

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Women constitute half of the population of the world. However, their participation in development process seems not good enough. Women participation is essential to pave the path of development. Unless their participation no any development activities enhance successfully. The slogan of women empowerment remains only in the paper than the reality. Main problem of the developing countries is the failure to recognize women potentialities and thrust.

Women can play the vital role in the development process of the nation. The patriarchal structure of our country shows that, women are considered as passive in their societal role and they often only played the subordinate role. These days, people are realizing those women's participation utmost aspects for development. Men and women have now started participating on equal footing development activities in many developed countries having faith and relationship as that of "muscles and nail of the finger"; such relationship bring drastic changes in their social position.

Women's role is an indispensable human resource was initiated only with the onset of the international wave of "women in Development" which took all the South Asian countries including Nepal in its fold after the UN declaration of 1975-1985 as the UN Decade for women. Prior to this, women had been rendered statistically invisible by development practitioners. Women as the traditional producers and managers of the domestic and subsistence sector were highly undermined, their activities being automatically labelled as "non-monetized", "non-marketable" and "non-productive". Such acute statistical bias reflected in national accounting further fed by staunch traditional

norms, values and perceptions can be held responsible for the shift in women's status to "non status"

Nepal is also victim of such unpleasant situation. Over the last three decades from 1970s to 2000s, the focus of development policies and objectives have shifted from being growth oriented to people oriented. The main emphasis of the programs and policies were helped the paupers, impotent and social deprived people of the state. In fact, such programs were failed to catching up their mission due to the complex political and social structure. The evidences show that there was no any change the triple roles like productive, reproductive and community development of the women.

Prior to the UN declaration of 1975-1985 as the UN Decade for women, any well defined women's organization in Nepal was practically non-existent. Few women's organizations were emerged as an outcome of the political changes after 1950 their primary interest were motivated and designed to serve their own circle of families and friends instead of women at large. In addition, donor driven agencies were also interested to invest in the sector of women's empowerment. Their main thrust was to boost their economic standard; however their idea seems unproductive and vain.

The focus of the Nepal Women's Organization established in 1960 was directed more towards social welfare activities like knitting, sewing and weaving. Although, it's interest was not purely in the uplift of women. Nevertheless, its efforts to initiate an interest and concern for women and their development cannot go unappreciated.

It was only after the UN declaration of 1975 as the international year of women and 1975-1985 as the UN decade for women that a national committee on International Women's Year in Nepal was formulated. This committee attracted considerable foreign funds for seminars and conferences on women issues headed by women leaders of the world.

The International Women's Year witnessed several other women related institutions both governmental and non-governmental such as Regional

Women's Training Centres and a Mother's Club in 1975. The Business and Professional Women's Club in 1976 and Women's Services Coordination Committee in 1977 within the 'Social Services National Coordination Council' are a few other examples. The monumental work of 'Status of Women in Nepal' carried out by CEDA/T.U. Such works give an academic input women's development sector.

Therefore, we can precisely conclude that women's status has been kept to a minimum in the past. In fact, the various policies and programs have aided in rendering women's status to a "non-status". This "non-status" itself represents the restrictions imposed over the various roles that a woman must perform within the household sphere including the role as decision makers.

The economic, demographic and social factors are found as the most important factors which directly or indirectly affect the decision making process. Women's involvement in the market economy lends them greater power in terms of household decision making in important matters. This can be attributed to the contribution of women towards the household income. On the other hand, confinement of women to the domestic and subsistence sector automatically implies a low status conferred to them terms of decision making powers (SSNCC, 1977).

In connection to the above view, greater confinement of the women to the household implies higher fertility rates. Such a demographic phenomenon further implies low economic participation among these women and consequently a low status attached to them. Again, conventional social norms and beliefs trend to diminish the overall status of women both within an outside the household. The general belief is that women belong to the domestic sector which releases little time off from their overwhelming work load for any kind of productive economic participation.

All these factors bestow the least possible decision making powers to these women as compared to their male counterpart. Whatever input they might contribute in this respect might be on unimportant matters, they being thought

as incapable of making any effective decisions. The high rate of illiteracy especially among the rural women might be another factor which confers a low state to them. The male perception of women being worthy of only their reproductive roles reinforced by the lack of self confidence of the women themselves to come forth as capable members, all aid in the process of their low states.

Remedies to withstand their problem and enhance their qualitative livelihood are forwarded. However, the most important factor to be realized is effective integration of local women into the mainstream of development activities must being with a clear conception of whom these women are? What they do? and what do they want?. They should no be confined to merely their reproductive roles and seen as a weak lot in need of support. Rather, they deserve to be recognized as the ones with tremendous potential, who if given adequate opportunities, could surface with productive powers to cope with important matters including effective decision making.

This study has been carried out in Malunga VDC to find out the socio-economic condition of women of that village. In the study women have been surviving under the patriarchal system. In the community women are involving in the different community based programs like ward meeting, school management, community forest and various other development activities. Agriculture being the main sources of income, women's participation is high in household work whereas male involve in the various works like business, official works. We find high involvement of male in buying agricultural goods, tools or selling them. Male member decide paying labour wages, purchasing and selling livestock, fruits and vegetables. The women of the study area gets low wages even they work similar categories of the work. Women themselves discriminate the female children within their home. Female are inhumanly treated if she gave the birth of female child. The mother has a concept that the daughter after marriage has to go to other's house and the mother doesn't bother about her education and participation in social and economic activities.

In male dominated society we can observe the larger gender inequality. Male are given preference in many socio-economic activities. We find involvement of male in district as well as in national level programs rather than women. Many opportunities are given to male rather than women from the household bases. Women's participation is minimum in every decision making and job opportunities.

Women of the Malunga V.D.C. are living in miserable conditions. Regarding the educational aspects most of the women are illiterate and a few have managed to forward their study up to the certificate level.

Women of this area are mostly involved in agriculture. There is very less involvement of women in other economical activities like business and governmental services. On contrary to this, male are involved in business and government officials. Women do not have clear concept to elaborate various economical program to enhance their financial condition.

Though various programs like Adult literacy programs, negotiations and seminar are organized by various governmental and non governmental agencies still the women of this area are lagging behind in educational, economical and social aspects.

Economically, Malunga Village Development Committee women's are contributing greater share of the farm workers. Besides, they have to take care of their children, cattle's and manage family in preparing foods and serving males. In other words, they can not escape from their domestic drudgery as it is their primary and prioritized sector. Thus they do not get chance for involvement in other economical activities, due to the time constraints and their various roles in the society such as reproductive and community roles.

So due to the society being overruled by patriarchal values, women are far behind than man in various development, economical, educational and social aspects.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Women constitute 50.06 % of the total population of 2,31,51,423 (CBS 2001). Yet, this vital section of the society is the ones bestowed with minimum access to resources, information, and food and services both within and outside the household sphere. This holds true to even a greater extent for the marginal rural women who shoulder heavy workload amidst difficult social and ecological conditions.

Their role as managers of the subsistence sector is shunned off as unproductive, their opinion in important household matters is hardly considered, their freedom within the household sphere is restricted, leave alone the outside sphere and are overall conferred the status of a weak lot. The reasons for such as predicament may spring from the strong gender bias evident in the economic and political field, conventional social norms, values and perceptions and attitudes of the people themselves. But whatever the reason, the outcome remains the same-the widened gap between the status of men and women.

By adopting such concepts without looking into the realities of rural household and women's productive roles, both women and the development process itself have suffered.

It is ironical that any specific mention of women was made only in the 6th National Five Year Plan for the first time in Nepalese history. Because in the programs up to 5th five yrs plan any consciousness to the women empowerment and development was not given by various governmental sectors. But even with the gradual consciousness of women's importance, policies and programs designed to assist them have been limited to social welfare activities. The numerous development interventions, no matter how well intentioned have failed to effectively reach their target groups (women), reinforcing various forms of exploitations and further weakening their positions.

Therefore, the fact that women as the oppressed and suppressed lot still persists. This is reflected in almost all aspect of their lives including their powers of decision making in the household. Decision making is also an important aspect which measures the relative status of the households' members. Although women have access to decision making in unimportant matters, they still remain excluded from important decision making.

The population of female is greater than that of male in Malunga VDC. Though the women have larger population they are involved in minor decision, such as food items and clothing but the major and crucial decision is done by male such as livestock management, farm management, selling and purchasing of land etc.

So, to identify the major issue why only the male are involved in major decision making have carried out this study.

On the contrary, if women are endowed with decision making power, they deserved a significant improvement in the household set up and subsequently in the society itself could be achieved. So, further programs should be designed by the government to enable the women with their productive powers of effective decision making.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to analyse the role of women's in Household Decision Making of the Malunga Village Development Committee. The specific objectives are as follows:

-) To analyse the role of women in household decision making i.e. farm management, labour utilization, educational aspects and family planning.
-) To examine the role of women in household resource procurement and their use.

-) To examine the social status of women in the study area such as their employment, economic and educational status.

1.4 Importance of the Study

This study will be benefited for applied and action research. The study centralizes upon women's ability or strength as well as their weaknesses. Patrimonial structure of the nation discarded the women participation in social, political and economic sector which can precisely present in the thesis. The planners and policy makers' advocates and professionals may get the benefit from this study. The issue of gender discrimination and should implement various programs based on women's self confidence decision making skills and ability to envision a better life.

Decision making skills and ability to envision a better life, and which address the concerns of Nepalese men as they are the one's who will need to share power with women. This study directly illustrates the roles or holding of women in the family. Many new dimensional can be identified to accelerate and enhance the participation of women in development sector.

1.5 Limitation of the Study

The study is narrowed down in our area of concern to only household decision making and therefore we would be analyzing, the relative status of men and women is the same household. In other words, we would be ignoring the inter-caste, inter-class relations and other factors between men and women during our analysis of decision making. The study has been focused in a very small range of Geographical area Malunga VDC only.

Our data generated from the field study allow us to measure the male/female status (in terms of decision making) only within the household, but not in the wider spheres of society. In other words our overall data analysis is applicable only at the micro level i.e. household.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Role of Women in Decision Making

Women have very low participation in decision-making process, 70% of household related and external decision are entirely made by male member of house (Acharya, 1995).

Women are the primary supporters of the domestic and subsistence sector. Their major role in agricultural production particularly, both in labourers and managers of the production process (Acharya and Bennett, 1983).

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

Acharya and Bennett (1981) have singled out "decision making" from the multidimensional concept of status which reflects the internal dynamic of sexual stratification within the household. They developed some model from the study of eight different village communities from the status of women in Nepal. In this model, the village were more conceived to be operating in such four spheres of subsistence activities as household domestic work, agricultural production activities, work in the village labour market and local bazaar and total employment in the wider economy beyond the village.

The finding of the model shows that in the first sphere women participation in farming and domestic activities constituted 86 % women

impact accounts for 57 % in agro-production or in sphere second, while their inputs in sphere third and fourth drop down to 38 % respectively. Their total contribution to the household's income remains 50 % as poses to 44 % for male. The remaining 6 % of income is contributed by the children of 10-14 years.

The same study highlight another interesting pattern, that different degree of female participation in market economy in different communities, which subsequently relates to their decision making power within the households. Women from Hindu communities have greater concentration in domestic and subsistence production. Women from Tibeto-Burma groups have concentration in market activities. This implies “women in the more orthodox Hindus communities who are largely confined to domestic and subsistence production display much less significant role in major household's economic decision those in the Tibeto-Burman communities where women participate activity in the market economy” (Acharya and Bennett, 1983).

Acharya (1997) stated that conventional social custom is one of the major reason obstruction women from participation fully in economic development, which result low decision-making power in the women's hand. Higher the participation of women for economic development, higher will be the decision making power of women. On the other hand, the social conception that only woman are responsible for the reproduction of human beings, conception, delivery and upbringing of the child has made it extremely difficult for women to participate in the development process as equal member of society. Due to all these reasons their status compared to male is very low. Even political social and cultural development follows the economic development of a country. In this context, the committee constituted by United Nations in the status of women trying to gain for equal rights for women in various field of their social and economic life, suggestion for removal of gender inequalities in legal economic, social and educational matters.

