

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

"Yatr naryasto pojyantay ramantay tatra Devta" where women are honored, there gods are pleased. (Manu, Manusmriti, 3/56). According to Oxford Advance Dictionary, the term single women means "women who are single and not married". However, the feminist literature defines single women who had divorced or separated from the family. Women for Human Right single women group (WHR), "Women who are unmarried over 35 years of age and women whose husband is dead" are called single women (WHR, 2005). However, single women denote all the women who are widows, divorces separated and unmarried over 35 years of age. But my study will be covered only the widows of the study area.

#### 1.1 Conceptualization of single (widow) women

Single women can be referred to those women who abandoned by their husbands or themselves, who are divorced with their spouses, whose husbands are dead and those who are unmarried till the age of 35 (Upreti, 2008). For her, understanding for single women differs from differences of nature and forms of single women. Unmarried, divorced, separate and widow are the various forms of single women and all these forms are defined in different ways she further says that literally, unmarried single women are defined as those who are not married or have an unmarried status. Divorcee single women are those who have legal ending of a marriage. Similarly, separate single women are those who stop living together as a couple. Besides this, widow, single women will be focused in my research. Widow is simply defined as a woman whose husband has died and who has not married again.

Widow is a harsh and hurtful word. It is derived from the Sanskrit and it means "empty." The term "Vidawa" or "widow" is very old and can be traced to Vedic scriptures or even beyond to Indo-European origin. Despite the social transformations caused by scientific advancement over the past 200 years leading to change in human outlook, there has hardly been any change in people's attitude towards widows (Thapa, 2011).

There is some progress going on in some other countries for the empowerment of widows by the government. After the much initiations done by the South Asian Network for Widow's Empowerment in Development (SANWED), the widow's issues has been incorporated into the Colombo Declaration during the 15<sup>th</sup> SAARC Summit 2008, which has directed to work for regional cooperation for the elimination of all forms of discrimination and abuse against women In general and widows in particular and guarantee their rights to live in the society in a dignified manner. Rights based approaches to empower widows has bee recently as opposed to the welfare approach adopted by the NGOs and government for a number of years.

There is some progress going on in south Asian countries for the empowerment of widow women by the government. South Asian Network for Widow's Empowerment in Development (SANWED), the widow's issues has been incorporated in the Colombo Declaration during 15<sup>th</sup> SAARC summit 2008 (Thapa, 2011). The summit has declared to work for regional cooperation for the elimination of all forms of discrimination and abuse against women in genera and widows in particular and grantee their rights to live in the society in a dignified manner. Now right based approaches to empower widows has begun recently as opposed to the welfare approach adopted by the NGOs and government.

The situation of widow in Nepal is very critical, the insurgency cost over 13,000 lives (Thapa, 2011). In Nepal, the consequences of socio-political conflicts of the last fifteen years (those related to Maoist insurgency and various social movements) left tens of thousands of women to become widow without their own involvement in these events. However, the conventional belief of society takes this type of their suffering also as a product of their sins committed in the past probably in previous life. How far this belief matches with the hard fact of society is a question which requires answers through empirical studies and investigations (Upreti, 2008)

Women for Human Rights (WHR, 2005) thus passed a national declaration to use the word "Single Women" replacing the terminology "Widows" to rephrase this "state of being single" as a natural phenomenon. The change in terminology has made many effects, particularly, to the rights of widows. However, over the time, the definition of single women has undergone change to include divorcees, unmarried women over 35 and other single women. In spite of the several social reforms and legal enactments,

the widows (especially youth widows other than elderly widows) continue to suffer the physical, mental, cultural and other social discriminations and many other social malaises (Upreti, 2008). Hindu social structure is such that it makes majority of women dependent on male members of the family. As a result, when a woman becomes a widow, she becomes vulnerable. Lack of adequate expertise does not permit her to run any type of earning activity independently.

