

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The cooperative is a form of organization engaged in economic activities and carries out management functions such as planning organization, controlling and evaluating. The word “co-operative” is said to have been derived from the Latin word “cooperative” which means working together for some common purpose. People have different angle of vision about co-operatives, Dr. CR. Fay claims that cooperation is a forms voluntary organization for a joint organization of some work equal terms and with common objectives. This form of organization has been growing popularity in the sphere of economic activities, particularly among the economically weak members of the community who by definition can't protect their interest on and individual basis. Generally, speaking, co-operation means living, thinking, and working together. In its technical sense, it denotes special method of doing business. In its former sense corporation existent then the man himself, example are not wanting of 'Reflexive' and 'Instinctive' cooperation in the animal world. Formation of social groups are the outcome of reflexive cooperation, while the life of ants, bees, wasps, loons, etc. provide the best example of instinctive cooperation. The practice of principle of cooperation contributed to the development of human role. That other biological and social factor. An ILO Report define a cooperative society “as an association of the economically weak who voluntarily associating on the basis of equal rights and equal responsibility. Transfer to an undertaking on a several of their function. Corresponding to one or more of their economic needs, which are common to them all. But which each of them is unable fully to satisfy by his own individual efforts

to manage. Use such undertakings in mutual collaboration to their common material and moral advantage. Such association have been tried in one form or another in production, consumption and distribution, Co-operatives is business organization which is gained capitalized and managed by of and for its members patrons furnishing and/or making at cost goods and for service to patrons.

Cooperative is a form of economic as well as social organization based on certain values. Cooperative effort is ultimately the group instinct in man which enables him to live together, work together and help each other in times of stress. Cooperatives are voluntary oriented and self-help organization. They aim at meeting the human needs through collective action without any exploitation. It is the voluntary and democratic association of human beings, based on equality (of control and opportunity) and equity of distribution and mutuality for the promotion of common interests as procedures or consumers. A cooperative is generally viewed as a socio-economic organization that can fulfill both social and economic objectives of its members, and that has its member's interests truly at heart (Singh, 1999). It directly serves its members interests by meeting their needs but doesn't earn profit for itself as an independent economic unit at their cost (Krishnaswami 1978)

The very motto of cooperatives each for all and all for each signifies loyalty, trust faith and fellowship. Cooperative provide opportunity to weaker segment of the society by pooling their resources leading to collective and cooperative social action and thereby mitigate their problems and promote development (Tripathy 1998). A cooperative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntary to achieve their common social and social and cultural needs and aspirations through jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprises.

Nepal has a long standing history of informal community based cooperatives. Traditionally, these groups were based on Kinship, ethnic and religious bonds. Some of the major traditional informal cooperatives are as follows: Parma related to agriculture sector is a free labor exchange among the rural households of particular localities and thus wage savings. Gumba is related to cultural protection in Buddhism. Dharmabhakari literally means a religions strong of grains that is often use to protect social welfare activities and natural calamities. Guthi is an institution of immovable property set aside for religious purpose in the care of some persons without having any kind of alienable rights. Primarily, the Guthi came into existence as a step to provide endowments for upkeep of the temple and domestic observance and rites. In course of time, Guthi developed as an institution which tended to keep social groups and their individual members safe from process of disintegration by providing adequate economic sections against the same. In its original form, Guthis are communal temple and land tenure association, common among the ethnic Newars of Kathmandu valley.

However, in course of time, the concept of Guthi has also been further elaborated from literacy foundation i.e. Madan Puraskar Guthi to health institution i.e. Mrigendra Chikitsa Guthi to Social Services i.e. Nepal Charkha Pracharak Gandhi Smarrk Maha Guthi.

Nepal does not have a long history of modern cooperatives. The cooperative movement began only since the last five decades. It saw the formal cooperatives for the first time in 1953 through establishing the Cooperative Department.

Nepal is a developing country. It has about 51 percent female and about 49 percent male population in Nepal. The data itself sows that without the involvement of half people (women) in development, the development of country

will be lame.

It was not realized the difference between men and women in development process the difference between men and women in development process before 1970s. First of all, the analysis of Esther Boserup's research paper women's role in economic development from the concept of "Women in Development" was developed to involve women in social, political, economic empowerment activities. One strategy of women in development is to change social condition and position of women. Because of some weakness of women in Development the concept gender and development tool place in 1980. This concept defined biological and social difference between men and women.

After defining women, the process of bring forward in social, economic and political activities from background, is called empowerment. However, the cooperative programme adhering to the globally recognized cooperative principles and values started in the country only in 1956 when 13 credit cooperatives were established in the Chitwan Valley. The objectives of the cooperatives societies (registered under an Executive order of the Government, as there was no Cooperative Act at that time) was to provide agriculture credit to flood-stricken people resettled in the valley. Following the successful delivery of the agricultural credit by these cooperatives, the cooperatives societies Act was promulgated in 1959. After this, many legal and other reforms have been made to continue the cooperative movement in the country.

However, during the last five decades, the cooperative movement has experienced many difficulties. Prior to the 1990s, the government had used to set a target for registering cooperative societies: This usually restricted the public initiatives to promote cooperatives. Hence, the growth was almost negligible.

However, with new act and liberal environment, where government did not restrict cooperatives from being registered, cooperatives were free to promote them. Hence, a mushroom growth was recorded during the 1990s (Mali, 2005). There were 33 district cooperative unions by the year 1990, but there were no national and central federations. After 1992, the mushroom growth took place at all levels of cooperatives societies, ranging from grass root to secondary and central level. The government had celebrated “Cooperative Golden Jubilee Celebration Year 2000” with a slogan “Adapt Cooperative System and alleviate poverty and unemployment”.

The study area lies in the rural part of country having working field of few NGOs and a savings and credits’ cooperatives. Saving and credits cooperative has been started its programme. Since 2054 B.S in this V.D.C. now many CBOs are formed with aim to empower the women in many respects. This study has attempted to find out whether the women of that VDC are feeling difference in their former life style or not. Are they empowered or not in decision making through the activities of cooperatives and to find out the barriers and weakness faced to achieve its objectives.

Himalaya Saving and Credit Cooperative Limited (HSCCL) is located in Pokharbhinda VDC of Siraha District which is far from the capital and eastern part of Nepal. It lies about 3/4 kilometer south of National Highway of Siraha segment. One has to reach the working areas of this cooperative for about an hours from the highway by left-righting. The population of this VDC is about 3 to 4 thousands. Among them the female population have been high than the men. The major castes groups are Tharu, Yadav, Danuware, Kewat, Kurmi, Chamar, Mushahar, Teli, Sudi, etc. They are mostly small farmers. Agriculture is the major occupation.

Paddy, wheat are the principal cereal crops, whereas potato, onion, dalhan, telhan crops milk production through livestock is another sources of income of he people of this VDC.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

More than half of the total population of Nepal are women without their contribution national development can not be uplifted. The contribution of he women in households and agriculture is more than men. But their contribution is not accounted in the economy. Their participation on decision making is very low. Women's role in socio-economic development has not been properly recognized. In our country, women are as the traditional procedures and manager of the domestic and subsistence sector.

Nowadays, the issue of women empowerment is being like the bread and butter for some institutions. Different strategies have been taken for past few years regarding the empowerment of poor including the women but programme and strategies assessment of such institutional initiatives have been lacked. Women risks were dealt with differently depending on a person's age, marital status, income level, and geographic location (i.e. proximity to medical facilities). Ex post, women were borrowing money from the village lender, selling assets or borrowing from the cooperatives and informal savings groups. Ex ante, women were saving money as a means of risk preparation and investing in their homes. Children's education as well as purchasing productive assets.

According to the word Bank record, Nepal is a poor country in the world's economic panorama. It has been extremely necessary that the poverty and underdevelopment of the nation be attacked from all possible directions. Cooperative movement is one such a measure to ease, and lower the blows of poverty and underdevelopment to the country and its people (member). The cooperatives are therefore, established and managed to solve the problems of

distribution of goods of daily necessity that of agriculture inputs of facilitate improved farming system and exploitation of the intermediaries to mass people. Moreover, the cooperative can definitely help the farmers to get fair prices to their farm products. Thus, the problem of agricultural production, distribution of goods and services of daily necessity to each and every concern of the country's marketing the agricultural products, loan disbursement to the member in need, etc. can be solve through the cooperatives. But unfortunately, these important institutions initiated with such high expectation and objectives are not simply working satisfactory. Most of them are not in a position to render goods and services to the people. Many of them are under the unbearable and almost inescapable loads of bank loans and are always looking for the nominal grants from the government. Instead of being on aid to the very uneasy economic situation of this poor country by helping the poverty-stricken people in different ways according to the universal principles of the cooperative movement. Most of the cooperatives are still unable to render their services to their government and misleading directions, unnecessary pressure from the politicians inactive implemented factors of cooperative Act 1992, hence with in the frame of this pure view the government launched the programme of cooperative movement to improve this sector in the country since 4.5 decade. But very often complains and grievances of the farmers are heard against the service performed by cooperative organization.

The role of the central level and apex level cooperative organization is to tackle with various problems faced by its primaries of different sectors i.e. Multipurpose, Dairy, Consumer, Savings and Credits etc. but the cooperative societies are not only in Nepal but in the SAARC region too. Cooperatives development trend seems to be unsatisfactory. Women's share in total population

is greater than male. But women are very back in cooperative field. Gender inequality has been appeared as a big social problem. A large number of cooperatives have emerged with government, non-government and donor initiatives. Cooperative are so intimately concerned with underdeveloped country like Nepal that improvement in livelihood can become a fundamental strategy for poverty alleviation and empower the people. The programmes of microfinance through the cooperatives have been materialize in different modalities in different regions and parts of the country. So a regular review and evaluation of the programme is necessary to choose and formulate new programmes that bring positive change in lives and life style of the targeted people. On the other hand, we have come to the point that Nepali agricultural system is largely primitive and traditional. To eliminate the pervasive challenge of poverty, we need transformation of surplus labours of agriculture into entrepreneurs and system of agriculture need to be industrialized to rise per capita income and accelerate economic growth.

Despite this, the majority of women are still left out of institutional microfinance services. Such programmes have only limited impact in terms of increasing the out reach of co-operatives and microfinance to the women. Rural women living in mountains, hills and interior areas of the Terai have no access to institutional micro-finance services. More than 80 percent of the total poor families still depend upon informal sources to meet their credit need or have no access to any source of credit at all.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The overall objectives of this study is to assess the present role of savings and credits cooperatives in Rural Women Empowerment.

The specific objectives are:

- i. To find out the socio-economic status of Rural Women.
- ii. To analyze the savings and credits activities of Rural Women.
- iii. Prospects and challenges of savings and credits cooperatives for the empowerment of Rural Women
- iv. To make relevant recommendation to Policy Maker.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Given the purpose for which the study was conducted, the study may be considered as a references guide as it described the financial and non-financial services and activities that the selected SCC had implemented and pointed out areas for improvement that this SCC and promoting agencies may address to build the farmer's capability and capacity in meeting its members' needs. The findings of he study or significant only in so far as they provide the SCC and promoting agencies with the ideas on what types of developmental interventions women-only SCCs need to build their capacity as provides of financial and non-financial services. Thus, this study serves as a reference point for both promotes and the SCC as the latter move to become stronger and more sustainable community-based organizations.