Acharya (1997) concludes that in addition to the activities being performed under national and international auspices activities involving women in development process, status of women in Nepal can be improved by giving attention to such things as making specific studies about the economic, social and cultural activities of women in Nepalese societies. Providing similar school and curriculum for both girls and boys students, eliminating inequalities in inheritance rights, family rights and all over legal rights, involving the educated women in office and involving them in seminar and symposia from the time-to-time etc.

Greater participation of women in decision making will be great steps towards ensuring women of their right to voluntary motherhood and in turn improve her status. Dahal (1992) summarizes the information from the status of women in Nepal (CEDA, 1981) that among high cast groups. The authority structure is male dominated, women cannot make their own decision and they have no independent sources of income and property. Among the women for Baragaule, Loharung Rai and Kham Magar, they have liberal social structure, which permit in the accumulation of property. Likewise the Newar, the Tamang and the Tharu women can have their own independent source of property. Out of that, among the Newar of Kirtipur women cannot make her own independent decision to take her sick baby even to the hospital, with out prior permission of the senior adult male of the family (Dahal, 1992).

Women's public life is culturally restricted to the degree that it is casually related to the patriarchal social system which confines them to subordinated position. Religion, ethnicity, culture, law, tradition, history and social attitudes place severe limits on women's participation in public life, and also control in their private life. These factors have both shape the cultures worldview and governed individual self image, subsequently affecting the understanding and practice of development. This fact is largely evidenced by the reality that a negligible number of Nepalese women are involved in professional, management and decision making position (Shtri Shakti, 1995).

UNICEF Report (1987) depicts, that women's contribution to economic and social progress is still constrained by their limited access to education and information which the full development of utilization of their intellectual and productive capacities. For a large proportion of women, the written world still finds no meaning. Many rural women who do become literate however, will lose their skill because there are few opportunities for them to practice. Low level of educational attainment among the women and prejudice in favour of male recruitment may also negatively affect the formal employment of women. In 1982, in government service only 7% of gazetted officers and 5% of the supporting staff were women. Women constitute less than 10% of decision making position at the national and local level. Most of the decisions concerning activities are made by men. The study shows about 50 % of decision are made by men, 19% jointly and 31% by female, which shows very low %age of decision making power on the part of women.

Satnam Kaur (1987) in a case study carried out in Haryana state, emphasizes upon the need to give due recognition of female decision making especially in the case of home and farm affairs among the rural families. She claims that women are never found as final decision- maker in many matters except for cases of food and nutrition of the children. Ironically women are not even free to decide about participating in women's organization such as Mahila Mandals. Financial decisions are found as solely manipulated by husbands except in few cases. She concludes saying planned, programs should be designed which support women's potential as capable and worthy decision makers.

Kaur goes on to emphasize education and access to educational opportunities as an important factor influencing women's input in the decision making process. She observes as "educated women are better placed as compared to their illiterate counterpart" (Kaur 1987: 120).

Shrestha (1994) noted that the decision making power of women may increase with an equality of participation at all levels of planning and policy

making not as recipient beneficiaries, labour and input contribution and consultants but as active change agents at the concerned level. It does not mean the involvement of one of two women or the wives of the leaders, but the involvement of women and men in the same proportion in decision making as their proportion in the communicates at large. She also mentioned that the women of Nepal are so dependent to men, if the partners of members deny to give shelter to them, it is a question of basic survivals. This system has made women so helpless, houseless, and dependent that without men they will not survive. So, in this inhuman system the right of survival is laid on the hearts of men.

“Another Development with Women: A View from Asia” Speaks of the Asian Women who have been subjected to acute social, economic and political prejudice and oppression in the past and which continues even to this day, may be to a lesser degree. She argues that, “the monopolies of economic and political power as well as access to knowledge are the three major instruments by which the present structure of inequality between and within nations in maintained.” (Mazumdar 1982:65). The majority of the women in the world, especially the Asian women, are excluded from these instruments. Their position is further belittled by the fact that their work is considered as “non-productive. This undervaluation of women’s contribution to the economy is closely associated with their inferior social status and also “the relative loss of individual freedom and status with the family” (Ibid: 69), He also talks of non-socialist countries, where the extension of capitalism has further marginalized the economic and social roles of women. They have been projected as mere consumers, worthy of only social welfare services but not as partners with equal say in building a new society. Such welfare policies, no matter how well intentioned, are found to reinforce various forms of exploitation of these women.

Mazumdar also highlights upon the fact that in Asia, women constitute the single largest group engaged in agriculture and food production. some

Asian traditions even claim that women discovered agriculture. Yet very few of them control the basic asset-land. Although they participate actively in the labour process, they are often excluded from the decision making process.

Further, women in agriculture attach highest priority to food crops, as it becomes their responsibility to feed their families. Therefore, their greater control on agriculture decisions could be made instrumental in reducing the areas under food crops.

Mazundar concludes, saying that constraints of family, illiteracy and all traditional barriers and attitudes prevent women's ability to influence vital decision making. She suggests forming grass root level organizations responsive to the needs of the poor and local women. Along with this is needed a new approach to study the social organizations, i.e. families and household in a clearer perspective. Better knowledge of women both in the past and present can bring a lot of changes to these perceptions.

Janice Jiggins (1989) speaks of the sub-Saharan African women who are involved in almost all household based agricultural activity which support rural livelihoods. An overall 30 % of rural households are estimated to be headed by women who contribute 80 % of agricultural labour mainly as unpaid labour. They produce 60 % of the food consumed by rural households and contribute over one third of all household income via small business, trading and casual labour.

But despite their major input to household food and economic security, "patriarchal family and social structures deny women real property rights in land, limit women's access to control over the proceeds of their own labour and constrain their decision making roles," (Jiggins, 1989: 953).

Government incentives, provisions for services and market support have been low for these women. With increasing responsibilities to be fulfilled within the household on the one hand and major resources on the other, their activities are increasingly under stress. This probably can be associated with

their high mortality rates than in other developing countries besides the inadequate health care provided for women.

Although they support the household economy, women are increasingly becoming dependent on self-employment on wage work for survival. This is because the whole economic, social and legal set-up is such that it provides few opportunities for women from being productive. To cite an example, the statuses of divorced and separated women are legally vulnerable. They have less access to credit and social support so much so that separated women are not allowed to make economic and financial decisions on the assumption that such authority lies only with the separated husband.

The continuing male dominance and unequal household responsibilities further worsens the position of these women. And although informal sector provides for female entrepreneurship .especially in trading or small-scale agro-industry, they are faced with many problems such as interference and manipulation by men, raiding of cash to meet domestic expenditure and competition with licensed state enterprise.

However, Jiggins also suggest various micro level interventions which would strengthen women's position "in the labour process, within the household and as independent wage and income earners" (Jiggins, 1989: 960). Such interventions would be supportive of the expansion of income generating opportunities and activities for women which would stop further deterioration of their livelihoods.

According to the PCRW tripartite Review (1989) and Impact Evaluation Study of PCRW (1988) production Credit for Rural Women (PCRW) extends credit facilities especially to rural women which acts as an initial boost for them to involve in income generating activities and subsequently achieve sustained self-reliance. Although, the overall performance of PCRW in this direction has not been significant, yet it is considered as a major break-through in the livelihoods of the rural poor women.

PCRW, through a sponsor agent hopes to influence policies for achieving equity between the male-female wages to increase the overall household earnings. Therefore, its main objective is to draw the women into the market economy. For this, PCRW allows easy access to low cost credit for rural women. It also provides for various training that would empower women with skills and increase their participation rate in local decision making and development schemes. It also supports activities that would reduce the time spent by women on domestic chores which could then be utilized in productive income generating activities.

Krishna Ahooja-Patel speaks of the absolute necessity to bring women's issues into the forefront of development strategies. Although such issues have been denied access in important national and international discussions in the past, she feels that the preliminary term of "women and development" now being replaced by "women in development," is quite a significant step towards a realistic perception of women their lives.

Ahooja-Patel observes that "the collective effect of perceptions, values and lifestyles have distorted women's personality and stunted her growth, reducing her to the size of a 'crippled' tree," (Patel, 1982:19).

Such values and norms have imposed restrictions to her time, energy and space and rendered her status to a "non-status" according to her, this "non-status" of women is "tied to two poles of their immobility: in the work cycle (production) and in the life cycle (reproduction). These, in turn, have led to an overall third immobility: that of being marginalize in both decision making and decision- taking." (Patel, 1982:19) these three immobility's may stem from women's place in the family, in the labour market and their relationship to the society. Although the extent of immobility imposed on women may vary between families and societies, the outcome remains the same-that of suppressing the integrity and creativity of women at large.

Ahooja-Patel goes on further to highlight upon the roles of women in food production, industrial work, health provision and education.

According to her, women constitute the largest number of food producers- approximately 50 % in Africa, 30-40 % in Asia and slightly less in Latin America. Yet this vital section of the food producers are themselves “the most undernourished and in some places the hungriest part of population” (Patel, 1982:22).

The industrial scene also provides a picture of the women’s need to struggle for survival. While women occupy the least qualified jobs, almost all qualified jobs are filled by men. Moreover, the women’s jobs are characterized by minimum wages which accounts for the fact that their earnings are much lower as compared to that of an average man.

Beside the heavy manual and menial work that women perform, their energies are further drained throughout their life by the reproductive processes. They are also the ones to be highly neglected regarding medical treatment.

However, women’s health problems cannot be resolved unless the perception of her sexuality undergoes a fundamental change. Further, until it is the third party or the male member who decide on her reproductive capacity, there seems little possibility of resolving the health problems faced by these women.

Where education is concerned, one billion women in the third world countries cannot read and write and in some countries as much as 90 % of the female population is illiterate. Besides, the female drop out rates increase as they move up the educational ladder from primary to secondary education. Their educational status enhances their inferiority complex in the competitive world-a complex which starts from home where they are given a low priority in household expenditure and other equally important matters.

Finally, Krishna Ahooja-Patel concludes on a questioning note “can we afford to trace any path of development without pooling the untapped resources of women?” She emphasizes upon women as an indispensable human resources and the necessity to mobilize them for any significant and balanced development of a nation.

Different books and prospectus supported a lot for my study. I have consulted various writings and magazines which inspired me to study about the women of a typical VDC which finally gives the national status of the women as a whole. Some of the references are: World Bank Report, Human rights in Nepal (A Status Report 2003), Economic participation and household decision making in Nepal, Dangerous Wives and Sacred sisters, women in rural development and Shtri Shakti.

2.2 Status of Women

According to the constitution of Nepal, all citizens of Nepal are equal under the law, regardless of sex, caste and ethnicity. Nevertheless, in actual practice, illiteracy, poverty deep-rooted socio-cultural values and traditions, especially cost prejudices, and political factors have all often combined to prevent women from exercising their human rights. While human rights are common to men and women, there is a large area in the human rights of women that are either not recognized or neglected.

Thus there should not be any biasness in ethnicity, sex, language, religion, politics, socio-economic and cultural aspects regarding human rights. So to honour one's respect and development of human UNO in 10th December 1948 announced worldwide layout about human rights.

“The constitution guarantees all citizens the equality before law and equal protection of law. No one shall be discriminated against on the basis of sex. Despite these constitutional and legal provisions, Nepalese women are suffering from social, economical and political discrimination. Major areas of discrimination include citizenship rights, property, employment, reproductive health rights, marriage, family relations and punishment and legal proceedings. Deep-rooted cultural norms and patriarchal values are themselves unfavourable to women. As a result, social preference for sons in schooling, neglect of women's health needs, child marriage and unmatched marriage bigamy/

polygamy are still part of the reality. Dowry and domestic violence are still other problems.” (CEDAW, 1995: 44-49)

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

To avoid any social, economical and cultural discrimination to the women UNO in 18 December, 1979 prepared convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women known as CEDAW. Nepal also signed this treaty in April 22, 1991.

