

CHAPTER- I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Establishment of women status in a society is challenging issue for the context of developing as well as in developed countries. Nepal is in generally male dominated country where male has higher status than female. Female are discriminated in various fields even though recently country's laws are activated. Women have low socio economic status as well as low performance in all development sectors. Women have to bear three responsibilities as households, as reproductive and productive economic activities. However this household role is not considered as productive work. In Nepal women comprise of more than 50 percentage of total population (CBS, 2001). But only 43 percentages female are literate. Women are heavily engaged in domestic chores along with the socio economic activities. They have major role in households' management.

The majority of women in Nepal live in rural areas. Where the choice for livelihood is limited to agricultural works on the farms, which are owned in most case either by father, husband, landlord or brothers. Most of female are economically dependent on male. They have to ask to their male partners to spend their own income also. Very few women are economically independent and they have little bit higher status in the society.

Socio-economic status of female affects the role of women in society. However they are capable and potential, their capability and potentiality do not respect, and they have low status. As female are less educated, they have low

status in society. These women who have higher education and sound economic background, have higher chance on household management. There are very few households, which are headed by female. Only 15 (620984) per cent households are female headed (CBS, 2001). Women are not in leading roles; they are considered a second grade citizen and play subordinate role in the society. They have low access to resource, which makes them dependent, and it affects their role in households as well as in society.

Very few women are involving in mainstream of development and very few are also in service sector. There are very few women in policymaking level. More than 70 per cent female are involving in agriculture sector. Recently, only one woman is nominated as a member of national planning commission (NPC Report, 2004).

It is essential for the development that male and female should enjoy equal opportunities for decision making either in lower or in higher level of policy making plan formulation as well as in monitoring an evaluation sector. Unless women are not bringing into the mainstream development, participating them in decision-making process, the path of development will not be smothered.

In rural Nepal, women play multiple roles. They integrate their responsibility of domestic affair with that of farming works in field together with their male counterparts. Several studies over the years have clearly indicated that labor contribution of women in Nepalese agriculture appears to be higher than that of male. And women do most of the agriculture work. Although, women constitute a little over half of Nepal's population. They rank lower

than men in almost every social indicator in the country. Within in the increasing tides of poverty in Nepal, women are the poorest of the poor, a relatively more deprived segment even from among the poor.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Defining the problem is the crucial step in the research process. Problem does not necessarily mean that some thing is seriously wrong with a current situation or with the organization under study. A problem simply indicates that on interest in some field in which findings might help to improve the existing situation (Pant, 2002). Establishment of women status in society is challenging issue. Their role cannot be seen in the batter condition.

In the case of developing countries like Nepal, the situation of women is very miserable. Our culture, society and religion are bounded the female. Not only our culture grape the female right but also so, many legal provisions also support to central the female right and dominated by male. The government cannot silent spectator on the issue of Nepalese women. As reported by the 2001 population census women constitute 50 per cent of the total population. However the women 's role in the society has minimal access as resources. Information and services with in and outside the households (HHs) spheres. This shows that owner suffer from discrimination and have face unequal social and economic conditions.

Women in Nepal contribute 50 per cent of the HH income and work 11 hours as against 8 hours for men (CEDE, 1981). They engaged more in HHs chores but they have no decision-making opportunities. They have to work according to others order. The role of women as a manager of the subsistence sector is shunned off as unproductive, and the important opinion of women is hardly considered. The freedom of female with in the HHs sphere is restricted. There is gender bias in terms of decision-making. Women have to work but they have less chance to decide.

It is true that women are capable and they have efficiency of making important and effective role if they have get given a chance. As they are the providers of basic HHs needs. They can be the closest association with it.

The Beijing Conference on women in 1995 has emphasized different aspects related to the problems of women and passed plate form of actions addressing 12 different critical areas of concern but they are still facing the problems of deprivation. They are deprived from their rights and responsibilities. Even their husband and family members are not ready to hear their voice. Female roles are changed in the case of different situation. Such as when she plays the role of a daughter, always stay under the elder/younger brother or father. Again, when she plays the role of a wife, stay under her husband, in the old age, she stays under her own son. This is the actual scenario of Hindu women. We talk about the slogans of 21 first century is advance development, gender equity and equality all aspect of society. Therefore many question rise here in contrast. So, we all intellectual person of the society to be aware about the status of women, needy programmers especially for women, health of women, decision making power of women, role in family, level of

education. Now a days a wind of women empowerment, participation and so on. Things occurring and many program launched for the mitigation of the backwardness of women. Expect some program, many have launched in the surface of land. These could be implemented in objective ways and neglected ground reality.

Many studies were done with related to women and added to the new brick of women development activities. But in case of women headed households in-depth studies have not been found yet.

In nutshell, generally role of women is marginalized and male dominates them. In case of female herself as a household head. Though they were dominated by male, they have face many problems. So the study has addressed some of the questions as given below:

-) What is the socio economic condition of female-headed households?
-) What kind of social status has get from the society?
-) Whether female have an access to resources have?
-) What kind of role has been played in the society?
-) What kind of participation has seen in the community works?
-) What kind of problems have they faced in their house?
-) Perception of society to look for female-headed household.

This study is totally concentrated based on the above research problem.

1.3 Objectives of the study

General objective of this study is to analyze socio-economic condition of the female-headed household. The specific objectives are as follows:

-) To analyze the social status of female headed households in the study area.

-) To analyze the economic status of female headed households in the study area.
-) To analyze the perception of society towards the female headed households in the study area.
-) To explain the problem of female headed households in the study area.

1.4 Significance of the study

Everything in the world is essential in its own place and its own importance, as in the world, women constitute half of the total population, and they are backbone of the society. They have equal roles and responsibilities to make the society developed. The people form all the development activities and they are the main focal point of development. However in most of the society men have major role and responsibilities. They are deprived from their right and responsibilities. They are deprived from their right and duties even though they work more than their male counterparts. Women should be the subject and also actors of development, because women have major duties to maintain HHs as well as society. If women are not treated equally in society, it is impossible to achieve sustainable development and it will certainly hinder national development. It is essential to bring them into mainstream of social improvement and national development. People should be aware about gender issue, which is essential to protect the rights and duties of male and female their roles in household and in society

And in nation have great significance in terms of social justice. This study has attempted to reflect the socio economic status of female headed households. Therefore; this study has its own value within its limit. Many studies had been done in the field of women's related activities, which supported the women development. To Some extent, helped to increase female status. In

the same manner, this study would be helped for those purpose of women headed households programme doing. It could be supported the experts who work in this village. Further more same area would be assumed and that kind of situation can be recommended.

1.5 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework is the basis or foundation upon which the established (Pant, 2002). The study focuses primarily on how the female headed household affected in society socially as well as economically. The study has been conducted with the following chart.

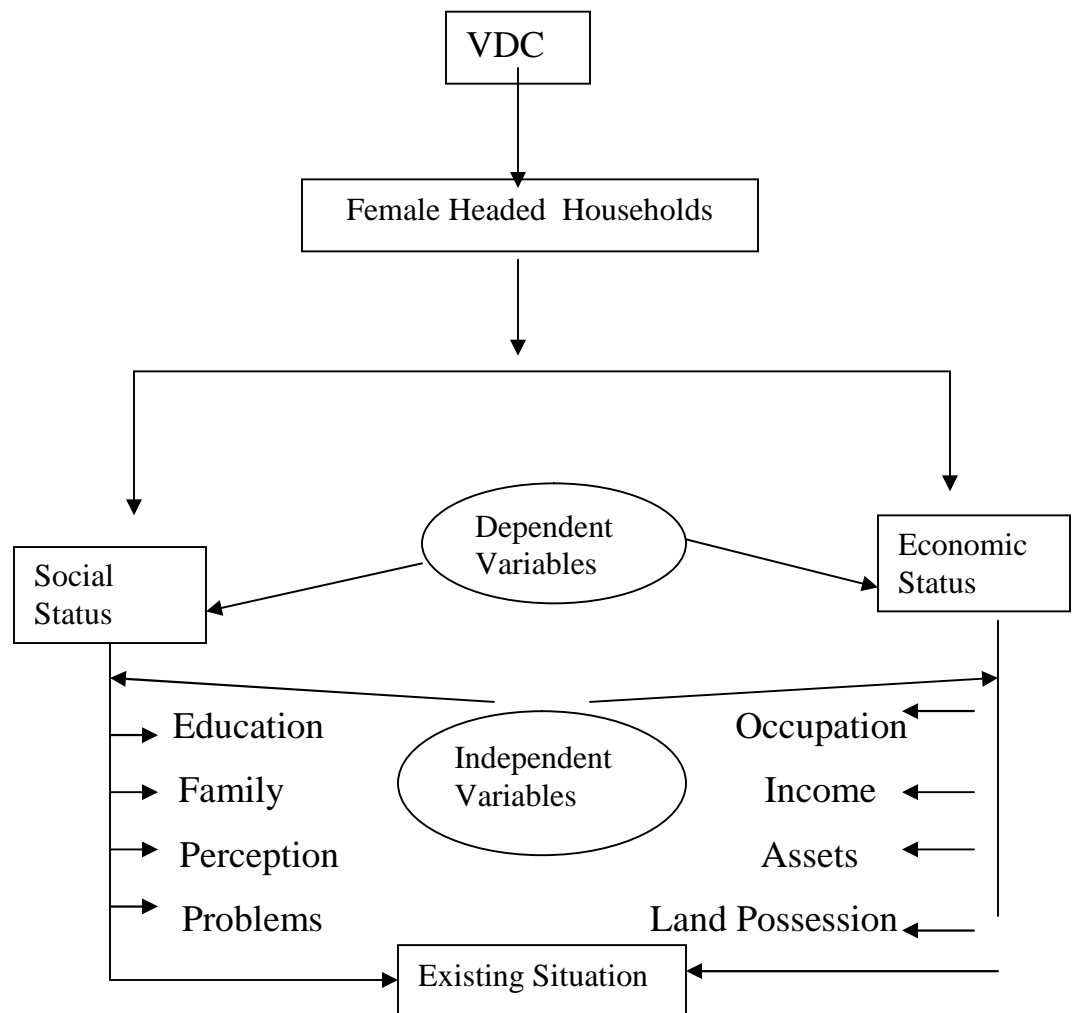


Chart-1

1.6 Organization of the Study

This report has been divided into six chapters. The first chapter opens with the introduction of the study, which is followed by background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, significance of the study and conceptual framework.

