was done by both men and women together. In the remaining 22 percent of sample households the decision was made either by men or women equally. So, it is clear that women's decision making role in family planning was equal to men in the study area.

#### **4.10.2.3 Decision Making in Farm Management**

The involvement of women in Nepal is often invisible or they have low visibility in census figures and employment statistics. Because their work is unpaid and takes place within traditional and concentrated family framework. It is usually classified as family labours because society believed that women should be limited within the household work because physically they are weak and economically they are not active.

The households income, its image of the female sex, the individual women's age, the distance of home, her age at marriage, her own income and her participation in subsistence, domestic and out village market activities, together account for 32 percent of the variation in female input into farm management decision. Participation in domestic activities also increase women's input in farm management (Acharya and Bennett, 1982). Parbatiya women also displayed a fairly strong role in planning decisions. Which they made on their own in 57 percent of the cases while male did so in only 40 percent. But on the contrary to these findings, the Baragaule and Maithali society showed a tendency towards male prominence in this area of decision making, while the Tamang and Tharu men and women appeared to share decision fairly and equally (Bennet et al., 1981).

In the farm management section, according to gender disaggregated decision making role in planting, seed selection, use of fertilizer, harvesting etc. have been mentioned in Table 17.



**Table 17**  
**Decision Making Role in Farm Management**

Activities	Decision Makers			Total
	Women	Men	Both	
Planting	6 (16.66)	7 (19.44)	23 (63.88)	36 (100)
Seed selection	10 (27.77)	8 (22.22)	18 (50.00)	36 (100)
Use of fertilizer	6 (16.66)	9 (25)	21 (58.33)	36 (100)
Harvesting	6 (16.66)	7 (19.44)	23 (63.88)	36 (100)

Note: figures in parenthesis show percentage distribution.

The above table shows that 64% household decision making was done by both men and women together regarding the planting. Remaining 19 percent decided by women for same work. Actually there was almost equal role in decision making process in planting.

By the same table it is clear that 50 percent decision making over seed selection were done by both men and women. 28 percent of the decision was done by women and the rest of the 22 percent decision was done by men.

From the some tale, in nearly about 58 percent of the sample households, the decision using fertilizer was made by both men and women. In about 25 percent was made by men and 17 percent households the decision by women.

As shown by the table 17, it is seen that in 64 percent of sample households, the decision makers about harvesting were both men and women together. In the remaining 19 percent the decision makers were men and 17 percent households the decision was done by women.

Hence from the table, it is clearly seen that in seed selection the decision making role of women is higher and in the other cases like use of fertilizer, the decision making role of men is higher than women. And the rest of the above cases the role over decision making was almost equal.

#### **4.10.2.4 Decision Making in Socio-cultural Practices**

Tharus are rich in culture and customs. They have their own language and rituals practices. They usually used to give less significance to child birth compared to marriage and death rituals. They have been greatly influenced by Hindu culture and ritual so, they have been modified their rituals due to the poverty and modernization i.e. they invite Brahmin priest in name giving ceremony and use them for purification also.

In the naming ceremony, Tharus have their own ritual. They still practice of giving name on the basis of days, event, festival, place etc. which is differ than the upper Hindu caste groups. In the marriage ceremony, exchange marriage system was popular in the Tharu community. But now a days purposed and love marriage system is increasing in the Tharu community of Dhadhawar village. Likewise, death ritual is the major event of Tharus which is differ according to the place of habitations. According to their ritual, the dead body is kept making it north south direction. The grave is also dug making it north south direction. Mustard and cotton are also put inside the grave and the people thinking the dead person make use of those things in the next life of the other world.

**Table 18**  
**Decision Making Role in Socio-Cultural Practices**

Socio-cultural practices	Decision makers			Total households
	Women	Men	Both	
Girls participation in festivals	8 (22.22)	7 (19.44)	21 (58.33)	36 (100)
Girls participation in religious ceremony	8 (22.22)	9 (25)	19 (52.77)	36 (100)
Arrangement/ Management in religious ceremony	9 (25)	9 (25)	18 (50)	36 (100)

Note: figures in parenthesis show percentage distribution.

As revealed by the table 18, in 58 percent of the sample households, the decision makers about girls participation in festivals were both men and women together. In the remaining 22.22 percent households the decision was done by women and 19.44 percent the decision was of men. Here single household head's decision was when in absence of the next where we cannot see gender discrimination.

From the same table, in about 53 percent sample households, the decision about girls participation in religious ceremony were taken by both men and women together. In the remaining, about 25 percent of the decision was done by men and the rest of the 22.22 percent the decision was done by women.

As shown by the table, in 50 percent of the sample households the decision making over arrangement/management in religious ceremony

was done by both man and women together. In the remaining 50 percent of the decision was made by men and women mutually.