“Nepalese society being patriarchal, people still doesn’t see women politicians as their leaders, no matter how capable they are. They tend to see them through the prism of social roles as sister, wife and daughter-in-law etc” (Karki, 2003:1).

Commenting upon the difference between pre-and post- 1990 years, almost all the women respondents stated that in the post-1990 days, “women have the opportunity to speak and exchange views with their husband, to participate in public forums, institutions and political parties, and also get elected in different tiers of local government bodies, particularly the VDCs but they also pointed out that women still are not often encouraged to participate in socio-cultural and political activities, and when they do, their ‘character’ is questioned and, worse, the male members of their families citizen them” (Dahal *et. al.* 1992:71).

Some of the works practice within the country, though less are appreciable. Increasing literacy, low birth rate, age at marriage are the milestones of women’s empowerment and progress. Women’s participation in restriction to drug and alcohol right to parental property and society of women

in favour of changes plays vital role in the outstanding progress and development of women.

“It is contented that currently there are more than 100 legal provisions in 54 different laws, including the constitution, that discriminate against women.” (Human Rights in Nepal, A Status Report, 2003: 76).

Human rights are women’s rights which they should exercise. Constitution of Nepal 2047 describes all are equal and are to be treated equally.

“The proportion of women employees declines as one moves up the administrative hierarchy- of the total 647 Special and First Class Officers, only 26 are women (4.02%)” (A Status Report, 2003:74).

According to the article 26th the law regarding women’s education, health and job is passed by the constitution 2047. Every time women’s sorrow, tears and feelings are taken as weakness and disability of women (Parajuli, 2058).

In the study of Nepalese women sociology by Bennet (1983) How women are facing the hazard ness situation in family and society as a whole. Similarly, according to (March, 1983) how the works of male and female is different and who is given more priority is clearly described of the Tamang society.

To talk, share advice and solve the worldwide problems of women four worldwide women conferences have been held. First women conference was in Mexico, second and third in Nairobi. After the participation of Nepalese women in fourth world wide conference in Beijing his majesty government established the ministry of women, children and social welfare (2052 B.S.).

The fourth worldwide women’s conference organized by UNO in 1995 in Beijing is the historical milestone of women’s empowerment and their rights. From 5th-9th June in 2000 A.D. UNO organized the 3rd conference regarding women which is also known as Beijing+5. To ensure the layout of

Beijing +5 and to improve the hindrances and face the present challenges National Women Commission in 24th Falgun 2058 was established under the chairmanship of Durga Pokhrel.

Education is the most important factor for the development of human personality as well as for the development of a nation. As women make half of countries population, education of women is very important and it should receive top priority in the context of development of modern Nepal. Mahatma Gandhi said, “Educate a man and you will have a person educated but educate a woman and you will have a whole family educated”.

Acharya and Bennett (1982) study reflects that in Nepali express less desire to educate girls than boys. This is manifested in two ways (i) fewer people are willing to send girls to school and (ii) even among those who do send girls to school there are very few who want as much education for the girls as for boys.

The research done by Family health found that the vast majority (80%) of Nepalese women have never been to school. One in nine has attended primary school, 6% have some secondary education and less than 3% have passed their S.L.C. four of five women are illiterate (Family Health Survey, 1996).

The economy of Nepal is totally dependent on agriculture production and women play a major role as they actively participated in the various farm activities. 98.1% of the economically active rural women are agriculture workers, hence women importance.

According to Alfred De’ Souza, in the countries of South Asia, between 70% to 80% of the total female work force is employed in agricultural activities either as cultivator or farm labour (Sauza, 1980:12).

The role of women in various farming activities is crucial not only because of the number engaged but also because of the variety of agricultural

activities they perform. Women participated in all farm activities required to grow food grain, vegetables, and fruits and live stock farming. The role played by women is significant in the development of the nation, but all these workers by women are considered voluntary (Gautam, 1998).

Women's health is a societal issue. Improving women's health and well being improves not only their own life but also those of their children and contributes to improve household and community welfare.

The health status of the Nepalese people in general has been improving though it is low compared to other less development countries. The health status of women remains still lower. The life expectancy for men is 55.9 years of age and it is 53.4 years of age for female (Mathema, 1997).

Luitel (1992) states that the Nepalese women's health is in miserable condition in the sense that they are quite neglected from their very childhood stage. The cultural norms, economic conditions and preferential attitude of parents towards the boys are in the centre of the ill/poor health of women.

Age is the important factor determining the working load of women. Aged women have to work more than young girls. Among men and women of some age group, women have to work much more than men.

Adult men spent 92.2% of their work time in productive work, while women spend only 38.8% of their daily work time in productive work. But again given that women work more hour than men. Men have about seven hours of free time while boys of 10-14 age groups put in about 5 hours of work per day, girls of same age group have almost full work day i.e. they work for an average of 7.6 hours per day (Acharya, 1981: 127).

Marital status makes women totally dependent upon her husband because her rights upon the family property are only through husband. About the women's right upon family property Bennet wrote that "men are endowed

with the right to property by virtue of the biological fact of birth. Women's right to property depend almost entirely upon the social fact of marriage (i.e. on their role as an wife)." Therefore women's economic security is entirely dependent on their adherence to strict social norms of proper martial behaviour (Bennet, 1980: 89).

Economically, women have no rights to parental property as well as in the husband's home. They bear 70% of the household work burden and yet have no success to economic resources. Even doing the same work, they get lower wages as most of the women work as unskilled labour in carpet and garment factories and get low paid due to illiteracy (Luintel, 2000).

Women in many developing countries marry when they are very young. Almost 50% of African women, 40% of Asian and 30% of Latin American women are married by the age of 18 (World's women, UN 1991).

Women still have fewer social options for survival other than marriage. According to culturally defined ideals, getting married and producing children are the ultimate goals for women. All other options including education and employment are only secondary (Acharya, 1997).

In the Nepalese society the status and position of women depend on their economic condition. Women play significant role in the development of the nation. In the past, women were considered a second grade citizen in most of the countries including Nepal. The status of Nepalese women is very poor. They have very less access to health, security and other basic needs of life.

The United Nations has defined the status of women in the context of their access to knowledge, economic resource and political power and their personal autonomy in the process of decision-making. Women from different cast/ ethnic groups have different social status in their respective communities and women from the ethnic groups seem to process better status than the women from Hindu caste group. The dominant Hindu culture and the

patriarchal value system of the country have influenced the status of women as their subordinate.

Although there is imbalance in status between men and women as in the most of the developing countries, women in Nepal are also engaged in domestic chore along with the social and economic activities required for survival. Despite their important roles undertaken for social and economic life capacity and potential, women have more disadvantage than male partners due to an inadequate access to exposure, technology, credit and environment.

Women have low degree of opportunities for their education and have hardly any access to employment. There is lack of women participation in decision making from house to the executive levels. There is no positive attitude towards women's health and they do not get appropriate nutrition even in the period of pregnancy (UNIICEF, 1996). Women get married early and are considered as child bearing machines (Sherpa and Rai, 1996) due to early age delivery there is high maternal mortality rate in Nepal (515 per 100,000 live birth (CBS, 1991). Higher rate of maternal and child mortality shows the lower social status of women. Women have lack of economic power and also have lack of decision-making role over their fertility too (Acharya, 1995).

According to the preliminary report of population census 2001, in Nepal, women constitute more than 50% of the total population in the country (CBS, 2001). The infant and maternal mortality rates are also highest in Nepal among the countries of South Asia. The adult literacy rate of 40% (female less than 1/3 of that) is one of the lowest in South Asia (CBS, 1995). Although women who comprise half of the population of the country and have always have been involved in national development, they are still marginalized from the opportunities such as a economic resources, e.g. property, income, employment as well as other resources. Illiteracy, malnutrition, poverty and conservative social taboos have been the fate of Nepalese women in general.

Women in Nepal, as elsewhere, hold the triple work responsibilities of reproduction, house holding and farm work. However, reproduction is not

treated as work and house holding is not considered as productive work by government system. Women also suffer from discriminatory practices in opportunities for education, personal mobility, which is required among other for skill development and independent decision-making (UNDP, 1995).

Gender inequality still permeates Nepalese life whereby women lag for behind men in economic, social and political positions. Women's traditionally disadvantaged status in the areas of education, health and economic participation has restricted their mobility and divide them the basic needs/ tools necessary for political participation, (Upadhyaya, 1999).

When daughter grow up, they will become wives. In other words, a laborer for another family sooner or later, more over, if girls is not good at household and farm work owing to exposure to education, she might be looked down up in her husband's family when she gets married. So, investment in a girl's education is discouraged. Generally, there has been more girls' dropout than boys at the primary level (Gurung, 1999).

Nepali women are daughters, wives and mothers, but are not recognized as individuals with their own identity, despites the fact that they are as human as men. Society has relegated women to the lowest rank and to a submissive role, confined to the home and farm and their responsibilities there due to their maternal function. They are discouraged and prevented to taken part in public life. (Subedi,1993). Women's economic dependence on men, mainly stemming from the fact that men earth cash incomes, contributes so their social status. The few women who earn a salary are often held in higher esteem than women who do not (Gurung, 1999).

Girl's trafficking for prostitution is tremendous in our society due to illiteracy and poverty. It makes them victims of sexually transmitted disease and in the long run causes psychological depression. Until and unless women are made equal partners in the development process of the nation no improvement can ever be made in the socio-economic situation of the country. In order to fulfil the commitment made by HMG to resolutions passed by the

world women's conference held in Beijing in 1995 and to ensure women's equal involvement in the development process in parallel with their male counterparts, the women's empowerment aspect has been emphasized in the Ninth plan (NPC, 1997).

The movement for women's status all over world has emphasizes the role of education. It is believed that education will bring about the education in the inequalities between sexes and uplift women's subjugated position of the society. In general, educated women have a higher status in the society and the family size become smaller as the education level of the mother rises. In fact, women's education is low in Nepal, and the lowest in SAARC countries that is adult female illiteracy is 88% for Nepal compared to India 71% Pakistan 81%, Bangladesh 78% (World Bank, 1995).

Equality in society cannot be achieved either through slogans, demands, conflicts or through wishes and blessing along. Experience has also shown that laws and regulations are not adequate. What is indeed required is a climate of public opinion where feeling of equality emanates from the hearts of all. Women are bounded by socio-cultural norms. Even parents discriminate against the girl child. This is because of lack of knowledge, awareness and education.

So, if the nation wants to gain something from women, their first duty should be to given equal opportunity of education, health, empowerment etc. and control of family, by the use of family planning measures and drastic change will come in the nation automatically in every field like economic development, status of women, women's decision-making power etc.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Introduction to Study Area

Syangja District is located between 27° 52' and 28° 13' altitude and 83° 27' and 84° 46' longitude. Its bordering districts are Tanahu in the east, Pyuthan and Gulmi and Palpa in the west, Parbat and Kaski in the North and Palpa in the south with the area 1,164 sq Km. Syangja districts comprise of two ecological regions, namely Hill and Siwalik. It lies in the western zone and its Headquarter is Pautali Bazar. There are 60 village Development committees, two municipalities and three electoral constituencies.

The population of the district is 3,17,320. Male occupy the 1,43,619 whereas female 1,73,701. Population monograph of 2058 stated that the growth rate of the population of the Syangja is 0.81%. The growth of the population is very low in comparison to the other districts due to the out migration. The same report noted that there are 64,746 households the average household size is 4.9. The density of the population is 272 per sq. Kms. Malunga is located 50 km in the south west from district headquarter. Jagatradevi lies VDC in north and east, whereas Kaligandaki River surrounded in east, west and south. The people of this area equipped with infrastructure development i. e. education, health, communication transportation and electricity.

