

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 General Backgrounds

Nepal has a population of more than 26 million people, made up of over 40 different races and tribes (2001 CBS). The Nepalese population can be classified into three major ethnic groups in terms of their origin: Indo-Nepalese, Tibeto-Nepalese, and indigenous Nepalese. Nepalese speak 62 different vernaculars and 10 of these are reported as major. In Nepal, an ethnic group is called major when its language-speaking inhabitants account for more than 500,000. These 10 groups shape a large hunk in the populace of Nepal comprising almost 70 percent of the total population. The first group, comprising those of Indo- Nepalese origin, inhabited the more fertile lower hills, river valleys, and Terai plains, mostly of Brahman and Kshatriya status. The second major group consisted of communities of Tibeto-Mongol origin occupying the higher hills from the west to the east; they are Rai, Limbu, Sherpa, Gurung, Bhote, Magar, Tamang, etc. The third, indigenous Nepalese, much smaller group comprised a number of tribal communities, such as the Tharus and the Dhimals of the Terai. Within the ethnic groups Chhettri 15 percent, Brahman-Hill 12.5 percent, Magar 7 percent, Tharu 6.6 percent, Tamang 5.5 percent, Newar 5.4 percent, Muslim 4.2 percent, Kami 3.9 percent, Yadav 3.9 percent, other 32.7 percent, unspecified 2.8 percent (2001 CBS).

Tharus are the largest and oldest ethnic group of the Terai belt found living in close proximity to densely forested regions, numbering more than 720,000. Tharus are dark in complexion and have smart, trim bodies. Tharus follow the Hindu religion and practices are dependent on many typical Aryan practices. Tharus have own culture, tradition, values, norms, beliefs and life styles. Farming and business are their main occupations. Danwars, Majhis and Darais are very similar to Tharus, physically and culturally. Nevertheless, Tharus speak own languages which are of Sanskrit origin and encompass 6.75 percent of the total population. In terms of absolute number, Tharu's population is 1,533,879 of them 774,924 (50.52 percent) are male and 758,955 (49.48 percent) are female (CBS, 2001).

Tharus called Dangaura and Rana are seen in western and far western region of terai. 'Dangaura' refers to the Tharus who claim Dang as their original home (which includes the Deokhuri Valley), and 'Rana' to the Tharus of the far western Terai who claim to have a Rajput origin. In the Central Terai, the Inner Terai valley of Chitwan shelters an important Tharu population. Tharus living in Nawal Parasi district are slightly different from their neighbours of Chitwan district. The eastern Tharus, called Koshi or Koshila or Kochila. There are also probably subgroups or endogamous units, such as the Lamputchwa Tharu of Morang district who are considered different by the Koshila Tharus.

The life of women is always dominated in contrast to their male counterpart in Nepal. It is well known that the standing of women is lower than that of the male. Girls work more than boys (sometimes more than twice) in all the age groups. Women's work burden increases with age (Acharya.M, 1997). However, it is so painful to reveal here that, women's work is not measured as the productive work. Women's status in the society results in a continuous lag in opportunities in education, training, employment, health, public life, access to economic rights and the like and their worth as individuals and as members of the family and society is barely recognized.

Although the Nepalese Tharu women are very active in household and field works, Tharus women have been assigned less important status to men. In most of the ethnic groups in Nepal there is a conventional tale that women are inferior to men. Customs and traditions about sexual division of labour, limits the standing of women only to the household activities. Household activities are not considered as the economic activities. Tharu women are restricted into their domestic and subsistence activities. The main profession of these women is household chores and agricultural activities.

Tharu women carry a triple burden in the society: as a production worker Tharu woman contributes directly to subsistence and income; as a mother and wife Tharu woman cares for the children and the family members; as a community worker Tharu woman give all leisure time and labour to the society. Besides Nepal, women of other countries of the world also bear heavy burden of household activities. Women are also equally involving in agricultural activities. In South Asia, 70-80 percent of

the total female work forces are employed in agricultural activities, either as a cultivator or farm worker. Women's workload reaches peak during planting and harvesting season.

According to the article published in Nepali times in 2006, Sending young daughters as kamlaris (girl-child indentured labourers) is widespread in the Tharu community of lower Dang Valley (also called Deukhuri Valley) and adjoining districts. The reason often cited is poverty, and this tradition began when hill-people descended upon the fertile plains of the western terai and slowly seize the land once inhabited by the Tharus. Loss of land brought associated social ills as it changed the power equation within the communities. Mostly poor and illiterate, Tharus found themselves tilling the landlords' farms in a sharecropping agreement so unbalanced that Tharus were in bondage as kamaiyas. And even then, many offered own daughters as household helper to attract the maalik to get the sharecropping opportunities.

1.2 Gender Issues

Nepal is a desperately poor country where more than 80% of the people live in the countryside without electricity, running water, or basic sanitation. More than half earn less than a \$1 a day. Peasants on tiny plots of land live on the edge of deepening poverty, debt and hunger. Women are doubly oppressed. A common proverb in Nepal goes, "To be born as a daughter is having ill fate." The reality behind this saying is that women in Nepal women are among the most oppressed on the planet. Feudal tradition and patriarchy subject the women to a life of servitude to fathers, husbands and sons. Women have no right to inherit land. With a lot of the men in the cities looking for work, the women do most of the farming in addition to taking care of the children, cooking, washing, grazing animals and hauling water.

Gender is a key locus of the cultural arrangement in Nepal. The practices of gender and gender relations vary to some degree by age, life cycle related positions within the family, caste, ethnicity, class, religion etc. This gender practices are not based on equal status, prestige and power. The subordination of women in Nepal irrespective of their caste/ethnicity and class is a fact. This results in an extremely unequal level of the life opportunities and attainment between men and women. The

term gender relationship as used here, refers to the relations of power between women and men which are revealed in the range of practices, ideas, and representation, including the division of labour, roles and resources between women and men and the ascribing to them of different attitudes desires, personality traits, behavioural patterns and so on.

According to Human Development(1998), the female infant and child mortality rates are significantly higher than the rate of the male child. The girl child spends approximately 1.4 times as much as a boy sharing in house holding and production responsibilities including on sibling care and farm work. The educational participation ratios and rates get even more skewed in favour of male. Nevertheless, the relative intensity of public exclusion of women from the labour force is considerably less in degree and the division of labour by gender somewhat more relaxed than in other countries of South Asia. The male-female discrepancies in the well-being are however pronounced. The assessment of the major changes in women's lives in Nepal over the past decade has shown that despite higher attainment of literacy, social mobility and awareness, women still remain confined to their traditionally prescribed and socially acceptable roles, lower status and subordination to men within the patriarchal socio-cultural, economic, political and legal framework.

1.3 Feminists Movements in Nepal

Due to the occurrence of high gender inequality and low status of women in Nepal, the feminist movement is considered to be the best option to empower the deprived women in Nepalese society. In this regard different attempts were made in the part.

Nepal has made specific policy declarations to integrate women in development since the early 1980s. Successive five-year plans have made appropriate policy declarations for improving women's status. Such efforts have focused on credit and employment generation, education, and health. A few women's mechanisms have been set up, including the Ministry of Women and Social Welfare (MWSW), the Women's Division in the National Planning Commission (NPC), and the Women and Development Division in the Ministry of Local Development. Initiatives have been taken towards some legal reforms, like women's right to property, which makes a little

more secure and strengthening disciplinary measures against violence. Nepal also committed itself to the Platform of Action for the UN's Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. The Ninth Five-Year Plan Approach Paper (1998) sets triple objectives of mainstreaming, eliminating gender inequality, and empowering women along the lines proposed by the Beijing Platform for Action. Each of the three sections strategically target key areas to be improved. The issue now is how to translate the policy into practice. The activism of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in Nepal has increased tremendously since 1990. However, except for a few, most NGOs lack capacity, regular access to resources, and a long term vision. Gender perspective is lacking even in programs implemented by women's NGOs. A number of NGO networks have been formed. The most important of them is the Women's Pressure Group, comprising 84 NGOs of various categories. Other networks are theme oriented and focus on advocacy on particular themes such as media, HIV/AIDS etc. Both multilateral and bilateral external funding agencies have played a positive role in making women/gender an issue in development since the mid-1970s. Their efforts have evolved through time, passing through various phases of women in development (WID) and gender and Development (GAD). First, in the late 1970s, it was small women's components in development plans and programs. In the 1980s, it was women and development (WAD). Since early 1990, it is GAD. Since the Beijing Conference, voices have been raised for empowerment of women and a fundamental change in the socioeconomic structure. Within this general framework, approaches to women's problems have varied among various funding agencies. Some of them, particularly multilateral agencies, see women's problems as part of a larger problem of poverty and would like to concentrate on women's programs for achieving efficiency of resource use and the eradication of poverty. Others aim at empowerment of women directly. International NGOs (INGOs) have also played a key role in funding projects and advocacy programs for women.

At the Beijing Fourth World conference on women (September, 1995) Nepal has made six commitments for advancing the status of women in Nepal. The major areas of concern are:

1. To revisualization women's rights, concerns and activities as an integral part of all planning and policy framework, rather than as separate, sectoral concerns.

2. To improve all laws which disregard the equal rights of men and women and to review and enforce legal provision relating to violence against women including trafficking.
3. To prioritize all components directed at assisting impoverished women.
4. To improve the health status of women with emphasis on combating iodine deficiency disorder, anemia and maternal mortality.
5. To improve the educational status of women by strategic intervention such as providing scholarships, hiring female teachers and enforcing quotas in technical schools and training programmes.
6. To plan and implement development programmes within gender framework.
7. The most recent initiative (1996) taken by the Government of Nepal is an attempt to coordinate and monitor all activities directed towards enhancing the status of women in the establishment of an organizational structure, "The Ministry of Women and Social Welfare."

1.4. Role of Nepalese Women in Household Economy

With the initiation of education and awareness women everywhere are influencing and participating in mainstream of development. However, the scenario of the Third World differs from that of the Western world. Women in the third world are still far behind their male counterparts in almost all aspect. And, Nepal is no exception. Women's status in the society results in a continuous lag in opportunities in education, training, employment, health, public life, access to economic rights and the like and their worth as individuals and as members of the family and society is barely recognized. Although women are the main providers of basic services in poor settlements, their key role remains largely unrecognized.

Women contribute to development not only through remunerated work but also through a great deal of unremunerated work. On the other hand, women participate in the production of goods and services for the market and household consumption, in agriculture, food production, or family enterprises. Though included in the United Nations system of National Accounts and, therefore, in international

standards for labor statistics, this unremunerated work - particularly that related to agriculture - is often undervalued and under-recorded. On the other hand, women still also perform the great majority of unremunerated domestic work and community work, such as caring for children and older persons, preparing food for the family, protecting the environment, and providing voluntary assistance to vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals and groups. This work is often not measured in quantitative terms and is not valued in national accounts. Women's contribution to development is seriously underestimated, and thus its social recognition is limited. The full visibility of the type, extent and distribution of this unremunerated work will also contribute to a better sharing of responsibilities.