Normally, the status of women in Nepalese society has been subordinated to right from the beginning. They have to undergo various kinds of discrimination, exploitation and torture, the mental and physical in the society and within the four walls of the family. In the family which is supposed to be the insecure for its member's protection and development the women are not only tortured, exploited, discriminated but they are occasionally killed or burnt. If this is the case of normal life of women, what can we expect of such women who have lost their husbands in a male dominated society?

The socialization of girls and women in a male dominated society had such a great impact on women. They consciously or unconsciously enforce the patriarchal system. Therefore, women are exploited, discriminated, subordinated, subjugated, oppressed and suppressed, politically, socially, culturally, economically and ideologically (Katuwal, 2014).

Women in Nepal have many challenges and problems than other parts of eastern and developed countries (Migration Resource Center, 2013). Early marriage, illiteracy, poverty and other socio-cultural as well as economic factors have made life more complicated, single women are dually in discrimination.

Every area of single women has potential hazards, has given the importance to five theoretical models of overcoming grief and adjustment after the loss of husband: support systems model, attachment model, social networks model, deficit model and violence model. According to (WHR), there has been dramatic increasing in the number of widows in south Asian, Africa and the Middle East over the last decade. This unprecedented rise in numbers has been affected by the proliferation of armed conflict and the persistence in some regions of harmful traditional practice. It is estimated that half of women may be widows (WHR, 2005).

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

The issue of single women is a great challenge and problem of Nepal. Firstly women are taken as second citizen which shows women inferior position and secondly, those who are single women; their social status is critical because the patriarchal social system with Hindu dominant religious culture thus this study will be focused on single women's social status as well as economic. As a human being man has right to live and survive freely. Socio-cultural aspect of Nepal, before and after marriage women are under control of parents and husbands respectively. Women have no opportunity to show their hidden talent and abilities. They are always deprived from political, socio- cultural and economical activities.

Today, our world is shifting rapidly in terms of increased violence and armed conflict. This indicates that more young women are likely to be widow or single. Many women became widow during the armed conflict between government and terrorists. These widows not only have to lose their husband but also have feels, helpless, support less and do the endless struggle of their entire life. Most of the single women are young, which look make them even more vulnerable. Their children are affected from fundamental rights of hygienic food and quality education. They are deprived from the access to nutrition, health services, and social verbal physical, emotional and psychological tortures which is the gross root violation of Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Reviewed literatures have shown that research on single women are very limited. Being a mostly patriarchal social system, male are dominant. Among the women, single women are another vulnerable group. In my study area, women are dominated, discriminated, burnt, and separated due to strong dowry system. And yet no any study found in my area that is why this study will be carried out to find social and economic status of single women.

There are many studies on the field of women's employment "Nepali women rising" (Subedi, 1997). "Discriminatory Law in Nepal and their Impact on Women" (Malla, 2000) There are many problems and challenges of single Women but no study has been conducted yet about, "The socio-economic and demographic status of single women". Therefore, this study occupies a special importance. In fact, this study focuses on following research question.

- ) What is the social status of single women in the study area?
- ) What is the economic status of single women in the study area?

#### **1.4 Objective of the Study**

The overall objective of this research is to draw out the current situation of socio-economic and demographic status of single women in Rautahat District at Gujara municipality. The specific objectives of the study are as follows.

1. To examine the social status of the women in the study area.
2. To find out the economic status of the single women.

#### **1.5 Significance of the study**

The main goal of this research is to explore the real situation socio-economic status of single women of Gujara municipality of Rautahat District in Nepal. Single women have been burning issue in the contemporary Nepalese society that thousands of single women frequently suffer from different kinds of verbal mental and physical torture relating to different reason. There have not been any studies on this issue yet. So, there is an immediate need of research for protection of human rights of single women and empowering them to bring in the mainstream of development.

The present study was based on field research that will help to find the students of similar field to start another project. This study will be useful in will be useful in sociology, anthropology, gender studies, health and population. It is expected that this study might generate useful information to students, project planner, policy maker, administrators, researchers, programmers, organizers and designer, and other interested individual and organization.