Knowing the similarities as well as differences between before the cooperative and after the cooperative in this study would guide women-only SCCs and promotes in knowing their unique characteristics and help them in determining what their role could or ought to be in enhancing the co-operatives' self-reliance and effectiveness in meeting the co-operative members' practical needs and strategic interests. This study could also add to the literature on the similarities and differences between the preset daily life and past life rural woman in the context of

Nepal.

About 85 percent of the total population in Nepal live in rural areas and subsistence agriculture is the major occupation. It is associated with low production income, low savings, low economic growth etc. Geographically most of the area consist of Hilly and Terai regions. There are highly population density in Terai regions. Various programmes intended to reduce deep rooted poverty and livelihood, empowerment in the targeted group/areas of the country. One of them is savings and credits cooperatives. Operationally, it is focused on women specially in rural areas.

1.5 Limitation of the Study

Each and every study has it's own limitation likewise. This study too is no exception. This study is confirmed with role of savings and credits cooperative in rural women's empowerment of Pokharbhinda VDC in Siraha district. However, it is supposed that this study proved to be representative. This study is limited only Pokharbhinda VDC.

The chief limitations of the study are given below

- 1** This study has covered only Pokharbhinda VDC and will not applicable to all the VCD of Nepal.
- 2** The analysis of this study has based on the primary data collected from the household of he study area and secondary information received from District Development Committee Siraha and from various sources and centre for Micro-Finance, Bhatbhateni, Kathmandu (CMF, Nepal).
- 3** This study covers 50 respondents (15% of total members) of the Himalaya Saving and Credit Cooperative Limited members of different cast and ethnic group. Key informant interview has taken with cooperative's members and

social women workers of the study area.

- 4 The non-members taken as control group were also found to be members of other cooperatives and/or I/NGO-promoted micro-finance-programmes. It was difficult to find those non-members who were not-members of other cooperatives.

1.6 Organization of the Study

This study has been divided into seven chapters. First chapter is introduction, back ground of the study, statement of the problem, objective of the study, significance of the study, limitation of the study and organization of the study has been include in this chapter. Second chapter is literature review. Third chapter leads with methodology which include nature and sources, rational for selection, research design, sampling procedure, techniques and tools of data collection.

Fourth chapter discuss the overall setting of study area. It consists introduction to Pokharbhinda VDC. Fifth chapter presents the members and their needs of the study area. Sixth chapter describes about cooperative and rural women empowerment. Last but not the list, seventh chapter provides summary, conclusion and recommendation. This chapter followed by references, and annex.

CHAPTER-TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

When we talk about savings, credits or microfinance, the credit goes out the Nobel Peace Prize winner Prof. Mohammed Yunus of Bangladesh. He was the first person who developed the concept and applied it. An economist by profession, he established saving and credits bank in Bangladesh that come to known as Grameen Bank. The Bank was established in the Jobra village of Bangladesh in 1976 as a result of action research project on Chittagong University. The project later became a pilot project and covered throughout an entire district. This was undertaken with the financial support of the Central Bank of Bangladesh. In 1983, an independent financial institution, Grameen Bank was established under a special law passed for its creation. It is owned by the poor borrowers of the bank who are mostly women. It works exclusively them. At present, 94% of the total equity of the bank is owned by the borrower of Grameen Bank and remaining 6 percent by the government of Bangladesh.

Saving services allow servers to store excess liquidity for future use and to obtain returns their investment. Credit services enable the use of anticipated income for current investment or consumptions. Overall cooperatives services can help low income women, reduce risk, improve management, increase empowerment, raise productivity, obtain higher returns on investments, increase their incomes and improve the quality of their lives and those of their dependent. Lack of saving and capital make it difficult for many poor rural women to become self employed and to undertake productive employment generating activities. Providing credit seems to be a way to generating self employment opportunities for the poor women.

Experience and studies have shown that the provision of financial services is

not sufficient in meeting the needs of the disadvantaged and the poor. The needs of this particular sector in society or basic yet to diverse that opportunities to improve their condition must be varied and multifaceted. This fact is even more pronounced when clients and poor women.

Thus, even if its main role is that of a financial intermediary, a micro finance institution (MFI) has to provide not just financial services but non- financial services as well. This situation is very true for a poor country like Nepal.

The centre for micro finance (CMF) in Nepal had commissioned a number of studies in the past for purposes of determining how best to use micro-finance as a mechanism to empower poor rural women. One of such studies investigated women's control over savings and loans (Selim, G. and Bhadra, C. Dr. 1999) while another examined the role of savings in women's empowerment (Thomas, L 2000). The former study concluded women have control over savings than over loans. The study further pointed out various factors that mitigate women's control over loans. These factors are the women's civil status, their ethnicity, and the actual use of loan among others. This study proved that credit loan is not enough to bring about women's empowerment. The latter study concluded that "women do benefit from participation in mixed- sex SCCs but in a limited way..... presently, mixed-sex. SCCs are not vehicles for women's empowerment because their access and participation as members and in leadership is constrained by their marginal role in decision making and by barriers perpetuated by society as a whole and by local SCC Board. This study, therefore supports the view that women only SSC is the better institutional mechanism for women empowerment in Nepal.

Generally, the above mentioned researcher are valuable in their contribution to the body of literature that sheds light on the relationship between micro-finance and women's livelihood, empowerment in the context of Nepal. Their

contribution specially to MFIs in the country however, could be a step beyond accumulation of knowledge if it would lead to a resolve among MFIs to implement practical actions that aim at women's livelihood and empowerment.

This study intended to identify some "Best Practices" of women only savings and credits cooperating (SCCs), if any in providing non financial services to their members, which when linked to improved access to financial (particularly micro- finance) services, can have the most significant development impact on poor households in general and poor women in particular. The study aims to identify and analyze what these non financial services are, the factors that motivated women only SCCs to provide these services, and whether such services met their women members needs. The study will propose some practical action for women only SCCs and promoting agencies to consider in enabling women - only SCCs in meeting financial and non- financial needs of their members.

Saving and credits cooperatives (SCCs) are financial intermediaries. Being financial intermediaries, their function is to provide savings and credits services (only two of several types of financial services) to its member-clients. However, in poor communities SCCs cannot avoid providing more than Just Financial Services to their member-clients due to mainly two factors: 1) expectation from their member-clients for non-financial services, and 2) their success in financial intermediation depends greatly on their ability "to create mechanisms to bridge the gaps created by poverty, illiteracy, gender and remoteness" (Ledgerwood 1998). These mechanisms created to bridge the gaps caused by economic social, and cultural disadvantage may be the form of non-financial services which may come in the form of : social intermediation, enterprise development services or social services.

Benett (1997) proposed a system analysis in understanding the process of

successful and sustainable financial intermediation. Within the systems framework, an SCC or any micro-finance institution should not be expected to provide all the services needed by its clients and/or members but rather “a number of different institutions be involved, each responsible for providing one or more of the different services-needed for successful banking with the poor (Bennett 1997). In short, successful and sustainable financial intermediation should involve several players or services providers.

The MFI, therefore, may opt but should not be expected to provide any or all of the non-financial services identified by Ledgerwood (1998) other than financial, its core services:

Ledgerwood asserts that within the systems framework, there are four categories of services that may be provided to micro-finance clients.

These services are:

- a. Financial intermediation, or the provision of financial products services such as savings, credits, insurance, credit cards and payment system;
- b. Social intermediation, or the process of building human and social capital required by sustainable financial intermediation for the poor;
- c. Enterprise development services or non-financial services that assist micro entrepreneurs; and
- d. Social services or non-financial services that focus on the well-being of the poor.

The degree to which an MFI or the SCC in this particular study is willing to provide more than just financial services depend on whether it takes an “minimalist” or “integrated” approach. The minimalist approach involves providing financial intermediation only while the integrated approach involves providing financial and other services.

Ledgerwood develops a schematic framework (as shown Figure 1) that showed the relationships of the different types of MFI services to clients.

Figure 1.1: Minimalist and Integrated Approaches to Micro Finance

Minimalist Approach

One "missing Piece"-credit

Integrated Approach

Financial and Non-financial services

Women-only SCCs, in particular, are expected by their members to perform more than just a financial intermediation role as women's condition and disadvantaged position in society requires more than just an economic or financial response. Women-only SCCs are almost automatically expected by promoters to perform a social development role as well, that is, to provide what Ledgerwood referred to as social services and enterprise development services.

Researcher has shown that simple extension of credit to poor women does not always generate sustainable benefits. This is generally attributed to three main factors namely:

- Women do not always control investment decisions in the household or the monies generated by such investments.
- Poor households of ten have limited investment opportunities, and therefore access to savings and insurance services are insurance services are now widely considered more important for managing household vulnerabilities than access to credit.
- Financial services address only one aspect of poverty, the economic and do not generally address other constraints by poor household such as limited education, poor health, social and political marginalization etc. (Selin and Bhadra 1999)

The categorization of types of non financial services as presented in the schematic framework developed by Ledgerwood (1998) will be used in the analysis of types of non-financial services provided by the SCCs studied. The author proposes another type of non-financial services of the women-only SCCs, namely; women's empowerment. The author proposes further that the categories be modified to encompass what mainstream cooperative would refer to as mere

"activities" and not services as will be explained in the forthcoming paragraphs. Thus, four categories will be used in the analysis of non-financial, developmental services activities that the SCCs implement or provide to their members. Bennett's definition of social intermediation, enterprise development and social services are used in the analysis while the definition of women's empowerment is as follows:

"Women's empowerment services-activities" refer to those that are intended to raise awareness of women's rights and enable women to exercise these rights.

Women's condition and position are described condition refers to women's material state. Position refers to women's social and economic standing relative to men. Practical needs are linked to women's condition. Poor women may identify practical needs which are related to food and water, the health and education of their children, and increased income. Meeting such needs through development assistance can be a relatively short term process involving inputs such as equipment, training, credit programme, literacy programmes, or clinics. Projects that aim to meet practical needs generally preserve traditional relations between men and women (Moffat and Stuart, 1991)

Strategic interests for women arise from their subordinate (disadvantaged) position in society. Strategic interests are long-term and related to improving women's position. the strategic interests of women as a group include: reduced vulnerability to violence and exploitation, more economic security, independence, options and opportunities, shared responsibility for reproductive work with men and the state; organizing with other women for strength, solidarity and action; increased political power; increased ability to improve the lives and future of their children; an a more humanistic and just development process (Moffat and Stuart, 1991).

Women's involvement in decision-making in different matters, including household decisions, was taken as a proxy indicator of their empowerment. Involvement of women members in decision-making in various matters, such as opting for family planning, buying and selling assets, participating in community development.

Increasing poverty, shift from subsistence farming to cash crop farming, depleting natural resources, increased migration and growing number of women headed households, due to globalization, are factors that have increased women's vulnerability in recent years. A large percentage of women lack access to productive resource especially land.