Moreover, women's economic activity rates even by conventional definitions are estimated to be much higher than those reported in the census data. A study of regional data clearly indicates a persistent reporting bias in economic activity rates. While the overwhelming majority of mountain (73.6 percent) and hill (57.9 percent) women were reported as economically active, only about 27 percent of the Terai women were so reported. However, The Status of Women report series by Acharya and Bennett, 1981, shows that women in the Terai were equally active in the economic sphere, although invisibly, but that their activities were not reported as being economic. In fact, women were active in the household production system, e.g., in food processing and cooking for farm labor; post harvesting cleaning and storing of farm products; kitchen gardening; and cooking food for village shops run by male members of the family. In addition, women performed domestic chores as unpaid labor, which is not reflected in any economic statistics.

Women constitute more than 43 percent of the labour force, 48 percent in agriculture and 34 percent in the non-agriculture sector during 2001. Women's proportion has increased almost in all occupations to some extent. But their greater concentration in agriculture is also visible. Women still constitute only a small proportion among administrative, technical and professional, and clerical worker categories. Women constitute only about 14 percent among the administrative workers, i e, among the senior officers, legislators and managers and 19 percent among the professionals and technicians, which comprises teachers, trained nurses, doctors, engineers, professors etc. The increase in women's proportion in this group

by 4 percentage point indicates a positive trend, reversing the decreasing trend observed in 1991 compared to 1981.(Acharya M, 2003)

Women constituted 22 percent of the wage workers and 50 percent of the non-wageworkers (employers + self-employed + family workers) in 2001. However women's share in the non-agricultural wage labor was only about 18 percent, a decline of 1 percentage point from 19 percent in 1991. Women constituted 33 percent of the agricultural wage labour.

1.5. Tharus in Development

Many of the Tharu do not have their own land and have become the laborers to higher-caste immigrants who wanted to take advantage of the agricultural opportunities in the Terai. Many worked as servants in households of the rich. Recently, the Kamaiya system of bonded labor has been outlawed by Nepal's government.

Tharus are the peasant farmers involved in the agricultural activities. Previously, the Tharu were like all other tribes, heavily dependent on hunting, fishing, live stock rising but at present agriculture and animal husbandry is the main occupation. Tharus are the fifth largest ethnic group of Nepalese society, so Tharus should have the greater role for economic development of the country.

Nepal is one of the poorest countries in the world. Government statistics show that most Tharu above age 6 have never gone to school. Half of all the children in the country under 5 years old are malnourished. Education, the basic element that helps to promote the economic development of the country, is also lacking in this community. Thus Tharus are unable to promote significant development activities of the country. Tharus spend their large portion of time to cultivate the land of the other people from which Tharus get very low income. Most of the Tharus are unskilled and some who have skill are also undervalued and exploited by the landlords of the society.

Therefore, it can be concluded that Tharus have the greater role in the development activities however their contribution in development is of least admiration yet.

1.6. Social and Cultural Factors

The Tharu religion is a mixture of animism (a belief in spiritual beings who live in persons, animals or things) and Hinduism called “folk Hinduism.” Tharus also live among many Buddhists and Muslims. Tharu’s homes contain a statue of a god, and the family offers animal sacrifices to calm down the spirit. When Tharus are sick, they often turn to traditional healers and Buddhist medicine. The Tharus believe sickness comes when the gods are displeased, and the demons are at work. Healers try to calm down the gods of the illness through incantation, beating drums and offering sacrifices.

1.7 Statement of the Problem

The contribution of women in household economy has largely been "invisible" because women’s involvement in domestic works and skill-based activities such as handicraft, agricultural works etc. have been regarded as non-productive sector. This has been devaluating the women's contribution in household economy which is no doubt a significant constraint to uplift the socio-economic status of Nepalese women. Thus, there is a need to study the contribution of women in household economy.

The role and status of women differ according to caste and ethnicity; however their sub-ordinate position to men exists in all caste, ethnic and religious groups. Women play important roles in household subsistence, in agriculture, in labor work etc. Specially, the role of rural women in household economy is crucial. Women’s labor participation in agriculture is backbone of Nepalese system. Beside these women have substantial contribution in household economy through skill-based entrepreneurship like weaving, poultry, fishery, etc. In return to these contributions, women are discriminated and subjected to have low socio cultural status.

Therefore, present study focuses, taking in account the diversity of Nepalese population in terms of caste/ethnicity, to study the role of Tharu women of Ishworpur VDC in Sarlahi District in their household economy.

1.8 Research Questions

More specifically the present study attempts to address the following research question.

1. What is the role of Tharu women at household economy?
2. How do the Tharu women manage their time to contribute in agricultural works as well as in other social and household activities?
3. What is the educational status of the Tharu women?
4. What is the role of Tharu women in decision making at household level?
5. What is the role of Tharu women in social activities?

1.9 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this thesis is to study the contribution of Tharu women in household economy.

The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To study the role and contribution of Tharu women in agricultural production (livestock, agricultural labour and forestry).
2. To investigate the role and contribution of the Tharu women in off-farm activities for household. Off-farm activities are meant by non agricultural activities that is, industry, business, service, labor work, and so on.
3. To explore the role of the Tharu women in household decision-making which includes decision on household income, expenditures, and so on.

1.10 Rationale of the Study

Economic development without the proper development of human is only a partial development. It has been a jobless, ruthless, voiceless, rootless and fruitless growth (HRD, 1996). The task for the upcoming decades, therefore, is to make the growth process more human equitable and sustainable. Gender equality is an integral part of the more human and equitable growth. Without equitable access to resources and women's empowerment, growth cannot be sustained in the long run, because women form half of the population.

Tharu women in Ishworpur VDC are poor due to the unequal pay, high unemployment and low status jobs. Tharu women get low payment than their male counterparts. Tharu women are engaged extensively in agricultural and households activities. Tharu women's participation in cereal and cash crops production and livestock rising is significant. In crops production Tharu women perform all operations, except ploughing. Women perform these activities for household consumption. Livestock rising is another activity, which is mostly taken care of by women of this society. Besides grazing and cleaning cattle shed, women collect fodder and take care of the stall-feeding of animals. Tharu women are also engaged in selling vegetables, milk and other diary products in the weekly markets and in the nearby village town. Most women from low and middle-income household work either in their own field or on others land as labour on labour exchange basis (Perma). Women generate additional income by working for the high-income household in their fields, food processing and fuel processing.

In this way, the Tharu women of Ishworpur VDC contribute to their household economy. But their contribution is still undervalued. Tharu women's status is very low in this scenario. This study is basically undertaken to explore the status of the Tharu women and their contribution in household economy, which makes this study significant. This study will be useful as a reference material for the future researchers of the field and the policy makers to design the appropriate policy to uplift the status of Tharu women. Thus this study deserves the rationality.

1.11 Organization of the Study

This study is composed of seven chapters. The first chapter, as already dealt, is about introduction containing general background, statement of the problems, rationale of the study and objective of the study.

The second chapter is about the Review of literature. This chapter includes gender issues, women's involvement in economic activities, tharus, their origin, and lifestyle, tharu women, their role and status in their household.

The third chapter deals with the methodology used in the study. This chapter includes rational for the selection of the study area, research design, sampling procedure, nature and source of data, data collection techniques, semi-structured

interview, observation, method of data analysis, encounter and experiences of the study.

The fourth chapter explains introduction of the study area. This chapter includes physical settings, socio-economic settings, demographic situations, educational status, economy and cultural practices of gender in the Tharu communities.

The fifth chapter is about socio-economic characteristics of the respondents. It includes socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, educational status, economic characteristics of the sampled households, occupational patterns of sampled households, and patterns of land holding, level of food sufficiency, livestock holding and major income of household.

The sixth chapter is about the contribution of the Tharu women at household economy. It includes women's involvement in domestic activities, time contribution in household works. Tharu women and livestock management, Tharu women's role in agriculture, Tharu women's involvement in off-farm activities, role in decision making by gender, participation in women focused skilled training, view of women on property right, and case studies.

The seventh chapter contains summary, conclusion, and recommendations

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Several studies have been carried out concerning the issue. In this chapter various books, articles, reports, related dissertations are reviewed.

2.1. General Literatures on Women

M. Acharya and L. Bennett (1981) focused that women are primarily involved inside the household. Women are frequently dependent on men as mediators with the outside world. This dependency deprives women of the opportunity to learn the skills necessary for forms of development increasingly being made available by government. Women in the economically defined non dichotomous communities(Lohorung Rai, Baragaonole, and Kham Magar) have considerably more decision making responsibility both outside and inside the household than women in the dichotomous communities(Maithali, Parbatiya, and Tharu), while remaining communities(Newar and Tamang) women's decision making roles falls in between.

V. Majumdar (1982) stressed on the Asian women who have been subjected to acute social, economic and political prejudice and oppression in the past and which continue even to this day, may be to a lesser degree. There are three components to balance the inequality i.e. economic, political power and knowledge. Asian women's works are considered as unproductive. It is closely associated with their inferior social status and also the loss of personal freedom. Non- socialist countries where the extension of capitalism has further marginalized the economic and social roles of women. The determinant of decision making of women are family constraints, illiteracy, traditional barrier, attitude, and women's ability. It is suggested to form grass root level organizations responsive to the needs of the poor, local women and suggested such group to study social organizations like families and households.

M. Acharya and L. Bennet (1983) mentioned that various socio- economic, cultural, and demographic factors affect the extent and structure of female economic participation in the largely subsistence economy of rural Nepal. The women's labor is heavily concentrated in their own agricultural production activities. However female percent's involvement can be seen in the local market economy and wider economy

beyond village. Women in the more orthodox Hindu communities who are subsistence production display a much less significant role than those in the Tibeto-Burman communities where women participate actively in the market economy. The proportion of time spent by women in domestic activities emerged as a positive factor in the determination of her input in farm management decisions and as a negative factor in her input into resource allocation decisions. Participation in the market economy outside the village had a positive influence on women's input into both domestic and resource allocation decision and a negative influence on farm management decisions. Women who participate in the market activities make a measurable contribution to the household income, while women working in the subsistence agriculture are generally laboring on land, controlled by the male household head. The women involving in the development process and expanding their acceptable roles beyond those of mother, household and subsistence agricultural worker can be expected to have important long range effects in terms of reduced fertility rates and changed social attitudes towards children's education.

I. Majpuria (1985) mentioned that women play dual role in every society. In Nepal, women engage themselves in agricultural and non agricultural tasks. As labor in agriculture, women spend more hours in sowing, transplanting and weeding. Although Nepal is not highly industrialized, in cottage industries of small and medium scale, the labor force of women forms a very high proportion. As workers women are found more in industries like, textiles, carpet weaving, metal works, wood caving work, pottery vendor's job, food preparation, small scale construction and professional services such as tailoring etc.