CBS report 2001 mentioned that the total population of this VDC is 3536 out of which 1946 are females and 1590 are males; the size of households being 710. People adopted the agriculture and animal husbandry as their main occupation whereas business, government jobs and foreign labour as their subsidiary occupation. The artisan groups engross in their occupational business like manufacturing wood ware, tailoring, manufacturing agricultural tools and brick layering. The study area consisted by the different caste and ethnic groups like Brahmin/ Chettri, Magar and Newar. In addition, some other

occupational castes have been inhabitant with the study area such as *Kami* (Viswokarma), *Damai*(Tailors)and *Sarki* (Cobblers) . The dominating castes are Brahmin and Magar. Within the study area; there is gender division of labour based on their cultural identity. Mainly male are concerning with income generating activities whereas women only subordinate their male i.e. firewood and fodder collection. Their working hours is naturally longer than that of their male counterparts. The eye viewed shows that the male are primarily dominating over the decision making process both within household and community itself.

3.2 Rational for the Selection of Study Area

The proposed area of the study is suitable to get the abundant information of my research queries. Study area being occupied by various caste and ethnic groups like Brahmin, Magar, Kami, Newar, Sarki and Damai. The cultural mosaic of the study area give the space to get the cross-cultural information related women's role in the household decision making. The study area is itself my own motherland where I have been observed the ignored matrimonial decision making process.

3.3 The Research Design

This research is based on both exploratory and descriptive. In the exploratory design I used the various methods like interview, survey and observation during the period of study. However, this particular feature of our research design is translated into a descriptive-analytical form which has been utilized during our data analysis process. This means that the data interpretation has been supported by tabular analysis followed by their explanations. In order to meet my research agenda I used the secondary information to interpret my field data.

3.4 Nature and sources of Data

In the present study, both primary and secondary data have been used. The primary data were collected from the field study. For this purpose, a brief and intensive fieldwork was conducted in the months of Jestha and Ashad 2064. During the field work, primary data were collected from the sample respondents and key informant interview. The secondary data were collected from published and unpublished literature such as books; journals, articles, research reports and other official documents.

3.5 The Households and the Sample Size

A total of 1247 households are found within the nine wards of Malunga Village Development Committee according to CBS report 2001. But according to the Malunga village Development Committee office record only 876 households were recognized and recognition to remaining households had not been carried out by VDC due to some political hindrances and unusual circumstances. Thus sample size that we have selected for our present study is more than ten % of the total number of households which comes out to be 88 households.

3.6 The Sampling Procedure

Keeping in view our sample size of 88 households, we then proceed to the sampling procedure conducted during our field survey which is namely the 'Random Sampling' using the lottery method.

We listed down the 88 households corresponding to the 88 numbers in the randomly selected papers. We then compared this list of 88 households with the earlier list of 876 households to identify the 88 households that our study would be conducted upon.

3.7 Methods of Data Collection

In order to obtain necessary and reliable data for this study the researcher has used different methods such as direct participation observation, survey, and case study.

3.7.1 Observation

Observation method was used to collect the observable information such as women's participation in day-to-day activities, their role in household activities, and their relationship with the members of the family. The decision making process in the households was observed to find out the women's role in the household decision making.

3.7.2 Structured Interview

An interview questionnaire was structured so as to meet the purpose. The questionnaire was divided into 4 sections. The first section dealt with purpose of getting information's such farm management, and livestock management. The second section deals with resources procurement and use while the 3rd section comprises of information regarding labour utilization pattern. The last or 4th section includes miscellaneous questionnaire about attitude towards dowry, family planning, family size and the structured questionnaire are include in the Annex.

3.7.3 Case Studies

In order to see the process of decision-making and other aspects of household activities, some 'case studies' were also carried out. Three women were taken purposively for case studies. The cases were chosen with level of income, education, martial status as well as different age groups. The selected informants were intensively interviewed to prepare detail case study, to incorporate individual experience of their work and feeling of empowerment.

3.8 Data Generation and Data Analysis Procedure

The entire procedure for our data generation and its analysis begins with the formation of a structured questionnaire. It comprises of the all relevant questions concerning the decision making in household affairs such as farm management, domestic expenditure and transactions, education, labour utilization and so forth. Besides, questions pertaining to the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents have also been included. Therefore, the questionnaire has been designed in such a manner so as to give an overall picture of the relative status of the female in terms of household decision making as well as a glimpse of the socio-economic situation of the selected households within our study area.

The questionnaire was then pre-tested so as to test its credibility. Accordingly, some additions and deductions of questions were made to suit our purpose and was eventually finalized. Then the researcher himself conducted the entire questioning within the 88 households which were earlier selected via the random sampling using the lottery method as mentioned above. The researcher made sure that the respondents were all female household heads. This means that the other female members such as daughters, daughters-in-law and so forth were not interviewed. We have strictly limited ourselves to the wives or female hands of the family as our respondents.

However, the data, thus generated was grouped into mainly two categories all tables containing the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents and the tables consisting of the decisions made by different household members on different household matters. Finally, the data generated in this manner was prepared for analysis as seen in the fourth chapters.

3.9 Tools Used for Data Analysis

We have mainly relied upon tabular analysis for data interpretation. However, simple statistical tools like percentage, age, ratio and average was used for the data collection.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS - ROLE OF WOMEN IN HOUSEHOLD DECISION MAKING

This chapter analyze the women's status within the household special emphasis on their decision-making powers as compared to their male counterpart. The information included is in consonance with our methodology used which was collected from women of four different ethnic communities namely Brahmin/Chhetri, Newars and Magars. Their main source of income was agriculture. No significant inclination towards industry, small business and entrepreneurship could be depicted among these households.

GDI focuses on comparing the attainments of women in relation to those of men in a given nation. According to GDI report, 2001 economic activity other than agriculture of women was 16.5 % and literacy rate was 42.49 %.

According to GEM report based on recent data ratio held by women in national parliament in 1997 was 3.4 % but in 2001, it seemed to be 5.9 %. Based on CBS report 1991, 45.5% of women share in total labour force but in 2001 only 43.8% of women were found to share total labour force.

Greater confinement of women to the domestic sector is probably one of the reasons for a very low literacy rate evident among them as compared to the male literacy rate.

Besides these general observations, efforts have been made to include all possible socio-economic aspects of the respondents into our present study. Tables have also been illustrated to support our findings.

Table No. 4.1
Ethnic Composition

S.N.	Ethnic Groups	No. of Households	%age
1.	Brahmin/Chhetri	42	47.72
2.	Newar	11	12.5
3.	Magar	3	3.40
4.	Occupational Castes	32	36.38
	Total	88	100

Source: Field Survey, 2007.

The ethnic groups revealed a tendency to stay clustered among their own communities. However, people from different groups were also found to be living together in certain areas of settlement. The Brahmin/Chhetri community is seen as dominating the overall population they occupied 47.72%. But the Newars, Magars and occupational groups remain 12.5%, 3.40%, 36.38% respectively in the population composition.

Table No. 4.2
Marital Status of the Respondents

S.N.	Marital Status	No. of Respondents	%age
1.	Married	73	82.95
2.	Unmarried	3	3.40
3.	Widowed/Separated	12	13.65
	Total	88	100

Source: Field Survey, 2007.

Out of the total 88 female respondents 73 of them were found to be married, 12 of them widowed/separated and only 3 unmarried. The married women, constitutes a large majority of 82.95 %, the unmarried a small minority of 3.4 % and the widowed/separated 13.65 % out the total number of respondents.

Table No. 4.3
Educational Status of the Household Couple

S.N.	Education	Husband	Wives/Unmarried/ Separated/Widowed Females	Total	%		Total
					Husband	Females	
1.	Illiterate	33	83	116	28.44	71.56	100
2.	Literate	40	5	45	88.88	11.12	100
Total		73	88	161	45.34	54.66	100

Source: Field Survey, 2007.

The household couple here does not strictly mean husbands and wives. Since, questions were put up to only women during our research, women of different marital status, married/unmarried and separated/widowed are included. However, the number of husband among the 73 married couples remains the same. Out of the total 73 husbands 33 of them are found to be illiterate while 40 of them literate. Similarly, out of the 88 female respondents 83 of them are illiterate and only 5 of them literate. The total illiterate husbands and female respondents amount to 116 out of which the husbands constitute 28.44 % and the females 71.56 % of it. In the same way the total number of literate women and husbands are 45 out of which 88.88 % are husbands and only 11.12 % are females. This as a clear indication that the literacy rate among the women is negligible as compared to that of the men, considering the fact that the men (husbands) constitute only 45.34 % as opposed to 54.66 % of females out of the total number of 167 persons.

In the national level literacy % is prescribed as 53.74%. But in my study area out of 161 people only 27.95% of people were found to be literate. Among them the % of women i.e. (11.12%) was recorded the least. This shows that still women are far behind than male from educational aspect. Through, the

government has greater early expense still many people in the grass root level are deprived of education in clearly signified by my study area.

Table No. 4.4
Occupational Composition of the Household Couple

S.N.	Occupation	Male	% (of 76)	Female	% (of 86)
1.	Agriculture	50	65.78	47	54.66
2.	Business	13	17.10	14	16.28
3.	Services	3	3.94	-	-
4.	Household work	-	-	22	25.57
5.	Others	10	13.18	3	3.49
	Total	76	100	86	100

Source: Field Survey, 2007.

We see that 50 out of the 76 male are involved in agriculture, 13 in business (small shops), 3 in government services, none of them in household work and 10 in others occupation. Out of the 86 females 47 of them concentrated mainly upon agriculture, 14 in businesses none in the service, 22 in household work and only 3 in others. Therefore, we find a comparatively higher rate of men in agriculture (65.78), business (17.10), service (3.94) and others (13.18) as compared to women. But we also see no involvement of men in the household activities while the women score 25.57 % out of the total in this particular activity.

From my study I found involvement of male in business, service and other economical field in great deal. Only few female are involvement is negligible as compared to male. Still many of the female are as compared to male. Still many of the female are engaged in agriculture and household activities and aren't conscious about other, then agriculture.

Table No. 4.5
Working Hours among the Male and Female Groups

Working Hours/Day	Male	Female	Total	Male %	Female %
Up to 2 hrs	22	-	22	100	-
3-5 hrs	34	10	44	77.27	22.72
6-8 hrs	8	52	60	13.33	86.67
9-11 hrs	8	14	22	36.4	63.63
11+ hrs	6	10	16	37.5	62.5
Total	78	86	164	47.57	52.43

Source: Field Survey, 2007.

The female input in terms of working hours per day is definitely higher than that of their male counterpart. This can be attributed to their involvement in both domestic as well as the agricultural sphere of activities.

We find only men in the category where the working 2 hours per day. On the other hand women constitute a 62.5 % and men 37.5 % with in the category of the highest number of working hours/day (viz 11+ hrs.).

Our overall finding is that, men comprise a larger portion of the lesser number of working hours where as women constitute a greater %age of the higher number of working hours. For example, in the category of 3-5 working hours/day, men constitute 77.27 % and the female only 22.72 %. But for the category of 6-8 working hours/day, women constitute 86.67 % as compared to only 13.33 % for men. Women, therefore have longer working hours as compared to men.

Table No. 4.6
Use of Energy

S.N.	Fuel	No. of Households	%age (out of 88)
1.	Firewood	88	100
2.	Kerosene	74	84.09
3.	Crop residue	74	84.09
4.	Dung	24	27.28

Source: Field Survey, 2007.

All the households (100%) are found to use firewood as their main source of fuel. Kerosene and Crop residue are also found as widely used among them. Both scores 84.09 % while 27.28% used dung as fuel.

Table No. 4.7
Methods of Coping with Deficit Production

S.N.	Activities	No. of Households	% (out of 88)
1.	Agri-labour	68	77.27
2.	Construction Labour	49	55.68
3.	Income Generating activities	13	14.77
4.	Service/Occupational activities	35	39.77

Source: Field Survey, 2007.

Above table shows that almost all the households did not have enough crop production to sustain them throughout the entire year. Therefore, their means of compensation for deficit production ranged from agricultural labour, construction labour, income generating activities down to service and occupational activities. Agriculture based labours is highest with 77.27 % and income generating activities the least with only 14.77 %.