The second chapter reviews some relevant literature about socio –economic status of female and other women related document. Which is followed by theoretical review and related studies.

The third chapter included a sketch of research methodology. This chapter describes research methodology, research tools in this report.

The fourth chapter is a brief account of the study area (Ashrang, VDC). It is related to geographical introduction, climate, soil, general socio- economic condition, population, religion, and educational status of the study area.

The fifth chapter is about data analysis and presentation of filed survey that is followed by socio-economic characteristics of respondent and sample households, perception and problems of female headed households (FHHs) on the study area.

The sixth chapter deals with summary, conclusion and recommendation. Summary, which is followed by major findings related to respondents and sampled households.

CHAPTER- II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter deals with the available literature about women related in different sector. In this section, efforts have made to review past researches, publication and documents pre tainting to area of study. Research is a careful study of investigation especially, in order to find out new facts or information of earlier literature investigation play a vital role. Some literatures related to the women are revised and also revised the theoretical review.

Discrimination against girls at home, at school, in media. Women's Socio economic status, healthcare, women and education, decision making power of women, economically active women. National policy for the advancement of women (Thapa, 2003). Status of women is an important factor, which affects the socio-economic development of a country. Status is not a fixed rigid concept, it changes with time. So the status of women also changes with time. Status has been defined in different wags. As cited by the population monograph –The conjunction of position a women

Occupies as a worker student, wife, mother of the power and prestige attached to their positions and of the right and duties. She is expected to exercise (CBS, 1987). Society is a web of human relationship. Educational status and many other such factors determine the status of society. Nepalese society is made up so many cultures but Hindu culture dominated the society. So that is most influential with regard to defining the role of women (Shrestha, 2002). In Nepal women are treated as second-class citizen.

According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary (19990), Socio - economic means relating to or concerned with interaction of social and

economic factors in a system of social stratification. It refers to a contribution of various social and economic indexes of rank, which are used in research studies. 19509055 population, live in rural area and almost half of them are women (9814039) (CBS, 2001).

2.1 Theoretical Review

In theoretical review, the findings of various previous studies as well as general theory on women integration into development has been presented.

"In our world hundred of millions are marginalized, oppressed and made miserable by domination and exclusion. Most of them are women" (Robert Chamber, 1985).

"To be assets, unemployed, illiterate, destitute, yet over worked, tired and weak: This defines the state of rural wome (Singh, 1991).

At the end of the 18th century women's issue were becoming a subject of discussion during, 1950s and 1960s. Women's economic role was perceived as reproductive only for example, as homemaker and housewives (Braidotti et. aI, 1994). Their productive roles were disregarded. It was Ester Boserup who documented the considerable contribution of women particularly in agriculture of developing countries, economics in her book-women's role in economic development 1997. She found that not only women do automatically benefit from development program; instead the development process. Often leads to the relative and absolute deterioration of women's role and status compared to men. These findings lead to emergence of women in development (WID) as a concept or way of thinking about women (Braidotti et al; 1994). By the middle of 1970s it become an area of study for many professionals in field. Such as forestry, agriculture etc. The WID approach focused on two main issues:

-) Addressing the situation of the growing number of poor people
-) Disproportionate number being women in the world by improving over all development programs.
-) Ensuring the equality of women's participation in the implementation and outcomes of development.

The Women in Development (WID) approach pioneered awareness of the need for gender sensitivity in development. The first UN conference on Women and development held in Mexico City in 1975 declared 1976-1985 as the women's decade, many countries have set up WID unit in appropriate ministries and projects level. International organization such as the World Bank has also established women's units. The establishment of these units has shown some willingness and commitment to women's issues. However the results are disappointing as these WID units suffered seriously from staffing and funding shortages (Cox, 1997). Moreover they suffered from political constraints as decision-making power largely remains male dominated and gender blind (Moser, 1993:5)

There have been considerable changes in the WID approach for the developing countries. At the beginning its focus was on welfare, the welfare approach is controversial as it recognizes women as passive participants and sees child bearing as the most effective role of women in aspects of economic development. This approach was widely criticized and a number of alternative approaches were developed to target women, namely-equity, antipoverty, efficiency and empowerment (Moser, 1993:60-62). Again these approaches / assumption and strategies were largely criticized in the late 1970s and 1980s particularly by feminist researchers and activists, as they viewed women as an untapped labor resource (Cox, 1997)

After 1980s, GAD (gender and development) approach came in existence. GAD analysis the nature of women's contributions in side and outside the household and sees women as agents of change rather than as passive recipients of development assistance (Braidotti et al, 1984:82). There are three main elements in GAD approach.

-) Systematic and mutually reinforcing nature of gender disadvantages and discrimination are believed to exist in all aspect of life.
-) The household is seen as a basic unit of social organization, which is culturally varied and involves a conflict of interest arising from man's control over women.
-) Distinction social identities and roles exist for men and women are in all societies.

GAD focus on practical and strategic gender need (Moser, 1993). The analysis of these needs will contribute to raising women's social and economics status as well as to greater gender equality (Holmberg, 1993). The practical needs are those needs seen as arising from actual conditions in women's engendered position. For example, improved cooking stoves, healthcare and water supply. Similarly strategic needs are those arising from the analysis of women's subordination to men, for example, the abolition of gender-based division of labor, land and property rights and political equality. Thus the analysis of practical and strategic needs has emerged as powerful tools in the policy making and planning process.

Later WED (Women, Environment and Development) as a theme became an increasingly fashionable topic in the 1980s, being pioneered by Chipko (Tree Hugging) and green belt movements (Braidotti et. al. 1994). The

WED approach was the first to highlight women as having a special relationship with the environment. The WED debate emerged in the light of global economic problems, increasing environmental degradation and the feminization of poverty in the developing countries, where women were subsequently seen as the major 'victims' of the crisis, emerging as the poorest of the poor (Braidotti, 1994).

GED (gender, environment and development) approach developed mainly through critiques of WED (Cox, 1997). GED has emerged as an area of special interest for researchers, policymakers and activists since the late 1980s, (Hombergh, 1993). The focus on gender (The relationship between men and women) rather than on women only was important in understanding human interaction with the environment. Holmberg states that gender, environment and development are closely connected, which can be explained by three interrelated factors: the sexual division of labor, the feminization of poverty and gender ideology. Thus the GED concept has been a landmark in drawing attention to issues of gender and equity.

Concept of Eco-feminism

Along with the WED concept, another approach, namely, eco-feminism, was also gaining popularity. It was also gaining popularity in Nepal. Eco-feminism is based on the notion that women are especially close to nature in a spiritual or conceptual sense (Jokes et al, 1996). Women are considered as naturally privileged environmental managers who, over the generations, have accumulated specific knowledge about natural resources and therefore, women's knowledge is different and more appropriate than that of men in general (Braidotti et al, 1994:93).

The term eco-feminism refers to the assumption that there is a critical

connection between the domination of nature and of women. Eco-feminist condemns male culture and sees both women and nature as oppressed and subjected the victims of patriarchal power structure. The prominent eco-feminist Vandana Shiva, in her influential book, staying alive (1988), criticize the western patriarchal mode of development in India which had resulted in large scale; forest destruction and replaced women's substance economy based on the forest. She sees this mode of development as destructive, especially for Women and nature (Shiva, 1988) she asserts: Since it is women's work that protects and conserves nature's life in forestry and agriculture and through such conservation work, sustains human life through ensuring the provisions of food and water, the distraction of the integrity of forest ecosystem is most vividly and concretely experienced by peasant women (Shiva 1988). Although Eco-feminism too fails to make any references to men and once again, women are viewed as a unitary category. However has to lead to recognition of gender issues.

Other Feminist Movement

Elizabeth Cady Stanton was a leading theoretician of the women's right movement. Her book, "Women's Bible," published in two volumes in- 1895 and 1898, raised questions about the male bias of the Christian Bible.

"The second sex (1953)"by Simone De Behavior is a very famous book used widely; in the beginnings of the feminist movement in the west and it is still used today. Her views of the perpetuation of female oppression

"Open, Boundaries," a book by Canadian writers Barbara' crow and Lisa Gotten, raises issues concerning the feminist in Canada and the gender division of labor.

In India, Kamala Bhasin's booklets on feminism, Patriarchy and gender are excellent. Vandana Shiva (already mentioned) of India and Beena Agrawal of Sri Lanka are also contributing through their books women's movement.

Similarly, there are many voices to be heard with in our own country. Shashikala Sharma was a magazine publisher for “Swasni Manchhe”(1958). Modnath Prashrit wrote “ nari Bandhan ra mukti”(1981) and many booklets calling for women's liberation. Prativa Subedi, has written "Bibidha Pakchayama Nepali Nari" (1992) and "Nepali women rising" (1993 and 1997). In this, she talks about the. Situation and contribution of Nepali women from a feminist perspective. Meena Acharaya, Beena Pradhan and Indira Shrestha are all involved in research relating to women and development. Dr. Durga Pokhrel (With Anthony Willet) wrote the book, Shadow over Shangri La" (1996), discussing her struggle as a female political activist.

There are just a few examples of the many voices of women in Nepal. These are supporting the women's movement through their writing and research. Writing and research are a very strong part of the Women's movement at local national and international level to bring out women's voices (Shrestha, 1987). These movement through their writing and research were more helpful and supportive for women participation in social activities like as local leadership, income generating activities, saving and credit activities, decision making activities, protection and conservation of surrounding forest and other environmental issues. Such local activities were helped women to participate on forest management as well also.

Women and Education

Education is the most important factor for the development of human personality as well as for the development of nation. As women make more than half country's population, education of women is very important and it should receive top priority in the context of development of modern Nepal.

The study undertaken by Meena Acharya and Lynn Bennett reflects that

in Nepal people express less desire to educate girls than boys. This is manifested in two ways (1) fewer people are willing to send girls to school (2) even among those who do send girls to school there are very few who want as much education for the girls as for boys (Acharya, 1982).

Basnet (1987) - Described the status of female education and reasons for low female school enrolment, education programmes for women. She further explains that education is the basic necessity, which will create public awareness for development. Therefore education should be made easily accessible to all. Various programmes have been assigned to meet this national goal of which education of women is equally important.