United Nation (1987) focused that the role of young women workers in manufacturing of rapidly industrializing economy is closely associated with the international division of labor. Garment and textile industries of Philippines and Thailand were chosen to analyze the role of women. The data presented in this study indicated that women's employment has been concentrated in the most labor-intensive and wage industries and that in association with this fact, the labor force participation rate of women has risen much faster than that of men during the export oriented phase of industrialization. The wage levels of men and women are found to be similar in Thailand, but the work burden of women and the task assigned to them

does not revealed as the same. Since the development programs have not effectively addressed women's contribution as industrial workers, fairer laws are required to cover women working in manufacturing. If governments are genuinely interested in protecting women as well as promoting opportunities, then social policies and job related programs will be needed to prepare women workers for the new skills and jobs of the future.

R.D. Mullar and R. Anker (1988) mentioned the importance and usefulness of women's economic roles and prevailing constraints on women's economic productivity. It has also been tried to focus the picture of female's overwhelming participation to their total family incomes, that is to say, slightly more than 50% of household incomes. Daily work burden is more on women than in men and the female working duration exceeds than that of men by 2 to 3 hours per day. The average working day for Nepalese adult women is about 12-13 hours and for adult men is about 10 hours.

P. Subedi (1997) focused on women's contribution on family livelihood. Eighty percent of the material needs of household in Nepal are produced by the members of the family themselves and major parts of that are produced by women. Only 20 percent bought outside the house. In this type of subsistence economy the contribution of women covers 50 percent of the household income. Men have defined what is "work" and how work is valued. All that women do at home is not defined as "work" and it is not given any economic values.

Central Bureau of Statistics (2000) mentioned that women account 11587502 (50%) population out of total population of Nepal. Women play crucial role inside household as well as in agriculture and related activities. The tasks women perform are not recognized as work. In most of the Asian countries women are merely respected in their role of mothers and housekeepers. The dual burden is very heavy on the women. In the economic setting women occupy lower status than men because traditionally women have been associated with reproductive rather than productive tasks. Therefore, whatever job is preformed by women demands lower prestige and is paid lower rate if a man does same kind of work.

C. Newman and S. Canagarajah (2000) showed that non farm activities play an important role for women in many ways. The methodology used was based on two comprehensive sets of household level data over periods spanning four to five years for each rural Uganda and Ghana. Non farm activities are defined by wage work that is not in agriculture but located in local areas. Non farm participation led to the largest declines in female poverty rates in both countries. Since the non farm activities were linked to more rapidly falling poverty rates, it is equally important for men and women. The higher levels of education lead to the greater participation in non farm activities and lower participation in agriculture and concluded that non farm work is linked with the higher standards of living at least at the lower income deciles.

B. Farzon (2002) showed that the proportion of female labor force has been increasing in the world labor market. According to the world development report 2001 /2002; women now comprise 41% of the world labor force. The nature of women's employment, its status, pattern and sectoral distribution is largely determined by the level of development of the economy, nature and structure of production, and the level of integration of the country with the world economies. In developing countries 71% of women were working in agriculture until 1980 and the proportion of women employed in industry almost doubled between 1960- 80. Export orientation in the economic policies of developing countries created enormous space for women to engage themselves in paid employment. In relative sense the improvement and gains for women working in industrialized countries are higher than those for women in developing countries. More women in labor market are found to be part time and informal worker in order to meet women's need as it provides opportunity for them to combine their reproductive roles and responsibilities with paid work. The women's representation within services varies according to the nature and scale of growth of the service sector within various regions and countries. Women's share in employment is rising in the services sector neither at all levels nor at the same pace around the world. However, women have been losing jobs due to the introduction of technology and consequent de- skilling of their jobs.

U.S. Jha (2004) focused on the Gender and Social order, issues and Challenges of India. The work structure for educated and uneducated employed or unemployed women has basic similarities in the domestic front. In both cases, there is

no reward, monetary, and otherwise, for performing the household jobs which are mainly indoors. But outside the home, the work situation and structure are hierarchically related to the level of education. Concerning the women's participation and withdrawal from labor force it depends upon the household income (husband's income). If the household income rises then women tend withdrawal from the labor force and vice versa. The technological changes also exerted multiple and complex effects on women, some of which proved harmful to labor participation. When new technology used to perform farm operations, women are dislocated from production tasks compelling them to confine to household duties. The notion of 'household domain' and 'women affairs' do not permit women to play active role in the community and village institutions. Women's work, status and employment are greatly influenced by fertility levels and other fertility related behaviors. The high fertility rates in absence of some support system exert diverse effects on duration and intensity and work and thereby on productivity of women.

R. Bajracharya (2005) discussed on the gender issues of all Nepalese women and cultural diversity. In Nepal women are being ill-treated by male dominance and power. The work burdens of Nepalese women in the reproduction, household and employment is among highest with the lowest human and gender development index in the world. Gender discriminations differ among all castes, ethnic groups, class, and geography with more cruelty in rural and underdeveloped areas of Nepal, a pluralistic society. Nepalese women face various forms of discriminations due to family practices, patriarchy, inheritance and property ownership, early marriage, violence against women, less access to health, education and institutions, and resources etc. The study suggested that several efforts have to be made to reduce and balance the gender discrimination. In spite of still existing inequality of men and women, some changes have definitely taken place in gender sector worldwide including Nepal with the mainstreaming and empowerment of the women through affirmative and inclusive policies in public and private sectors. Women, in fact, constitute very vital pillars in society for development of religion, tradition and culture of the nation.

R. Tuladhar (2005) focused on the current status of women's work pattern, economic activities rates, and women's extent of participation in the labor force. The analysis was based on the secondary data. Women's proportion has increasing in

almost all occupations to some extent, but they are clearly concentrated in the agriculture sector. There is also a positive trend of their empowerment as reflected in their increasing proportion among the professionals and technicians and also in administration and management. Although women are slowly joining the expanding modern sectors, women's are concentrated in low-skills jobs because of lack of education and training opportunities, the biases of employers, and women's limited mobility. Women access to formal labour market therefore remains limited, and women are still mainly engaged in piecework, household activities.

N. Bhatta(Amagain) (2005) mentioned the analysis of socio economic status of women, especially in education, health, decision making, property ownership and employment of the Panchkhuwa Deurali VDC at Gorkha district. The overall findings of the were not different than national scenario. It means that the large number of women of that VDC was uneducated but general literate and they highly depend on agriculture with traditional systems. Large number of that area had not any property in their own name and if so, they were divorced, single, or widow. Women are far from their decision making process in social as well as financial activities but can take decisions on their family matters. Since low economic status of women in that VDC was due to the lack of education and proper trainings, the study suggested that the various women empowerment programs like vocational and entrepreneurship trainings should be conducted by government, NGOs, INGOs.

2.2. General Literatures on Tharus and Tharu Women

D.B. Bista (1967) mentioned that Tharus are probably the oldest and original inhabitants of Terai. Tharus live very nearly to the heavy forest region, and the culture, living standard, tradition differs from western Nepal to eastern Nepal. Although various ethnic groups are completely individual cultural entities, Tharus are influenced by several groups other than their own. Tharus are tradition peasant farmers, are exploited by 'zimindars' (landlords) and revenue agents. Tharus are said to have been theoretically divided into two main categories, namely Pradhan and Apradhan. Tharu marriages are polygamous and patriarchal. Tharu in general, practice their own tribal religion which consists of worshiping a member of spirits and some Hindu deities which have been incorporated. Those Tharu who still practice their traditional Tharu religion have their own 'guruva' (priest). Any kind of rituals

religions activity in the family is always in the name of senior member of the family. Some Tharus cremate their dead body while some bury them. Joint family system is usual in Tharu society. As with other societies in Nepal, the Tharu community is undergoing a tremendous change. There is a wave of reform among educated Tharus. They have changed their food habits, adopted the Hindu religion and introduced modern education.

Ministry of Communication, Information Department, (1974), like other castes in Nepal Tharus main occupation is agriculture. Animal husbandry is a supplementary occupation with agriculture. Most of the Tharu families raise minimum 4-6 cows, 4-6 sheeps, goats and pigs. It is difficult to find the Tharu families who don't have chicken and pigs because chicken are needed in feast, festivals in faith healing by Guruva.

K.N. Pyakuryal (1982) mentioned that Tharus are one of the major ethnic groups in terai region and one of the more underdeveloped groups in Nepal. The history is a story of extreme deprivation, enormous hardship and obvious class exploitation because of physical and social isolation development activities in the region. As Tharus are generally illiterate and unschooled, Tharus lack awareness about their rights and privileges. The gap between Tharus and non-Tharus is very wide. The ethnicity does not interfere the agricultural modernization and rural development, thus it is suggested that ethnicity should not be viewed as a pathogenic and detrimental to social integration but it should be encouraged in order to help underprivileged minority groups like the Tharus face up to inter- ethnic competition successfully.

K.W. Meyer (2000) focused that among the peoples of Nepal, the Tharus are one of the very few who over centuries have acquired a substantial resistance to malaria, which has enabled them to survive the terai's particularly virulent form of this disease. Until the malaria eradication program in the middle of the 20th century, hill people avoided the terai because of its mosquito-infested swamps. Indeed, for them to be forced to live year-round in death sentence. Yet whereas hill people shunned the terai, the hardy Tharus converted its dense jungle into settlements and farmlands. As our document revealed, tigers, leopards, snake, elephant, were part of Tharu everyday life, as were the evil spirits of the forest.

D. Rajaure (1981) focused that the status of Tharu women is complex and it varies from women to women. Tharu women's status varies in different spheres of activity in their day to day life. Despite the complexity and variations, however a few general principles can be established which will help in evaluating the status of Tharu women in their society. One such general principle is complementarity and other is flexibility. Tharu women have more alternatives than women in many other Nepalese groups if Tharu women's life at their husbands' house is not happy or successful. However, in Tharu society, for a woman who has neither a husband nor a child, there seems to be no future.

M.P. Sharma (1987) focused that Tharu women has the responsibility to manage the family. Although man is the head of the family, he does not interfere in family affairs. It is women's duty to manage the meal, welcome the guest, look after the cattle and clean shed.

P. Lamichhane (1991) focused that the place of women in Tharu society is a good to a great extent. There is no doubt that the place of women in Tharu society is far better than that of man. This might be happened due to the existence of exchange and bride price marriage system.

R. Gautam and A.K. Magar (1994) mentioned that Tharu women have higher status among Rana Tharu as Rana Tharu women push their empty plate of food towards their husbands with their feet after finished eating. Male is not allowed to enter the kitchen. It showed that Rana Tharu women still consider themselves as an ancestor of Rajput women and their husbands as an ancestor of servant of Rajput women.

J.S. Eng and J. Hender (2000) focused the poor situation of Tharu women. The Tharu society is male dominated society where property is handled by male while females are concentrated only in the domestic works, discrimination was found in the study area, the ratio of Tharu girls student to Tharu boys students was quite high at primary level but gradually tapers at the higher grades. The withdrawal rate of Tharu girls student was higher than that of boys. Early marriages, language problem, use of their children in field works, ignorance of parents are presented as the case of

withdrawal. Apart from these, poor economic condition is found to be the main principal factors of determining the low educational status of Tharu women.