Therefore, agricultural wage labour appears as the most popular means of compensating deficit production among these households.

Table No. 4.8

Polygamy in the Family

Yes	No	% of (Yes) out of 88	% of (No) out of 88
10	78	11.36	88.64

Source: Field Survey, 2007.

Observations revealed that divorce among the 88 households was non-existent. However, polygamy was evident among only 11.36 % of the households. But the case where a husband with more than one wife was reported to be higher than that of wives having more husbands. These evil practises have greatly influenced overall status of women and have made them valueless. The polygamy so, should be strictly prohibited and law should be amended.

In analyzing the role of women as household decision makers, we have made attempts to cover all relevant aspects which would reflect their degree of decision-making power in different matters within the household. Accordingly, we have divided the chapter into four different categories. They can be listed as women’s decision-making role in farm management, resource procurement and use and labour utilization.

4.1 Farm Management

This section is sub-divided into two parts namely-

- (i) Cropping Pattern and
- (ii) Livestock Management

(i) Cropping Pattern

Table No. 4.9
Decision Makers for the Cropping Pattern

S.N.	Decision maker	No. of Households	% age
1.	Husband	24	27.23
2.	Wife	53	60.22
3.	Jointly	11	12.52
	Total	88	100

Source: Field Survey, 2007.

It shows that the wives of the households have a greater input in the cropping pattern decision making process, scoring a 60.22 % out of the total. The husbands then follow with only 23.86. The other male members of the household score the least with only 3.40 %. The joint decisions of both the male and female members, however, rank third with 12.52 %.

(ii) Livestock Management

Table No 4.10
(a) Livestock Purchase

S.N.	Decision-Maker	Who first thought No. of H.H.	%	Who was consulted No. of H.H.	%	Final Decision maker No. of H.H.	%
1.	Husband	27	45.76	21	35.59	21	35.59
2.	Wife	27	45.76	26	44.06	22	37.28
3.	Male members	5	8.47	-	-	4	6.77
4.	Female members	-	-	-	-	2	3.39
5.	Jointly	-	-	12	20.35	10	16.97
	Total	59	100	59	100	59	100

Source: Field Survey, 2007.

Table 4.11 mentioned that only 59 household involved in the household purchasing. Both the husband and wife have equal share of 45.76 % each as the initiators of the idea of livestock purchase. But wives score the highest (44.06%) as the persons consulted as well as the final decision makers for these purchase (37.28%). But the other female members score a lower % than the male members as the final decision makers in this matter.

Table No. 4.11
(b) Livestock Sale

S.N.	Decision-Maker	Who first thought No. of H.H.	%	Who was consulted No. of H.H.	%	Final Decision maker No. of H.H.	%
1.	Husband	15	48.38	8	25.8	19	61.29
2.	Wife	12	38.70	11	35.48	-	-
3.	Male members	3	9.70	7	22.58	8	25.8
4.	Female members	-	-	-	-	-	-
5.	Jointly	1	3.22	5	16.14	4	12.91
	Total	31	100	31	100	31	100

Source: Field Survey, 2007.

It should be noted that only 31 out of the 88 households were engaged in a recent sale of livestock. The husbands show greatest input as initiators 48.38% and final decision makers 61.29% of livestock sale. Among the persons consulted, the wives score the highest percentage 35.48% but none as the final decision makers. The female members do not appear in any stages of the decision making process. Overall, the male members of the household appear to have a stronger hold over the decision making of livestock sale.

Table No. 4.12
(C) Livestock Maintenance

S.N.	Grass Collector	No. of H.H.	%	Overall Caretaker	No. of H.H.	%
1.	Husband	2	2.85	Husband	2	2.85
2.	Wife	46	65.71	Wife	49	70
3.	Male members	-	-	Male members	-	-
4.	Female members	20	28.57	Female members	17	24.3
5.	Jointly	2	2.85	Jointly	2	2.85
	Total	70	100	Total	70	100

Source: Field Survey, 2007.

Only 70 households are found to keep livestock. Among them the wives are seen as the major grass collectors 65.71% for the livestock with the other female members following with 29.59 %. Both make up a significant portion of the household members as the overall caretakers of livestock. The male members, however, show the least input in this respect. Thus, greater involvement of female members is found in feeding and caring the livestock and male are involved in the regular health check up of the livestock.

4.2 Resource Procurement and Use

We have included energy (fuel) and household cash/transactions as household resources. Therefore, women's decision making in this particular area would be analyzed under two categories.

- i. Energy Procurement and Use
- ii. Control over Household Cash/expenditure/transaction

(i) Energy procurement and Use

Table No. 4.13
Firewood Procurement

S.N.	Source	No. of H.H.	%	S.N.	One who brings firewood	No. of H.H.	%
1.	Forest	64	72.72	1.	Husband	15	22.05
2.	Bari	4	4.54	2.	Wife	39	57.35
3.	Bought	20	22.74	3.	Male members	-	-
				4.	Female members	11	16.17
				5.	Jointly	3	4.43
	Total	88	100		Total	68	100

Source: Field Survey, 2007.

All 88 households are found to use firewood out of which 64 of them (72.72%) procure their from forest and only 4 (4.54%) of them from the *bari*. The remaining 20 households buy it from others.

Table No. 4.14
(b) Firewood use

Amount Required	No. of Households	(%) out of 45
1-2 Mutha ¹	10	11.36
2-3 Mutha	17	19.32
3-4 Mutha	33	37.5
4-5 Mutha	13	14.77
5-6 Mutha	11	12.51
6-7 Mutha	-	-
7-8 Mutha	2	2.27
8-9 Mutha	2	2.27
Total	88	100

Source: Field Survey, 2007.

¹ 4 Mutha = 1 Bhari
1 Bhari = 10 k.g.

Out of the 68 households who procure firewood from the forests and *bari*, there are 50 households where wives and other female members are involved in such procurement. Together they constitute 73.52 % of the total. The male members excluding the husbands appear to have no input in this respect. Therefore, women are found to make the most significant contribution in firewood procurement. Most households (37.5%) are found to require 3-4 *mutha* of firewood per day. However, the daily requirement does not exceed 8-9 *mutha* among the 88 households.

Table No 4.15
(C) Kerosene Procurement

S.N.	The person who brings	No. of H.H.	%age
1.	Husband	24	32.43
2.	Wife	18	24.32
3.	Male members	28	37.84
4.	Female members	4	5.41
	Total	74	100

Source: Field Survey, 2007.

Table No. 4.16
(d) Kerosene Use

Amt. required/day	No. of H.H.	%age
Up to ¼ litre	56	75.68
¼- ½ litre	15	20.28
½ - 1 litre	3	4.04
1 litre	-	-
Total	74	100

Source: Field Survey, 2007.

Only 74 households (94.09) appear to use kerosene as another means of fuel. The male members including the husbands of the households score the highest %age (70.27%) in kerosene procurement from the bazaar. Kerosene requirement for most households (75.68%) is up to ¼ litre per day. This daily requirement, however, does not exceed one litre/day.

Table No. 4.17
(e) Crop Residue² Procurement

S.N.	The person who brings	No. of H.H.	%age
1.	Husband	-	-
2.	Wife	66	89.16
3.	Male members	-	-
4.	Female members	8	10.82
	Total	74	100

Source: Field Survey, 2007.

Table No. 4.18
(f) Crop Residue Use

Amt. required/day	No. of H.H.	%age
Up to 2 Botes	-	-
2-4	30	40.54
4-6	33	44.59
6-8	6	8.10
8-10	3	4.05
10 +	2	2.72
Total	74	100

Source: Field Survey, 2007.

² Crop Residue, locally known as ‘Dhanth and Nal’ are maize and wheat plants.

We find that 74 (84.09%) out of the 88 households use crop residue for fuel purposes. Further, the female members including the wives are solely responsible for its procurement (from the *bari*), with wives constituting 89.18 % and other female members 10.82 %. The amount of crop residue required per day by most households is 4-6 botes (44.59%) and by least households is 10 + botes (2.72%).

Table No. 4.19
(g) Dung Procurement

S.N.	Person who brings	No. of H.H.	%age
1.	Husband	-	-
2.	Wife	20	83.33
3.	Male members	-	-
4.	Female members	4	16.67
	Total	24	100

Source: Field Survey, 2007.

Table No. 4.20
(h) Dung Use

Amt. required/day	No. of H.H.	%age
Up to 3 guintha ³	-	-
3-4 guintha	3	12.5
4-5 guintha	14	58.33
5-6 guintha	3	12.5
6-7 guintha	2	8.33
7-8 guintha	-	-
8 + guintha	2	8.33
Total	24	100

Source: Field Survey, 2007.

³ Guintha = used for fuel purposes and are made out of dung from livestock mainly from cow. They are also known as 'dung'cakes'.

Only 24 (27.27%) household out of 88 households used dung from livestock as an alternative means of fuel. Female members including the wives of the household are solely responsible for procurement from livestock. Most households (58.33%) require 4-5 *guintha* of dung for fuel purposes. However, daily their requirement does not exceed 8 *guintha*s of dung cakes.

Table No. 4.21
Energy Use Decision Maker

S.N.	Decision Maker	No. of H.H.	%age
1.	Husband	13	14.77
2.	Wife	71	80.68
3.	Male members	2	2.27
4.	Female members	-	-
5.	Jointly	2	2.27
	Total	88	100

Source: Field Survey, 2007.

Corresponding to the pattern of energy, we now analyze the degree of input from different household members in the decision making of this pattern. Wives are found to be largely responsible for the decision making of energy use. They constitute 80.68 % of the total with the husbands falling way behind at 14.77 %. The other female members of household, however, appear to have no input into this decision making process.

Hence we found that most of the households depend solely upon firewood as the energy use. However kerosene and crop residue are also used as the alternative fuel in larger extent. A few of them also used Dung as the survey of energy. From our survey we found the vital role of wife as the major decision maker of household energy procurement and use.

ii. Control Over Household Cash/expenditure/transactions

Table No 4.22

(a) Control over Household Cash

S.N.	Person	No. of H.H.	%age
1.	Husband	14	15.90
2.	Wife	72	81.82
3.	Male members	2	2.28
4.	Female members	-	-
	Total	88	100

Source: Field Survey, 2007.

The wives score the highest % (81.82%) among the other members of the household as the ones to keep the household money. However, the other female members appear to have no such control as compared to their male counterpart.

Table No 4.23

(b) Control over Bazaar Purchase

S.N.	Person	No. of H.H.	%age
1.	Husband	26	29.54
2.	Wife	37	42.04
3.	Male members	21	23.87
4.	Female members	4	4.55
	Total	88	100

Source: Field Survey, 2007.

The wives alone have a greater control over purchases required from the bazaar as compared to the other members of the household. The other female

members, however, show very little control in this matter (4.55%), which is in fact the least among the rest of the household.

While the husbands alone make up 29.54 % for control over bazaar purchases, they together with the other male members make up a considerable 53.41% %. This is much higher than the combined control of both wives and other female members, which constitutes only 46.59 % of the aggregate total. Thus, over all expenditure is greatly handled by both husband and wife combine.

Table No. 4.24
(c) Control over Family Expenditure
(c.a) Food items

S.N	Decision-Maker	Who first thought No. of H.H.	%	Who was consulted No. of H.H.	%	Final Decision maker No. of H.H.	%
1.	Husband	16	18.18	49	55.68	17	19.32
2.	Wife	62	70.45	23	26.14	59	67.04
3.	Male members	4	4.55	12	13.66	2	2.27
4.	Female members	4	4.55	-	-	2	2.27
5.	Jointly	2	2.27	4	4.52	8	9.1
	Total	88	100	88	100	88	100

Source: Field Survey, 2007.

Note:

The decision making process for all sections of Table No. 4.25 are carried out under the three stage process, namely

1. Initiators of the idea,
2. Persons were consulted for those ideas,
3. Final decision makers.

The wives appear to have a greater input as initiators (70.45%) and as final decision makers (67.04%) for the expenditure on food items as compared to the other members of the household.