The distribution presented in Table 18 makes it clear that both men and women make decision almost equally in the case of socio-cultural practices.

#### **4.10.3 Factors Affecting Women in Decision Making Process**

This chapter attempts to identify and examine the factors that affect women participation in the decision making process. In the previous chapter decision making process and women's fallback position and participation were examined. It is found that women who were largely confined to domestic and subsistence production played fewer roles in major household decision. Women, those who participate actively in the market and there are various factors that affects women in the decision making process. Factors which affect participation have been broadly grouped into two categories: 1. Household factors 2. Social factors, household factors deals about male dominated position, exploitative nature of men and relation in the household etc. Likewise, social factors consists like prevalent socio-cultural beliefs, concept of pure and impure, access over resources, education etc.

##### **4.10.3.1 Household Factors**

Here in Dhadhawar village household head does the decision-making. In patriarchal system senior most male or the household lead controls household and agriculture. Thus, being the household head, land holding is also in control of the head of the family. But in some families where men has gone to other places, women herself in acknowledge

acting head of the household as a decision maker. After returning to the home husband takes charge as a household head. In families where husband is present as the functioning head of the household, he often initiates the decision making process. In the joint family household head is the father of the house and if he has passed away, the elder son does the decision making. Father's place is taken over by his elder son of the household in controlling as a household head. Likewise in nuclear family, the husband does the decision making as a household head. In this village out of 36 sample households, most of the household head were men but where the husband had absence in his home and women who lost her husband in such a family only women were the head of households.

Female from nuclear families participates in decision making process. She has to look after most of the farm, household and marketing activities. Females from the nuclear family said that they are free to put their views and act accordingly to their will. They do sell milk, labor works and they use the income for buying household consumption for their family. So we can say that, in the nuclear family the women's decision making power is high then to the comparison of joint family.

According to the relation of the members; father, who is the household head, for the decision making process, firstly consulted with the son and wife then only daughter-in-laws are informed later in time of final meeting. So, household head firstly prefers to inform his son about his plans and then his wife is informed about his plan. In the decision making process females are included if necessary. Male member of the household get more preference in the participation in the decision making process.

#### **4.10.3.2 Social Factors**

Socio-cultural beliefs influence the participation in decision-making process. There are certain tasks that are traditionally termed as the male works. In research areas, decision making was also thought to be one of those male dominated areas. Though females were involves in decision making, many females seem to hold the attitude that males had more knowledge. The example of ploughing agricultural land, there is traditional knowledge about what women should and should not to do. The local people explained that the females do not use plough. Men used plough from before: forefathers have made this rule that only the males should use it.

In most traditional societies girls are kept largely within the confines of the household and family where they are protected and taught to accept the decisions that other parents, teachers, brothers make on their behalf. But the things have changed now but still mothers make the daughters do the household work agricultural work and boys go to school and roam around.

Female are not decision makers because firstly she is not a household lead; the head usually does the decision making. Secondly, she is not male of the household the male is the household head. Thirdly, women seldom hold ownership and tenure rights to land. While women contribute most of the labour for agriculture, they rarely have formal control of land or ownership. After the death of the household head the control on decision making passes on to the eldest son of the family according to the patriarchal practice. Even in the female headed household, in the decision making process, she ask for the help from

other male relatives and friends to take decision. If she has her grown up sons then the son do all the decision making for the household.

Women's involvement in market activities give them much exposure and greater power within the household in terms of their input in all aspects of household decision making. At the same time, confining women's work to the domestic and subsistence sectors reduces their power vis-a-v-s men in the household. A greater economic role definitely improves their status within the family. In the study area women goes to involved market activities, they used to go out of their home for selling labour, they involve women's group and informal education center. So, to the comparison of other high caste women, Tharu women are more freer and they have more power in the decision making process. But most of them involved to domestic and subsistence production which played a much less role in major household activities.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

In this chapter, the summary of the finding generated from the data analysis and interpretation has included. The findings regarding the Tharu women's household activities their decision making role over these activities and the affective of factors to make decision in Tharu community of selected 36 households have also been listed.

A few pragmatic recommendation's have also been included with the intent of raising women's status in terms of their decision making power in the present study area. These suggestions I hope, would initiate policy makers and local development practitioners to design appropriate and effective policies and programs regarding the upliftment of women and their status within the households.

#### **5.1 Summary**

Women are involved in most activities and decision making related household and other activities. As women do not have the land and lack of other source of income. They are depended upon their husbands . Thus when it comes to having access to land resources the women have the accessibility. However, when it comes to control of benefits of the resources the males still exercise the control because our society is male dominated society where major decisions are taken by the male household head.

The analysis focuses upon the status of women in terms o their households decision making power in comparison to their male counterparts.