2.3. Conclusion

Gender issues, women's involvement in economic activities, Tharus, their origin and lifestyle, Tharu women, their role and status in their household has been tried to show in the above paragraphs. Women are frequently dependent on men which deprives women of the opportunity to learn the skills. Having 50 percent population in Nepal, women play crucial role inside household as well as on agriculture and related activities, but the tasks perform by women are not recognized as work. The higher levels of education lead to greater participation in non farm activities and lower participation in agriculture and non farm work is linked with the higher standards at least at the lower income deciles. Although women's involvement in modern sector has been increasing day by day, these are concentrated only in low skills jobs because of lack of education, trainings opportunities, the biases of employers, and so forth.

Tharus are probably the oldest and original inhabitants of terai. Although, various ethnic groups are completely individual cultural entities, Tharus are influenced by several groups other than their own. Generally the male Tharu is the head of the family but do not interfere the family affairs, Tharu women has the responsibility to manage the family. Due to the existence of exchange bride price marriage system the place of Tharu women is far better than in other groups of Nepalese society. However, above mentioned literatures do not have studied on the contribution of Tharu women in household economy at Ishworpur Village development committee of the Sarlahi district in Nepal; therefore, this study has focused on particular issue.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The main objective of the study is to illustrate the socio-economic status of women and their role in household economy in Nepal with special reference to the Tharu women of Ishworpur VDC of Sarlahi district.

3.1 Rationale of the Selection the Study Area

This study was carried out in Ishworpur VDC of Sarlahi District. The area was selected for the following reasons.

1. One of the least developed groups in rural area.
2. Easily accessible area.
3. Study has not been carried out in this area.

3.2 Research Design

Exploratory Research Design is used for this research which is not based on prior studies of the same area. So, it explores the role of the Tharu women in household economy of the study area. This research was conducted in Ishworpur VDC of Sarlahi district. Women of this village were the universe of the study. This study tried to explore the role of Tharu women in Household economy of this study area. Recommendations are suggested on the basis of findings so that it may be useful for the people concerned and policy makers as well.

3.3 Sampling Procedure

Tharu household was taken as a sample unit because Tharu household is the basic unit of production and distribution as well the cultural system of Tharu community. The total household of Tharu is 450 in the study area. This was considered the sample universe for the study. Out of these households, 90 households (20 percent of the total households) were selected by using stratified random sampling and systematic random sampling methods.

Tharus are inhabiting in the 6 wards of the study VDC. First of all, the total Tharu population was divided into the six strata on the basis of their wards. Then, 15 households were selected from ward no 2, 3, 4 and 5 by using systematic random

sampling. From wards 6 and 7, 20 and 10 households were selected from ward no 6 and 7 respectively, since 6 and 7 wards consists the highest and lowest numbers of Tharu households. The lists of the households were taken from the ward office, and from that list the first sample was selected randomly and every 5th households were selected systematically so that targeted households could be selected. Suggestions from the local teachers, leaders and the chief of the Tharu of the concerned village were also considered. Table 1 shows total number of households and the sampled household of different wards.

Table: 1 Total Numbers of Household and the Sampled Households of Different Wards

Wards	Total Households	Sampled Household
1	0	-
2	66	15
3	56	15
4	93	15
5	79	15
6	127	20
7	29	10
8	0	-
9	0	-
Total	450	90

3.4 Nature and Sources of Data

The data need for the study is mainly primary in nature. The data were collected from the field through the interview and the observation. An interview schedule containing economic, socio-educational and cultural variable was formed for this purpose. Besides this, VDC representative and other local women were contacted for the supplementary information needed along with these primary data.

The questionnaires were presented among 90 households and were applied to the economically defined woman that is woman of aged 15-59. Women below 14 years and above 60 are not included in this study as a sample. In the case of more than one female respondent in the household the women having higher age and high

financial status in the family was chosen. These studies were carried out on July, 2007.

3.5 Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected both from primary and secondary sources. The primary data were collected from the fieldwork using semi-structured questionnaires as said above. The secondary data were collected from various books and websites.

3.5.1 Semi-Structure Interview

The questionnaire was prepared with several questions covering different aspects of the Tharu community with special emphasis on socio-economic aspects and contribution of the Tharu women in household economy.

3.5.2 Key Informant Survey

The researcher visited the study area and the activities and behaviour of the Tharu communities were studied by discussing with the local teachers, leaders, VDC representatives, Tharu leaders, etc. Several informations were gathered through observations and by discussion with above mentioned key informants which were not to be in the semi-structured interview.

3.5.3 Case Studies

Two cases of the Tharu women of different ages were taken. Various aspects of their life are deeply and thoroughly studied taking into account of its past and present. Their behavior and relationship with the topic of the study are viewed from all dimensions and tried to relate their natural history, relationship with social factors and their contribution in household economy.

3.6 Method of Data Analysis

To analyse the collected data, categorization, ordering, ranking was done to obtain answer of research questions. Editing of the secondary data, classification and tabulation and comparison of data were done and necessary statistical tools were used and presented in the form of tables to present the situation concisely and clearly. After the processing of data, inferences were drawn.

3.7 Encounter and Experiences

In the Tharu society, especially women are not exposed to other communities. Therefore it was not easy to get information from women. Women are not very open and clear to the outsiders. It was also observed that women were afraid of male while expressing their views.

CHAPTER FOUR

INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY AREA

In this chapter, general background of the study area has been introduced which consists of economic, social and cultural issues. Both primary and secondary data have been employed in this chapter.

4.1 Physical Settings

This study is carried out at Ishworpur VDC of Sarlahi District in Terai region of Nepal. Bhaktipur VDC lies at the eastern part of this VDC, at west there is Phuljor River, at north Mahendra Highway and there is Bela and Babargunj VDC at the southern part of the Ishworpur VDC. North – South length is 7 km and West – East length is 3.75 km.

People in this area are indigenous farmers. Every household has land. Unlike in the past, there are very few people holding larger area of land. The farmers in this area belong to middle to marginal class. The Tharus who used to occupy big land in the past have small piece now. Migrants from the hill have bought their land and the land sizes of the indigenous people have decreased. More than 80 percent of the cultivated lands in this area are irrigated and the land in general is fertile and highly productive.

The Sarlahi District lies in Terai belt of Nepal. Especially, the tropical evergreen forest is found in this area. Basically Shisau, Sal, Satisal, Khayer, Jamuno Simal, Teak etc. are the types of trees found in this region. Besides these, herbal and medicinal plants such as Amala, Harro, Barro, Nimb, Tulashi etc. are also available in this area. Different types of animals such as tiger, elephant, monkey, fox, etc are found in the forest of near by jungle. Several species of birds like parrot, crow, pigeon, sparrow etc .are found in this area.

Due to its geographic location, the climate of the village is very hot during summer and quite cold during winter.

4.2 Socio-Economic Settings

Females have to participate in their household economy according to the socio-economic conditions of a society, the caste and cultural system of the family. Thus, in this sub –chapter the general socioeconomic condition of the Ishworpur VDC (study area) has been studied.

4.2.1 Demographic Composition

Total population of Ishworpur VDC is 25,568, which consists, 13,884 male and 11684 female. Total Tharu population is 4,277 among them 54.73percent is male and 45.27percent is females (CBS, 2001).

Originally this area was of Tharus, but after the eradication of malaria many people of non-Tharu origin like, Brahman, Chhetri, Magar, Gurung etc migrated from the hills and settled in the VDC.

Under the involvement of economically active people in small scale occupation other than agriculture, the highest percentage of the people (47.11percent) is involved in services. The second popular work is trade/business (28.88percent). Besides these, people are earning cash from manufacturing, transport etc. The marital status of the population above 10 years of age of the studied VDC is, 31.55percent is unmarried and 61.79percent is married, 1.01percent is either widow/widower or divorced (CBS,2001).

4.2.2 Educational Status

Table 2 shows the educational status of the population above the age of 6 years of the Ishworpur VDC. Total literacy rate for the said age group is 43.83percent. The male constitutes 66.99percent and the female constitutes 33percent of the literate population. Among females only 29.19 percent are literate.

Table 2: General Literary Rate of VDC, 6 Years and Above

Literacy	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
Literate	4271 (66.99)	2104 (33)	6375 (43.33)
Illiterate	3064 (37.51)	5103 (66.48)	8167 (56.16)
Total	7335	7207	14542

Source: Population Census 2001, CBS

Table 3 shows that the percentage of school attending population 6 and above is 43.61 percent. The population of female attending school is less than that of male that is 55.34 percent of male is going to school and 44.65 percent of female is going to school.

Table 8: Population of 6 Years of Age and Over Going to School

Population	Going to school	Not going to school
Male	1797 (55.34)	2289 (54.53)
Female	1450 (44.65)	1908 (45.46)
Total	3247	4197

Source: Population Census 2001, CBS

4.2.3 Economy

The economy of the VDC is predominately agricultural. Besides, basketry, rope making, fishery, services, business, labour work etc. are also the sources of income of the community.

Paddy, wheat, and mustard are the main crops. Other includes maize, millet, pulses, sugarcane, tobacco etc. Majority of people, though heavily dependent on land, possess only a nominal piece. Majority of the people, especially the Tharus in the VDC are poor, uneducated and can be easily guided by the superior groups due to their simplicity and honesty in nature. They cultivate the land from landlords on the basis of the Adhiya system as Tikur or Tinkur system.

Animal husbandry is also one of the major occupations of the people. Animals like cows, buffaloes, goats, pigs etc. are kept for the different purposes such as, for sale (cash farming), ploughing dairy products, transport etc. However, the majority of the people of the VDC are still poor and heavily dependent on agro-based works.

4.2.4 Cultural Practices of Gender in the Tharu Community

The Tharus are religious people. In general, Tharus practice their own tribal religion, which consists of worshipping a number of spirits and some Hindu deities. Tharus have their ancestral deity installed in their family house called Kumarbarti Jahhadimai (Kul Devata). All family rites and rituals are performed after worshipping the ancestral deity. Tharus believe that the deity is the form of Kali or Bhagwati. Tharus have their own priest called Guruva who performs the traditional rituals, besides; Tharus worship Hindu god and goddess like Ram, Sita, Hanuman, Shiva, Parvati, Durga etc. Any kind of rituals religious activity in the family is always in the name of senior member of the family. Tharus also follow Hindu rituals during wedding and domestic Puja. Brahman priests are employed to perform these rituals. Some Tharus cremate their dead body while some bury them.

Tharu marriages are monogamous. The parents of the couple arrange the marriage within the group. The marriage partner can be anybody except the member of the same gotra unit. Most marriages are early but due to social awareness the marriage age is increasing.

The Tharu families are patriarchal but have divided their roles between male and female. Though the eldest male member of the family deserves full authority of making all decisions, women also can decide on household activities especially in farm works. Generally Tharus used to have big joint family but nowadays they prefer to live in a small family. The senior most mothers-in-law or the wife of their eldest son heads the female group and divides the responsibility. In the Tharu society female are treated as the means of production and reproduction. Normally Tharus marry their sons with elder girls so that Tharu women can contribute more in the farm activities. The social status of female, to a great extent, is higher than women of other groups. The place of a daughter-in-law in the family is also very good. A mother-in-law may not misbehave with her daughter-in-law because mother in law is always afraid of the consequences to her own daughter from the other side because a daughter and daughter-in-law are exchanged according to the exchanged marriage system. If a daughter in law became unhappy, she can leave husband's home. In this condition, it is very problematic to get a son remarried or their son can leave his parents following his wife's fate. More attention is paid to keep happy a newly married daughter-in-law

in Tharu society. All the family members behave well to help adjust a bride to a new situation.