Neupane, shows that female education plays an important role to reduce population growth. The fertility rate decreases as the education status of women increases and vice versa. So, to reduce the fertility rate it is necessary to provide facilities for all women especially in village area in the field of education, because when they are engaged in other works outside home there is little chance to have more children (Neupane, 1982). The Research done by Family Health Survey found that the vast majority (80%) of Nepalese women have never been to school. One in nine has attended primary school 60% have some secondary education and less than 3% have passed their S.L.C. forty three percent women are illiterate (Family Health Survey, 1996). Ghimire had further emphasized on the importance of female education. He had mentioned that a boy is to educate an individual, but to educate a girl is to educate the whole family and the society.

Education is therefore essential for women and girls to become self-dependent, more productive, skillful, creative, and to recognize their right place in the society and to enter the mainstream of development of the nation (Ghimire, 1997).

Women and Agriculture

The economy of Nepal is mostly depended on agriculture production and women play major roles as they actively participated in the various farm activities. 98.1 % of the economically active rural women are agriculture workers, which shows the important role of women on national economy. According to Alfred De'Sauza many countries of South Asia, 70 per cent to 80 per cent of the total female work force is employed in agricultural activities either as cultivator or farm labor (Sauza, 1980).

The role of women in various farming activities is crucial not only because of the number engaged but also because of the variety of agricultural activities they perform. Women participated in all farm activities required to grow food grain, vegetables, fruits and live stock farming. The role played by women is significant in the development of the nation, but all these work done by women are considered voluntary (Gautam, 1998).

Women and Health

Women health is a social issue in most of the developing countries, Improving women health and well -being improves not only their own life but also those of their children and contributes to improve households and community welfare as well. The health status of Nepalese people in general has been improving though it is low compared to other developing countries. The health status of women remains still lower. The life expectancy for men is 56. Years of age and it is 53 years of age of female (Mathema, 1997).Luitel (1992) states that Nepalese women's health is in miserable condition in the sense that they are quite neglected from there very_childhood stage. The cultural norms, economic conditions and preferential attitude of parents towards the boys are in the center of the ill/poor health of women (Luitel S, 1992).

Age

Age is the important factor determining the working load of women. Aged women have to work more than young girls. Among men and women of same age group, women have to work much more than men. Acharya wrote in “Sirsia “ Male children between 5 and 9 years of age spend 1.24 hours working each day while girls in the same age group put in 2.05 hours. Adult men spent 92.2% of their work time in productive work, while women spend only 38.8% of their daily work time in productive work. But again given that women work more hours than men. Men have about seven hours of free time while boys of 10-14 age groups put in about 5 hours of work per day, girls of the same age group have almost full work day i.e. they work for an average of 7.6 hours per day (Acharya ,1981).

2.2 Related studies

In Nepal, due to conservative tradition, illiteracy, ignorance, poverty and superstitions women have been treated as second classes citizens. Women are deprived and discriminated against despite their economic indication. They have little access to property or independent economic resources such as land as well as they are also deprived of many opportunities owing to social cultural constraints. Women’s role in development activities and population control is not considered as well as the role of men. Thus, the overall status of women in Nepal is still very poor in socio-economic and legal aspect (NPC, 1994). Women are given more priority in international conference on Population and development (ICPD) in 1994. The ICPD emphasized the empowerment of women. Later Beijing Conference on Women held in China on 5-15 September 1995 also emphasized on the empowerment of women. Both conferences considered that uplift of women is a part of development and influence all

section of development issues. In 8th five years plan of Nepal programme was formulated to increase women's status (UNFPA, 1994). The Beijing Plat Form for Action (BPFA), an action plan adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW), for gender equality and women empowerment, identified twelve areas of critical concern: women and poverty; Education and Training of women; Women and health; violence against women; women and armed conflict; women and the economic; women in power and decision making' institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women; human rights of women; women and the environment; and the girl child. Nepal expressed her full commitment to BPFA because these were and still are pertinent issue in the context of Nepal (Baidya, 2000). Similarly, it has been widely accepted that the elimination of discrimination against women is a prerequisite to an improvement in their status (ESCAP, 1993). Women's status as reflected in their legal rights, education, health, and employment, position in HH and family decision-making power. These in turn have an impact on the improvement of women's status and their participation in the development process (UN, 1993).

Education is the key process and unless women are the educated, they will not be able to enjoy their rights. The education of women has been badly neglected in the past. Though the percentage of literacy among women has increased from what it was 40 years ago. The disparity between boy's education and girl's education is still very high. Education is considered the most effective instrument of bringing. About social and economic charge, that our society particularly rural remained static and tradition bounded is due to the fact that a vast majority of women in rural areas are not educated (Kumar Ashok, 1990). Every one has the right to take part in the government of this country. Each has to right to equal access to public service in this country. Universal declaration of human rights, article 21, and every citizen shall have

the right and the opportunity to take part in the conduct of public affairs, to have access, on general terms of equality, to public service in this country. International convention on civil a political rights, Article 25. It is considered that both male and female are equal by legal and human right but they are separated by different social values, norms and attitude Thus, male became more powerful than female in our society. The majority of women in Nepal live in rural areas. Rural women, as else where play multiple roles In the domestic sphere they are HH managers, mothers and wives in community they maintain social and cultural services, Predominantly on a voluntary basis and in economic, if they are not formally engaged as employees or entrepreneurs, they are active in family business and farms. But they have to low access to income, wealth and employment, which are the main cause of their low economic status.

2.2.1 Related studies in decision- making process

Many studies had conducted role of women in decision-making process in difference purpose. According to Acharya M. and Bennett L. (1982) women's role in household decision- making is affected directly and indirectly by economic condition. Women have a greater economic participation and will have a greater power in decision- making. Similarly social and demographic factors also influence the role of decision-making. Small size of children implies higher economic participation and consequently greater decision-making power for women. Nepalese women also play managerial role for decision making i.e. farm management, resource allocation and domestic expenditure. There is variation between the communities regarding the male/female in put in to the farm management decision (Acharya and Bennett, 1982). Acharya and Bennett have singled out decision making from the multi dimensional concept of status which reflects the internal dynamic of sexual

stratification within the household they developed some model from the study of eight different VDCs were from the status of women in Nepal. In this model, the village were more conceived to be operating in such form spheres of subsistence activities as HH domestic work, agricultural production activities, work in the village labors market and local bazaar and total employment in the wider economy beyond the village.

The finding of the model shows that in the first sphere women participation in farming and domestic activities constituted 86 per cent women imparts account for 57 per cent in agricultural production in second sphere, while their inputs in third and fourth sphere drop down to 38 per cent respectively. Their total continuation to the household's income remains 50 per cent as oppose to 44 per cent for male .The remaining 6 per cent of income is contributed by the children of 10-14 years.

The same study of Acharya and Bennett highlighted another interesting pattern, the different degree of female participation in market economic in different communities, which subsequently relates to their decision making power within the HHs. Women from Hindu communities have greater concentration in domestic and subsistence production. Women from Tebeto Burman groups have concentration in market activities. This implies women in the more orthodox Hindu communities who are largely confined to domestic and subsistence production display much less significant role in major HHs. Economic decision than those in the Tibet- Burman communities where women participate actively in the market economy.

Women public life is culturally restricted to the degree that it is casually related to the patriarchal society system, which confines them to subordinated position. Religion, ethnicity, culture, law, tradition, history and social attitudes piece severe limits on women's participation in public life and

also control in their private life (Shriishakti, 1995). Women are more apt to say that their husbands make decision alone than to consider that they are making decision jointly with their husband or those they have made decision alone. Women have simply nodding approved or accepting their husband's decision without questioning does not mean that a decision was made jointly, simply because they express their opinion does not mean that they make a decision. The idea is that women express disagreement because they have an increased sense of their own value and an increase in the level of their confidence in voicing their opinions (Shrii Shakti, 1995).

It can be concluded that only strong status of female may increase the decision- making power otherwise they have to play sub-ordinate role of their male partners. Women of Nepal are not suffering from lack of resources in some extent such as property rights, the generating income goes to family's pocket, but from the lack of power to use their available resources, lack of power to assert their own rights. They are suffering from exploitation and injustice. To uplift the women from this stage, women's strategies needs like consciousness raising increasing self confidence, educating people, increased women participation in development should be practice. Only then the decision making power may exist at large extent. Equality between women and men can only be achieved if both are equally in a position to participate in decision-making processes at all levels. Reality is how ever still very different. UNFPA therefore continues to support change towards equal sharing of power and leadership between women and men; with in the family; in the community at the national and international level (Beijing Conference, 1995).

2.2.2 Related studies of women participation in different sectors

Many studies had conducted in the field of women participation in different sectors. Such as forest management, local government, profession, industries, household management, and environmental protection and so on. Women have very low participation in decision -making process, 70 per cent of HHs related and external decision are entirely made by male member of house (Acharya, 1998). Though female spend their time in HH activities, they have less chance to decide for these activities.

Acharya (1997) states that conventional social custom is one of the major reason obstructing women from participation fully in economic development, which results low decision- making power in women's hand. Higher the participation of women for economic development, higher will be the decision making power of women. On the other hand, the social conception that only women are responsible for the reproduction of human beings conception delivery and upbringing of child has made it extremely difficult for women to participate in the development process as equal member of the society. Owing to all these reasons their status compared to male is vary low.

Acharya (1997) concludes that in addition to the activities being performer under national and international aspire activities involving women in development process, status of women in Nepal can be improved by giving attention of such things as making specific studies about the economic, social and cultural activities of women in Nepalese societies. To provides similar school and curriculum for both girls and boys students, eliminating inequalities in inheritance right, family rights and all over legal rights involving the eructated women in office and involving them into seminar and symposia from time to time. Status of women may increase with an equality of participation at

all levels of planning and policy making not as recipient beneficiaries, labor an input contribution and consultants but as active change agent at the concerned level. It does not mean the involvement one or two women on the wives of the leaders, but the involvement of women and men in the sample proportion in development sector as their proportion in the communities at large (Shrestha S.L, 1994).

Most of female representations do not have political background. They contested the election and the guidance and instruction of the party worker and male members in family. It means the decision are being made by male and female representatives in the VDCs are just to fulfill the mandatory quota (Bhandari Bidar, 2004). It is also seen that in Nepal the higher caste groups of women have more right of decision making power than the of women of the lower groups of women. The women make decision only when the male are not in the home or they have gone outside their village (Status of women vol.4 part II). Women still have fewer social options for survival other than marriage. According to culturally defined ideals getting married and producing children are the ultimate goal for women. All other options including education and employment are only secondary (Acharya, 1997)

The slogan of development remains in paper unless women participation equally in sharing the fruits of development (DFID, Nepal, 2002). The above referenced studies shows that the statuses of women are surrounded by various factors. In Nepal, women constitute more than half of total population with poor status. More families are engaged in HH activities without any major roles. They have to follow their male partners in most of the cases. A perusal of the available literature also makes it clear that there is a persisting controversy regarding women's input in HH managements.