In Nepal, 40.4% of women and 59.6% of men over the age of 10 are considered economically active. This indicates that women's economic participation is lower than men. This is due to the fact that subsistence agricultural works, which almost exclusively performed by women, is not considered to be economic activity and is excluded from surveys. The vast majority of economically active population (81.25%), particularly in rural Nepal, is engaged in agriculture and allied industries. The portion of the persons engaged in this sector is substantially higher among women (90.5%) than among men (74.9%). (Beijing and Beyond, 2004).

The Interim constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic, Nepal (2007) recognizes men and women equally and prohibits discrimination between them. The notion that "women's rights are human rights" is a new phenomenon in Nepal. For the last several decades, women's rights did not get recognition as human rights. Even today there have been reluctances to recognize the concept of land and resources rights for women, granting them separate legal status and a degree of

autonomy. Affirmative action programs on behalf of women have rarely been statutorily implemented (Beijing and Beyond, 2004).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Methodology is a process of completing the study. Methods and techniques of data collection and methods of analysis have been consisted in methodology. It describes the essential and experienced view for all academic work of the study. It clarifies the concept and gives the way of the study. This is the comparative study which uses both qualitative and quantitative methods.

3.1 Nature and Sources of Data

This study has obtained data and information primarily collected from the field survey. However, information obtained from secondary sources was useful during discussions of several issues. Secondary data or information has been derived from different books, journals, reports, institutional publication and website.

3.2 Rational for Selection of the Study Area

Pokharbhinda VDC is situated in eastern part of Siraha district. Based on the nature of the study Pokharbhinda VDC is selected for the study where most of the dwellers are Janajatis, Madhesies and Dalits people. Among them most of the people are women. Moreover, women's empowerment through saving and credit cooperative is different in comparison to other rural women.

3.3 Research Design

The study has been carried out both on the basis of exploratory and descriptive research design. The study has been focused on to investigate the role of cooperatives in rural women's empowerment. On the other hand it tries to describe the existing status, problems and prospects.

3.4 Sampling Procedure

The universe of this study is Himalaya Saving and Credit Cooperative of Pokharbhinda VDC. Out of 300 (total) members of that cooperative 50(17%) have been selected as respondents from this cooperative. The respondent has been sampled to get the intended information. The samples are selected by using simple random sampling method to acquire the desired objectives.

3.5 Data Collection Techniques and Tools

Both qualitative and quantitative data have been collected in this study. To collect primary information sample method has been used.

3.5.1 Household Questionnaire Survey

A questionnaire is prepared consisting 42 questions with close and open structure. The researcher himself has administrated the questionnaires with the selected cooperative's members. It took altogether 40 days to conduct the questionnaire survey. Socio-economic information with different variables is included in 42 questions.

3.5.2 Field Observation

Direct observation is applied in order to get additional information of the activities of cooperative members for the study. Generally, this observation collected women behaviour and information on members with other persons, staff of administration, visitors. Their internal interaction with other women has also been observed and it is helpful to understand the dynamic of daily life style in empowerment sites. It is participant observation of the researches will be the key tool to acquire their income pattern or practices.

3.5.3 Key Informant Interviews

Educated persons and administrator were the sources of special information in this survey. To derive some specific information, it was necessary to visit some key persons. Generally, teachers, social workers, politician and senior citizens are key persons. In this survey, ten key persons were interviewed in Pokharbhinda for specific information about the study area and role of cooperative in rural women's empowerment process. A check list, including some structured and unstructured questions, has been used for key informant interview.

3.5.4 Informal Interview

During field study, informal interactions with a number of people were made. They were asked about saving and credit business informally. This technique was also useful to provide essential information about the activities of members.

3.5.5 Focus Group Discussion

Focus group discussion is most essential for collection of qualitative information. Altogether four focus group discussions were carried out in this study. Different issues associated with saving and credit occupation will be forwarded to the group for discussion.

3.5.6 Reliability

Information collected from FGD is reliable. The assessment done by participation has been further verified with the records of the concerned local savings and credits cooperatives offices. Questionnaires has been reviewed by affiliated guide and experts. Information's and findings have been also validated by concerned members during the assessment period.

3.6 Field Note

Not all the information during the fieldwork will be secured systematically and in such cases field notes proved helpful. The field notes help to remind later on when the subject matter will complex and the pace of flow of information was rapid. During field survey both subjective interpretation of the situations and the raw interpretation of the fact have been recorded.

3.7 Method of Data Analysis

Collected information has been processed scientifically. Information have been analyzed with the help of computer software like excel as well as manually. Different tables are prepared for different socio-economic variables. Mathematical calculation and statistical operations and tests are performed for quantitative information. Qualitative information has been adopted in descriptive way. To visualize information different diagram's and charts have been prepared.

CHAPTER FOUR INTRODUCTION THE STUDY AREA

4.1 Introduction

The study area for this study is Pokharbhinda VDC of Siraha district. Siraha is located in south and west side of the eastern region. Pokharbhinda is located on the north and east corner of the Siraha district. Siraha has 108 Village Development Committee and two municipalities. It is located $26^{\circ}16'$ to $88^{\circ}32'$ east south attitude and $26^{\circ}37'$ to $88^{\circ}05'$ west north longitude (District profile 2007/08). Siraha district has covered and area of 1,188Sq.kms. (District profile 2007/08). The total population of Siraha district according to 2001 census is 572,399 out which 293,933 are male and 278,466 are female (CBS 2001)

The SBP/CSD is being operated in this area since 1993. Pokharbhinda VDC is one out of 108 VDC of Siraha district. It is situated in east of Pipra Pra. Dha. VDC, west of Siswani VDC North of Bhawanipur VDC, and south of Sitapur Pra.Ra. VDC. The total land of this VDC is 12.21 square km. Sarashwati is only one river flowing across from this VDC. According to 2001 census, the total number of households are 762, in average households are 4.77 including landless. The total population of Pokharbhinda VDC, according to 2001 census is 3,636, out

of which 1,841 are male and 1,795 are female. The population consist of different caste/ethnic such as Tharu, Danuwar, Yadav, Mahato, Teli, Sudi, Kewat, Chamar, Dhobi, Kami etc. The majorities are Danuwar and Yadav (VDC records, 2008).

Educationally, there is only one high school and a primary school in this VDC. The main profession of the people are agriculture and small trade. More than 90 percent of the total population is engaged in agriculture sector. The main agro-products are paddy, wheat, maize, vegetables, pulse, mustard, sugarcane, tobacco etc. Besides this people are engaged in different income generating activities such a animal husbandary, cattle trading, wage and salaries, small enterprises and business etc.

This VDC lacks develop economic and physical infrastructures. The people of this VDC are poor. Among poor, some are in such a miserable condition that they have insufficient food to feed their children through out the year. Women are still engaging on unproductive and only used in reproductive machine. Most of the women of this area are uneducated, poor, untrained or without any vocational training.

4.1.1 Population of this VDC

The major settlement areas of this VDC are Pokharbhinda and Parsa. The total population of this VDC is 3,636. The female population and male population of this VDC is 1,795 and 1,841 respectively. The percentage of population who, solely depend upon agriculture is 70%. About 26% of the people in this VDC are found engaged in business whereas about 4% are engaged in Jobs (VDC records, 2004)/

Tharu and Danuwar are ethnic group and their main occupation is cottage

industry and agriculture. Economically, the community of this VDC can be divided into three categories i.e. middle, lower middle and lower classes.

4.1.2 Ethnicity and Caste Composition of VDC,

Different kinds of casts and ethnic groups has found in the study area. They are Yadav, Tharu, Danuwar, Teli, Brahmin, Dalit, Muslim, Kewat, Mallah, Halluwai etc.

Table 4.1: Ethnicity and Caste Composition of VDC,

Caste/ethnic	Number	Percentage
Yadav	610	17
Tharu	313	9
Danuwar	808	22
Teli	169	5
Brahmin	29	0.6
Dalit	547	15
Muslim	267	7
Kewat	372	10
Mallah	178	5
Haluwai	173	5
Koiri	9	0.2
Sunidhi	108	3
Hajam	47	1
Newar	6	0.2
Total	3636	100

Source: Village Profile, 2007/08

4.1.3 Religious Condition of VDC

There are various religious groups in the study area. They are Hindu,

Buddhist, Muslim, Christian etc. Among the various religious groups, Hidus are in majority. Because of acculturation and modernity, Tharu and Danuwar, and other ethnic groups have also belief in Hinduism.

4.1.4 Occupation

The population's percentage who solely depend upon agriculture is 70 percent. About 26 percent of the people in this VDC are found engaged in business whereas 4 percent are engaged in Jobs (village records 2008).

4.1.5 Infrastructure Development of the VDC

This section highlights about infrastructure such as school, drinking water, social organization, health post and sanitation services and settlement pattern etc.

Schools

Altogether, there are two schools in this VDC. Out of two, one is secondary and another is primary school. They are Shree Janata Domi Chaudhary Secondary School and Primary School, Parsa.

Drinking Water

The water supply condition of this VDC has found satisfactory. There are so many tube wells in this VDC. Most of the people of this VDC have own tube wells in their houses. After some times, so many GOs and NGOs/INGOs, are implemented for drinking water. They have provided tube wells in groups.

Social Institutions/Organizations

There are many social and cultural organization in this VDC. They are given below:

- Village Development Committee's Office

- Pokharbhinda Sub-Health Post
- Additional Post Office
- Twenty-Five Community Development Organization
- One Saving and Credit Cooperative
- Arniko Youth Club
- Women Empowerment Programme Office

Health and Sanitation Services

One sub-health post has been serving the people of this VDC. People awareness about health, hygiene and sanitation of this VDC has found satisfactory. People of this VDC have taken facilities from sub-health post in case or ordinary diseases. They have been providing treatment their family in Lahan Hospital in case of serious illness.

Settlement Pattern

This VDC is situated within Siraha district. The study area is composed of several ethnic groups and majority of them are Yadav, Teli, Haluwai, Tharu, Danuwar, Dalit, Chamar etc. Local people of this VDC largely depend upon natural resources to supplement their small cottage industries and their livelihood.

4.2 Saving and Credit Cooperative in VDC

There is a cooperative in the study area which is established by women. Himalaya saving and credit cooperative Ltd is name of the cooperative. 300 members are in this institutions, among them majorities are of women. The cooperative provide credit to agriculture, education, health, trade and business etc.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE MEMBERS AND THEIR NEEDS

5.1 Members Profile

This section shows the members' socio-economic status, length of membership and position in their SCC, motivations for joining their SCC, and affiliation with other SCCs, if any;

5.1.1 Socio-Economic Status

In general, the member surveyed, SCC have low socio-economic status as can be gleaned from the different variables measured. Number of variables, namely:

- Civil Status: More members are widowed separated or divorced from husband,
- Educational attainment overall: More members have no education and primary education only,
- Caste: More members come from ethnic, Madhesis groups and lower caste than upper caste,
- Main occupation: More farmers, fewer entrepreneurs
- Income from main occupation, from other occupations, from other household income earners, and aggregate household income: lower in this area.