The Tharu, one of the ancient tribes inhabiting in Terai are considered as one of the primitive groups. Tharu's population is 6.5percent of the whole country and 16.72percent in the study VDC (CBS, 2001). In general, the Tharus are simple and honest. Tharu's settlement is mostly near the forest and rivers. Tharus remain isolated for long time for the mainstream of the country, which kept them away from education. As Tharus were lately exposed to the modern society, Tharus still have animistic practice and believe in faith healing. Tharus are indigenous farmers and livestock is an integral part of their life. Economically Tharus belong to poor groups therefore; they have to work hard for their hand to mouth. Aside from the agricultural products and labour work, the main source of their livelihood is livestock and handicraft.

Many of the Tharu have lost their land and have become the laborers to higher-caste immigrants who wanted to take advantage of the agricultural opportunities in the Terai. Many worked as servants in households of the rich.

CHAPTER FIVE

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESPONDENTS

It is well recognized that socio-economic characteristics of the people explain much aspect of their lives. In this chapter an attempt has been made to highlight some of the basic socioeconomic characteristics of the sampled households of the study area. The socio-economic background includes family structure, age and sex composition, marital status, educational status, major occupation of household, land holding pattern, types of land holding, livestock holding, and so forth.

5.1 Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The study is based on the sample of 90 Tharu households. The data was collected by interviewing with one woman (economically defined women, that is women aged 15-59), from one household. The total population of the sampled households was 633 in which 53.08 percent are male and 46.91 percent female. The average household size of the sampled household is 7.033 that can be considered relatively higher than the national figure 5.4. The following sub-units deal with the basic demographic characteristics of the sampled household.

5.1.1 Age and Sex Structure of Population

Among the sampled households, 78.51 percent belong to active productive age, 15.95 percent are children and 5.52 percent are of old age (i.e. above 60 years). The sample population shows that the population of male counterpart is more than that of female counterparts of economically active age, which is shown in table 4.

Table 4: Age and Sex Structure of Population of Sampled Household

Age Groups	Male (Percent)	Female (Percent)	Total (Percent)
Below 15	49(7.74)	52(8.21)	101(15.95)
15-59 Age	271(42.81)	226(35.70)	497(78.51)
60 and Above	16(2.52)	19(3.0015)	35(5.52)
Total	336(53.08)	297(46.91)	633(100.00)

Source: Field survey, 2007

5.1.2 Marital Status

Marital status is a significant social indicator for understanding gender participation in household economy. Gender ideologies for married and unmarried male and female differ and the roles of married and unmarried female also differ in the household economy. The marital status of the sampled households is shown in table 5. Out of the total 633 populations of the sampled households, 488 are married, 124 are unmarried daughters and sons, and 21 are widowed. As seen in table 5, the married population constitutes a large majority (77.09percent). The unmarried constitutes (19.58percent). While widowed constitute 2.29percent of the total population. However, no Tharus have remained separated in the sampled household.

Table 5: Marital Status of Tharu of 10 Years and Above Population

S. No.	Marital Status	No. of Population (Percent)
1	Married	488(77.09)
2	Unmarried	124(19.58)
3	Widowed	21(3.317)
4	Separated	0(0.00)
5	Total	633(100.00)

Source: Field survey, 2007

Originally, the Tharus belonged to the group of having a big joint family. This is changing with the change of time. The average family size of the respondent is 7.033, which is bigger against national average 5.4. Among 90 households 78 households are joint family and 12 households are nuclear family. According to Tharu's belief, children are divine gift. Tharus like to live in the joint family with their children.

Usually the Tharus marry at younger age and the girls are older than boys. This specifies that Tharus are farmers and they perform physically capable daughter-in-law to help them in their farm works. This also reveals the importance of women's contribution in the domestic economy of the community. However, young Tharus on these days prefer to marry with the girls of their age and the marriage age also has been increased.

5.1.3 Educational Status

From the sampled household it is known that 189 (56.25percent) are literate. The female literacy rate is 20.53 percent (for all ages). This figure is due to the primary school girls. Above the age group 15, female literacy rate is very low. The percent of lower secondary and higher secondary education of female is only 5.72. The study shows that the higher the level of education, the lower the participation of people in education. In Table 6 no tharus are seen to be graduated. Because of their low economic status and traditional belief, the Tharu people could not attend the higher education and female has less privileged among them. The Tharu respondents regard this lack of access to education as a major factor hindering their participation in wider economic and political sphere of society.

Table 6: Educational Status of the Sampled Household

S. N.	Education	Male (Percent)	Female (Percent)	Total (Percent)
1	Illiterate	189(56.25)	236(79.46)	425(67.81)
3	Primary	94(27.97)	38(12.79)	132(20.85)
4	Lower Secondary	31(9.2)	16(5.38)	47(7.42)
5	Higher Secondary	6(1.78)	1(0.336)	7(1.11)
6	Bachelor & plus	0(0.00)	0(0.00)	0(0.00)
7	Total	336(100)	297(100.00)	633(100.00)

Source: Field Survey, 2007

5.1.4 Economic Characteristics

The economy of tharus is predominantly based on agriculture. Besides, basketry, rope making, fishery, services, business, labour work, agricultural/ construction etc. are also the sources of income of the community.

Paddy, wheat and mustard are the main crops; other includes maize, millet, sugarcane, pulses, tobacco etc. Majority of Tharus, though heavily dependent on land, possess only a nominal piece of land. Most of the Tharus are poor, fallen and uneducated and can be easily guided by the superior groups due to the simple honesty in their nature. Tharus cultivate the land from landlords on the basis of the Adhiya and

Tikur. In Adhiya system Tharu have to give half of the total production to the landlord where as Tharus give two third of the total production in Tikur.

Animal husbandry is also one of the major occupations of the Tharus. Animals like cattle, buffalo, goats, are kept for the different purpose such as domestic uses, for sale, ploughing dairy products, transport etc. Hens, duck are also rearing by tharus. Besides this, some Tharus are actively involved in National Politics, business and services like government jobs, development works, teaching and private firms.

5.1.5 Occupational Patterns

Tharus do not possess much diverse occupational patterns. Agriculture is the primary means of survival. Due to the lack of high educational achievement, Tharu's participation in non-farm employment is limited. Selling of their human labor by both men and women and traditional skill-based products (mostly of women) constitute the bulk of non farm income source for the majority of households. Table 7 shows the major occupations of sampled households. Almost all of the Tharu people are following the indigenous agriculture based occupation like farming, livestock raising, fisheries, households works etc. and their main source of livelihood comes from this occupation. Besides Tharus also work as wage labour in construction works which is the main source of cash earning outside the farm activities. The Tharu women also involved in off-farm activities like small business which includes selling of chiura(beaten rice), alcohol , handicrafts like dhaki, matt, in their local markets , tailoring.

Table 7: Major Occupation of the Active Population/Women (Age above 15 to 59)

S. N.	Occupation	No of HH
1	Agriculture	90
2	Livestock Raising	86
3	Household Chores ^a	90
4	Business ^b	50
5	Fisheries	10
6	Handicrafts ^c	15
7	Wage Labour ^d	85
8	Service	6

Source: Field Survey, 2007

Note: Table 7 shows that one household can be involved in more than one activity. Therefore the total number of households exceeds.

- a. Household chores mean everyday household responsibilities of women like cooking, cleaning, washing, grinding etc.
- b. Business includes tailoring and small shops, as well as selling of chiura (beaten rice), alcohol, handicrafts in their local markets especially done by women.
- c. Wage labour means working in the daily wage in making houses, making irrigation channels and also in others agriculture.
- d. Handicrafts means weaving matt, dhakki.

Women in their share of works use the traditionally acquired profession like weaving of mat, weaving Dhaki which are attractive and fetch them a little amount of money too. Women do it in their own houses from locally available materials in their free time from their household works. But only 15 households are continuing this occupation.

It was found from the study that, 50 out of 90 households are doing small-scale business however, Tharu community does not participate in business like other groups.

5.1.6 Pattern of Land Holding

Land can be considered as a key resource of the Tharu community. The pattern of the land holding not only influences the economic status of households but also conditions the gender pattern of works within households and beyond households.

Though Tharus are indigenous farmers, do not hold very big plot of land. Out of 90 households surveyed, 53 families (58.89percent) hold less than one bigha, 24 families (26.67percent) hold upto 2 bigha and only 13 families (14.44percent) hold more than 2 bigha. The biggest size of land holding is 5 bigha. The data clearly indicates that the majority of the Tharus are marginal farmers and the richest among them are undersized, which is revealed in table 8.

Table 8: Land Holding Pattern

S.N.	Land Holding in Bigha	No. of HH (Percent of HH)
1	0 - 1	53(58.89)
2	1 - 2	24(26.67)
3	2 - 3	6(6.67)
4	3 - 4	4(4.44)
5	4 - 5	3(3.33)
Total		90(100.00)

Source: Field Survey, 2007

Due to the very low land with large groups, many tharus cultivate other's land, that is to say more tharus do not only cultivate their own land but also cultivate other's. From survey it is observed that most of the tharus do not give their own land others to cultivate in adhiya basis rather Tharus cultivate others due to the lack of their own land.

5.1.7 Level of Food Sufficiency

Landholding and productivity from the land is important indicator of the economic status of the household. The conditions of food sufficiency also guide the managing strategies of households which in turn may have impacts in the ways men and women work outside household to earn source of livelihood like wage labour. That is to say, if the food level is not sufficient for their livelihood Tharus go others places for work that is, Tharus may be engaged in off –farm activities or they take loan for fulfilling food deficiency otherwise they may not be engaged in off-farm activities. The case is true for the surveyed VDC also.

Table 9 shows that out of 90 households surveyed, only 17 families (18.89percent) have enough food to eat all over the year. The rest 73 (81.11percent) families cannot produce sufficient food from their farm. Of the 73 families, 9 (10percent) families have the food sufficiency approximately for one year, that is, 9 to 12 months, the large, 56.67 percent families have food sufficient for less than 3 months. This indicates that the Tharu community suffers from food deficit. Tharus have to depend upon other non-agriculture sources for their livelihood.

Table 9: Food Sufficiency

S. N.	Food Sufficiency (Month)	No. of hh (Percent)
1	0 - 3	51(56.67)
2	3 - 6	8(8.89)
3	6 - 9	5(5.56)
4	9 - 12	9(10.00)
5	Above 12	17(18.89)
Total		90(100.00)

Source: Field survey, 2007

5.1.8 Livestock Holding

Livestock is an essential part of household economy in ethnic society of Nepal. For the Tharus of the study area, livestock is source of animal labour in agriculture work, manure and source of protein as well as an income earning strategy of the people. Similarly, culture i.e. ritual, festivals and other rite-de-passage of the Tharu also involve livestock like ducks and chicken, but the Tharus of this study area do not rear pigs while rearing pigs by the Tharus from other part of the country can be seen.