#### **1.6 Limitation of the study**

Each study has their own limitations and short comings. The researcher has time bound and economic constraint. Thus, this study only highlights the actual situation of single women. Information depends upon the answers only by those respondents (single women). The information and opinion are shared by those respondents will represent the voice of all single women of Gujara municipality of

Rautahat District. The findings of the study can not be generalize out of the study area.

### **1.7 Organization of the Study**

This study will contain seven chapters. It will starts with an Introduction under which the study outlines the general background, statement of the problems, objectives of the study, significance of the study, limitations of the study and organization of the study. The second chapter will deal with the literature and conceptual framework. Likewise, research methodology will be given in chapter third. Social and demographic characteristics of the respondents will be presented in chapter four. The chapter fifth will deal with the socio-economic status of single women. Emotional felling of single women will be dealt in the chapter. Summary and conclusion will be drawn in chapter seven. This research work will also consist of references and appendices at the end of the chapters.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This section will describe literature review on the single women who are in pathetic condition, they seem to be a respective citizen and have given more facilities from the state to them and their dependence children.

#### 2.1 literature review

Gender as a social category is socially constructed. Every society is run in the basis of social norms and values. They fulfilled their needs from social institutions. Every society, there are different customs, law, system, norms and values which control and regulate human behavior. Society determines the role and position that what the role of son and daughter. (Acharya, 2067). As a practice in Nepal, marriage is regarded in the form of a spiritual and social obligation and commitment between both men and women relation. It is also a common understanding of people in our society that neither men nor women can have a happy and successful life in this world and also in heaven if they have not entered into marital life. Our social values have provided an orientation that women have to feel privileged to be with husbands in the family, and be content with happiness gained through this relation by their spouse. The theories of family and marriage institution have established an ideology that a woman is the equal partner of the male for the maintenance of the family and other dealings. However, what is in practice is that she holds an inferior status within these social units.

Institution regulates position, role, and status of people. In every society and culture, there is no similar role, status and position between male and female, in the family during childhood, girls are socialized to be sweet and soft spoken and submissive while boys are socializes to be aggressive, bold and dominant. Thus, it creates different role and status of male and female which brings differentiation in the society. Society is stratified in many sectors, like caste, ethnic group, class, age, gender, economic Situation, political power exercise, Ideological Sector etc. Out of them Gender is one important factors of stratification. Gender is determined by social and cultural system or it is constructed by society. Death is inevitable. But, the bereavement due to loss of husband creates a severe problem in the role adjustment for a woman. The oppressive social structures founded on patriarchal construction

make widowhood personally problematic for individual widows (Thapa, 2011; Upereti, 2008)

### **2.1.1 The worldwide context of single women**

Margaret Owen (2005), in her report "Widows for Peace and Democracy highlighted that, "The rise of widowhood among young women is quite unprecedented, Conflict, violence, and natural disasters have led to the death or disappearances of thousands of men in so many regions of the world in Asia, Latin America, Middle East, and Eastern Europe. Yet in spite of the huge numbers of single women (widows) and children depend on them, it is estimated that Afghanistan, Iraq, Sudan, Africa, over 45% of the adult female population either widows or wives of the missing husband."

In the Russian society, Urevan (2005) Meena suggests that the single women where divorces or widows they are considered as lucky to be single. There were an increasing number of single women in Russian day by day.

All the single women in Russia, they live as a respected citizen with out any problems and interference in their lives from anybody. They enjoy legal provision in favor of them. They are legally and socially allowed and free to remarry, if they wish to. Remarriage is viewed as a normal practice by Russian society. The state supports single women with dependents through mother child special fund in the following ways:

In Russia the widows can easily transfer all fixed and liquid asset their husbands to whoever she chooses or in their own names. Furthermore, her state also supports widows in rearing their children and for their education. She is free to remarry without any hindrance. Such marriages are taken in a positive way; society understands and places no blame on single women for her husband's death. They are considered that every individual has right to live their lives in a dignity. One has to understand that everybody faces problems and difficulties in his /her life and try to help in any circumstances. Instead of living in past and think of their problems, it is better to think of their problems. It is better to think of their future and of their problems go ahead the attitude of Russian society.