While the other male members and female members show an equal input in the same two stages of decision making, the husbands appear to be the ones who are consulted the most in the expenditure of food items.

Wives as the major final decision makers may be attributed to their greater concern for providing sufficient food within the family.

Table No. 4.25
(c.b) Small gifts/Loans to Friends

S.N	Decision-Maker	Who first thought No. of H.H.	%	Who was consulted No. of H.H.	%	Final Decision maker No. of H.H.	%
1.	Husband	14	17.5	51	63.75	18	22.5
2.	Wife	58	72.5	17	21.25	50	62.5
3.	Male members	4	5	8	10	2	2.5
4.	Female members	4	5	-	-	2	2.5
5.	Jointly	-	-	4	5	8	10
	Total	80	100	80	100	80	100

Source: Field Survey, 2007.

Only 80 (90.90%) out of the 88 households have expenditure on small gifts and loans to friends. Among them, the wives reveal the greatest input as initiators (72.5%) and final decision makers (62.5%) for such expenditures, While the husbands are consulted the most in these matters, the other male and female members appear to have a low but equal input as initiators and final decision makers.

Table No. 4.26**(c.c) Clothing**

S.N	Decision-Maker	Who first thought No. of H.H.	%	Who was consulted No. of H.H.	%	Final Decision maker No. of H.H.	%
1.	Husband	14	15.90	51	57.95	16	18.18
2.	Wife	64	72.73	20	22.72	59	67.04
3.	Male members	3	3.40	13	14.77	7	7.95
4.	Female members	4	4.57	1	1.13	3	3.41
5.	Jointly	3	3.40	3	3.43	3	3.41
	Total	88	100	88	100	88	100

Source: Field Survey, 2007.

All the households (88) spend on clothing. The same pattern of wives as the major initiators (72.73%) and husbands as the persons consulted the most (57.95%) in the decision making process is repeated. However input from male members in all three stages of decision making is higher than that of the other female members. But the joint and traditional decisions for expenditure on clothing score the least, similar to that of the previous items.

Table No. 4.27**(c.d) Medical Treatment (Traditional/Modern)**

S.N	Decision-Maker	Who first thought No. of H.H.	%	Who was consulted No. of H.H.	%	Final Decision maker No. of H.H.	%
1.	Husband	8	10	59	67.04	19	21.59
2.	Wife	74	84.09	14	15.90	55	62.5
3.	Male members	4	3.64	9	10.22	5	5.68
4.	Female members	2	2.27	2	2.27	1	1.14
5.	Jointly	-	-	4	4.57	8	9.09
	Total	88	100	88	100	88	100

Source: Field Survey, 2007.

Wives are again seen as the primary initiator and final decision makers for expenditure on medical treatment (both traditional and modern) among the

88 households. Such decision making depicts women's greater concern for the health of the family members. The husbands, however, are consulted the most in such matters, as they score the highest (67.04%) in the second stage of the decision making process. The other male members have a greater input than the female members in all three stages of decision making. The joint decisions appear to be low but are still higher than the traditional decisions.

Table No. 4.28
(c.e) Social/Religious Ceremonies

S.N	Decision-Maker	Who first thought No. of H.H.	%	Who was consulted No. of H.H.	%	Final Decision maker No. of H.H.	%
1.	Husband	33	37.5	38	43.18	21	23.86
2.	Wife	51	57.95	38	43.18	51	57.95
3.	Male members	1	1.13	10	11.37	4	4.55
4.	Female members	3	3.42	-	-	2	2.27
5.	Jointly	-	-	2	2.27	10	11.37
	Total	88	100	88	100	88	100

Source: Field Survey, 2007.

Wives are mainly responsible for the two stages of decision making process namely as initiators and final decision makers for expenditures on social/religious obligations. But their input as persons consulted equal that of the husbands. While the male members show greater input as final decision makers than the other female members, the latter show greater input as initiators than the former. While joint decisions, although low, are found in the second and third stages of decision making.

Table No. 4.29**(f) Investment**

S.N	Decision-Maker	Who first thought No. of H.H.	%	Who was consulted No. of H.H.	%	Final Decision maker No. of H.H.	%
1.	Husband	17	31.48	26	48.15	23	42.59
2.	Wife	31	57.40	15	27.77	15	27.77
3.	Male members	3	5.56	13	24.08	4	7.40
4.	Female members	-	-	-	-	-	-
5.	Jointly	3	5.56	-	-	12	22.24
	Total	54	100	54	100	54	100

Source: Field Survey, 2007.

Only 54 (61.36%) out of the 88 households are involved in investment or the other. Although wives have a greater input as initiators (57.40%), however the husbands appear as the main persons to be consulted (48.15%) and as final decision makers (42.59%).

The other male members have some kind of contribution in all three stages of the decision making process, while the other female members appear to have none in all these stages, while joint decisions in the final stage score 22.24 %.

Thus regarding food expenditure, clothing, medical treatment, loans and gifts, social and religious ceremonies we find larger involvement of women as major decision maker. However, the husband (male) is consulted and final decision towards the above mentioned aspect is done jointly.

4.3 Labour Utilization Pattern

Four distinct types of Labour were found to be practised in the area where our study was undertaken. Such labour was either an alternative means to compensate deficit household production or performed for social/humanitarian reasons. These different labours can be listed as:

- a. Exchange labour know as *parma*
- b. Agricultural wage labour
- c. Non-agricultural wage labour
- d. Voluntary Labour.

Therefore, the data for household decision making would be now analyzed under these four categories of labour.

Table No. 4.30
(a) Exchange Labour⁴

S.N	Decision-Maker	Who first thought No. of H.H.	%	Who was consulted No. of H.H.	%	Final Decision maker No. of H.H.	%
1.	Husband	28	34.14	29	35.36	42	51.21
2.	Wife	46	56.09	21	25.60	13	15.85
3.	Male members	3	3.65	16	19.52	4	4.87
4.	Female members	-	-	-	-	-	-
5.	Jointly	5	6.12	16	19.52	23	28.07
	Total	82	100	82	100	82	100

Source: Field Survey, 2007.

⁴ *Parma*, denotes the communal labor exchange system among the parbate. For example, we may cite an example. If the members of one household put in 2 days of labour for the agricultural work of another household, the family members of the latter would have to put in the same amount of working days for the former's work. The concept of 'Parma', therefore, encourages households to participate in community activities. it may also be taken as social obligations.

Exchange labour, which is usually known as *parma* among the communities is practised by 93.18 % (82) of the 88 households. Here, the wives are seen as the major initiators for exchange labour. However, the husbands are the ones to be consulted the most (35.36%) in this matter. They also appear as the main final decision makers (51.21%) among the other household members. The joint final decisions rank second with 28.07 %. A much lower input from traditional decisions is depicted. Although the other male members have little input in all three stages of decision making, the female members appear to have no say at all in all the stages.

Table No. 4.31
(b) Wage Labour (Agriculture)

S.N	Decision-Maker	Who first thought No. of H.H.	%	Who was consulted No. of H.H.	%	Final Decision maker No. of H.H.	%
1.	Husband	27	36.48	35	47.29	47	63.51
2.	Wife	39	52.70	26	35.13	9	12.16
3.	Male members	3	4.05	8	10.81	4	5.40
4.	Female members	-	-	-	-	-	-
5.	Jointly	5	6.77	5	6.77	10	13.53
6.	No one/traditional	-	-	-	-	4	5.40
	Total	74	100	74	100	74	100

Source: Field Survey, 2007.

This type of wage labour is strictly restricted to agricultural activities where households hire people to work in their land and give wages (in cash or in kind) in return. Such labour can be an alternative means of income to compensate deficit household production. Only 84.09 % (74) out of the 88 households are involved in agricultural wage labour. Among them, the husbands are seen as the primary final decision makers (63.51%) and as

persons consulted the most (47.29%) for this particular kind of labour. The wives again are seen as the main initiators (52.70%) in the decision making process. Joint and traditional decisions and decisions from other male members are seen as low. The female members, however, have no input at all in the entire process.

Table No. 4.32
(c) Wage Labour (Non-Agriculture)

S.N	Decision-Maker	Who first thought No. of H.H.	%	Who was consulted No. of H.H.	%	Final Decision maker No. of H.H.	%
1.	Husband	23	41.82	19	34.54	36	65.45
2.	Wife	32	58.18	19	34.54	7	12.72
3.	Male members	-	-	11	20	2	3.63
4.	Female members	-	-	-	-	-	-
5.	Jointly	-	-	6	10.92	10	18.20
	Total	55	100	55	100	55	100

Source: Field Survey, 2007.

This type of wage labour refers to non-agricultural activities like construction of houses, roads and carrying loads etc. Such labour can also be seen as an alternative source of family income. Only 62.5 % 55 out of the 88 households are engaged in this activity. The wives predominate as initiators (58.18%) and husbands as final decision makers (65.45%) in the decision making process. But both appear to contribute equally as persons consulted (34.54% each). The other female members have no contribution whatsoever in this decision making process. The decision of the male members, and the joint and traditional decisions again show a low contribution to the process.

Table No. 4.33
(d) Voluntary Labour

S.N	Decision-Maker	Who first thought No. of H.H.	%	Who was consulted No. of H.H.	%	Final Decision maker No. of H.H.	%
1.	Husband	33	47.14	19	27.14	35	50
2.	Wife	29	41.42	25	35.71	7	10
3.	Male members	5	7.14	12	17.14	3	4.28
4.	Female members	-	-	-	-	-	-
5.	Jointly	3	4.3	14	20.01	25	35.72
	Total	70	100	70	100	70	100

Source: Field Survey, 2007.

Voluntary labour refers to community activities like constructing schools, canals and roads for which the members of the household spontaneously put in their share of labour. This may be done out of humanitarian reasons actively supporting the upliftment the communities. Only 79.54 % (70) out of the 88 households engage themselves in voluntary labour. The husbands appear as the main initiators (47.14%) and final decision makers (50%) for this activity. But the wives are seen as the persons who are consulted the most (35.71%).

The joint final decision is also quite high scoring 35.72 %. The input from male members, although low, is evident in all three stages of the decision making process. The other female member has no say at all regarding the decision making of voluntary labour.

The labour utilization pattern from my study area showed the husband as the final decision maker regarding the matter. Women are found to be the initiators in different labour patterns. Husband and wife both consult with each

other in these matters. But the final decision in this aspect is done by husband and involvement of other male and female members was seen to be very less.

4.4 Miscellaneous

Here we include the decision making on various other aspects of the household with special emphasis on the decisions of women. These aspects range from women's education, children's education, dowry system, use of family planning measures even down to freedom of women for participation in community activities. Our data analysis on such aspects is as follows:

Table No. 4.34

(i) Decision Making in the Choice of Bridegroom

S.N.	Decision makers	No. of Households	%age
1.	Husband	55	62.5
2.	Wife	11	12.5
3.	Male members	11	12.5
4.	Female members	-	-
5.	Jointly	11	12.5
	Total	88	100

Source: Field Survey, 2007.

We see husbands (men) from 55(62.5%) out of the 88 households decide on the bridegroom for their daughters. The wives and other male members and joint decisions have an equal input of 12.5 % each in this matter. We should note that the other female members including the bride have no say in the choice of the bridegroom.

Table No. 4.35

a. Attitude towards Dowry

In case of less dowry, women are condemned		% (yes) out of 88	% (No) out of 88
Yes	No	88.64	11.36
78	10		

Source: Field Survey, 2007.

Table No. 4.36

b. Decision Making in Dowry

S.N.	Decision Maker	No. of Households	%age
1.	Husband	53	60.22
2.	Wife	10	11.36
3.	Male members	10	11.36
4.	Female members	-	-
5.	Jointly	15	17.06
	Total	88	100

Source: Field Survey, 2007.

Dowry system was observed to be practised among all the 88 households. Women were questioned whether taking fewer dowries with them during their marriages meant greater condemnation from their laws or the profile in households. A large majority of 88.64 % women professed such presumptions as being true while only a small minority of 11.36 % women denied it. The underlying implication here is that a woman with much dowry earns herself a greater respect from her in-laws and husband and consequently a higher status in the family.