In the study area most of the Tharu families have very limited land. The production of land is not sufficient to feed the whole family. Livestock raising is one of the most important side occupations, which helps to provide supplementary food to their family. Thus, each household of the studied area possess at least a few stock of livestock. Larger the number of cattle richer is the family. Therefore, it can be concluded that even though the family has food deficiency, Tharu can fulfill it by selling the livestock. Livestock has two major importances in the life of the farmers. Primarily, it supports in agriculture through its manure and ploughing. Secondly, it supports directly (milk, meat, egg etc.) or indirectly (by selling the animals and its product) to supplement the food. This is the second largest source of income after agriculture.

5.1.9 Major Income of Household

In rural communities, the major source of livelihood comes from agriculture. Majority of the households do not subsist with the income from the land alone. Therefore, the community has to rely on livestock, agriculture-labour and other works like small shop, handicraft, fishery etc. for the shortfall.

Every household has a stock of livestock and each of them earn reasonable amount of money to meet their cash needs. There is relation between the land size and livestock number. Number of livestock increases as the land size of the farmer increases and the income also increases. But, the incomes from other sources (agriculture/construction labour works) decrease with the increase in the income from livestock and agriculture.

CHAPTER SIX

CONTRIBUTION OF THE THARU WOMEN IN HOUSEHOLD ECONOMY

This chapter is the analysis of the major findings of the study. The chapter focuses on the pattern of household economy of the Tharu women in the study area. The household economy describes the collective economic activities of households. Often the household economy is called the household sector as distinct from the business, government and foreign sectors. However the household sector is large enough to deserve the term household economy. The rest of the economy can then be called market economy. Household is conceptualized as the social process of the production, exchange and distribution of resources for subsistence of a family. This also includes the patterns of the social relationships especially between male and female family members and the way they are organized within household to sustain the economic life of the household.

As described in the previous chapter, in Tharu economy agriculture plays major role. Therefore, land, labour and livestock comprise the three main component of the Tharu agriculture system within which, we can find the gender division of labour. Other off-farm activities like, wage labour, handicraft, tailoring, fishery, construction work are supplements to the household economy of the Tharu household.

6.1 Women's Involvement in Domestic Activities

Gender roles are socially and culturally constructed. Gender practices vary according to culture and society. Though the Nepalese Tharu women are very active at household and field works they have been assigned subordinate to men. Tharus are confined into their domestic and subsistence activities. The main occupations of these women are household chores and agricultural activities. In the Tharu community of the study area, the distinct pattern of gender division of the labour within households exists. The women contribute 6.7 hours more per day than men. Tharu women are highly responsible for household chores and activities, the field survey shows. Almost all the activities in domestic affairs fall under the responsibility of the women. Table 10 shows that out of the 13 activities, ploughing is the only work that the women do not do, whereas there are seven activities (more than 50 percent of the total

activities), which are done by women only. Digging is considered as the job of men but it is found that in 42 households women are doing those jobs too, in only 48 households the male do that job. This indicates that women are given additional responsibilities gradually in addition to the traditional one. Table 10 shows that only 30.77 percent of the works are done by both male and female of the sampled house. Thus from our analysis it can be generalized that about 84.62 percent Tharu women of the studied VDC are involved in the domestic activities and can be considered as the pillars of the household economy.

Table 10: Women's Involvement in Domestic Activities

S.N.	Activities	Male	Female	Both	Remarks
1	Fetching water	-	90	-	^a only 86 HH are involved in livestock raising.
2	Collecting fodder	-	83	7	
3	Livestock Care ^a	-	82	4	
4	Washing dishes and clothes	-	90	-	
5	Making dung bars	-	90	-	^b only 15 HH are involved in weaving.
6	Weaving ^b	-	15	-	
7	Fisheries ^c		2	8	^c only 10 HH are involved in fisheries.
8	Plantation	-	90	-	
9	Ploughing	90	-	-	
10	Digging	48	42		
11	Hauling manure		90	-	
12	Harvesting products		90	-	
13	Maintaining dykes	-	40	50	

Source: Field Survey, 2007

6.2 Time Contribution in Household Work

Everybody in the house contributes time according to their age and social norms. Based on the data of the studied VDC an average working hour of male is 10.9 hours per day whereas, women work 17.6 hours a day. That is to say women work 6.7 hours more than men. Thus we can say that in the Tharu society, women have more working load, which holds true in most of the rural households of the country.

In totality, women involve in household activities such as cooking, caring for children, regular house maintenance, grinding, weaving, cleaning, fetching water, milking, feeding to animals etc. as extra work to male. Ploughing is the only work that male alone do but both male and female do the rest of the farm activities. Among these works, the farm and off farm activities are the seasonal but the household works where the burden of women is more are regular.

6.3 Tharu Women and Livestock Management

Since the income from cultivation is not enough for the subsistence, Tharu's communities are active in the livestock raising. Thus it can be considered as an integral part of agriculture life and economy of a Tharu household. Every household has kept different kinds of animals. Each household has different kinds of animal. The farmers sell chicken, duck, goat, sheep, milk and milk products for cash earning. The farmers use this income to buy deficit food and to meet other household expenses and the livestock are used for the farming purposes as well. Care of livestock stall is primarily an activity of women, while boys and girls are engaged in herding activities on a large scale. Men are also involved in animal care and herding, while mainly women collect the grass and fodder, clean shed, feed the cattle and milk them, which are the major responsibilities of the livestock raising. Mostly men bring livestock to the market, sell it and get the money. It also indicates that the Tharu women contribute in generating the income and the male control it.

6.4 Women's Role in Agriculture

Nepalese economy is based upon agriculture which is dominated by small-scale subsistence farming. Agriculture is becoming progressively feminized. Many women engaged in family farms are still reported as economically not active. Women's role in agricultural production is input. Women take substantial contribution to uphold domestic economy. The Tharu women do everything except ploughing, like transplanting rice, weeding, hauling manure, spreading manure, threshing millet and wheat, harvesting corn, hauling corn and millet, maintaining dykes and irrigation system and so forth. All the women in the study area participate in the agriculture. Tharu women do other works only when they do not have farm activities.

There are altogether 90 households under study. Among them 17 household contribute 0-2 months of their time in agriculture farming. In this class of household the contribution of male is found to be greater than that of female. Out of remaining 73 household 19, 27 and 27 households contribute their time in agriculture farming respectively for 2-4 months, 4-6 months and 6-8 months. In each of these households the time contribution of female is found to be greater than that of male. In totality, the time contribution of female is greater than that of male.

Table 11: Contribution of Men and Women in Agricultural Work

Time contribution in months	No. of HH	Male	Female
0 - 2	17	More	Less
2 - 4	19	Less	More
4 - 6	27	Less	More
6 - 8	27	Less	More

Source: Field Survey, 2007

6.5 Women's Involvement in Off-farm Activities (Outside the Agriculture)

Mostly the people of Ishworpur VDC are farmers. In spite of this majority people have limited land, which cannot meet their subsistence. People have also not got proper training on agriculture so that they can earn more income from the limited land. Therefore, people need to involve in the off-farm activities to meet the food deficit.

The Tharu community of the VDC have not yet exposed to the modern change. Table 12 reflects that there are very few people who have started different occupation than the traditional one for cash earning. Among them, only two women out of six are involved in services, one woman is helper in health post and other is working at co-operative institution organized by the local women. Among the off-farm activities, wage labour is the most common and 55.55 percent of the Tharu women are engaged in labour force. Similarly, 11.11 percent and 2.22 percent of the Tharu women are engaged in handicrafts and fishery respectively. Concerning the business, 48.88 percent of women are involved in it. This proportion of female engaged in business doesn't mean that women in this place are successful to a great extent and have their own huge business because here business means not bulky but

of small scale. To fulfill the crisis of money Tharu women are very active in doing such kind of business which consist of selling of vegetables, chiura (beaten rice), flour, snacks and alcohol near by the local markets(haat bazaar) which is held twice a week, Saturday and Wednesday. There is discrimination between men and women in paying the wages while working as labour, male get Rs.120.00 where as female get only Rs.90.00 per day. Thus Tharu women are being exploited in this area regarding the wage but are actively involved in the off farm activities.

Table 12: Women's Involvement in Off-farm Activities

S.N.	Activities	Tharu women's involvement (percent)
1	Business ^a	44(48.88)
2	Services	2(2.22))
3	Handicrafts	10(11.11)
4	Fishery	2(2.22)
5	Wage Labour	50(55.55)

Source: Field Survey, 2007

Note:-

- a. Business includes selling of chiura (beaten rice), vegetables, alcohol, snacks etc in local markets especially, done by women.

6.6 Role in Decision Making by Gender

The purpose of the study is to draw the contribution of Tharu women on household economy. So as to study this, it is necessary to know the capacity or role of women in decision making at household level.

6.6.1 Women's Decision in Agricultural Work

Table 13 shows that male and female decide mutually in agricultural works. It was tried to know how much women are listened during mutual discussion. Table 13 gives the degree of importance given to women's voice in making the household's decision, 36.67 percent of the respondents replied that the work is done according to women's decision. But 63.33 percent replied that male dominate in the decision making process. The study reveals that women, who contribute most in agricultural products, are disregarded in decision making process.

Table 13: Women Decision in Agricultural Work

S. N.	Decision in agricultural works	No. of HH	Percentage
1	Yes	33	36.67
2	No	57	63.33
Total		90	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2007.

More over, the large proportions of women do not have the power of selecting seeds for planting the crops. Women can't even rear and sale livestock without the permission of male counterparts.

6.6.2 Women's Decision Outside the Agricultural Works (Off-farm)

The women in the Tharu community have greater responsibilities in production and income generating activities but women alone have very rare role in decision making process. It is clear from the study of table 14, that although female do wage labour works to fulfill food deficiency cant decide it herself, but has to take permission from male counterpart, that is to say out of 85 household involved in wage labour works, 50 women are involved in it, but only 35 women can take decision herself to work. In the same way female can not take a decision about the own health, female is dependent on husband, however male and female mutual decision can also be seen in some activities like in children's education, children's health care, adult education, adult health care, in some houses mutual decisions relating to the health care of the women has also been seen. Overall it is analyzed that 57.82 percent of male decision is dominant in household decision making process. Only 18.98 percent and 23.20 percent women and both's decision is considered in household decision making process respectively.