It can be concluded from the above studies that female has low status owing to the lack of proper socio-economic and demographic status. Now- a-days the access of female in resources have been increased but their status has been moving low motion to for ward. Either one way or other female have more responsibilities in HHs chores, agricultural activities and other but they have less chance to decide freely. So, it should not be forgotten that without equal participation of male and female in all spheres of HHs or other activities, there is less change to be development societies. Therefore, women should bring into the main stream of development activities not by only their physical presentation but by providing fully decision-making power.

The study of female headed household is not conducted in an academic fields as well as development field also.

CHAPTER- III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study is based on analytical research design because the study has focused on the socio-economic status of female headed households. Similarly descriptive research design is also been adopted to find out the existing situation of female headed households.

3.2 Selection of the study area

The study is conducted at Ashrang VDC in Gorkha district. The particular area has been chosen for the study owing to the easily accessible for the researcher and also easy to collect the necessary information. Similarly, previously there is no studies has been done. So, this study about women's status has contributed to fine out the socio-economic status of female headed households in rural area of Nepal.

3.3 Sampling procedure

The universe of the study was the female headed household at Ashrang VDC in Gorkha district. From each of the wards 5 female headed households have been sampled with purposive and quota sampling used for household survey.

Sample size is taken as follows

Caste	Sample size	Wards	Total
Brahmin	2	9	18
Chhetri	1	9	9
Ethnic groups	1	9	9
Schedule	1	9	9
Total		9	45

The sample size is 45, which is 25 per cent of the total female headed households of the study area.

3.4 Source of data collection

This study analyzes the status of female headed households. Thus, the primary data has been collected from the female headed households only from the study area. Similarly the secondary data is used for the study has been collected from published or unpublished written documents from individuals experts.

3.5 Data Collection Techniques and Tools

Using following methods have collected primary data:

a) Household Survey with Questionnaire

For the purpose of the collection of information in the study area, from each of the ward five female headed HHs has been selected by using quota and purposive sampling. A set of semi-structured questionnaire has been prepared,

which divided into four aspects such as social, economic, social perception and problems related.

b) Key Informant Interview (KII)

Some of information may not collect by questionnaire owing to the various causes. So, that researcher had collected some information by using KII. In this study, researcher had prepared checklist and discussion was held with the Informants. Fifteen Key Informants were interviewed. They were teachers, political leaders, educated men and women, Shopkeeper and health workers.

3.6 Data Analysis

The collected data from the field has been compiled and analyzed with computer software simple statistical tools such as tales, chart and diagram is used for data interpretation. Descriptive method is also used for qualitative data.

3.7 Limitation of the Study

This present study is based on and limited to the female headed HHs at Ashrang in Gorkha. The study would be very specific like that of case studies. So, the conclusions drawn from this study is mere indicative rather than conclusive. The conclusion might not be generalized for the whole. Definition of the terminology

-) In this study, female headed HHs, means that households where, headed male has gone out from the house at least one year.
-) It means, if male stay in home but female is played the vital role in household management.
-) Widow household is taken
-) Separated from her husband and family.

Only four kinds of features are manipulated in this study.

CHAPTER- IV

INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY AREA

4.1 Geographical introduction

Gorkha district lies in the western development region of Nepal. Gundaki zone has 6 districts where Gorkha lies in northwestern part of the Gundeki zone. Geographically, it lies between the $27^{\circ} 15''$ to $28^{\circ} 45''$ north latitude and $84^{\circ} 27''$ to $84^{\circ} 58''$ east longitude. The elevation of the land is 1097 m from the sea level. There is only one municipality and 66 VDCs. Ashrang VCD is located in the north east of Gorkha district, 17 km far from the district headquarter. It is bounded in east by Borlang, in west Taple, in north Dhawa and Taple and in south Bungkot V.D.Cs.

4.2 Climate

Generally, the climate condition of this V.C.D is sub-tropical. Warm temperature climate is found during March to October while cold temperature climate found in November to March.

4.3 Soils

Soil is prime factor for agricultural activities. Most of the people in this area engaged in agriculture. Soil is important natural resources for farmer. Agriculture production is impossible without fertile soil. In general, most part of the VDC has the similar quality of soil such as Rato mato, Phurso mato and sandy. Many crops are widely cultivated in this area for instance, rice wheat, corn potato millet and oil seed.

4.4 Social Structure

Society is a web of social relationship, which may be of hundred or thousand types. It is the composition of people of the different trial or racial groups. Generally all of society is heterogeneous owing to caste, religion, education and economic status. Social structure of Ashrang is more heterogeneous due to different factor such as caste system, class system, education, social status profession and so on.

4.5 Population

In the Ashrang VDC the total population is 3880 where male are 1727 and female are 2153. Total households are 769. The following table can be illustrated about the ward wise population at Ashrang.

Table No: 4.1
Number of Households and Population by Sex

Wards	Household	Population	Male	Female
Total	769	3880	1727	2153
1	84	471	207	264
2	56	272	157	145
3	77	390	166	224
4	33	171	73	98
5	191	931	409	522
6	110	518	216	302
7	49	222	97	125
8	73	434	218	216
9	96	471	214	257

Source: CBS, 2001

4.6 Caste /Ethnicity and Religion

Different on caste and religion groups live in the study area as Brahmin, Newar, Gurung, Kami, Damai, Magar, Chhetri, Sarki and Muslim. These caste/ ethnic groups are basically Hindus. But other religion are also involved for instance, Islam, and Sikh. The table shows the different caste /ethnicity of the Ashrang.

Table No: 4. 2

Distribution of Population by Caste/Ethnicity

Caste/Ethnic	Number
Brahmin	1214
Magar	997
Muslim	459
Chhetri	330
Sarki	157
Damai/Dholi	35
Kami	108
Unidentified	389
Others	5
Newar	186
Total	3880

Source: CBS, 2001

From the above table it is seen that Brahmin has highest population followed by Magar and Muslim. So-called untouchable has lowest population.

Table No: 4. 3
Distribution of Population by Religion

Type	No. Of Person	Percent
Hindu	3420	88
Islam	459	12
Sikha	1	-
Total	3880	100

Source: CBS, 2001

From this table only three kind religious people are there and it is also seen that Hindus has highest percent i.e. 88 percent followed by Islam.

4.7 General Socio-Economic profile

Economy of the traditional society of Ashrang VDC is characterized by subsistence economy, which is marked with substance farming or agriculture as in the other rural parts o of Nepal. Agrarian economic condition is less developed because of various physical constrains. Some of the constraints of agriculture in the VDC are low quality of soil type, lack of irrigation facility, lack of knowledge about modern farming such as technology, high yielding crops, insecticides and lack of technicians. Lack of effective year round facility of irrigation pre monsoon and post monsoon crops have low productivity. In the study area agriculture and livestock rearing is the major economic sources of this VDC. The major agriculture productions are paddy, millet, maize, white and vegetables. Now a day's cash crop farming mainly vegetable and fruits has become popular and farmers of the study area are growing various types of

vegetables for commercialization. There are modern rice mills, sawmills and facilities of other milling process.

Poor households who do not have sufficient land for cultivation get land from the land owners who are out of village specially for the service and business in the form of “Adhiyan” crop sharing., according to which 50 percentage of the total production of major crops have to be paid to the owner of the land.

In recent year, the trend of foreign employment has been raised in Ashrang VDC. Young generations of this VDC are flying over to the gulf countries, some developed countries and industrialized countries such as Korea, USA, Malaysia in search of foreign employment. Likewise several youths from this village are serving as security guards and laborer in different city of India such as Bombay, Delhi, and Calcutta etc. Foreign employment of this VDC can be taken as a major source of income. The foreign employment is the major drive of socio cultural changes but it has also adverse impact in their agrarian economy and cultural preservation. The Brahmins are culturally agrarian people in this VDC. Their economy is largely based on agriculture. Their economy is characterized as subsistence economy. Nevertheless, their economy is advanced and well developed than that of the Newar and other occupational groups of the VDC.

Some of the Brahmans and Newars of Ashrang VDC are seems to be inclined towards the government employment. Mainly some of the people of ward no 5, 6, and 7 of this VDC are in government employment, so that the government services is their secondary sources of income.

Some people of this VDC are seemed to be inclined towards the trade and business such as tea stalls, agro-processing mill, and different kinds of shops. Most of the trades and businesses are situated at the Thati bazaar and

Harabishauna area. The majority of occupational group so called untouchable kami, damai and sarki are landless or small size land holders. Most of them earn their livelihood by servicing high caste as hired waged laborers in agriculture works. During agriculture off-season, they went to out of villages. Most of the Damai and Kami households have still carried out their traditional occupation of tailoring and making agricultural and household's utensils. They served whole year without having wages and collect food grains called Bali at the end of fiscal year.

As a whole the economy of the VDC is characterized by subsistence economy. In the aspect of trades and business, it has not yet been growing rapidly. But in the field of education, the village has the sound literacy rate even in the entire district.

The following table illustrates literacy rate of the people in this VDC.

Table no: 4.4
Literacy Rate by Sex in Percentage

Parameter	Male	Female	Total
Illiterate	17	41	31
Literate	83	59	69
Total	100	100	100

Source, CBS 2001

From this table it is seen that male has 83 percent and female has 59 percent literacy rate. 69 percent of the people in the study area are literate. Literacy rate in the study area is higher than national literacy rate.

CHAPTER – V

ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF FIELD SURVEY DATA

5. Introduction

The study area is Ashrang VDC of Gorkha district, which is situated in western development region. This chapter deals with the socio economic as well as problem and perception aspect of the female headed households of the study area. Out of the total 769 households 179 households are female headed. 45 households were taken as sample and structured questionnaires were asked to the female respondents only. In this chapter age, sex composition, ethnic composition, education, family structure, land distribution, occupation, society's perception towards the female headed households and other activities are included.

5.1 Socio Economic Characteristics of the Respondents

5.1.1 Age Composition of Respondents

The age is the most important factors to determine the role and status of the human being. It makes difference in working hours, types of work, decision-making roles, social relation and responsibilities. Age can also determines the social status of people. Age has great influence in terms of economic value and talking part in social activities.