These data confirm the finding of other studies that showed that women are in more marginalized or disadvantaged condition. It also indicates that even if opportunities for membership in on SCC is equal among women from different castes, actual access is still determined by the level of castes, the women belongs

to. Women from higher caste feel less constrained to join the SCC, while women from lower caste feel more constrained to join due to their caste.

5.1.2 Caste of the Sampled Population

Majority (50%) of members belonged to ethnic groups, that is Tharu and Danuwar while 30% belonged to various Madhesis women and 20% were Dalits, the low caste. There are more upper caste member in this cooperatives. There were more members belonging to different ethnic groups and Madhesis groups in the SCC. This data is consistent with the observation that women only SCC tend to have a strong women's empowerment agenda.

Table 5.1: Caste of the Sample Population

Castes	Number	Percentage
Ethnic groups	25	50
Madhesis	15	30
Dalits	10	20
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2008.

5.1.3 Age and Sex Composition of Sampled Population

Whether a population is young or old, or getting older or younger depends of the portion of people at different age group. In general, a population with more than 35 percent under age of 15 is considered young and population with more than 10 percent aged 65 and above is considered old. Age structure is affected by the fertility, mortality and migration (NPR, 2007). Independent and active age group of population has a significant role in the overall development of the society.

Researcher has identified three groups of population interval among sample household. The following table depicts age and sex structure of sampled population.

Table 5.2 : Distribution of Sampled Population by Age/Sex

	Male		Female		Total	
	N.	P.	N.	P.	N.	P.
0-15	-	-	-	-	-	-
16-59	-	-	39	78	39	78
60 and above	-	-	11	72	11	22

Source: Field Survey-2008

5.1.4 Civil Status

All members surveyed in SCC were married. But only 6% were widowed, and 2% separated/divorced. This data means that 8% (6% widowed plus 2% separated/divorced) of the members surveyed are heads of households. Because of SCC programme they are easily considering in the society. Without feel hesitation, they are still spending quality of life.

Table 5.3: Civil Status of Sampled Population

	Number	Percentage
		46
Unmarried	-	-
Widowed	3	6
Separated/Divorced	1	2

Source: Field Survey, 2008

5.1.5 Educational Attainment of the Sampled Population

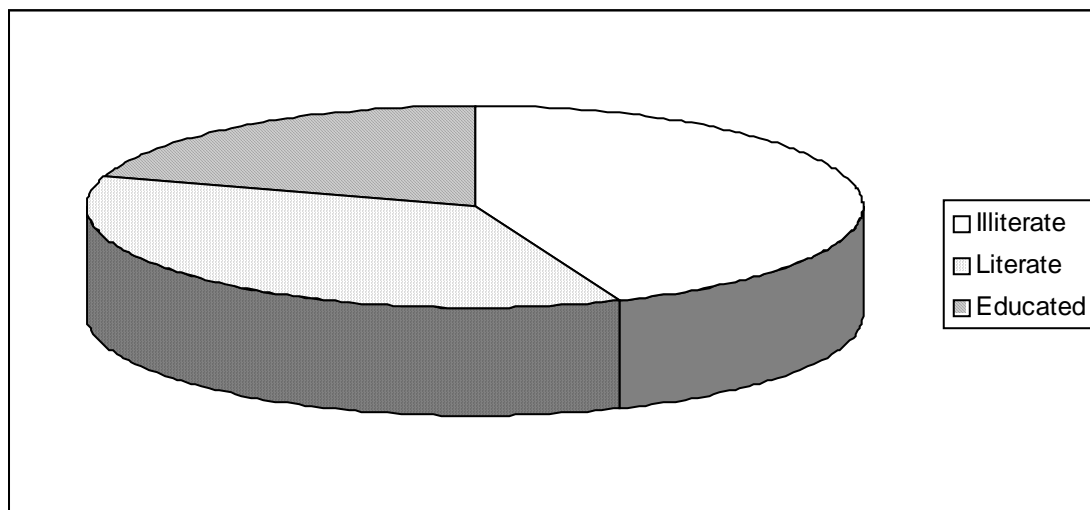
Education empowers the women; it increases women's status in community and leads to greater input into family and community decision-making. Having knowledge, income and decision-making power can place women on a more equal footing with their male counterparts. Education also provides people with the knowledge and skills to contribute to and benefit from development efforts, especially in area of health, nutrition, water and sanitation and the environments.

Table 5.4: Distribution of Sampled Population by Educational Status

Level	Female Population	Percentage
Illiterate	22	44
Literate	18	36
Educated	10	20
Total	50	100

The number of educated people in the study area has found 10 i.e. 20 percent of the total sampled population. The percentages of sampled population that are illiterate are 44 percent. There are few government schools in the Pokharbhinda VDC. In the study researcher has defined literacy as the ability to read and write. Illiteracy as having no ability to read and write and educated as those who have passed SCC an above. The education are shown in table 5.4 and in the below diagram.

Figure 5.1 : Distribution of Sampled Population by Educational Status



5.1.6 Distribution of Respondents by Family Type

The empowerment of rural women depends upon the family types. In the joint family, the women has less authority and responsibility due to male dominant society and it is very difficult to enhance skill because less opportunity has provided to her for career development.

Table 5.6 : Distribution of Respondents by Family Type

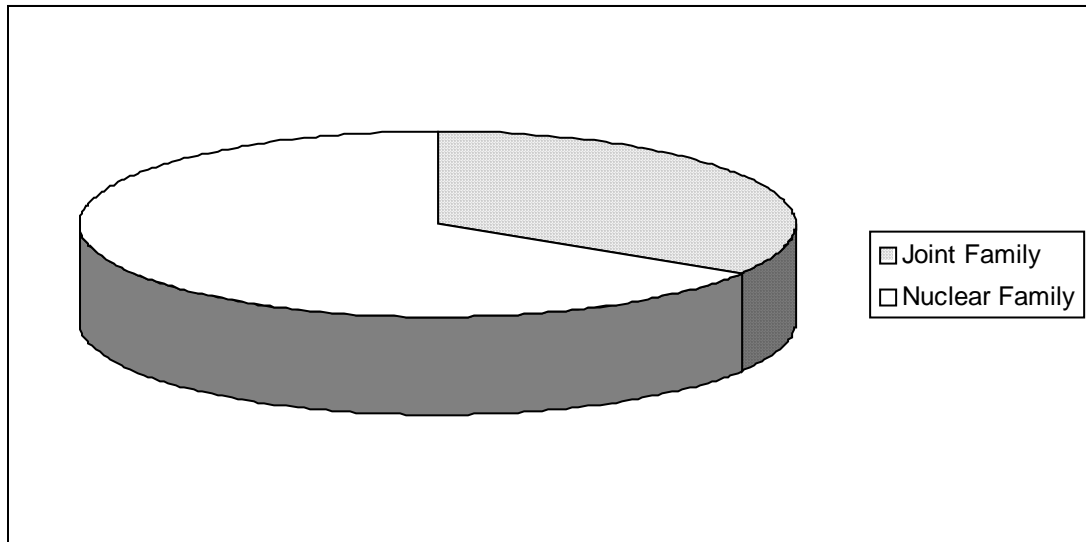
Family Type	Numbers of HHs	Percentage
Joint Family	17	34
Nuclear Family	33	66
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2008

Exactly 34 percent of the family in the study area are found as joint family whereas 66 percent as nuclear family. The joint family is still dependent on traditional occupation. The distribution of sample household by family types is

shown in the following table and in pie chart diagram

Figure 5.2: Distribution of Respondents by Family Type



5.2 Economic Characteristics

Women make substantial contributions to uphold Nepal's economy. The status of women study completed in early 1980s established that women and girls together contribute more than 53 percent of the household income in rural household of Nepal. Several studies (Stri Shakti, 1995, Ojha 1989, MOA 1993a, 1993b, 1993d 1994) in subsequent years have reconfirmed that women's labor contribution of Nepalese agriculture is substantial and at least equal to that of men.

To foster women's increased participation in the market economy, access to economic opportunities such as secure savings, non-collateral credit, and business skill trainings are vital. Training enables women to access capital and to start of expand their own income generating micro-enterprises. This, in turn, will expand household income (Beijing and Beyond, 2004).

5.2.1 Size of Landholding

Land is the most important source of wealth of a nation. Without abundant land, it is very difficult for the development of any country. It is argued that landholding is considered as the major indicator for the identification of poor in Nepal. In the study area, researcher found all most all respondent having less landholding as compared to average national size. The following table 5.7 and bar diagram depict the average landholding size of the study area.

Table 5.7: Distribution of Respondents by Size of Landholding

Types of Land in Bigha	No. of Household	Percentage
Landless	8	16
0-1	17	34
2-3	12	24
4-5	5	12
6-7	3	6
8-9	2	4
9-10	1	2
>10	1	2
Total	50	100

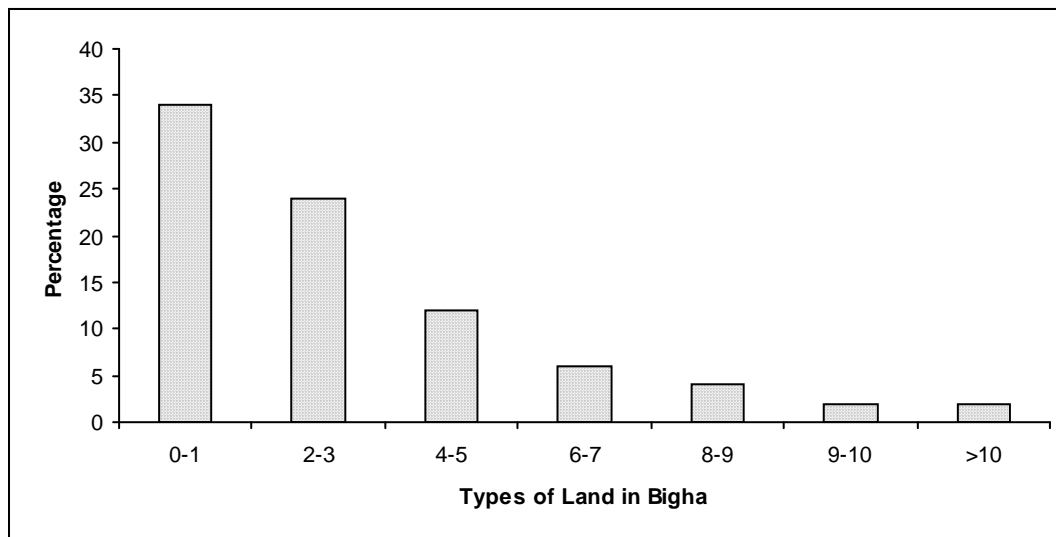
Source: Field Survey, 2008

From the above table no 5.7 and figure 5.5 below, it is clear that most of the respondents do not have adequate land for their living. There are 34 percent of the households have less than 1 Bigha land only, 16 percent of households have no lands, and they depend upon absolute poor and Sukumbasi. 24 percent of the households have 2-3 bigha of land and 12 percent of the households have 4-5 bigha of land. Only 2 percent of respondents have found 9-10 bigha of land. The percentage of population having greater than 10 bigha of land is 2 percent only.