Table 14: Women's Decision Making in Off-farm Activities

S.N.	Activities	Male (No of HH)	Female (No of HH)	Both (No of HH)	Total HH	Remarks
1	Wage labour	37	35	13	85	The HH Listed in each column indicates the number of activities that the number of HH under go.
2	Business	5	2	-	7	
3	Services	4	2	-	6	
4	Handicrafts	5	10	-	15	
6	Attending any gatherings	84	6	-	90	
7	Children's education	49	6	35	90	
8	Adult education	-	-	11	11	
9	Children's health care	49	6	35	90	
10	Adult health care	85	-	5	90	
11	Female health care during pregnancy	60	-	30	90	
Total in percentage		57.82	18.98	23.20		

Source: Field Survey, 2007

6.6.3 Women's Decision Making in Household Expenditures

As it is observed from the above analysis, there is very low decision making power of women in the household of the Tharu community of the Ishworpur VDC, the same is seen in the case of decision making in household expenditures too. Out of 90 households surveyed 22 households' women can take decisions for their daily household expenditures like food, clothing, health/medicines, children's educations, buying seeds, fertilizers, expenses for festivals and rituals. Thus 24.44 percent women's decision is considered in the household expenditures. More precisely, it is observed from the field study that masses of women has their own decision making power regarding food expenses which shows that Tharus are fond of delicious food so that female do not have to take decisions from their male counterparts to expense on daily food provisions. Generally, the women spend to buy clothes, medicine and commodities of their own interest during fairs and festivals. Whereas female are highly dependent on other household expenditures decisions.

6.7 Awareness on Girl's Education

Education is the milestone of the development and vital indicator of social status. An educated wife and mother naturally have better communication with the outsider as with increasingly educated males within the household. An educated girl can maintain better family health; contribute in slow population growth, to increase productivity and builds confidence in decision making. When women grows as a wife and a mother in the future her role to manage the house and rare the children is indispensable and an educated women can contribute better than her uneducated counterpart.

The field survey reveals that the majorities of the Tharu women (67.77percent) are not in favour of girls' education, as women were not educated and do not know the importance of education and think that girls will go to their husband's house after their marriage. In women's opinion, the family will not get any benefits from the investment in girls' education and are not interested to send their daughter in the school, but not all the women who are illiterate, do not go against their daughter's education, which can be proved by the fact of 79.46 percent of female illiteracy rate of studied VDC, 27.78 percent of the respondents replied that girls and boys both are their children and therefore should not discriminate.

6.8 Participation in Women Focused Skill Training Programme

There are several variables, which influence the generation of income by human. Among them skill training is considered as one. Most of the Tharu women spend their leisure time by doing the traditional works such as making dhaki, weaving straw matts etc. but these handicrafts are not of high quality. Trainings on making use of indigenous skill and resources aiming at using the leisure time certainly improve women's living condition.

But in the survey area very least of the women are trained, only 24 households are involved in it which is shown in table 15. Only 11.12 percent of the women got the agricultural training. The role of women in agriculture is substantial but women are still following the conventional method of farming due to the lack of proper training. If they get the training on modern farming technique, the agricultural output would definitely increase.

Table 15: Participation of Women in Trainings that Improve Skills

S.N.	Type of Training	No of HH(percent)
1	Agricultural	10(11.12)
2	Weaving	6(6.66)
3	Tailoring	8(8.88)
4	Total	24(26.66)

Source: Field Survey, 2007

6.9 View of Women on Property Right to Daughter

Majority of the people in the research area are against the notion of property right to daughter. This is the generally accepted tendency in Nepal. Some of women replied that girls get it from their husband and the rest replied that girls are married in the other village and they cannot cultivate the land situated in their parent's village. The field observation reflects that 91.1percent of the Tharu women are against the property right to daughters and only 4.45 percent is in favour.

6.10 Personal Property of Women (Pewa)

Most of the women are handicapped due to the lack of money. Women are unable to get different income generative training and quality education and do not get the good health service and the mortality rate is also high. So, if women have Pewa, can generate some more from it and fulfill the basic requirements. So, Pewa is also considered as one of the significant tool to upgrade women's living standard.

Every woman has pewa either in terms of cash and jewellery or animals. Table 16 shows that among 90 households, 84.44 percent have jewellery, 75.47 percent have animals and 65.55 percent have cash. But, none of the women have Pewa in terms of land. The total households exceed 90 because single respondents can have more than one type of Pewa. This is the only property that the women can decide independently how to spend. Normally, the women spend to buy clothes, medicine and commodities of their own interest during fairs and festivals.

Table 16: Private Property of Women (Pewa)

S.N.	Properties	No of HH	Percentage
1	Jewellery	76	84.44
2	Land	-	0.00
3	Animal	68	75.47
4	Money	59	65.55

Source: Field Survey, 2007

6.11 Case Studies

6.11.1 Case Study One (Chanda the best example of Tharu society)

Chanda Chaudhary was born on 28 years before in a village of Bara district, Fattepur VDC. She gets married with Shankar Chaudhary of Ishworpur VDC at the age of 18 years. To a great extent her life is diverse in comparison to other Tharu women of the Ishworpur VDC, in that sense; she is educated women and is engaged in a permanent job. She is working as an Auxiliary health worker at the health post near village. She earns 7 thousands money monthly. Only after completing her study she gets married and started her job after her marriage. She is living with her husband, children, father/mother in law. Everybody in her family support her and her work. She also helps her family in household and agricultural works but is not involved in extra activities that other women do like weaving etc. She has given birth to 2 children, 1 son aged 4 year and 1 daughter aged 8 years, they are studying in class nursery and two respectively. She is much busy in her life doing her job and her household works. She keeps all the money herself earned by her and spend in her house according to the problem arise. Her husband is involved in his own business, he is running rice mill and earning good sum of money. He has completed higher secondary education. Her family is a good example in the society. The person who is in financial problem came to her house to lend money to fulfill their requirements. Her family is so liberal and do not have to face any barriers regarding her cravings. They are well off family and are living their life without any supports from others but are supporting other accordingly. Since Chanda is educated and engaged in job, does not have to depend on other and is contributing a lot in her household, so is different from other Tharu women's life.

Though Chanda may not be a typical woman for a case study in case of Tharu women but the way she started her life is different from other Tharu women and the method she used for their living is a best example to other Tharu women of the society.

6.11.2 Case Study Two (Can all Tharu women become like Janaki Devi?)

Janaki Devi Chaudhary is one of the female members of Tharu community in Ishworpur VDC. She was born in the Ishworpur VDC. She has got primary level education. When she was young her parents decided to marriage her with one of the young Tharu named Lalan Chaudhary of the same VDC at the age of twelve. Now, she is the mother of three daughters and one son.

Janaki Chaudhary has slightly different domestic situation than a conventional Tharu family, as her husband is also tractor driver aside from a traditional farmer. The family is one step ahead of the conventional Tharu families because they use tractor to plough their field. He earns considerable amount of cash by driving the tractor. As they do not have enough land, Janaki also work as wage labour in agricultural farms and construction works. Therefore, her contribution in earning cash is not less than her husband.

Women are the backbone of rural economy. She spends her life by doing all of the traditional activities, which is done by Tharu women. Besides, she spares some time to use her indigenous skill in making beautiful dhaki and mat. Primarily she used those products for her domestic use and sells the leftover in the local market and earns cash. She is also involved in different agricultural works that earns cash. She grows different kinds of vegetables in her kitchen garden and sells in the local market.

She has kept goats and raised chickens and ducks. Her children help her to raise these animals. Before and after the school the children feed them under her instruction while she is around the house and busy in kitchen works. This way she also trains her children in household activities.

In this way Janaki Devi Chaudhary is one of the examples of her village. She is almost busy in household work as well as in different kinds of income generating activities. She is equally concerned with the education and health of her children. She

has got primary level education which has inspired her life and vision. Therefore, she is conscious about the education of all the children and their health. According to Janaki Devi, she always works about 17 hours a day where as her husband works about 10 hours only. Main cause of her hardship is that she wants to provide better education to her children and keep them healthy. This mature and responsible behavior shows that the role of Tharu women is more than that of male counter parts both on household level economy and building the society. It is also important to note that primary level of education to women is very necessary to widen women's horizon in managing the family which ultimately helps to build the nations.

Janaki Devi Chaudhary is a typical woman for case study as she is practicing all traditional Tharu life style and struggling hard to adopt new changes. She believes that only education and sound economy can bring positive changes in the life of the rural people. Her hardship is devoted to the better future of her children. Therefore Janaki Devi Chaudhary has been chosen as a typical example as she has contributed in bridging the conventional and modern life style in the Tharu community.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Summary and its Major Findings

The entire analysis focuses upon the contribution of Tharu women in household economy. To undertake this study, the role of Tharu women in household economy, income generating activities and household decision making has been tried to study. Further, role of Tharu women in agricultural production and women's contribution in off-farm activities has been tried to show.

The study includes the Tharu households from all wards of Ishworpur VDC, Sarlahi district of Nepal. To analyze the collected data, categorization, ordering, and ranking was done to obtain the research objectives. Due to the time and resources constraints, this study covers only the 90 households of Tharu society. The demographic, educational status of the target groups has been analyzed to draw the information.

The literacy rate of the targeted group is lower than the national average and educational attainment is very low. Further more economic status of the targeted group is subordinate. The major occupations of female are agriculture, livestock raising, household chores, business, fisheries, handicrafts, construction work, wage labour etc. Due to the very low pattern of land holding Tharu women are unable to produce agricultural products, which is sufficient for the fulfillment of their subsistence annual needs. So, other off-farm activities have been done.

One of the important and interesting pattern emerged from the investigation is that the female members have a comparatively less power of decision making than the male counterparts. Females might have a significant contribution in the decision of many important issues but Tharu women heavily depend on the approval and permission of the husband for the execution of both important as well as less important matters. This is due to the many factors. The major affecting factors are their tradition, male dominated culture and lack of education.

Whatever is the status in making decisions at household level women contribute more than the male counterparts in the household economy. The data

shows that, in average women works 6.7 hours per day more than men and women's contribution is more by 61.5percent. However, the status of Tharu women is still subordinate in each and every part of the social activities and in the society.

7.1.1 Major Findings

The overall findings of the study can be given in this way:-

1. Tharus are one of the indigenous ethnic groups of Nepal. Tharus have common characteristics of other people only in some aspects of life but who have their own culture, tradition, values, norms and life styles. Tharus are Hindu by religion.
2. There were 12 households which have the nuclear family system and 78 households have joint family system.
3. Overall, literary rate is less than the national average standard. The female literacy rate is less than that of male.
4. Major occupations are agriculture, livestock, and wage-labour. But, Tharus spend the significant part of their time in off-farm activities too.
5. Out of the total Tharus in the study area, approximately 54.73 percent are female and 45.27 percent are male.
6. The pattern of landholding is very low. Approximately 58 percent of the sampled households hold less than one bigha of land. The data clearly indicates that the majority of the Tharus are marginal farmers and the richest among them are undersized.
7. Though the Nepalese Tharu women are very active in household and field works, Tharu women have been assigned subordinate status than men. Tharu women are confined into their domestic and subsistence activities. The main occupation of these women in each household chores and agricultural activities.
8. Tharu women carry a triple burden in the society. These are: as a production worker, as a mother and wife and as a community worker.

9. There is early marriage system and usually girls are older than boys at marriage. The average family size is 7.033 which is larger than the national average.
10. Tharu women's contribution is 6.7 hours more per day than men. Tharu women are highly responsible for household chores and activities. Male participation is less.
11. Usually, Tharu women spend their off-farm time in business (marketing their domestic products) producing cottage products, fishing, and working as wage labour. Among them wage labour is the most common.
12. Approximately 37.67 percent of the respondents under study reported that Tharu women have certain role in household decisions making but their decisions are not in action until the execution by their male counterpart.
13. In the surveyed area very few numbers of women are trained. Out of the total women of active age group only 26.66 percent have got training opportunities.