Table: 5.5
Distribution of Respondents by Age

Age	Number	Percent
20 -30	8	18
30 -40	27	60
40 -50	6	13
50	4	9
Total	45	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006

Distribution of respondents by age can be illustrated by the following pie chart

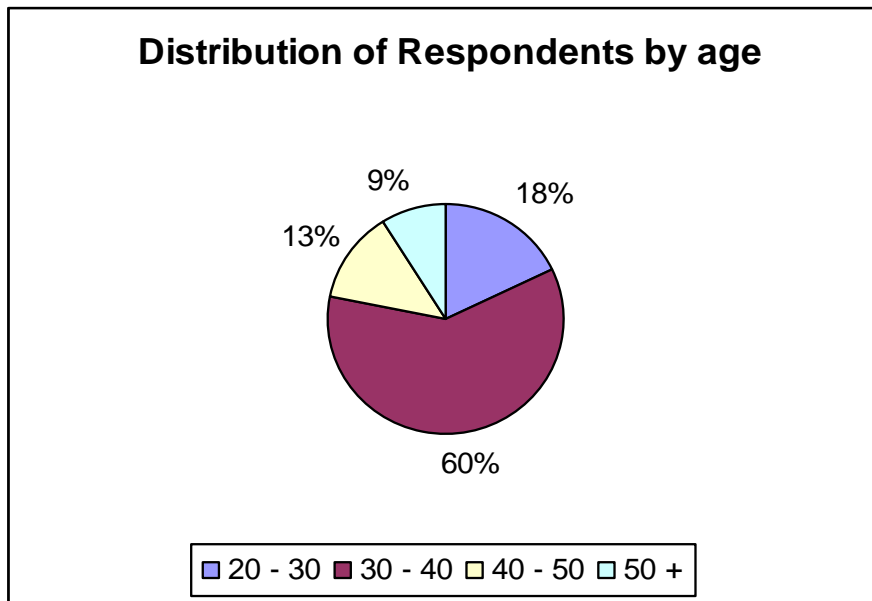


Chart No. 1

Table No. 5 shows the age distribution of respondents in the study area. Out of total 45 respondents, 60 percent fell under age group 30 - 40. The lowest number of age groups is 50 and above. i.e. 9 percent and only 13 percent age groups of respondents are between 40-50 years.

5.1.2 Ethnic composition

Nepal is a multi ethnical country where there are different caste/ethnic groups. Each caste and ethnic groups have their own language, Culture and tradition. Nepal is full of cultural diversity. Cast is also main factor in society and it plays important role in terms of socio- economics activities. The following table reveals ethnic composition of the respondents in the study area.

Table no: 5. 6

Distribution of Respondents by Ethnicity

Cast group	Number	Percent
Brahman	18	40
Chhetri	9	20
Ethnic group	9	20
Schedule	9	20
Total	45	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006

Respondent's ethnicity distribution can be express as follows in pie chart:

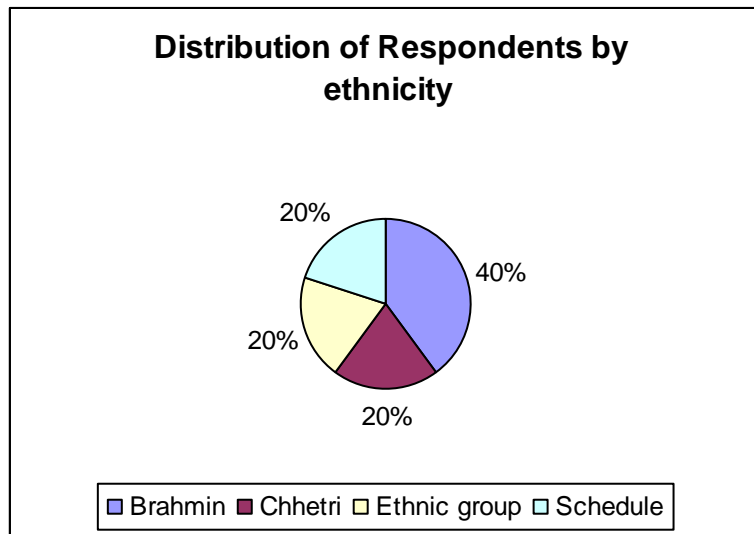


Chart No.2

Above table show that ethnic distribution of respondents, among the total respondent, Brahman is the highest caste group found in the study area that is 40 percent. Remaining others all are of same percent i.e.20 percent. It was due to the large population of Brahman in the study area.

5.1.3 Education

Education is the key indicator for reforming society and up grading its economic and social status. Education enhances the ability and capability of human being to judge for right and wrong. It also plays the vital role in development of the society. In most of the cases, it can be seen that higher educational status played dominant role in every field. Those voices are respected who are educated and having higher educational background. The following table indicators the educational status of the respondents.

Table: 5.7

Distribution of Respondents by Educational Status

Educational status	Number	Percentage
Illiterate	7	16
Literate	28	62
Under 8 grade	6	13
8 to 10	4	9
Total	45	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006

The educational status of the respondents can be presented as following pie chart.

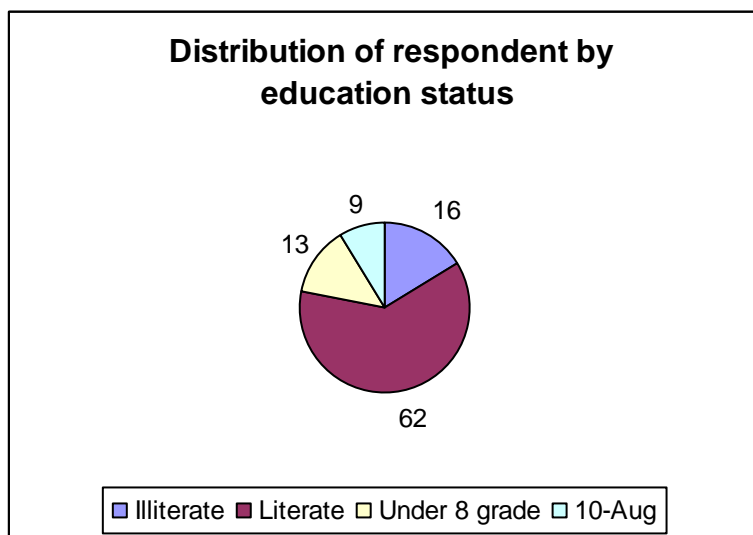


Chart No.3

The educational status is divided into 4 categories, which are illiterate, literate, under eight grades and eight to ten. Those who only can read and write are kept in literate and having school education but did not passed grade eight are kept under grade eight. Those who passed grade eight but did not passed SLC are kept under eight to ten categories.

The table no. 7 represents the educational status of the respondents. Out of total 45 respondents 16 percentages are illiterate, 62 percentages are literate, 13 percentages of respondents having school education but dropt school before grade eight and only 9 percentage have passed eight to ten class. Even the single respondent has passed the SLC examination in the study area.

5.1.4 Marital Status

Marriage is the most important event in the life of men and women. According to Hindu tradition marriage is compulsory for all whether man or woman. A man’s life is not considered complete without a wife and a woman has no option but to get married. In Nepal, majority of both men and women are married before 25 years of age (Acharya, 1995). Marriage is one of the universal

social institutions. In our society, marriage determined the social roles and responsibilities of people. It is essential for legitimate birth. Female's role also increase in family only after getting marriage.

Table No: 5. 8

Distribution of Respondents by Marital Status

Marital Status	Numbers	Percentage
Married #	35	78
Separated	6	13
Widow	4	9
Total	45	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006

Note: # Married means respondent whose husband belongs to same households but stay outside to earn money.

The marital status of the respondents can be presented as following pie chart

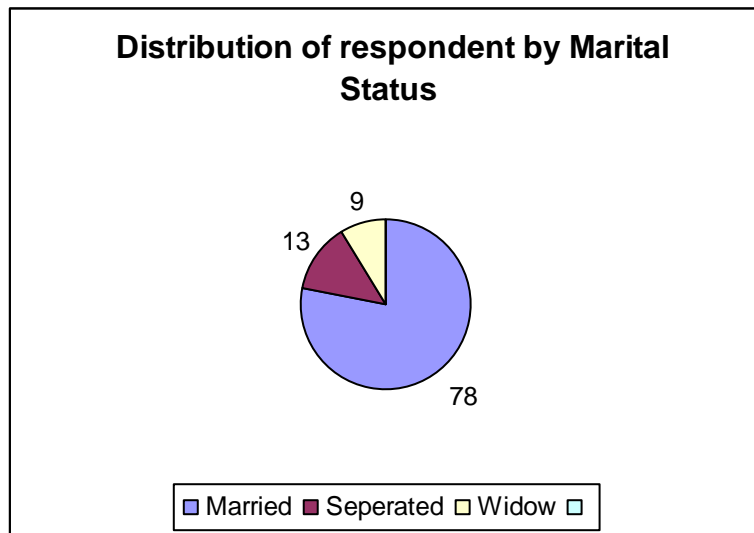


Chart No. 4

Above table no 8 shows that the marital status of respondents. Out of 45 respondents 78 percent are married, 13 percentages are separated and 9

percentages are widows. No one the single respondent was found unmarried in the sample households.

5.1.5 Occupation of the Respondents

Large no of population of the study area are associated with agriculture either as primary or as secondary occupation. Sample households of the study area are only taken from female-headed households. Occupation can play the vital role to improve the socio economic status of the human being. The occupational status of the respondents can be illustrated in the following table.

Table no: 5. 9
Occupational Status of the Respondents

Type	Number	Percentage
Agriculture	39	87
Labor	6	13
Total	45	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006

The occupation status of respondent can be illustrated by the following pie chart.

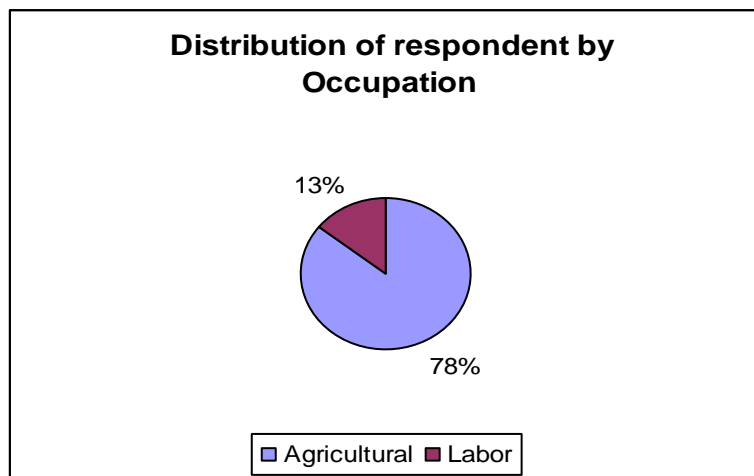


Chart No. 5

Table no 9 shows that there are only two types of occupation in respondents. Around 87 percentages are doing agriculture occupation and remaining 13 percentages are doing labor work in the local community itself. Even the single respondent has been found who is engaged in service and business occupation.