According to the respondents those households who do have no land and do have less than 2 bigha of land cannot maintain their daily life and fulfill the basic needs without other occupation and employment.

They who only can have maintained and fulfill their basic needs who have more than 5 bigha of land holders. Therefore, it can be concluded that 2 percent of population in the study area can survive easily with their land products.

Figure 5.3: Distribution of Respondents by Size of Landholding



5.2.2 Occupations

Occupational structure is a good indicator of employment of opportunities, both for men and women. The 1996 NLSS (CBS, 1997) has collected information on primary secondary and subsequent occupations. A person occupation has been defined as primary if he\she had devoted most hours of work in the preceding twelve months to this activity. The following table illustrates the main occupation of the households and respondents in the study area.

Table 5.8: Distribution of Respondents According to Occupation

Main Occupation	No. of Household	Percentage
Wage labor	17	34
Agriculture	16	32
Service	3	6
Business	2	4
Cottage industry	2	4
Tailoring	5	10
Labor	5	10

Total	50	100
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Source: Field Survey, 2008

The above table clearly reveals that majority of the respondents' main occupation in the study area has found wage labor. According to respondents 34 percent of them have been involved in wage labor. After that the second majority of the respondents' main occupation in the study area has found in agricultural sector. Only 6 percent of population was found engaged in service sector. Similarly 4 percent have found engaged in business, 2 percent in cottage industry and 10 percent in tailoring, and 10 percent in labor, which is illustrated below in the pie-chart diagram.

Figure 5.4: Respondents According to Occupation.



5.2.3 Annual Household Income and Sources of Respondents

Usually, income in poor households is contributed by several of its members. Gauging a member's socio-economic status using income as a variable,

the annual income from main occupation, her other sources of income and annual income from all other income earners of the household.

Per capita household and family income is an important economic variable. To extract economic characteristics, it is important. When the total family income is divided by the total number of family members, per capita family income is obtained. World development report stated that people struggling below. Yearly per capita income US\$ 365 are poor. the exchange US\$ into NRs is unstable, it varies from 64 to 72.5. So, average exchange rate NRs 68.49 has been used to calculate yearly peer capita income in Nepalese currency, which becomes NRs25000. Those cooperative members whose yearly per capita income is below NRs25000, are grouped as poor.

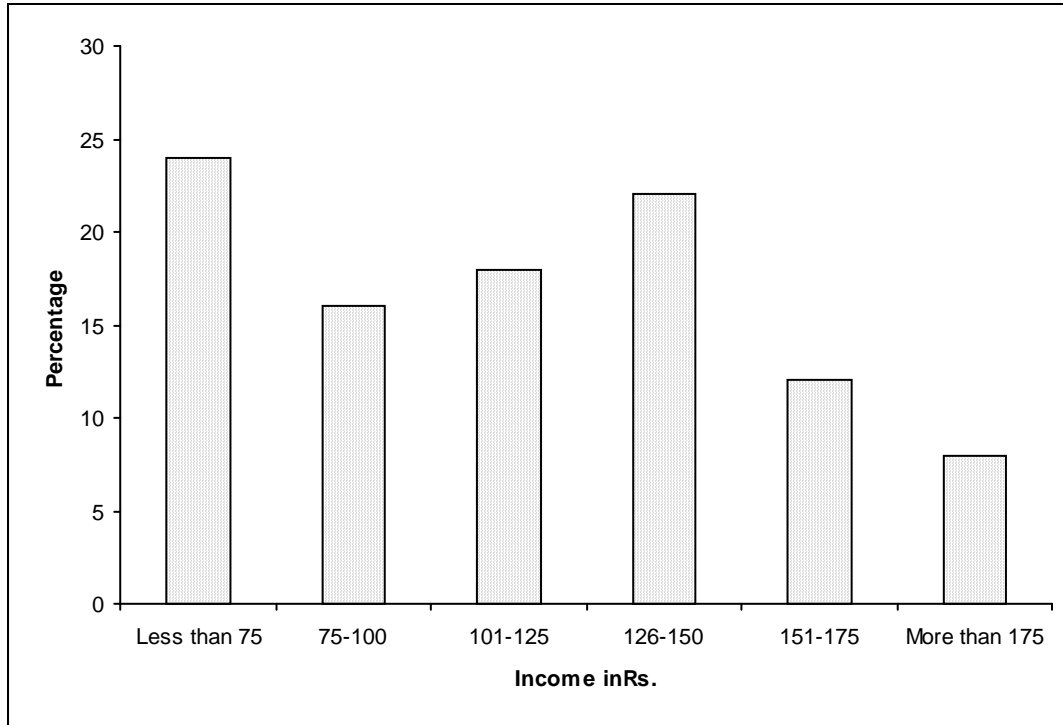
Table 5.9: Annual Household Income of Respondents

Income in NRs (000)	No. of Respondent	Percent
Less than 75	12	24
75-100	8	16
101-125	9	18
126-150	11	22
151-175	6	12
More than 175	4	8
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2008

The table 5.9 shows the annual income of the cooperatives members in Pokharbhinda VDC. According to the survey, out of 50 respondents, there are 24% households who have less than NRs. 75000. At the same time 16% households who have 75 to 100 thousands annual income respectively. The annual income of 18% households have 101 to 125 thousands and 22% have 126 to 150, 12 percent have 151 to 175 thousands annual income. Only 8 percents respondents households have more than 175 thousand annual income.

Figure 5.5: Annual Household Income of Respondents



Sources of Income

Micro-Enterprises

Agriculture

Wage labor

Vegetable gardening

Service

Livestock/Poultry raising

Small trading/selling

Medical Shop

Communication service

Seasonality of Income

The PRA exercise on gender-disaggregated activity calendar showed that the member's household's income is seasonal. Coming from mostly farming

households, their incomes were at their peak during the harvest season (during the months of November, December and January) and lowest during the dry (April and May) and monsoon (July and August) seasons when extreme weather affected either their farming activities or physical mobility. Stressful periods were during these season as well. As most members were engaged in subsistence farming, where production was mainly for purposes of family consumption, income from this main occupation was almost always not sufficient to feed their households for a whole year. Thus, it was common for households to be engaged in other forms of livelihood to be able to have other sources of income as shown in the earlier section on "other sources of income". Other than livestock-raising, petty trading and vegetable farming, the members were also engaged in farming using other crops such as wheat, potato, millet, corn and sweet potato. This types of crops planted varied according to the months or season and according to the geographical location. For example, any crop may be grown in the Terai region, but most grains cannot grow in the hill parts. Being engaged in different forms of livelihood was a means for the members' households to earn constantly throughout the whole year despite the seasons. Many members of SCCs in the Kathmandu valley and of some SCCs in the Terai were engaged in petty trading and in other forms of micro-enterprises. In general, they had higher incomes than those members who were mainly dependent on farming, even if the latter was engaged in other livelihoods that were not related to retail, trading or manufacturing.

Stressful period also occurred during those months when expenditures were higher than normal such as festivals during seasonal celebrations (such as marriage of children) and during opening (August) and closing (March) of classes when school fees have to be paid. Overall those observations applied to members who involve in SCC or not.

5.2.4 Workload

The average number of hours that the women surveyed spent on each type of work as follows: reproductive work-8 hours productive work-9 hours and rest-7 hours. Rest included the time spent eating meals or drinking tea. Similarly, urban-based members had slightly more time for rest (9 hours) and shorter time for productive work (7hours). This data shows that most women spent at least 17 hours of work on a regular day and they had very little time for rest and recreation. The number of hours worked in a day increased during the harvest season. It must also be noted that a large majority of the members were still in their reproductive age (between 25-40, average age in aggregate is 35 years).

This data implies that women's work-load must be considered in the planning of development interventions for these women-only SCCs. In particular, activities must be carried out in a way that they do not consume so much time in order not to take much precious time from the women. Activities should be conducted during periods that are not too stressful for them, either caused by too much work (say, during harvest season) or when major expenses have to be made (say, near the end of school terms).

5.3 Member's Needs

A modified timeline exercise, a PRA method, was developed specifically for this study. This PRA exercise encouraged participants to recall their most compelling or strongest past dream and recognize their most compelling present dream, both, realized and unrealized. The participants were not instructed to specify for or with whom the dream was avoid. Providing any clue as to what dream to focus on, that is either personal dream or that involving family or their

SCC. Using pictures showing images that best reflected or represented their dream, the participants shared with other participants their past and present dreams.

After the participants identified their dreams and shared these with the other participants, they identified those things that they needed to have or to do to be able to achieve the dreams that were not fulfilled yet. Each participant shared her needs with other participants. After all the needs had been listed, all participants were asked to identify what they considered as their top 5 needs according to importance and significance. This was required to encourage participants to focus on only a limited number and not a wish list of needs. Importance was defined in terms of what they value in principle. Significance was defined in terms of having a practical impact in their lives.

The participants arrived at consensus on what they considered were the top 5 needs. After these top 5 needs were identified, they were asked to identify the institutions that they thought could assist them in meeting their needs. They were also asked whether they were willing to pay for services from their SCC to meet their needs or not. And if yes how much they were willing to pay.

To examine the differences and similarities between the dreams and needs of the participants by relative difference in socio-economic status, the participants were divided into better off and poor groups. The key person from the SCC with the assistance from the study team identified who among the participants should belong to what groups. Most of the better off groups were Non-Dalits but not all while most of the poorer groups were Dalits (particularly in the SCC in Pokharbhina VDC).

5.3.1 Member's Practical Needs and Strategic Interests

The PRA exercise pointed to the following results and findings. It must be noted that overlaps between dreams and needs occurred. Conceptually, dreams referred to those that fall within the realm of wish or hope or desire or goal while needs referred to means, without which goals or dreams will not be fulfilled. However, participants did not make the distinction between dreams and needs, thus, the overlap between these two concepts were acceptable.

- a. Most of the member's needs were practical needs, but some dreams were related to strategic interests. There are very little difference in the dreams and needs expressed by members from better off groups and poorer groups.
- b. The most commonly expressed dreams that were related to practical needs were described as follows. The first two dreams appeared in the top 2 needs of all groups from both types better off and poor.

Education for Self and for Children

The referred to the dream to either have some education (especially for self as 44 percent of the members surveyed were illiterate) or higher education (specially for children as they are already in school). This also referred to the desire of some members to have some basic literacy, that is, to be able to read and write, specifically, letters from relatives and loves ones, and to be able gone through basic adult literacy classes and had to count and keep own accounts of their livelihoods (numeracy skills). Those who had since been literate, desired for advance literacy to be able to do more than just read and write. Specifically, they wanted to know about life in other VDCs, how people in other places live, how to take care of their livestock, how to increase the yield of their forms or vegetable gardens. For the poorer groups, higher education for children meant that their children would be able to reach up to high school. For the better off groups, that

their children would be able to get a bachelor's degree, land in good job, get a good income.