Firstly, the objective of the study was to explore and describe the household activities in the Tharu community of Dhadhawar village. Secondly, Tharu women's participation and decision making role at household levels i.e. household management, family affairs, farm management and socio-cultural practices. Thirdly, to explore the affecting factors of women in decision making process at household level.

The study is based on exploratory and descriptive research design. Both primary and secondary data were used for this study. Primary data have been collected from the field. Data collection instruments used while collecting the data were observation, interview, focus group discussion, questionnaire etc. Likewise, secondary data are gathered from various resources i.e. from CBS record, different published and unpublished articles, journals and books.

The total population was 1453 including 741 (50.99%) men and 712 (49%) women of the total household of ward no. 1 of Dhadhawar VDC. In the study area, there were altogether 177 households including 138 (77.96%) Tharus and 39 (22%) non-Tharu. For this study, 36 sample households were selected which were all Tharus.

The marital status of the sample respondents were 11.11% unmarried, 86.11% married and 2.77% widow. Except an unmarried one, there all were major responsible persons in their household. These unmarried girls were respondent because their parents were absent at the data collection time.

The educational status of the Tharu is still poor. Out of the total population, 68.66% are literate and 31.34% are illiterate. Within the ward Tharu women have not access in higher studies. This research revealed that among 36 respondents, 23 respondents are literate and rest of 13

respondents are illiterate. In the study area, there was not vast gap between male/female literacy rate.

In the study area two types of families, nuclear and joint are found. Among the 36 families nuclear family is found in 25 household and joint family is in 11 households.

Out of the total 36 households of the Tharu 15 households are found in sufficient food production and 21 households had no sufficient food to sustain themselves throughout the year.

Concerning the occupation check of the households, the main source of all the 36 households as agriculture. Business was the source of income for about 5.55 percent of sample households. The other source of income included labour, service etc. But the Kamaiya partha is declining now in the study area.

The Tharu women's accessibility in households activities is found higher in this village. Food preparation, fetching water, childcare are predominantly the job of women and the collecting firewood is considered as the job of both men and women.

In the major family affairs, the participation of both men and women is high in children's education and seeking treatment.

Participation in farm management, in seed selection process, women's participation was greater than men's and in the work of planting, use of fertilizer, and harvesting of crops, the participation of both men and women is high. So, women's participation in farm management is almost equal in comparison to male. Men's role seem to be more prominent in borrowing and lending money in comparison to women. Although the joint decision has taken the highest percentage.

For the decision of children's education, single decision is also countable 22.22% women and 19.44% for men. The mutual decision also 44.44%. As the analysis shows, women have more role in decision about seeking treatment. In this sphere also joint decision holds the highest percentage (63.88%). For the decision of family planning measures both husband and wife have found equal participation (5.55%). Mutual decision holds the highest percentage (38.88).

Women have a greater input in the decision making o the farm management. Tharu women's decision is powerful in planting, seed selection, use of fertilizer and harvesting to the comparison of other high caste women.

In the social and cultural practices Tharu women have more power. Both member of the household had equal decisions. In social and cultural ceremony, the analysis clearly indicates that they make decision discussing with each other.

The affecting factors that analyze the participation of females in the decision making process The factors that affect in participation of decision making have been broadly categorized into two groups, household and social factors. Yet, it needs to be kept in mind that these are not fixed categories but are interlinked. If the structure of the family is joint then others, the member of the household undertake the tasks. But if it is an nuclear family then the females have to take care of all the household, agricultural and as well as the male activities too.

In the study area, most of the Tharus have very less land. So, they have no sufficiency food to sustain whole year and they are working in other's land. thus, due to the high rate of poverty, their children can not attend school. So, they have no knowledge about their right. Thus, they

don not have more roles of the household and marketing level decision making to the comparison of male.

Social norms and values are the major affecting factors in the decision making process. The societal norms and values have defined actively as a male task. It shows that there is little or no economic independence and awareness of their rights. So that women may be able to experience it

The study points out that participation of females in the decision-making process actually meant their involvement in the process and their voices in the matter of decision making. The study shows that women from the nuclear family have more roles in decision making, then the women of joint family.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

As conclusion of the research it is clear that the Tharus respect women. Women's role is given a high priority in social, cultural, economic and religious activities. Exchange marriage system in the society is not in practice now a days, but arrange and love marriage system is increasing now in study area.

The role of women in household activities is comparatively high but men also play role in the activities. Women's role is higher than men's in cooking food, child care, fetching water because these works are still female stereotype works. The works men participate more in harvesting of crops, borrowing money etc. Hence, taking men and women as equal importance is the main characteristics of Tharu society but in society of Hindu culture men and women are not preferred equally. Equal opportunity of education to both son and daughter and mutual decision in

household activities are significant characteristics of the Tharu community.