5.1.5 Personnel Property of Women

In Nepal personnel property of women means the dowry they got during their marriage from maternal home. In the study area only minority of the respondents have personal property in the form of Daijo or Pewa, such as ornaments, animals and money. They are free to use this property. Their parents gave them Daijo according to their financial status.

5.2 Socio - Economic Characteristics of Sampled Households

5.2.1 Population Composition

The population of the study area has been settled a conglomeration of different caste and ethnic group such as Brahmin, Newar, Magar, Damain, Sarki and Chhetri. The study area is composed of 769 households. Out of them 179 households are headed by female. The total population of sample households are 240 which is composed of 111 male and 129 female (table no. 10). In other world, in terms of sex the population structure is composed of 46 percentage male and 54 percentage female. The following table illustrates the population composition or the population structure of the sample households in the study area by their sex and five years age group

Table no: 5. 10

Population Structure of the Sample Households by Age

Age Group	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
0-4	4	6	10	4
5-9	6	8	14	6
10-14	20	19	39	16
15-19	15	20	35	15
20-24	10	15	25	10
25-29	10	9	19	8
30-34	8	10	18	8
35-39	6	10	16	7
40-44	5	8	13	5
45-49	6	10	16	7
50-54	4	3	7	3
55-59	7	4	11	4
60+	10	7	17	7
Total	111	129	240	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006

Table no 10 shows the population distribution in five years age groups. The 10-14 years age group has the highest percentage that is 16 percentages. The age group 50-54 and 55-59 has the lowest population 3 and 4 percentage respectively. It also shows that the number of female has more than number of male in the sample households.

5.2.2 Literacy and Education

In the study area there is significant number of schools. There are six primary and one high school run by government. The reality is obviously revealed the high rate of literacy. Around 89 percent of the people are literate in the sample households. In terms of sex 91 percent of male and 89 percent of female of the total population above 5-year age are literate. The following table can illustrate educational composition of people in the study area where 5 years population group is excluded from the table.

Table no: 5. 11
Education Status of Sample Households

Educational Level	Male	Female	Total	Percent
Literate	40	50	90	39
Illiterate	10	15	25	11
I-V	10	15	25	11
VI-VII	15	16	31	13
IX-SLC	20	15	35	15
SLC	10	12	22	10
Certificate	2	0	2	1
Total	107	123	230	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006

The educational status of the sampled households can be represented in the following pie chart.

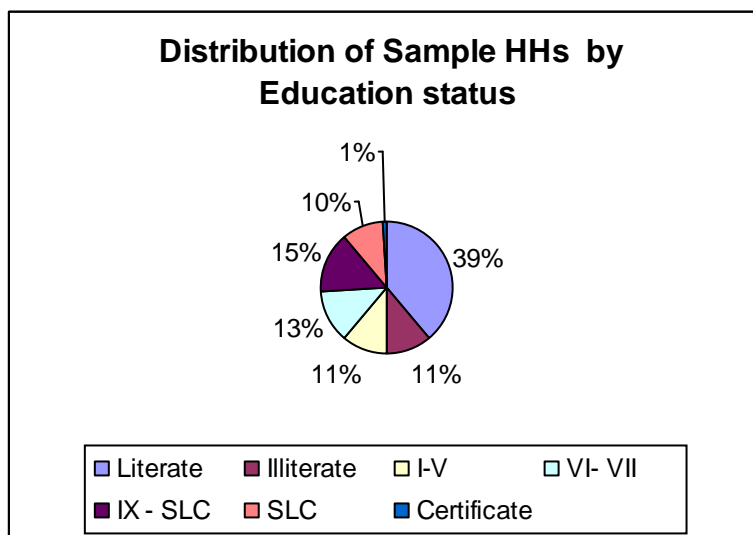


Chart No. 6

Table no. 11 shows that the 11 percentage of the population in the sampled households are illiterate in which researcher excluded the population having age below 5 years. 5 year is the age limit for schooling. Only literate people are 39 percentages who can read and write simple Nepalese script. 11 percent of the people are in schooling in primary level. 13 percent people are there in lower secondary level and 15 percent are in secondary level. 10 percent of the population has passed the SLC level and only around 1 percent people have passed the certificate level or equivalent of it. So the literacy is 89 percent of the total population in the sampled households. The education level and literacy rate of female is lower than the level and literacy rate of the male in the study area.

5.2.3 Family Structure

Family is the basic unit of the society and it is an institution that plays important role in building society. Family structure also indicates the socio

economic status of the family. There are two types of family structure in the study area mainly nuclear and joint family. Nuclear family refers that family which consists of husband, wife and unmarried children. While joint family consist of husband, wife, married and unmarried children as well as other relatives who share the kitchen for meal and reside under the same roof. In most of the cases it was recorded that the women from the nuclear family and female headed households have higher responsibility for households management and other activities than joint family and male headed households. The distribution of the sample households by family type has been shown in the following table

Table no: 5. 12

Distribution of Sampled Households by Family Type

Family structure	No of HHs	Percent
Nuclear	43	96
Joint	2	4
Total	45	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006

The above table no. 12 represents the distribution of family structure of the respondents. Among the sampled households 96 percent have nuclear family and remaining 4 percent have joint family.

5.2.4 Types of Houses

Basically there are three basic needs of human being that are fooding, clothing and housing for shelter. Though now a day’s education and health are also considered as basic needs, housing has great contribution in maintaining the quality of life of the people. It emphasizes the standard of living. In this study mainly three types of house are considered such as: concrete (Pakki), semi concrete (Adha pakki) and mud or not concrete (Kachhi). The concrete house is

defined as having stone and mud wall and slat or tin roof. Semi concrete consists of stone and mud wall having grass roof. Other categories except those two categories were considered as not concrete. The distribution of house type can be seen from the following table

Table no: 5.13
Distribution of Households by Type

Types	Numbers	Percent
Concrete (Pakki)	31	69
SemiConcrete(Adhapakki)	8	18
Not concrete (Kachhi)	6	13
Total	45	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006

The above table.13 shows that 69 percent of the total sampled households are pakki and 18 percentages are ardha -pakki. The remaining 13 percentage households are kachhi.

5.2.5 Access to Toilet

Health and sanitation lead the status of human being. The following table can illustrate the condition of toilet in the SHHs.

Table no: 5.14
Types of Toilet in Sample Households

Types	HH number	Percent
Permanent	12	27
Temporary	14	31
Slum	10	22
No	9	20
Total	45	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006

The table no. 14 shows that majority of respondent have a toilet i.e.80 percent and remaining 20 percent have not a toilet. According to the table 27 percent toilets are permanent. Its means toilet made by cement. 31 percent are semi- permanent that means toilet made by stone and wood. Similarly 22 percent toilets are slum that means these toilet are surrounded by the grass and bush.

5.2.6 Possession of Land of Sample Households

Nepal is agriculture country where more than 80 percent people dependent upon agriculture as main occupation. Land has great contribution in agriculture and it measures the economic status of people. The question had been asked regarding the possession of land to the respondents. The following table shows the possession of land by the respondent households.

Table: 5. 15

Land Distribution of Sample Households in Ropani

S.N	Area of land	Households	Percent
1	Less then 5	10	22
2	5 -10	24	53
3	10 -15	9	20
4	More then 15	2	4
Total		45	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006

The table No. 15 indicated that the status of land possession in the study area. Out of 45 HHs most of the households have 5 to 10 repines of land. Similarly, 22 percent have less then 5 repaints of land. And 20 percent have 10 to 15 repines of land and remaking 4 percent have more then 15 repines of land. Thus it can be concluded from the finding that most of the respondents have good access to land.

5.2.7 Ownership of Land

Ownership of land is a main issue of Nepal owing to the distribution between male and females. Males are the master of more than 80 percent of agricultural land in Nepal. Even a widow does not easily transfer her husband land in her name. The following table shows the land ownership situation of the female led household.

Table No: 5. 16
Ownership of Land in Sample HHs.

S.N	Ownership	HH number	Percent
1	Wife	4	9
2	Husband	30	67
3	Others	11	24
	Total	45	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006

The table no. 16 illustrated that out of the 45 households only 9 percent households have a female ownership. That means the trend of discrimination is still high in a society. Majority of land ownership fell under husband and 24 percent is still felt under the leader of the house

5.2.8 Food Production

It was found that more than 80 percent people are dependent upon agriculture. But only few families have sufficient food for the whole year. People are facing the problem of food deficit in Nepal. As the study area lies in mountain district Gorkha. There land is not more fertile, thus agricultural production is low. Though most of the people live in agrarian society. Food sufficiency take play the vital role in the society. It's also measure the status of family. The help of the following table can see food sufficiency nature of the study area.

Table No: 5. 17
Distribution of households by food sufficiency

Types	HH number	Percent
Yes	36	80
No	9	20
Total	45	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006

The table no 17 illustrated that out of 45 households 80 percent households produce food sufficient from their land have a good condition in food. Its means where they produced in their land is sufficient for their families. Remaining 20 percent households are facing the food deficiency. It is because of the low agricultural and low agricultural production. Those who have food deficiency, fulfill their food requirements from other income sources as livestock farming, wage earning, and labor business.

5.2.9 Average Annual Income of Sample Households by their Land Distribution

Income plays very important role to improve the living standards. Income is related with the purchase capacity of any family. Generally people who have high-income level have better life standard. Income level determines the social status of the people. All sample households are divided into four categories based on their land holding capacity. Following table represents the annual income of sample households by their land distribution.