Husbands in the households appear to have a greater say (60.22%) in the amount of dowry to be given away for their daughters. Joint decisions are also comparatively strong (17.06%) in these matters. The other male members and wives of the households have a low but equal input, while the other female members including the daughters (brides) have no say at all in this decision making process.

Table No. 4.37

b. Type of F.P. Measures Used

S.N.	Type	No. of Households	% age	
			Out of 33	Out of 88
1.	Permanent	14	42.42	15.90
2.	Temporary	19	57.58	21.59
	Total	33	100	37.49

Source: Field Survey, 2007.

Table No 4.38

c. Decision Making for the use of F.P. Measures

S.N.	Decision Maker	No. of Households	% age	
			Out of 33	Out of 88
1.	Husband	10	30.30	11.36
2.	Wife	12	36.36	13.63
3.	Jointly ⁵	11	33.34	12.5
	Total	33	100	37.49

Source: Field Survey, 2007.

General observations revealed that women from all 88 households have heard about family planning measures from others and/or through the media. Although all of them have heard about F.P. measures, the number of women who do not use them dominate over the women who do.

Among the 33 women (37.49% out of the 88 households) who practise F.P. measures, majority are found to use the temporary methods (57.58%) as compared to the permanent ones 42.42%. These women using the former and latter methods constitute only 21.59 % and 15.9 % respectively out of the total 88 household.

⁵ Jointly, here refers to both husband and wife together.

These 33 women using F.P. measures reported their decisions for its use as being the strongest. Their input in this process constitutes 36.36 % of the total % and 13.63 % of the total 88 households. The joint decisions rank second (33.34%) among the 33 household with the decisions of the husbands following closely behind with 30.30 %.

Thus family planning was adopted in few households in my study area. Both husband and wife jointly decide which family planning measures to adopt. However, temporary Family planning measure was practise in great deal.

Table No 4.39

(iii) Decision Making in the selection of the family size

S.N.	Decision maker	No. of Households	%age	
			Out of 86	Out of 88
1.	Husband	2	2.32	2.27
2.	Wife	26	30.23	29.54
3.	Jointly	44	51.16	50
4.	No one	14	16.29	15.9
	Total	86	100	97.71

Source: Field Survey, 2007.

Regarding the number of children to be had, the joint decisions of husband and wife appear to be the strongest (51.16%) among the 86 women who responded to this question. While decisions of the wives alone are also seen as significant (30.23%) the husbands alone show the least contribution in this particular decision making process.

Table No 4.40

b. Decision Making in sending Children to School

S.N.	Decision Maker	No. of Households	% age	
			Out of 84	Out of 88
1.	Husband	21	28	23.86
2.	Wife	33	44	37.5
3.	Jointly	21	28	23.86
	Total	75	100	85.22

Source: Field Survey, 2007.

The decisions of the wives in sending their children to schools are found to be the strongest (44%) among the 75 households who professed to have sent their children to schools. However, the decisions of the husbands alone as well as the joint decision of both husband and wife are found to have an equal contribution in this respect.

Table No 4.41

b. Decision Making for Women's Education

S.N.	Yes/No	No. of Households	% age
1.	Husband	15	88.23
2.	Wife	-	-
3.	Jointly	2	11.77
	Total	17	100

Source: Field Survey, 2007.

For the 17 women who participate in these classes, their husbands dominate as decision makers for their education, making up 88.23 % of the total. While the joint decisions of husband and wife is very low (11.77), the wives, alone, however, appear to have no say at all in their own education.

Table No. 4.42

Major Decision of Households

Wife					Husband					Total
23 (26.14%)					65 (73.86%)					88 (100%)
She consult or not		He agree or not			He consult or not		She agree or not			
Yes	No	Mostly	Some times	Never	Yes	No	Mostly	Some times	Never	
19	4	11	7	1	49	16	35	12	2	
% of 23					% of 65					
82.60	17.4	57.89	36.84	5.27	75.38	24.62	71.43	24.48	4.09	
% of 88										
21.59	4.54	12.5	7.95	1.14	55.68	18.18	39.78	13.64	2.27	

Source: Field Survey, 2007.

In the context of major decision making of household we found relatively greater involvement of husband than wife (i.e. male than female). In my study area, major decision of the household is made by husband and is supported by wife in greater extent. In few cases, women don't support the decision of her husband. More than 95% decision of male is supported by female.

Similarly, in decision of wife 94.73% husband support her when she consult with him. In same cases, husband doesn't agree the decision of his wife. As a whole more than 73.86% of the household decision is made by male member. The above data also convey that still there is no equality in decision making power between male and female. Still women are far behind than man in decision making power which is not only in grass root level, but also the major problem in national level as well. (See Table No. 4.48)

From the findings of my study area we found involvement of women as the initiators in various decisions making like education, expense, family planning labour utilization etc. However, the final decision regarding all these matters was found to solely depend upon the husband. Very less involvement of other male and female members was found in decision making in different aspects.

The greater role of husband as final decision maker signifies that women are still far behind than male as major decision maker. One of the main problems was illiteracy in rural area which leads only the husband as final decision maker.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

The entire analysis focuses upon the relative status of women in terms of their household decision making powers vis-à-vis their male counterparts. Household decision making is envisaged to be a strong indicator of the different powers and positions held by the different members within the household.

This study includes households from four different ethnic communities comprising of Brahmins/Chhetris, Newars, Magars and occupational caste groups. However, our issue in question has been limited only within the households irrespective of castes and inter-class relationships.

Within these prescribed limits, women's role in decision making have been perceived mainly from three different aspects of household affairs, viz., farm management, household resources procurement and its use and the labour utilization pattern etc. Further, the three-stage decision making process comprising of initiators, persons consulted and final decision makers, has been utilized to provide a simplified, yet a wider overview of decision making.

We find a distinct pattern of women as the main initiators and final decision makers of many aspects of the household affair. This can be attributed to their role as the basic providers and managers of the domestic sector. But a point to be considered here is that, women may have a greater say in many issues but which may be of lesser importance of e.g. decision making in mundane matters like food, clothing etc. They might also have a significant contribution in the decision making of important issues, but they heavily rely upon the approval and consent of their husbands for the execution of both important as well as unimportant matters. On the other hand, the husbands are

found to be the final decision makers regarding only crucial issues such as household investments, the labour utilization pattern and so fourth.

Another interesting pattern which emerged from our derivations is that the other female members (comprising of daughters, daughters-in-law etc. excluding the wives or female household heads) have a comparatively low power of decision making vis-à-vis their male counterparts. The underlying implication here is that, women holding the status of “mothers” or rather, the female household heads have a greater control over the powers of decision making. Therefore, once the daughters are married off and the daughters-in-law eventually replace their mothers-in-law as female household heads, they then become worthy of greater powers of decision making which was earlier enjoyed by their mothers-in-law.

Our research revealed that only 11.12 % of the female household heads were literate, in the sense that they can at least read and write. In other words, female heads from approximately 5 out of the 88 households were literate. The dissertant, through general observations, discovered a vast difference in the manner in which the small minority of literate female household heads answered the questions from that by the remaining illiterate ones. The literate women showed greater confidence in their approach and seemed to command a greater power within the household as compared to the illiterate female household heads.

The conclusion derived from the analysis of socio-economic characteristics and subsequently the conclusion of women’s role in household decision making process is as follows:-

5.2 Conclusion

5.2.1 Socio-Economic Characteristics.

-) The Brahmin/Chhetri community have domination upon other ethnic groups.
-) Majority of women are found to be married while only a small minority are unmarried.
-) The adult literacy rates among the women are a negligible 11.12 % as compared to the 88.88 % of the husbands among the aggregate total of literate husbands and females.
-) Women are solely responsible for household chores and activities whereas male are responsible for the income generation.
-) Women have much longer working hours than men, their average working hours being 6-8 hours/day as compared to only 3-5 hours/day for men.
-) Early marriages for women are still practiced. Their average age at marriage is 15-19 years which has naturally prolonged their child bearing.
-) While 40.90 % of the households do not own any Khet land, almost all of them own some Bari land.
-) The Brahmins and Chhetris have a greater livestock holding among the selected four ethnic groups.
-) All the households use firewood as their main source of energy and 84.09 % use crop residue and kerosene as the alternative source. But dung for fuel purposes are use at a lower degree (27.28%).
-) The households have a moderate production of paddy and maize as their summer crops and wheat and mustard as winter crops.
-) About 77.27 % rely upon agricultural labour as an alternative means to compensate deficit production while only 14.77 % rely on income generating activities for the same purpose.

- J Polygamy is practiced by 11.36 % of the households among which, cases of men with more than one wife are higher than cases of vice versa.

5.2.2 Women's Role in Household Decision Making

- J The wives have a greater input in the decision making of the cropping pattern scoring a 60.22 % as compared to only 23.86 % by the husbands.
- J The wives are the main persons consulted and the final decision makers for the purchase of livestock while the husbands have a greater input as initiators and final decision makers for its sale. The other male members have a comparatively greater say in both these issues than their female counterparts. Bu the other male members including the husbands show the least input in the overall livestock maintenance as compared to the women.
- J The wives have the highest contribution in the decision making regarding fuel/energy use, scoring an 80.68 % of the total as compared to only 14.77 % by the husbands. This may be due to the responsibility of the wives to utilize energy/fuel. However, the other female members have no say regarding this issue as compared to the 2.27 % scored by the other male members.
- J The wives make up the highest % 81.82% among the other members as the ones to keep the household money. Accordingly, they have a greater control 42.04 over the required purchases from the bazaar. However, the other female members have the least input in both respects as compared to the other household members.
- J Regarding family expenditures, the wives are seen as the main initiators and final decision makers for items like food. Clothing, medical treatment, social/religious ceremonies and gifts/loans to friends. This is due to their closer association to such mundane matters than the rest of the family. However, these wives rely upon

the approval of their husbands even for such unimportant items since the husbands figure as the main persons to be consulted regarding all these expenditures. But the husbands are the main final decision makers for a crucial issue like investments. The other male members usually have either a higher or equal input to that of the other female members in the three stages of the decision making process. This clearly indicates that these female members are thought incapable of making any effective decision. The joint decisions are found to be very low among the households.

- J The labour utilization pattern is subdivided into four aspects viz., agricultural wage labour, non-agricultural wage labour, exchange labour and finally voluntary labour. The wives are seen as the main initiators for the labour utilization pattern while the husbands appear as the main final decision makers. Regarding the persons to be consulted, husbands score the highest in few cases while the wives do the same in others.
- J While the other male members appear in most of the decision making, however, they show a low input in them. On the other hand, the other female members have no contribution at all in any of the decision making of the entire labour utilization pattern. While joint decisions are quite strong in some cases.
- J The husbands or the fathers have the greatest say (62.5%) regarding the selection of bridegroom for their daughters including the amount of dowry to be given away. Ironically, the other female members including the bride-to-be have no say in such crucial issues which solely concerns her and her future.
- J While wives have the greatest say regarding the use of Family Planning (F.P) measures, the joint decisions of both husband and wife also appear to be quite strong. The same trend is evident in the selection of the family size.

- J The wives have a greater contribution regarding the decisions in sending the children to school. This can be associated with their greater concern for the children's education.
- J Regarding the women participation in adult literacy classes the husbands have a greater control 88.23 over the decision making of this particular issue. On the other hand, the wives themselves appear to have no such control whatsoever.
- J Only 64.78 % of the women participate in community activities such as exchange labour. Their freedom to participate in such activities is highly restricted as they require the consent of either their husbands or other male members to do so. Only 28.4 % of the women professed the freedom for participation in community activities while a majority of 71.60 % spoke on the contrary.
- J Although women play grater role and take major responsibility in every aspect but in the vital and crucial areas men make decision where women's roles have been narrowed down only to follow or obey. The crucial areas are-sailing of property, Marriage of children, migration or other deciding factors which in a long run effect in household or family.