### **5.3 Direction for the Further Research**

From this study we can say that the status of Tharu women is very high. Their power of decision making also is powerful. But there are many aspects to improve.

Education was found to play a key role in the decision making of women. So, literacy rate should be increased with special emphasis for the special education for female, like female adult literacy classes, informal education classes etc.

Women's role in farm management in Tharu community is significant. So, they should be made aware through training of adapting new agriculture technology such as new seed, new fertilizer etc.

Other income generating activities should also be introduced to the women. They can be economically secure and independent. This will help to uplift their standard of living.

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## Appendix Questionnaire

Name of the Respondent:

Address:

District:

Village:

### 1. Socio-economic characteristics

#### 1.1 Family Structure

S.N.	Relation with the household head	Age	Sex	Marital Status	Literacy status	Education	Occupation	Secondary
1								
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								
7								
8								

#### 1.2 How much land does your family own ?

(a) 0-5 Kattha [ ] (b) 6-10 Kattha [ ] (c) 11-19 Kattha [ ]

(d) 1-2 Bigha [ ] (e) More than 2 Bigha [ ]

#### 1.3 Food production in your land is sufficient for consumption for a whole year ?

(a) Yes [ ]

(b) No [ ]

#### 1.4 If, no from where you fulfill food deficit ?

(a) Service [ ] (b) Business [ ] (c) Wage earning [ ]

(d) Others [ ]

#### 1.5 Do you have electricity ?

(a) Yes [ ]

(b) No [ ]

## **2. Women's Participation and Decision Making in Households Management ?**

2.1 Who usually goes to the bazar to make purchase ?

(a) Male [ ] (b) Female [ ]

2.2 Have you given and taken any loan from others ?

(a) Yes [ ] (b) No [ ]

2.3 If yes, who decides to give or take the loan ?

(a) Men [ ] (b) Women [ ]

2.4 Are women involved in borrowing and lending money ?

(a) Yes [ ] (b) No [ ]

2.5 Who decides the households expenditure ?

(a) Men [ ] (b) Women [ ] (c) Both [ ]

## **3. Women's participation and decision making in family affairs activities**

3.1 Do you consult doctor if any members of your family suffer ?

(a) Yes [ ] (b) No [ ]

3.2 If yes, by whose decision ?

(a) Men [ ] (b) No [ ]

3.3 Have you heard about any family planning ?

(a) Yes [ ] (b) No [ ]

3.4 Do you use means of family planning ?

(a) Yes [ ] (b) No [ ]

- 3.5 If permanent who has adopted ?  
 (a) Husband [ ] (b) Wife [ ]
- 3.6 Who decided it ?  
 (a) Husband [ ] (b) Wife [ ]
- 3.7 Do you think it is important to go to school for girls/boys ?  
 (a) Yes [ ] (b) No [ ]
- 3.8 Who decide to go to school for boys and girls ?  
 (a) Men [ ] (b) Women [ ] (c) Both [ ]
- 4. Women's participation and decision making in farm management.**
- 4.1 What are the crops grown by households ?  
 .....
- 4.2 Who decide to grow these crops ?  
 (a) Men [ ] (b) Women [ ] (c) Both [ ]
- 4.3 Who decides seed selection ?  
 (a) Men [ ] (b) Women [ ] (c) Both [ ]
- 4.4 What kind of fertilizer do you use ?  
 (a) Compost [ ] (b) Chemical [ ] (c) Green fertilizer [ ]
- 4.5 Who decide to use fertilizer ?  
 (a) Men [ ] (b) Women [ ] (c) Both [ ] (d) [ ]
- 4.6 Who involve many time in the agriculture and production.  
 (a) Men [ ] (b) Women [ ] (c) Both [ ] (d) [ ]

**5. Women's participation and decision making in socio-cultural practices.**

5.1 Who take initiation for celebrating the social religious ceremony ?

(a) Men [ ] (b) Women [ ] (c) Both [ ]

5.2 Who decide to spend money for social and religious ceremony ?

(a) Men [ ] (b) Women [ ] (c) Both [ ]

5.3 At what age did you get married ?

(a) 10-15 [ ] (b) 16-20 [ ] (c) 21-25 [ ]

5.4 Who decides for marriage ?

(a) Father [ ] (b) Mother [ ] (c) Both [ ] (d) Boy himself [ ]  
(e) Girl herself [ ]

5.5 Did you give or take do dowry for marriage ?

(a) Yes [ ] (b) No [ ]

5.6 If yes, by whose decision ?

(a) Men [ ] (b) Women [ ] (c) Both [ ]

## Key Informants Questionnaire

1. What do you think about the property right for women ?

.....

2. What are the causes of women backwardness in your society ?

.....

3. What can be done for empowerment of women in society ?

.....

4. How can we developed ?

.....