Table No: 5. 18

Average Annual Income of Sample Households (on the Basis of Ropani of Land)

S.N	Income source	Less than 5 Ropany land		5 to 10 Ropany land		10 to 15 Ropany land		More than 15 Ropany land	
		NPR	%	NPR	%	NPR	%	NPR	%
1	Cereals	0	0	2000	5	2500	5	5000	8
2	Animals	4000	27	10000	25	15000	32	20000	33
3	Labour	10000	66	8000	20	0	0	0	0
4	Service	0		20000	50	30000	63	35000	59
5	Business	1000	7						
	Total	15000	100	40000	100	47500	100	60000	100

Source: Field survey, 2006

Table no. 18 shows that less than 5 ropani households land holder households have 27 percent income from animal husbandry. 66 percent income from labor and 7 percent income form business activities. 5 to 10 ropani landholder households have 5 percent income form cereals production. 25 percent from animal husbandry, 20 percent from wages and 50 percent from service. Similarly 10 to 15 ropani categories households have 5 percent income from cereals production, 32 percent from animal husbandry and remaining 63 percent from services. In addition more then 15 rapines landholder have 8 percent income from cereals, 33 percent from animals and 59 percent from service.

5.2.10 Average Annual Expenditure of Sample HHs by Their Land Distribution

Expenditure is also a very important factor to measure the living standards of the people. Generally high expenditure is needed to maintain the better living standards.

Table: 5. 19

Average Annual Expenditure of Sample Households

Expenditure	<5 Ropanies		5 to 10 ropanies		10to15ropanies		15> Ropanies	
	NPR	%	NPR	%	NPR	%	NPR	%
Food	11000	69	15000	38	#	#	8000	18
Cloth	1000	6	4000	10	10000	26	1200	27
Health	1000	6	5000	13	5000	13	7000	16
Education	800	5	8000	20	9000	23	1000	2
Smoking	500	3	1500	3	2000	5	2000	5
Festival	1000	6	5000	13	8000	20	8000	18
Others	500	3	15000	3	5000	13	6000	14
Total	15800	100	40000	100	39000	100	44000	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006

Note

Production of food is sufficient in the SHHs and no one spent money for the purpose of buying food from market.

Table No 19 indicated that the annual expenditure of the sample HHs according to their land distribution. For expenditure, less than 5 ropani land holding HHs expend their income in food 69 percent, in clothes 6 percent, in health 6 percent, in education 5 percent, smoking 3 percent, in festivals 6 percent and remaining percent 3 percent in others. Like wise, 5-10 ropani landholder HHs

expend their income, 38 percent in fooding items, 10 percent in clothing, 13 percent in medicine, 20 percent in education, 3 percent in smoke, 13 percent in festival celerabration, and remaining 3 percent in other items. Like wise, 10 –15 ropani landholder HHs expend their 26 percent in clothing, 13 percent in medicine, 23 percent in education, 5 percent in smoke, 20 percent in festival celerabration, and remaining 13 percent in other items. Similarly, More than 15 repanies landholder HHs expend their Income 18 percent in fooding items, 27 percent in clothing, 16 percent in medicine, 2 percent in education, 5 percent in smoke, 18 percent in festival celebration, and remaining 14 percent in other items. From the comparison of income and expenditure of less than 5 ropani land holding households, it is seen that they do not have sufficient income for their life. They do not have sufficient income for basic needs like education and health. The minimum expenditure is more than their income. To fulfill the gap between income and expenditure, they have to take load from landowner and they have to work in landowner’s field. Similarly, 5-10 ropani land holding category households have equal situation in income and expenditure. Instead of them 10 – 15 ropani land holding households have surplus of amount 8500 per year. Similarly more than 15 ropani land holding households have surplus Rs. 16000 per year. The households who have surplus are providing loan to other villagers. These income, expenditure and surplus value have described per households according to their land distribution.

The mean annual income per sampled households is,

$$X (\text{mean}) = \frac{(X_1 + X_2 + X_3 + X_4)}{4}$$

4

Where, X1= income of less than 5 ropani land holding households

X2= income of 5 – 10 ropani land holding households

X3= income of 10 – 15 ropani land holding households

X4= income of more than 15 ropani land holding households

$$= (15000+40000+47500+60000)/4$$

$$= 162500/4$$

$$= 40625$$

The mean annual expenditure per sampled households is,

$$Y (\text{mean}) = \frac{(Y1+Y2+Y3+Y4)}{4}$$

4

Where, Y1= Expenditure of less than 5 ropani land holding households

Y2= Expenditure of 5 – 10 ropani land holding households

Y3= Expenditure of 10 – 15 ropani land holding households

Y4= Expenditure of more than 15 ropani land holding households

$$= (15800+40000+39000+44000)/4$$

$$= 138800/4$$

$$\text{Mean surplus} = \text{Mean income} - \text{mean expenditure}$$

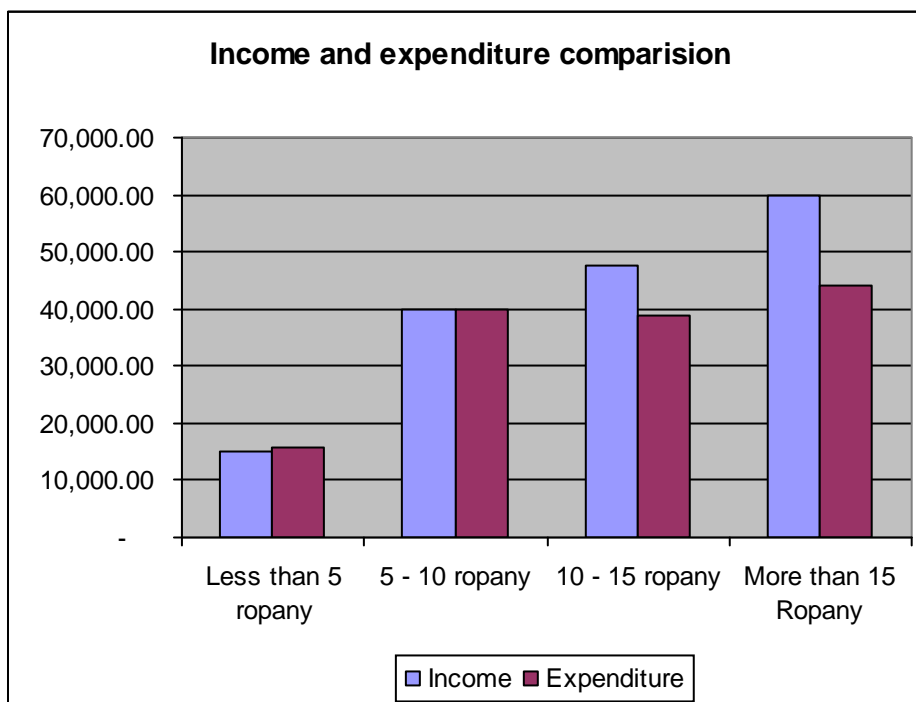
$$= X (\text{mean}) - Y (\text{mean})$$

$$= 40625 - 34700$$

$$\text{Rs } 5925$$

Therefore, average surplus per households = Rs 5925 per year.

The income and expenditure patterns can be expressed in the following chart.



5.2.11 Perception of Society towards the Female Headed Households

The Nepalese society is the male dominated society. Many activities are in favor of male so male control the society. Therefore female headed households are also suffering from male dominated culture. Our culture categories male and female role in society. Many priorities have gone for male headed households rather than female headed households. Out of sampled 45 households, 4 households are widows; these widows are more deprived by society in different nickname. They are simply neglected in development activities too. Similarly 6 households are separated by her husband and family. These households are less neglected rather than widows and more than married households. Out of 45 households, only 40 percent are called to participate in social development activities such as meetings of VDC, School program and so on. Among 40 percent, nearly 90 percent are married households. Out of 45 respondents, nearly 50 percent are self-confidence. Similarly 85 percent of respondents are engaged

in saving group and women group. It shows that situation of women are slowly enhancing and level of awareness is also increasing. Out of 45 respondents again 14 percent are the member of Caritas Nepal saving group. The Caritas Saving is the name of income generation program run by local NGO. Female are more aware compared to male at the study area after the restoration of democracy in 1990. The status of female is better in nuclear family rather than in joint family. Role of women is better in Mongolian group rather than other ethnic group. Especially in lower and untouchable caste, the socio economic status is very miserable even in the male headed households too. So in case of female headed households it was severer than male headed households.

5.2.12 Problem of Sampled Households

Female is facing many problems in different ways. The problems are different from place to place. Economic problems are common for all developing countries. Particularly, in case of sampled households, there are different between widows, separated and married households. The problems of widows are more serious than others. Their problems are neglected by society. They do not have permanent source of income generation, insecure feeling, and problem of children education, mental touchier and problem of land ownership. Similarly in case of separated HHs, Such problems are neglect by the society, lack of land and home, problem of children education, lack of income generating source. But out of 45 HHs 6 households are separated. Among them, 90 percent have a strong commitment with their present situation and ready to struggle with their husband for the property right.

The case of married households, they have get good respect from the society owing to their husband have gone outside to earn money. They manage their home in a good way. Out of 45 respondents 35 are married and their main

problem is high birth rate. So it leads to increase expenditure, which they could not be maintained in future.

CHAPTER – VI

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Summary

Women are considered to be vital and productive worker in the society. Their access to productive resources remained limited. They have not become empowered to participate in the social development program in a fair way. Further Nepal is patriarchal Hindu kingdom and is among the countries of the world with highest son preference country. Sons are required to perform religious and functional activities after the death of parents. In contrast role of Nepalese women are regarded supplementary in the religious function. Women follow husband family name and enjoy only sentimental value for carrying parents. They enjoy the condition of legal right at present.

This study was carried out at Ashrang VDC of Gorkha district in each of the wards 5 households were purposively sampled. Out of 179 female headed households, 45 households (**25 %**) were included in the study. All together 45 households were taken from Brahmin, Chhetri, Magar and so called lower caste.

The main objective of the study is to explore the socio economic status of female headed households of the study area. This is the descriptive cum analytical research study.

The study deals about the analysis and presentation of the field survey data. Basically, divided into two parts, one is a socio economic characteristic of respondents and another is a socio economic characteristic of female headed households. Researcher took this study area owing to the different socio

economic characteristics of the households. The age of respondents was from 20 and above. The age groups have been classified into four groups such as 20-30, 30 – 40, 40 – 50 and above 50. The questionnaires were designed only for individual for primary data collection. There were used purposive as well as the quota sample techniques for the quantities method of data collection. Check list was used to verify the data and to get qualitative information.

In this study, independent variables were used. Different socio economic variables such as education, health, occupation, land possession, problem and perception of society. Social status and economic status are dependent variables and education, family; problems, perception occupation, asset, income ownership and expenditure are independent variables. Data were analyzed through quantity and percentage. Pie chart and bar diagram were also used wherever necessary.