Therefore, the women have the least or rather no power over the decision making of issues that solely concerns them.

5.3 Recommendations

- J Create the conducive environment for the employment for the educated girls and encourage them for self-employment.
- J The overall literacy rate should be increased with special emphasis upon women's education. This could be achieved via adult literacy classes and providing incentives to encourage greater enrolment of girls in schools. This is suggested with the view that educating the

women implies empowering them and conferring them a greater status within the households. Their educational status would also earn them the household decision making powers on important issues since they would then be thought capable of making effective decisions by their male counterparts.

- J Bringing the women into the market economy is another approach to increase their decision making powers. Policies and programmes intended to encourage entrepreneurial skills among the women, should be promoted. These women could then be mobilized to engage in income generating activities such as weaving, knitting, petty shops, small scale cottage industries and so forth. The income added by them into the overall household income would earn them the respect and the power to decide upon expenditures on important matters like investments and so fourth.

Further, labour saving village technologies should be devised to release enough time off for women from their daily chores. Their contribution in domestic drudgery need to be involved and linked up with economic outputs.

- J Women need to be encouraged to join the dynamic areas/ sectors to prove their potentialities which finally can create a forum to empower them. policy of equal remuneration and equal treatment for same deliverance or piece of work/job need to be launched immediately
- J In lieu to the above view of drawing women into the market economy credit programmes such as Production Credit for Rural Women (PCRW) and Small Farmers' Development Programme (SFDP) should be promoted in the study area. Such credit facilities aimed at women, would act as incentives for them to partake in income generating activities and eventually become self-reliant.
- J Late marriages among the women should be encouraged with the aim of reducing their child bearing age and consequently lesser

confinement to their reproductive roles. Such a demographic factor indirectly implies encouragement of their productive roles via greater economic participation and consequently a greater status in terms of decision making within the household.

-) Family Planning Programmes should be promoted for greater practise and adoption of these measures by both men and women. Again, the purpose is to reduce the confinement of women to their reproductive roles within the domestic sector and encouragement of economic participation among them.
-) Steps should be taken to make men and the rural society itself aware regarding the capability of women as effective decision makers on important issues as well. These women also include the other female members who do not hold the status of the “female household head.”

Further, the brides-to-be should have some say regarding the selection of the bridegroom instead of being completely excluded from an issue which concerns her future.

The mobility and the freedom of women to partake in income generating and community activities should not be restricted by the male members of the family.

All these can be made possible by educating and making these rural people aware of women as productive potentials. This also implies gradual changes in the conventional social norms and perceptions which believe that women belong to the domestic sector.

-) Promotion of joint-decisions within the household should be stressed upon via informal education programmes. These joint decisions by both the male as well as female members seem more favourable to reach at effective decisions.
-) Reforms should be made regarding the various women related government policies and programmes. Significant steps should be taken to effectively reach their target groups (women) and bestow

direct benefit upon them instead of relying upon the “trickle down effect” upon women via their male counterparts, a phenomenon which has been occurring frequently in the past.

- J) Though various programmes have been run by NGOs, INGOs and Human Rights Organisation to uplift the status of women in every field in national level, these programmes shouldn't only be confined within cities and headquarters but it should be practised from the grass root level. Then only the aim to improve the status of women and to bring equality among male and female can be achieved.
- J) The concept of gender equity and the attitude towards women need to be modified in our patriarchal society to boost up the women's status in the family or society.
- J) The low profile of girl child prevailing in the family or society need to be rooted out. There should be no discrimination between son and daughter in the family. Equal treatment can lead equal share and activities both by male and female. Women should not be deprived from any right obviously resulting some rights in decision making process too.
- J) Discriminatory Acts/ laws and practices in all sectors such as legal, political, social and economical should be addressed carefully to enhance women's participations not only in household decision making process but along with in all multi-dimensional areas.

APPENDIX-A

CASE-I

Name: Nirmala Nuepane

Address: Malunga VDC-Ward-2, Basindanda

Education- Literate (Lower Secondary Level)

Age- 38 Years

Nirmala is a married woman who had a son and a daughter. Her husband was carpenter and bricks layer. He earned one hundred and fifty rupees per day. These days he is unable to do his work due to health problems. He always supports his wife particularly in the household chores like child rearing. They did not have sufficient farm except kitchen garden and the volume of production meet the consumption only for a month. Therefore, their family have been facing the problems of chronic poverty. Since last seven years she has been selling the vegetables in the local market; that helps to meet their family demand like food, cloths, medicine and education. Nirmala usually brings her daughter with her. Therefore, she could not attend her class irregularity. She is very proud with her work. “We can also work like man if the strong passion arises”, she said. Nirmala recall the story of the past days, she looked upon as suspension, when she went out for the selling the vegetable.

CASE-II

Name: Som Maya Thapa

Address: Malunga-4, Bajhadi

Education: Literate

Age: 50 yrs.

Som Maya Thapa is a active member of *Ama Samuha*(mother's group) who has 2 sons and a daughter. Her husband was an army who was died 5 years ago due to the conflict. She involves in *Ama Samuha* through the advice of the community members, since then she became active in *Ama Samuha* particularly in the arena of the community development like management of the drinking waters, trails, women literacy class and many more. 'I have participated in different seminars of community forest programmes where male members FUG committed to implement my advises basically pruning and thinning and plantation of the Forest resources, said Som Maya. She is also interested in social and political activities but she is unable to do due to household chores. She said, "Few years ago widows are inhumanly treated when they involved in social and political activities but now days that became history." Som Maya argue that the patrichal nature of the society is changing due to the influence of the non-government organizations. We women have been benefiting through the trainings, seminars and workshop carried out by the different projects. In one hand it builds the capability of women; in the other it became source of income.

CASE-III

Name: Radha Shrestha

Address: Malunga-6

Education: Literate

Age: 70 yrs.

Radha is a head of family 50 years ago she got married. She has 4 daughters and 6 sons. They have productive land which is sufficient to meet the demand of food; her husband was ex-Indian service holder who gets 5000 IC as his pension. Two sons of the Radha run the business in the Butwal. Both completed their schools education before they started their business, all our sons got married in their early age under our pressure. Four sons have Radha already separated and enjoying their conjugal life with their offspring's; the husband of Radha provided the equal portion of land to them without any biasness. "We celebrated the special occasions like Dasian, Tihar and Diwali puja together under the leadership of my old husband", said Radha. The household expenditure of our family managed either by husband or sons; we women just prepare food for them. There are significant changes in the life of the women in compare to past days, because of social and political empowerment programs at grassroots level, she stated. Radha is very much conscious regarding the gender sensitive, empowerment and their inclusion the sector of development. I found that she is quite interested the present political situations of the country like CA election. During my field work I put several quires with Radha where she enthusiastically participates in the discussion regarding decision-making process.

APPEDIX-B

Questionnaire: Role of Women in Household Decision Making, Malunga V.D.C Syangja District:

A: General Information:

1. Name:_____ Cast: _____ Age:_____
2. Marital Status: _____
3. Your Education: (a) literate (b) Illiterate
4. Husband Education: (a) literate (b) Illiterate
5. Your Occupation: _____,
Husband Occupation: _____
6. Working Hours: (a) Male_____ (b) Female_____
7. How many children do you have? (a) Sons:_____(b) Daughter:_____
(c) None: _____
8. Number of family members: 0-9 10-14 15-59 60-64 65+
Male : _____
Female : _____
Age of Marriage: _____
9. Landholding: (a) Khet Land _____ (b) Bari Land _____
10. Number of livestock: (a) Cow ___ (b) Ox ___ (c) Buffalo___
(e) Goats___ (e) Chicken/Hen _____
11. Energy Use: (a) Firewood ___ (b) Kerosene ___ (c) Crop Residue ___
(d) Dung ___ (e) Others _____
12. Type of the House: (a) Mud house ___ (b) Wooden House _____
(c) Living at other house _____

B: Economic Aspect:

1. Cropping Pattern : Summer Winter
Area : _____
Crop : _____
Production : _____
2. Who decides this cropping pattern? _____
3. Is the crop production sufficient for the whole year?
(a) Yes ___ (b) No _____ (c) If, Yes, Surplus: _____
4. How is the utilized? _____
5. Who decides? _____
6. If there is deficit production, how do you cope with the problem?

(a) Agri-labor ___ (b) Construction labor ___
(c) Income generating activities (Dalo, Namlo etc.) ___ (d) Others ___
7. What kinds of activities does the female counterpart perform?

8. Who decides these activities? _____

C: Live stock management:

Purchase of live stock	Who first thought of this idea	Who was consulted	Who decided to purchase/sell
1			
2			
3			
Sale of livestock and livestock products			
1			
2			
3			

1. Do you give your ox (if they have) for hire? (a) Yes _____ (b) No _____
2. If yes, who decides? _____
3. Who collects grass for the livestock? _____
4. Who looks after the overall maintenance of the livestock? _____

D: Energy use and Maintenance:

Source	Firewood	Kerosene	Crop Residue	Dung	Others
Who brings it?					
Amount required/day					

1. Who decides the use of this energy? _____

E: Labor utilization pattern:

Decision Items	Initiators	Person consulted	Final decision makers
1 exchange labor (perma)			
2 Wage labor (Agriculture)			
3 Wage labor (non Agriculture)			
4 Voluntary labor			

F: Control over Family borrowing, Cash and kind expenditure:

1. Who generally keeps the households money? _____
2. Who usually goes to the bazaar purchases? _____

Deciding Items	Initiators	Persons consulted	Final decision makers
a. Food items			
b. Small gifts/loans to friends, neighbours			
c. Clothing			
d. Medical treatment (Traditional/modern)			
e. Social religious ceremonies			
f. Investments			

G: Social Aspect:

1. What kind of marriage do you usually have? _____
2. If in case of arranged marriages, who usually decides about the bridegroom? _____
3. Do you still practice dowry saystem?
(a) Yes _____ (b) No _____
4. If yes, who decides how much dowry to give away?

5. If in case of less dowry, are women looked down upon?
(a) Yes _____ (b) No _____
6. Is child marriage practiced within the family?
(a) Yes _____ (b) No _____
7. Is Polygamy practiced within the family?
(a) Yes _____ (b) No _____
8. Are you consulted in these matters?
(a) Yes _____ (b) No _____
9. Is divorce system practice within the family?
(a) Yes _____ (b) No _____
10. If yes, are women consulted in this matter?
(a) Yes _____ (b) No _____
11. Have you heard about family planning measures?
(a) Yes _____ (b) No _____
12. If yes, through what source?
(a) Media _____ (b) from friends and neighbors _____
(c) from the school _____
13. Do you use family panning measures?
(a) Yes _____ (b) No _____

14. If, yes what type family planning measure do you use
(a) permanent _____ (b) temporary _____
15. Who decided to use this method? _____
16. Who decides upon the selection of the family size? _____
17. Do you usually have delivery at
(a) home _____ (b) hospital _____
18. Do you believe in doctors or faith healers (Dhami/ Jhankari)?
(a) Doctors ____ (b) Dhami/Jhakari ____ (c) Both ____

H: Educational Aspect:

1. Do your children go to school?
(a) Yes ____ (b) No _____
2. Are Boys given priority over girls to go school?
(a) Yes ____ (b) No _____ (c) equally _____
3. Do you think that girls should go to school?
(a) Yes ____ (b) No _____
4. If no, why not? _____
5. Who decides whether your children should go to school? _____
6. Are you participating in adult literacy classes?
(a) Yes ____ (b) No _____
7. If yes, who made this decision? _____

I: Participation in community activities

1. Are there any local traditional "Female solidarity groups"?
(a) Yes ____ (b) No _____
2. Do the village women involve themselves in community decisions?
(a) Yes ____ (b) No _____
3. Is any woman of your household a participant of these community activities? (a) Yes ____ (b) No _____
4. Do you have any freedom to decide upon such participation?
(a) Yes ____ (b) No _____

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