7.2 Conclusions

Based on the summary and the findings of the study, the conclusion of study of contribution of Tharu women in household economy can be drawn in such a way that women of Tharu community are being ill – treated by the society, have to work more in agriculture as well as outside the agriculture, but have a comparatively less power of decision making than the male counterparts. The major factors responsible for these phenomenons are the tradition, male dominated culture and lack of education. The data shows that, in average women works 6.7 hours per day more than men and their contribution is more by 61.5percent. However, the status of Tharu women is still subordinate in each and every part of the social activities and in the society which is not different from the national scenario.

7.3 Recommendations

In Nepal, women constitute more than one half of the total population who can play an imperative role in every society. The same is true in the surveyed area also. The women contribute to their household economy significantly. Women shoulder on

greater responsibilities than their male counterpart in the household activities. Though women's involvement in household decision making in each and every sector is very important but, their role is found to be undervalued. There is greater extent of gender discrimination in Nepalese society. This phenomenon is basically true in the Tharu communities of the study area also. To avoid the existing discrimination against the Tharu women and to strengthen Tharu women's role in household decision making of Ishworpur VDC, the following recommendations are made from this study.

1. As education is pioneering issue which helps to increase the level of thinking and the efficiency of human beings, it would be better to conduct the "education for all" programme in the Tharu communities of the study area.
2. Another important programme is to increase the public awareness programme against the gender discrimination in the study area. Thus, it is recommended to conduct such programme by some independent Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs).
3. Vocational and entrepreneurship trainings should be accomplished to the targeted group to increase their efficiency, make them independent and give them space at the decision making level too.
4. Tharu women are skilled in making basketry and mat. Tharu women should be encouraged making such things. Trainings related to these skills must be introduced and should be trained with new models. Such products should get market facilities and should introduce in national or international markets also.

Rural women are highly discriminated because of the lack of techniques which can value their contribution in monetary term to their household economy. The same is true for the Tharu women of Ishworpur VDC. But it is quite difficult process and thus deserves further study. Hence, on the basis of conclusions and findings of the present study instead of attempting to recommend some more points to make significant step towards raising the count of women contribution in their household economy and their decision making power within the sphere of their households, we think it is better to conduct the further studies concerning the women and their contribution in household economy.

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ANNEXES

Annex I: Glossary

Adhiya	:	The system of paying half of the production to the landlord by tenant keeping one half for himself.
Bigha	:	Unit of measurement of land in terai (6775 m ²).
Bhagwati	:	A kind of Goddess
Chiura	:	Beaten rice
Dhaki	:	A kind of basket which is made from the skin of corn.
Guruva	:	Priest
Haat bazaar	:	Local market
Kali	:	A kind of Goddess
Kul deveta	:	Family God
Kamaiyas	:	Slave kept by landlords
Maalik	:	Landlords
Perma	:	Labour exchange basis
Pewa	:	Personal property of women such as: money, land, and livestock given by Natal family and of the own income earned outside the regular work
Rajput	:	elites
Tikur/ Tinkur	:	The system of paying two third of the production by the tenant to the landlord keeping one third for himself.

Annex II: Household Questionnaires
Contribution of Tharu Women in Household Economy
A case study of Ishworpur VDC, Sarlahi
Questionnaire Schedule
Central Department of Economics
T.U., Kritipur

A. Question Related to Households

1. Information about the study area
 - a. Zone:
 - b. District:
 - c. VDC/ Municipality:
 - d. Ward No:
 - e. Village/ Tole:
2. Household information.....
 - 2.1 Name, Sex, Religion
 - a. Name of household head:
 - b. Sex:
 - c. Religion:
 - 2.2 Please give the detail information about your family living under the same roof including the household head.

SN	Name	Sex	Age	Education*	Occupation**
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					

* 1. Illiterate

2. Literate

a. Primary education

b. Lower secondary

c. Higher secondary

** 1. Agriculture

2. Non agriculture

a. industry

b. service

c. business

d. Bachelor plus

d. labor work

e. others(specify)

2.3 How long did your family been residing in this place?

a. Local resident:

b. Migrated from other place:

2.4 Type of family

a. Nuclear family (Separated):

b. Joint family:

3. Information about agriculture.

3.1 Do you have land?

Yes

No

Please mention the area in kattha and its ownership.

Ownership	Area	Remark
Self		
Others but cultivating		
Owned but cultivated by others		
Total		

3.2 What are your major cultivation from your own land and from your land owner? And how much do you earn from it?

Crops	Production (Quintal/Ropani)	Cost (Rs/Unit)	Total Income

3.3 Was the last year production from your cultivation enough to feed your family for the whole year?

Yes

No

3.4 If not, then please mention the deficit month: *.....

*1. less than 3 months

2. 4 to 6 months

3. 7 to 9 months

4. 10 to 12 months

3.5 How do you feed your family while the agricultural production is not enough?

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| 1. Loan | 2. Work on daily wage basis |
| 3. Selling other things from the house | 4. Depend upon forest products |
| 5. Work as a potter | 6. Others |

3.6 Are you rearing any animals?

Yes No

If yes, please provide the following information.

S.N.	Types of Animal Domesticated	Number
1	Cows	
2	Bulls	
3	Female Buffaloes	
4	Male Buffaloes	
5	Sheep/Goats	
6	Pigs	
7	Hens/ Ducks	

4. Income

Please mention your last year income and its sources.

SN	Particulars	Annual Income Rs
1	Agriculture	
2.	Animal Husbandry	
3.	Service	
4.	Daily wage	
5.	Pension	
6.	Business	
7.	Cottage industry	
8.	Fishing	
9.	Others (specify).....	
Total		

5. How many months are you busy in agricultural works?.....

6. How many months you are free from Agricultural works?.....

7. How do you spend your free time? Please tick.

1. Wage labor
2. Doing nothing
3. Politics
4. Social works
5. Others (specify).....

8. Any one from your family who is less than 15 years is involved in income generation?

Yes No

8.1 If yes who and what?

Work Description	Relation
Looking After Cattle	
Helping in Household Works	
Manual Laborer	
Others (Specify)	

B. Questions related to women only

1. Name:

2. Age:

3. Do you take part in land cultivation?

Yes No.

If yes,

3.1 What type of works do you perform while cultivating the land? Please tick.

- a. Ploughing
- b. Sowing seeds
- c. Transplanting seedlings
- d. Weeding
- e. Hauling manure
- f. Spreading manure
- g. Harvesting products
- h. Threshing products
- i. Smashing clods
- j. Maintaining dykes and irrigation system
- k. Growing vegetables
- l. Others(specify).....

3.2. How much time do you devote in land cultivation in a year?

A.1-4 months b. 5-7 months c. 8-12 months

3.3. Do you sell anything gets from your cultivation?

Yes. No.

3.3.1. If yes, what?

a. Paddy b. wheat c. maize d. vegetables e. fruits f. others (specify).....

3.3.2. How much do you earn, the last year? Please mention in Nrs.*.....

* Nepali rupees.

3.3.3. Do you keep that money?

Yes. No.

4. Are you engaged in animal husbandry?

Yes. No.

4.1. If yes what type of animal are you rearing? Please tick.

- a. Cow
- b. Buffalo
- c. Goat
- d. Sheep
- e. Hens/ Duck
- f. Pigs
- h. Others (specify)

4.2. How much do you earn from animal husbandry? Please mention in Nrs.

.....

4.3. Do you keep that money yourself?

Yes. No.

5. Are you engaged in Fishery?

Yes. No.

5.1. If yes how much do you earn from it? Please mention in Nrs.....

5.2. Do you keep that money yourself?

Yes. No.

6. Have you received any kind of income generating trainings?

Yes. No.

6.1. If yes, please tick.

- a. Agricultural
- b. Tailoring
- c. Weaving
- d. Traditional birth attendants
- e. Others (specify).....

7. Are you engaged in any kind of weaving activities?

Yes. No.

7.1. If yes, what are they?

- a. Weaving dalo
- b. Weaving dhaki
- c. Weaving naamlo
- d. Weaving damlo

- e. Weaving Straw mattress
 - f. Spinning
 - g. Others(Specify).....
- 7.2. How many days do you devote in weaving per months?
8. Do you sell your products?
Yes. No.
- 8.1. If yes, how much do you earn from this, the last year? Please mention in Nrs.
.....
9. Are you engaged in pottery?
Yes. No.
- 9.1. How much days do you devote per month?
- 9.2. How much do you earn from this? Please mention in Nrs.
10. Are you busy in running any kind of shop?
Yes. No.
- 10.1. If yes, what type of shop?
.....
- 10.2. How much do you earn monthly from this shop? Please mention in Nrs.....
- 10.3. Do you yourself manage to run the shop?
Yes. No.
- 10.3.1. If not who help you?
a. Husband b. Father/mother in law c. Son/daughter
e. others (specify).....
11. Are you engaged in any service?
Yes. No.
- 11.1. If yes, what type?
a. Governmental b. non-governmental
- 11.2. How much do you earn per month? Please mention in Nrs.....
12. If you are engaged in any activity other than above mentioned, please mention below
If yes, how much do you earn from this? Please mention in Nrs.....
13. How do you manage your time for doing income generating activities?
.....
.....

14. How much was your total income the last year, including both agricultural and non agricultural activities? Please mention in Nrs.....
15. Do you have your any private property (pewa), if yes, what?
 Yes. No
 a. Land
 b. Jewellery
 c. Money
 d. Others (specify)
16. Do you spend your income in your family (if any)?
 a. Yes. b. No. c. Sometimes d. According to the problem
- 16.1. If yes, where do you spend your income?
 a. Purchase of land
 b. Jewellery
 c. household expenditures:
 1. Health/ medicines
 2. Food
 3. Clothing
 4. Children's education
 5. Buying seeds, fertilizers
 6. Hiring labor
 7. Festivals, rituals,
 8. Save
 d. Others (specify)
17. Questions related to women's decision making in household:

17.1

Activities	Decision making	
	Self	Others
A. Economic activities		
1. Agriculture		
Ploughing		
Sowing seeds		
Selection of seeds		
Making irrigation channels		
Spreading manure		
Harvesting		
Livestock rearing		
Fisheries		
Agricultural products sale		

2. Non agriculture		
Wage labour		
Weaving activities		
Pottery		
Small shops		
Service		
B. Social activities		
Health care		
1.Children		
2.Adult		
3.Self (pregnancy,		
Education		
1. Children's education		
2. Adult education		
Marriage		
Attending any gatherings		

17.2. Who keeps the income earned from different activities?

Source of income	Self	Others
Land cultivation		
Livestock		
Fishery		
Pottery		
Weaving		
Small shop		
Sevice		
Others		

17.3 Who give decision for expenditures?

Expenditures	Decision	
	Self	Others
Purchase of land		
Purchase of jewellery		
Health/Medicine		
Food		
Clothing		
Children's education		
Buying seeds and fertilizer		
Hiring labour		
Festivals, rituals		
Others (specify)		