Having Own Livelihood and Own Income and Savings from that Livelihood

Livelihood, income and savings come together. The desire for owning a livelihood stemmed from a desire to have income plus savings. Most of the women come from very poor households where income was scarce and savings was almost nil. The desire to have income was strong in all members surveyed.

Comfort, Luxury and Beauty; Leisure and Rest

The women dreamt about having the time and the means to stop working sometimes, to have fun, to have the time to rest and relax and not having to work all the time in order to survive. They dreamt about owning good and nice clothes, ornaments and jewelries, to look nice and pretty to eat good food.

Art and Music

The dream to enjoy art and music was related to the dream of having comfort, luxury and beauty, but the source of pleasure was from art and music. Some of the women dreamt about being able to have the time to simply enjoy music freely; to be engaged in art to be able to sing; to be able to act; to be like the actress and artist they admired.

c. Some dreams were related to women's strategic interests.

Security

This referred to the dream of being secure specially in old age. It also included the wish to have some resources (specifically savings) to use in case of illness or accident.

Owning Land

Some members wished they own land. But when they said their own, they were not referring to themselves individually but rather to their family. This dreams came mostly from the poorer groups, particularly the Dalits and including who were landless.

Exposure and Travel

Some members wished to be able to go out of their village; see other places and see how they look like; se how other people live; being able to ride in certain modes of transport that they had tried to ride in for only a few times or not at all; to be able to reach for places; to be able to see the town and bazaar (headquarters); to be able to see Kathmandu. The members claimed that this dream was a reaction to some women's sense of isolation in their homes and in their villages, and a lack of contact with other people outside of their immediate environment.

Freedom to Decide for One's Own Life

Some women wished to have the freedom to make their own decisions and make choices, and not be dedicated by parents. It included the freedom of not having to work and "exercise the right of a son", according to one member; to be free to choose a partner, or whether to marry or not at all; to choose with whom to live, that is, with in-laws or with own family. This dreams stemmed from feelings of dissatisfaction, in some cases, fear in the women SCC members, in who were mostly in a marriage arranged by their parents, which is a common practice in Nepal. A daughter-in-law is also expected to join the family of the son, a condition highly favoured by the mother-in law as having the daughter in law means an additional hand in doing the housework in a normally large household comprised of two or more families.

Both better off groups and poorer groups each mentioned one dream that the

other did not mention. The poorer group mentioned "Respect from other people" while the better off group mentioned "fame".

Respect from other people referred to the members' need to have people recognize and accept them for what they are despite their poor status. It implied the wish for freedom from discrimination because of their poor economic and social status.

d. The needs commonly expressed by the members that were related to practical needs were:

- Education (both higher and literacy)
- Having the skills for a livelihood (both practical and business management skills)
- Security (as measured in savings that can be used for emergency and for other future needs)

The need for livelihood skills was related to the dream of having own income and savings. However, the needs included not just practical skills required in livelihoods but also business management skills. Business management skills were desired particularly by the better off members from the Himalaya Saving and Credit cooperative Ltd.

The other commonly expressed needs were related to strategic interests. Those were:

Linkage with Institutions

It referred to the need to have some contact with institutions (other than their SCC, but not engaged in saving and credit activities) that have resources that they can access. These institutions included training and business institutions. The

women wanted to know these institutions can be known by them.

Knowledge of and Access to Advance Agricultural Technology

This referred to need for knowledge on agricultural technologies that will increase their farm output while at the same time reduce their farming workload. It also referred to actually having access to agricultural technologies, tools and equipment. This need was particularly mentioned by both better off and poorer groups in the selected SCC.

Knowledge of and Access to Veterinary Science

This referred to the members' need to know how to take care of their livestock so as to increase their income from raising livestock and protecting their livestock from disease.

- e. The top 5 needs identified by members were (in order of frequency of mention by both better off and poorer groups):
 - i. Education for self and children.
 - ii. Having own livelihood and own income and savings from that livelihood,
 - iii. Security
 - iv. Linkage with institutions, and
 - v. Freedom to make own choices or decisions.

It is necessary to point out that the first 3 top needs were mentioned by all groups in SCC while the fourth top need was mentioned by more than half of the groups and the fifth top need by less than half. The first 2 top needs are practical needs while the last three top needs are related to strategic interests.

- f. Other dreams expressed by a few members, who were mostly board members or staff were

- i. To serve community
- ii. To help other women
- iii. To help the SCC

- g. Other needs expressed by a few members were
 - i. Awareness-raising programs on women's health, rights,
 - ii. Access to basic infrastructure, e.g. toilets, tubewells-to reduce time to fetch water, enhances sanitation and promotes good health, civil good health, good sanitation and clean environment particularly proximate environment such as house and yard.

- h. When asked about what institutions they thought can meet their needs, the members identified a number of institution, both government, non government, national and local, including their own SCC. Some of these institutions were the co-op District office, Nepal Rastra Bank, Women Development office, District Trade and Industry office, District Agriculture Office, NEFSCUN, Nari Chetna Kendra Nepal, Nari Bikash Sangh and the centre for Miro-Finance. The members thought that their SCC should meet their financial needs, particularly access to credit keeping their savings, and access to funds for future or emergency needs, and their needs for education and training, particularly on livelihood.
 - i. Although the members hoped that their needs would be addressed, they also recognized the limitations of their SCC in meeting their needs. The members expressed this recognition during the PRA exercise. They expressed that their SCC needed the following to be better able to provide it's members with financial, developmental services. These were
 - i. Fund for building (to provide a facility where the SCC can conduct training

to its members)

- ii. Fund for educational loans to members
- iii. Fund for educational scholarship for member's children
- iv. Training on co-op management, specially financial management, e.g. bookkeeping
- v. Trainings on motivating members
- vi. Linkages with other institutions especially other SCCs to know more about other types of financial services, and other services that can be given to members,
- vii. Unity among members

SCC members have both practical needs and strategic interests. Those needs point to areas for intervention in building SCC capacity to meet it's member's needs. The interventions must address the following needs

Needs	Probable Intervention (Addressed to members)
<p>Practical need for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Education for self <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Basic literacy - Advanced literacy * Education for children * Having own livelihood and skills to able to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have own income - Have savings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Basic adult literacy course(short) * Advanced literacy course (long) * Scholarship fund * Skills training and livelihoods, including entrepreneurship and business management training * Motivation training to increase saving in SCC
<p>Strategic interests on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Security 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Provision of access to insurance services for members

<p>Linkages</p> <p>* Freedom to make own's choices and own decisions</p>	<p>*Motivation training to increase savings in SCC</p> <p>* Study tours to other SCCs, both mixed-sex and women -only, resource institutions such as co-op development agencies, both government and NGO, and women's organization</p> <p>* Awareness seminar on women's rights for women only.</p> <p>* Gender sensitivity training to women only, the raining must teach about women's fundamental rights as human beings.</p>
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5.3.2 SCC Capacity and Willingness to Meet Members' Needs

The output of the timeline exercise was a list of priority needs, one each for better off and poorer groups. In another focus group discussion, the lists were shown to the Board, the Staff (if any), and other key people in the SCC and were asked whether their SCC had the capacity to meet these needs. They were also asked to identify the factors both internal and external to the SCC that would support the SCC effort to meet the members' needs and to identify those factors that would hinder the SCC to do so. In short, using the force field analysis, the SCC was asked to analyze the capacity of their organization to meet it's members needs.

The result of force field analysis done by the SCC showed that they were fairly aware of some factors or forces both within the SCC and outside of it that they can utilize or harness to meet their members' needs. However, there were

many more hindering forces, both internal and external, that they had to contend with than there were supporting forces that they can rely on. According to the SCC, it was lacking in the factor that is most essential and necessary for the SCC to be able to meet the members needs, namely: internal resources, such as funds, and capable human resources. Thus, although SCC would like to meet all own member's needs, it thought that as it does not have the means to do so. They thought that SCC, they should meet the members' financial needs firstly and their social needs, secondly.

The SCC pointed to it's organizing of non-financial, developmental activities and linkages with institutions that can conduct these activities in their SCC as supporting factors. This indicated that the SCC considered conduction non-financial, developmental activities important and not having the resources to do so on their own, having linkages with external resource institutions was necessary. This also indicated that it looked at itself as having both a financial and a social role and it looked positively at these roles. Organizing non-financial, developmental activities in linkage with other institutions is the SCC's way of performing this social role.

CHAPTER SIX

COOPERATIVE AND RURAL WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

6.1 Introduction of the SCC

Nepal is divided into five regions and 75 districts. It has three major geographic regions, high mountains, foothills and lowland plains. Across these three regions, Nepal has roughly 1,400 registered SCCs. To roughly represent Nepal's diversity the SCC from the plains region. This enable us to note any significant income and risks faced by women. Furthermore, the SCC chosen maintain a large population of women members with one being solely controlled by women.

Location

Siraha is one of the plain districts of Nepal. It has features similar to other plain districts in Nepal: plain area, plain land, roads and electricity, inhabitants of many ethnic people, more fertile land, lack of irrigation facility, access to transportation and have humid climate. At it is Terai (plain area), the VDC has access to road, market, irrigation, and have fertile land. Communication facility is available but electricity is not available in the VDC.

Key Economic Activities

Main occupation of the people is agriculture, amounting 78% of the total population. Other occupations include business (5%), wage labor (10%), small and cottage industry (3%), all others (4%). Since most of the land in Pokharbhinda has irrigation facilities, the agricultural production is very good. They produce three primary crops per year. Facilities such as transportation, availability of inputs, technical supports and marketing facilities are also available. So this is a relatively

prosperous VDC in comparison of other VDCs of Nepal. In the village women mainly involved in agriculture and livestock raising activities.

Organizational History

The programme of Save the Children (U.S.A) was initiated on a trial basis in 2048 in this VDC wards in 1, 2, 3. The objectives of this programme had been to give informal education class for rural old women, and by giving informal education to ensure the women for their rights and empowerment. Having shown expressive and positive results, the program was expanded all over the VDC's ward. Ministry of agriculture and co-operative Nepal is responsible for implementation of the program. During the past decade, its member in locations where member were capable of managing it independently. HSCCL Pokharbhinda started in 2053 B.S. and registered as a saving and cooperative Ltd. The major activities of the HSCCL are savings, credits, and life insurance.

The Current Status of Cooperative

Total Number of current member	300(all women)
Female member	300
Monthly regular savings	25
Interest of savings	8%
Interest of loan	20%
The loan size	500 to 30,000
Share Capital	4,55,000
Deposit	50,000
Loan from NRB	12,00,000
Repayment Rate	6%

6.2 Services Offered by HSSCL

The various savings and loan products, micro-insurance and social services offered by HSCCL to its members are discussed in following sections. HSCCL usually provide such financial and non-financial services during its savings and credit phase.

6.2.1 Savings Products

HSCCL offer a variety of savings products to its members. It starts its savings products from compulsory savings, and gradually introduce voluntary and other purposive savings. These savings products are designed to develop thrift among members, generate internal fund for on-lending and make savings available to members in times of emergency.