Following is the summarized about the findings from this study.

Finding Related to the Respondents:

-) Majority of respondents were in the age group 30-40 years. 60 percent of the respondents were from this group.
-) Majority of the respondents were from Brahmins caste.
-) Only minority was illiterate and majority were literate. 84 percent of the respondents were literate but no one has passed the SLC.
-) It was found that 78 percent respondents were married; their husbands were gone outside from the home for different reasons. However, their husband separated 13 percent and family and 9 percent were widows.
-) Around 87 percent respondents' occupation was agriculture and remaining was waged laborer.
-) Minorities have a pewa (dowry) i.e. 20 percent. Freely used of pewa was depended upon caste. In the higher Brahmin and lower Damai and Kami

caste they are not free to use their pewa but in the Magar and gurung caste they can use their pewa freely.

Finding Related to the Sample Households:

- J 10 – 14 years age group have higher percentage population i.e. 16 percent. The numbers of female is higher population than male in the sample households. The total population of the sampled household is 240.
- J Only 11 percent of the population is illiterate and 89 percent are literate in the sample households. As regards the level of education is, 12 percent have passed the SLC and no one has passed the bachelor level in the sample households' family.
- J Out of the total 96 percent are nuclear families in sample households. It means majority of female headed households are nuclear family.
- J Majority of the respondents (around 69 percent) have pakki house and 18 percent have Adha - pakki house. The remaining 13 percent of the respondents have kachhi house.
- J Majority of the respondents have a toilet facilities. 80 percent of the respondents have access for toilet. Where 27 percent have permanent type and 31 percent have temporary. However, 20 percent of the households do not have toilet. Out of total population who has no toilet facility, 56 percent thinks that they do not need toilet due to the access of forest for toileting, 22 percent do not want to use toilet due to the smell coming from it and remaining 22 percent are not able to make toilet due to financial problem.
- J Among the total household 53 percent have 5-10 ropani of land and 22 percent have less than 5 ropani land. It means majority of the households

have an enough land for agricultural farming. But no one is found as landless.

-) Only 9 percent female owned the land and in majority households (67%) husband owned the land and, remaining 24 percent father- in- law and other family member owned the land. Out of landowner female, 90 percent were widows and remaining were separated one.
-) There is surplus of Rs. 5925 per year per sample households in study area. The income and expenditure were analyzed on the basis of land holding status. Especially the households having less than 5 ropani of land have less income than expenditure.
-) The problems are different from their marital status such as in case of married, main problem is high birth rate which leads to increase expenditure and in case of widow's HHs is neglected by society. Similarly, Separated ones have problem of lack of land and home.
-) Perception of society towards the female HHs is also different according to their marital status.

CONCLUSION

Even though different programs have been launched at national, regional and local level to enhance the socio economic status of Nepalese women, the plight of women, their socio economic status, their recognition as well as inequitable distribution of resources are yet to be realized in Nepalese society at large. The Nepalese women still remained underprivileged, disadvantageous and non-recognized members in compared with their male counterparts. But in case of the study area, the finding reveals that the situation is slightly different from the others. Though the level of female education was improving, they are left behind the male. In contrast, the female headed households were improved rather than before owing to the better performance of work, continuity of work, hard working nature, low spend nature i.e. saving nature. The economic condition was also enhanced in married households due to their husband earnings outside from the village. But social status of these households was different according to their marital status. In case of widows' households the economic condition was not so bad but the social condition was miserable than others. Similarly in case of separated households, the social condition was not as bad as widows' households. The married female headed households have better social as well as economic status rather other households in the study area. But discriminated condition had still existed in female headed households.

In nutshell, it is concluded from the study that female were capable to fulfill their responsibility towards their family. The female head in the family was committed and confident to accept the challenged came in the family.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In every society men and women are just like a two parts of a coin. One cannot exists without another. But especially in rural society it is found that women are far behind in all sector of society in comparison with men. This is despite the fact that women play an important role in the society especially for the social as well as economic well being of the whole family. Thus it can be said that the women's contribution in their own family's income is largely unnoticed. Therefore, there is an urgent need to recognize the contribution of women's effort especially the effort put in activities for household's management. Only then will the women's effort be countable in their own house, society and community at large. This study indicates the socio economic status of female headed households. Though women's role has been increased in recent days but it is not satisfactory. A lot of government and non-government organization are involving to empower the female socially as well as economically but result is not as desired. So, it is essential to implement the existing policies and program properly and to formulate new appropriate policy and program to enhance women's capability in different field.

On the basis of findings of the study, the following recommendations have been suggested to improve the status of female headed households and to increase their participation in different development activities.

-) The men and rural society should be made aware regarding the capability of women as effective decision makers in important issue as well. Male member of the family should not restrict the mobility and freedom to take part in income generation activities and community development activities.
-) It is necessary to develop self-confidence among rural women so that they are able to undertake community development activities by themselves.
-) Reform should be made regarding the various gender related government policy and program.
-) Women's decision should be respected for the social welfare.
-) Government should make program to increase women's participation in development activities and it should support to raise their role in family as well as society.
-) Political leaders should provide the priority to participate women in political activities especially for female headed households.
-) Government gives priority to increase literacy level of women.
-) Access of female should be increased in economic activities
-) Gender discrimination still exists in society and increasing the awareness of people in society should eliminate it.
-) Female should be encouraged to participate in different development activities and policy making procedures also.
-) Female's voice for the betterment of the society should be respected in society.
-) Female should be made awareness about their right and responsibility.
-) Female should be brought into mainstream of development.
-) Female should not be harassed for their minor mistakes
-) Share the idea of female in different development activities.

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Appendix – 1

Socio-Economic Status of Female Headed Households

Questionnaires

1. S.N.- _____ Date- _____
 Address: _____
 Ward No.- _____ VDC- _____ District- _____
 Name of Respondent: _____
 Age- _____ Sex- _____ Female
 Education: _____
 Illiterate _____ Literate _____ Level- _____
 Family Members: _____
 Female- _____ Male- _____ Total- _____
 Children Numbers: _____
 Son- _____ Daughter- _____ Total- _____
 Family types: _____
 Nuclear _____ Joint _____
 Marital Status: _____
 Married _____ Widow _____ Separate _____ Other- _____

Social Aspect

2. Education

S.N	Family Name	Sex		Age	Relation	Education					Lite rate	Illite rate	
		F	M			1-5	6-8	9-SLC	SLC	Drop out			No Schooling
1													
2													

Do your Children have dropout? Yes/No

If Yes, Causes of dropout

a)..... b)

3. If you are married, what is your husband's occupation?

a) Service b) Business c) Agriculture d) Labor e) Other

4. If your husband stayed outside, Causes of staying outside,
 a)..... b)..... c).....
5. In villagers some have sufficient food and some do not have, what about you?
 a) Sufficient b) Not sufficient c) More
6. In case of insufficient, how many months do you survive through owns product?
 a) Months....
7. Where do you collect in case of deficient food?
 a)..... b).....
8. Do you have a Toilet? Yes/No
9. If Yes, which types of Toilet?
 a) Permanent b) Temporary c) Surrounded by bush
10. If No, why do not have a Toilet?
 a) Lack of Money b) Near from Jungle c) Dislike e) Other-

Economic Aspect

11. What is your occupation?
 a) Agriculture b) Labor c) Business d) Service e) Others-
12. If you are labor, wage of per day,
 a) Rs....
13. Distribution of Land in Ropani

Owner	Khet	Bari	Pakho	Total
Self				
Shearing				
Take Bandaki				
Give Bandaki				
Total				

14. Who is the owner of the Land?
 a) Husband b) Spouse c) Both d) Others-
15. If you are landowner, how many ropani do you have?
 a) Ropani....
16. How much crops do you product in a yearly?

Crops	Paddy	Corn	Millet	Wheat	Other	Total
Muri						

17. Do you sell your product? Yes/No
 If yes, how much money do you earn in

- a) Cereals Rs...
- b) Vegetable and fruits Rs....

18. Animal husbandry,

Types	Number	
	Ownership	Shearing
Buffalo		
Cow/Ox		
Goat		
Pig		
Cock		
Other		
Total		

19. Purpose of animal rearing,

- a) Milk b) Meat c) Money d) Fertilizer e) Others-

20. Do you earn some money from animal rearing? Yes /NO

If Yes, how much Rs...

21. Expenditure,

S.N.	Items	Monthly	Annual
1	Salt, Species, Kerosene		
2	Meat, Oil		
3	Cloth		
4	Food		
5	Median		
6	Education		
7	Festival		
8	Others		
9	Total		

22. Source of Income,

S.N.	Items	Monthly	Annual
1	Cereal product		
2	Animal husbandry		
3	Business		
4	Service		

5	Others		
6	Total income		
7	Total expenditure (n.21's)		
8	Difference		
9	Total saving		

23. Do you have annual saving? Yes/No
If Yes, how much...
24. Where do you put your saving money?
a) On interest b) give businessman for safekeeping
c) Bank d) Other-
25. Do you have dowry? Yes/NO
26. If Yes, What are they?
a).....
27. If it compare with money, how much is this?
a) Rs...
- 28 Do you have full right to use the dowry? Yes/No

Social Perception

29. How is the society looking for your family?
a) Good b) Not good c) Bad
30. What do you feel in case of bad looking?
a) It is ok b) Mental disturb c) Feeling absence of male d) Other-
31. Do the society call you for community works? Yes/NO
32. Do you go? Yes/ No
33. If No, why?
a) Lack of time b) Careless c) Other-
34. Do not feel incapability as being female? Yes /No
35. If Yes, why?
a)..... b)
36. Do you have member in community organization? Yes/No
37. If Yes, name of organization and type of membership,
a) Name of organization.....
Type of member.....

Problems Related

38. What is your main problem?
a) Security b) No income sources c) Neglected by the society
39. Have you any difficult for your children education? Yes /No
40. If Yes, why?
a) Lack of money b) Remote School c) Assistance needed in house d) Other-
- 41 How do you work in the period of farming?
a) Purma b) Money c) Own self d) other-
42. Do you get the labor when you want? Yes /No
43. If No, why?
a) Absent of male b) Poor c) Other

Appendix – 2
Check List

S. N. -

Date-

Name of Respondent-

Age-

Sex-

Education-

Occupation-

1. About female headed households,
2. Perception about female headed households,
3. Opinion about female headed households
4. Role of female headed households,
5. Problem of female headed households,
6. What about female headed households male?
7. Activities of female headed households,