Savings products are gradually introduced in HSCCL on trial and error basis. There is also the practice of adapting various products of advanced SCC by moderate HSCCL. Generally, members cannot withdraw compulsory saving up to an agreed term or till its give up membership. HSCCL cannot return compulsory savings because these are their main sources of capital and they are also considered collateral against loans. To fulfill members' financial needs, HSCCL gradually introduce other purposive savings products.

HSCCL issue passbooks to their members once they start depositing savings. Passbooks are filled and signed by the staff concerned.

Table 6.1: Savings Products Offered by HSCCL

Products	Purpose and Products Definition	Interest Rate Range (Per Annum)
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Compulsory Savings	Old age provision and loan guarantee for members and regular sources of investment fund for HSCCL. The minimum fixed amount must be deposit each month. These savings can be with draw only upon termination of membership.	8%
Demand Deposit	For emergencies and for lump sum investments. Members can withdraw stated amount mentioned in the policy.	8%
Daily Savings	Savings services for daily income earners. Must deposit fixed amount there of per day. With drawl after specified period when the amount becomes substantial.	8%
Fixed Deposit	For depositing surplus income of members and higher returns from the savings. Members can withdraw after termination of a pre-negotiated period and can borrow up to 90% of accumulated amount by paying 2-3% extra interest pa.	8%
Education al Savings	To meet future education expenses of children. Must deposit fixed amount per month. With-drawl when child reaches 16 years.	8%
Festival savings	To meet festival expenses. Must deposit fixed amount per month. With-drawl in specified festivals.	8%
Group savings	Designed for groups of poor women and occupational castes. Each group must save a specified amount or more.	8%

Source: Field Survey, 2008.

6.2.2 Loan Products

HSCCL offers a variety of loan products to its members such as productive, social and emergency loans. The loan products are described in detail in Table 6.2.

Members are eligible to borrow loans three to six months after acquiring membership. In the case of HSCCL, more than one member from the same family can become a member, but only one can get loan at a time. She can acquire another loan only after the repayment of the previous loan, but in emergencies, she can avail of emergency loans.

In the same way, any member who needs a loan may apply to her SCC with an application and the required fee. The loan sub-committee reviews the loan applications based on the existing policy and forwards them to Board of Directors (BoD), the final body for approving or disapproving loans, with necessary recommendations. Generally, it takes one week to approve or disapprove a loan application. The loan subcommittee is authorized to approve or disapprove loans up to the amount of Rs. 30,000.

Table 6.2: Loan Products Offered by HSCCL

Loan Products	Purpose	Interest Rate
Agriculture loan - Farm activities	Provided for buying seeds, seedlings, fertilizer, implements and livestock.	20%
- Vegetable cultivation - Livestock and fisheries	Divided mainly into three categories: short term (6 months), medium terms (up to 18 months), and long term (more than 18 months). Short-term loans are given for seasonal farm activities, medium term for livestock and long	20%

	term loans for other.	
<p>Micro enterprise and trade</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Petty trade - Trading in agriculture produce - Agriculture produce processing and cottage industry. 	<p>Loans for petty trade and trading in agricultural produce are given for short-term, while those for running cottage industries are given for long term. Cottage industries include construction of warehouse and cold storage.</p>	20%

Housing, latrine and bio-gas	Given for building new houses, improving old houses, construction latrines and installing biogas. This loan is for long term.	20%
Social loan	This loan is given for social purpose such as for consumptive purpose and for organizing rituals and festivals.	20%
Emergency loan	Given for emergency purposes, eg. during illness of family members, accidents, natural disaster etc. This loan provided only for short period (3-6months)	20%
Loan against collected savings	Given against fixed deposit, compulsory savings and purposive savings of members.	20%
Group loan for women and occupational castes	Mainly given on group guarantee for various purposes mentioned earlier.	20%

Source: Field survey, 2008.

6.2.3 Insurance Products

Some SCCs had introduced simple insurance products for the welfare of their members. Those insurance services were not provided through authorized agencies. Among the various insurance products offered in this way, life insurance covered the funeral cost, outstanding loan and transitional costs. Besides this voluntary and other purposive savings products and subsidized emergency loans also helped members to manage both predictable and unpredictable future risks.

According to HSCCL, the CMF has started linking formal life insurance through an insurance company to members of micro-finance institutions. HSCCL has been included in this life insurance project. This insurance covers funeral cost, outstanding loan and transitional costs of the family under shock.

6.2.4 Social Services

HSCCL provides a broad range of social services through their own resources or in coordination with developmental agencies for the benefit of its members. These services can be categorized under the following headings:

i. Training in Income Generating Activities

HSCCL has organized, in coordination with different NGOs and district line agencies, mainly with district agriculture office and cottage industry development committee, training in various income-generating enterprises such as seasonal and off-season vegetable cultivation, livestock (e.g. goat, poultry, buffalo) raising, knitting and weaving.

ii. Preventive and Curative Health Services

These services include implementation of drinking water projects, granting of loans for construction Pakka (permanent) latrines and requiring every member household to have a pit latrine and a kitchen garden. It also provide soft loans for health treatment and emergency purpose. The CMF has, along with some partner MFIs, also commenced a partnership linkage programme on HIV/AIDS and micro finance.

iii. Community Development Activities

HSCCL has mobilized its members for improving local infrastructure such as construction of village roads and school buildings, establishment of communication services.

iv. Awareness-Raising Activities

HSCCL has organized adult literacy classes for its members. Besides, it has organized various campaigns and talk programmes on gender equality, girl's

education, pre- and postnatal care, etc.

List of Services Offered by HSCCL

Particular

1. Services

1.1 Savings

- Compulsory savings
- Demand deposits
- Fixed deposits
- Daily savings
- Educational/child savings
- Festival savings
- Special savings
- Group savings
- Staff Provident fund

1.2 Loans

- Agriculture and livestock
- Micro enterprise and business
- Repair of house, latrine and biogas
- Social and emergency purpose
- Loan against savings
- Group/member guarantee

1.3 Insurance (Micro Life and Health)

1.4 Social Services

- Training on income-generating activities
- Health and nutrition
- Community development activities
- Awareness-raising and literacy

6.3 Organization Structure of HSCCL

The general assembly elects a seven to eleven-member BoD and a three member account supervisory committee for a three-to five-year term.

Figure 6.1: Organizational Structure of HSCCL

6.4 Rural Women Empowerment

6.4.1 Social Conditions of Respondent in Study Area

In general, the objectives of any development programme is to bring positive change in the community and to uplift the life standard of the poor, disadvantaged and backward segment of the society. The programme may bring either good or bad impact in the society based on caste/ethnic groups. The researcher found positive change occurred by cooperative programme in Pokharbhinda VDC. The following table depicts the social impact on household through saving and cooperative.

Table 6.4: Social Role of Saving and Credit Cooperative in Rural Women

Social Condition	Yes	No	Total Percentage
Occupational successful	90%(45)	10%(5)	100
Family Breakdown	0%(00)	100%(50)	100
Conflict in Family	4%(2)	96%(48)	100
Use of Outside Labor	0%(00)	100%(50)	100

Source: Field Survey, 2008 (Figure in Parenthesis refers to the no. of HHs)

The above table 6.4 reveals that only 90 percent respondents are successful in their occupation. No one has found suffer from the family breakdown due to the impact of saving and credit cooperative in the study area. Only 4 percent of households in the study area finds having conflicts between family members in the distribution of resources and savings whereas 96 percent of households have very harmonious relationship among the family members due to this cooperative that is a very positive indicator in socio-economic development of the community development and rural women empowerment that is illustrated below in the bar

diagram.

Table 6.5: Social Impacts on Rural Women in Households

Social Impacts	Excellent	Good	Bad	No concern	Total percentage
Family's views in occupation	17 (34%)	31 (61%)	2 (4%)	-	50 100
Husbands' response in occupation	13 (26%)	33 (66%)	2 (4%)	2 (4%)	50 100

Source: Field Survey, 2004

About 34 percent respondents have expressed excellent view on women involvement in community's saving and credit cooperative in the study area and 61 percent household family member have remarked women involvement good whereas the response of husband on women involvement in saving and credit cooperative in the study area was found 26 percent excellent and 66 percent good whereas 4 percent bad and no concern respectively.

6.4.2 Roles and Status of Women in the Study Area

There has been past efforts to reduce prevailing discrimination and inequalities against women. Notwithstanding these initiatives, there is a huge gap between de jure and de facto equality for women, as well as for other underprivileged caste and ethnic groups (Beijing and Beyond, 2004).

Nepali women are some of the most disadvantaged people and one of the major focuses of the SCC is to increase the role and status of women. From the research, it was found that the local governance programme has successful in

increasing the status of the women thereby increasing their role that can be considered as a positive role on women development of the SCC.

Table 6.6: Roles and Status of Women in Study Area.

Women status	Increase than before (2053 B.S.)	Decrease than before	As it is	Don't know	Total
Status in Household level	76% (38)	0	18% (9)	6% (3)	100 (50)
Status in Social level	68% (34)	-	26% (13)	6% (3)	100 (50)
Participation in group	82% (41)	-	14% (7)	4% (2)	100 (50)
Authority in household	92% (46)	-	2% (1)	6% (3)	100 (50)

Source: Field Survey, 2008

From the above table, it is clear that HSCCL has successful partially to meet the goal of rural women empowerment. Status of the women has increased by >6 percent in household level than before the establishment of cooperative. But status of women seems increased by 68 percent only in social level. After the implementation of this SCC, 92 percent women participation in group activities have found increase in the study area. Authority and responsibility of 92 percent respondent have increased than before in the study area. 6 percent of the respondent have found unknown about their authority and responsibility due to lack of education.

6.4.3 Women's Involvement in Decision-Making an Access to Financial Resources

For the purpose of this study, empowerment of women was defined as the ability of women to have access to and control over income, expenses, savings and credits, and household decision making.

Women's involvement in decision making in issue related to family planning, buying and selling of assets, community development, community meetings, voting, borrowing and use of loans and use of loan profit was taken as a proxy indicator of empowerment. In this study role of cooperative activities on women's empowerment was arrived at by calculating the percentage of women members involved in various areas vis-a-vis women non-members.

Table 6.7: Involvement of Women Members and Non-members by Area of Empowerment

Area of Empowerment	Respondents members n=50	Non members n=13
Family planning	72% (36)	61.5% (8)
Buying /Selling Assets	85% (43)	69.23% (9)
Community Development	84% (42)	38.4% (5)
Community Meetings	28% (14)	15.38% (2)
Voting	94% (47)	46.15% (6)
Taking Loans	86% (43)	46.15% (6)
Using Loans	84% (42)	38.46% (5)
Loan's Profit Use	84% (42)	30.77% (4)

Source: Field Survey, 2008

Table 6.7 presents the percentage of findings on the involvement of women

members and non-members in the above study area. The findings indicated higher percentages of women members involvement in all these areas than that of women non-members. During the household respondent survey, the researcher observed that women members were more vocal than non-members in giving information on various issue. Moreover, the female members of women-headed households (widows wives of migrant men and divorced women were more empowered in various areas. The researcher found that access to financial services can empower women to become more confident, more assertive, more likely to participate in family and community decision.

6.4.4 Level of Awareness of Political and Human Rights

It was found from the FGDs that the sampled women members were more informed about human rights, including women's rights than non-members were. Not only they were informed about the women's right issue, but they were also applying their knowledge into practice in their daily lives. Women's involvement in various income-generating activities through better financial services contributed not only to increasing their household income but also to their economic empowerment. As a result, women members' involvement in household decision making in different areas also increased in comparison with that of non-members. Table 6.7 also supports this finding. Similarly, their participation in HSCCL's various exposure programmes and community development activities increased their mobility compared to non-members. This, in turn, helped them to enhance their knowledge of different issues and thereby contributed towards their empowerment.

6.4.5 Increase in Income

Survey findings indicated increases in the incomes of 100 percent of the sample HSCCL's members since they joined their cooperative. HSCCL's savings and credits services provided and opportunity for its members to undertake different enterprises, including micro-enterprises. this helped the members to generate self-employment and increase their incomes, thereby contributing towards reducing their poverty to same extent.

The HSCCL's policy is to provide loans for productive purpose, such as cereal and cash crop production, micro-enterprises and agro-based trading activities.

Table 6.8: Increase in Income by Membership Status

Membership status	Increases in income	Percentage	Total (%)
Member (since joining cooperative)	50	100	100
Non-member (since establishment of cooperative)	6	46.15	46.15

Source: Field Survey, 2008

Table 6.8 shows that increase in the incomes of members since they joined cooperative were higher than those of non-members households since the establishment of cooperatives. Non-members also noted increase in their incomes since the establishment of cooperatives. It was because of their involvement in various income generating activities after observing the involvement of cooperatives members in the income-generating activities and their gaining knowledge and skills from them. Therefore, increase in the incomes of non-members households was spill-over effect of the activities of the cooperatives.

6.4.6 Increase in Health, Hygiene and Sanitation

Women's health has always been a cause for concern in Nepal, particularly in the context of limited economic resources and socio-cultural factors that give women a low status in our society. Factors like poor sanitation, inaccessible health services, food insecurity, lack of information awareness, difficulty in drinking safe drinking water and over workload have been responsible for women's ill health. The impacts are illustrated in the following table no 6.9.

Table 6.9: Increase in Health, Hygiene and Sanitation

	Before SCC programme	After SCC programme
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	Yes	No	Total(%)	Yes	No	Total(%)
Health post	50(100%)	0	100	50(100%)	0	50(100%)
Knowledge of family planning	30(60%)	20(40%)	50(100%)	50(100%)	0	50(100%)
Use of toilet	19(38%)	31(62%)	50(100%)	45(90%)	5(10%)	50(100%)
Safe drinking water	34(68%)	16(32%)	50(100%)	40(80%)	10(20%)	50(100%)

Source: Field Survey 2,008

Table 6.9 show that before the implementation of this programme only 60 percent of respondent have knowledge of family planning and they are practicing by now 100 percent of the women in study area have found having proper knowledge of family planning and they are using family planning means. The percentage of toilet users after the implementation of this SCC, have reached 90 percent but the percentage of toilet users before this SCC was 38 percent only. The percentage of population having safe drinking water was found 80 percent after the SCC but this figure was only 68 percent before the SCC.

From the above finding it can be concluded that the knowledge of health, hygiene, sanitation, drinking water and family planning of the respondent have much increased after establishment of HSCCL.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

7.1 Summary

The cooperation program of the corporate department of Nepal government has boost up the bottom up decision making approach instead of top down approach. The research problems were feeling of women on cooperation program, level of their participation and effectiveness of the program to reduce the poverty through women empowerment.

The objectives of the study are study of socio-economic status of the women of Himalaya saving and credit limited and role of cooperation on women. Different tools and techniques were used for data collection. Descriptive research was carried out as well as both primary and secondary data were collected for this study, Perception of saving and credit cooperation was collected from 50 respondents and 13 non- members based on proposed accidental random sampling from pokharbhinda PRA and anthropological tools were used to analyze the data .

From the study it is cleat that the most of the population of Pokharbhinda VDC has still remained largely poor, specially women, despite the saving and credit cooperative initiative. The basic indicators those are very vital for the socio-economic development of the society such as education, health hygiene and sanitation, drinking water, occupation etc. Play major role for the positive change in the community. From the ethnic composition perspective, most of the respondents of the VDC were poor in social as well as economic activities before the establishment of SCC.

Yadav 17 percent is dominant in population composition as compare to other

caste group. Such dominant caste group is the major obstacle in empowering women in empowering women in terms of decision-making, awareness and other factors.

Similarly the economically active population (age group 16-59) indicates that the possibility of active participation of female in the area of economic productivity if the women are given chance. The overall educational status of the sampled population of the study area is 20 percent. (Table No. 5.3)

The sampled household population engaged in agriculture is 32 percent but engaged in services are only 6 percent. Mostly women are directly or indirectly involved in agricultural activities. After the implementation of SCC programme women have an easy access in the economic sector. The landholding, among the sampled members is little schemed as 2 percent of the members hold more than 10 bigha.

Exactly 66 percent of sampled members have nuclear type of family, which might be a major factor unequal distribution of landholding.

SCC has been instrumental for considerable successful in terms of community awareness, which has been reflected upon equal opportunity to women in the selection of occupation, education, training and various other social activities. It is evident that women's role and status has been increased positively than before after the establishment of SCC. The level of increase is slow and gradual but has proved significant in terms of household decision making and in economic productivity. The household decision making power and authority of women has been significantly improved and reached after the establishment of SCC.

7.2 Conclusions

The study showed that as financial intermediaries, the SCC was able to meet only some practical financial needs of its members, specifically basic saving and credit services. However members expected their SCC to provide more (in terms of larger amounts) and other types of financial services. The members expected that these financial services come in various forms, namely: 1. Savings accumulated in ways that are more compatible with the seasonality of their income, which in a large majority of members is also limited; 2. Affordable and regularly available credit or loans; 3. Funds that members can access from for specific social purposes such as health (in case of illness, reproductive health), and accident and 4. funds that increase the stability of their savings and loans. These needs expressed by the respondents members were related more to their practical need for security and strategic interest of owning land.

The study showed that the non-financial, developmental activities carried out in the HSCCL with its members as participants and beneficiaries included the following types of activities that are "services" at the same time, namely; social intermediation, enterprise development, social services and women's empowerment. HSCCL also carried out community-development-related activities. These services/activities met the members' practical needs for literacy, good health (particularly nutrition, reproductive health, and awareness on HIV/AIDS) and sanitation, and practical skill needed in livelihoods. The rural women's empowerment services/activities addressed the strategic interests of women, specially those that were related to awareness of women's rights.

The HSCCL model was found effective in providing financial and social services for the Terai-based communities. HSCCL's financial services helped

communities (through direct and spill-over effects) in increasing their incomes, which thereby contributed to reducing their poverty. Similarly, technical services in terms of training provided by HSCCL to their members helped in enhancing their skills, which also indirectly contributed to increasing their incomes. In addition, undertaking of adult literacy classes contributed to making illiterate adult literate. HSCCL's community development activities were recognized in the community. Increased incomes and knowledge generated by training and exposure programmes helped in empowering the women members. The HSCCL has, therefore, a role to play in poverty reduction and development in Terai areas.

Although HSCCL had good outreach, it had problems in reaching the ultra poor in its working area. Its membership being voluntary, those women were aware and literate join the programme and the poor were left behind. They had no special programme that emphasized motivating the poor to join them.

The activities of HSCCL were found effective in generating wider role in its own area of operation in addition to the general role on the livelihood and empowerment of members at individual and household levels. Wider role included but was not limited to the following areas:

- Decrease in existing interest rates, specially of money lenders, in the working area of HSCCL,
- Availability of better financial services for the people in the Pokharbhinda VDC,
- Establishment and expansion of markets in communities,
- Creation of social capital such as group solidarity among members,
- Use of solidarity for exerting pressure against social problems,
- Increase in women's involvement in household decision-making process.

7.3 Recommendations

The following recommendation has been suggested for further improvement of the HCCL program in the future.

1. Strengthen HSCCL's capability in financial management and investment including the identification, design and delivery of other financial products and services.
2. In meeting members needs,
 - 2.1 Consider the following interventions:

Needs	Probable Intervention (Addressed to members)
<p>Practical need for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Education for self <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Basic literacy - Advanced literacy * Education for children * Having own livelihood and skills to able to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have own income - Have savings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Basic adult literacy course(short) * Advanced literacy course (long) * Scholarship fund * Skills training and livelihoods, including entrepreneurship and business management training * Motivation training to increase saving in SCC
<p>Strategic interests on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Security <p>Linkages</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Provision of access to insurance services for members *Motivation training to increase savings in SCC * Study tours to other SCCs, both mixed-sex and women -only, resource institutions such as co-op development

<p>* Freedom to make own's choices and own decisions</p>	<p>agencies, both government and NGO, and women's organization</p> <p>* Awareness seminar on women's rights for women only.</p> <p>* Gender sensitivity training to women only, the raining must teach about women's fundamental rights as human beings.</p>
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2.2 HSCCL should further try to meet member's practical needs for basic literacy as well as advanced literacy (for those who had gone through the basic literacy course), health care, livelihood (for example, a training on caring for and maintenance of livestock would be useful to many member's and education for their children and for themselves and their strategic interest to be protected from violence as according to members, these are the needs they need more assistance on.

2.3 Interventions must also include those that address women's strategic interest such as

- Increased time for self that can be used for rest and recreation on pursuit of activities that improve women's condition and in the long term, their position vis-a-vis men in their community (to address the issue of high workload)
- Awareness of women's condition and position vis-a-vis (to address the issue of women's subordination vis-a-vis men)
- Recognition of all types of work that they do (to address the issue of invisibility of women's work), and
- Increases access to opportunities (to address the issue of women's marginalization due to cultural factors such as caste and ethnicity)

3. Members should be encouraged to participate more actively in discussion and deliberations in annual general meetings and monthly meetings of HSCCL.
4. HSCCL boards should be encouraged to consult members related to non-financial, developmental activities of the HSCCL as they are interested in participating in these activities.
5. HSCCL boards, staff and members must gain some knowledge and understanding of the principle, values and practices of co-operatives.
6. The government programmes and/or I/NGOs should continue to promote the poverty focused SCCs model to improve access of financial services to the poor in terai region.
7. HSCCL should diversify its financial products as per the needs of its members for which it should conduct market research.
8. It should raise the required capital internally or by accessing funds from external leading agencies.
9. HSCCL should address the problems by developing strategies that would motivate poor people to join it.
10. The follow of credit facilities needs to be reviewed and should be provided as per priority basis at the rate of low interest.
11. Educational awareness programmes should be more focused.
12. Detail feasibility study of the area to be focused should be carried out before hand in order to ensure pay back of seed money and interest rate in the stimulated time period.

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