### **2.1.2 Single women in south Asia**

Mukes Ahujal (1996), author of the book "widows": Role adjustment and violence" analyses within a social perspective the location of new support systems, adopting new attachments, and entering new social networks by widows. After examining the miserable and pitiable situation lot of widows in terms of male domination, inter-personal power structure, and learned helplessness, is presented explaining widows' exploitation in terms of environment in and outside the family, personality traits of victims and victimize and the resultant stresses.

Stress is "Wear and Tear" our bodies experience as we adjust our continually changing environment; it has physical and emotional effects on us and can create positive or negative feelings. As a positive influence, stress can help to compel us to action; it can result in a new awareness and an exciting new perspective. As a negative influence it can result in feelings of distrust, reject stomach, rashes information uncase, blood pressure, heart disease, and stroke along duration of stressful situation can lead to health problems such as headaches, upset stomachache , insomnia, ulcer, migraine etc, and mentally, psychological disorder such as ulcer, migraine etc. and some neurotic symptoms such as hysterical deafness and blindness, anxiety etc. are viewed as a result of mind and body's failure to cope with stress. With the death of loved one, they experience a stressful situation that can imbalance the individuals physical, mental, psychological disorder (Acharya, 2063).

Mudgal (2005) suggests that in some parts of India the sin door is wiped away with the toe of dead husband's foot. The mother of the widow's thus heaping misery on both the concerned women often presents the white sari. The final ceremony of shaving the head was done in the presence of relation and cast members. The life of widows in itself expressions of violence against women. Deprived of property right, excluded from productive work, debarred from any chance of remarriage, malnourished, devoid of any security by their own right shut out from all luxury, they were condemned to a sort of living death. For a widow the maxim is 'once a widow, always a widow.

### **2.1.3 Single women status in Nepal**

Single women in Nepalese culture are discriminate and deprived of living normal socio-cultural life, they are the unwanted insiders, who is perceived to be insiders, and

inauspicious a burden and sexually dangerous. Her access to family resources, both physically and emotionally is all too after cut off at the time of her husband's death widowhood has its own specialized ceremony and the red and bright color is banned for them especially for the Hindus. Single women are vulnerable to violence at the hands of family. Malla (2000), highlighted that customary practice also associated with widowhood further emphasize their marginalization. It is but natural that in such atmosphere single women are neither properly educated nor properly informed of their rights and legal procedures.

### **Social status of single women in Nepal**

According to Ranjan (1989), 'The status of widowhood in Hindu society is considered as the worst and the most dreadful period in a high caste women's life. Among the lower caste, at least the stigma of widowhood is riming them. A widow in Hindu society has to undergo various kinds of socio-religious, cultural oppression as well as economic hardships'.

The life style of Hindu widows which came out from the study, shows too much women are exploited and tortured just being a widow. The state of widowhood, which has been imposed upon them, is not due to their own fault, but it is just a natural phenomenon. Birth can be checked, but death can't be. Any of the life partners can die any time, but it is the women, who have to undergo through different types of harassment: mental, physical, economical etc, just being a women, as well as a part of patriarchal society. Because no male after his wife's death is called by bad names, declared inauspicious, deprived of average living condition, normal sex life and economic independence.

In patriarchal based society, widowhood has its own moral dimension expressed through a behavior code, diet restriction and dress code etc. Most of their codes have little or no religion sanction, but customary practice over time had gained the weight of religious percepts. A widower is considered to be inauspicious. There is no dress code for widower but there is dress code for widow.

Thus, the continuous mental, physical, economic tortures, harassments, and systematic dehumanization of widows, develop some severe mental problems for themselves.

A widow below thirty years old, who receives food, clothes and expenses for religious observances cannot obtain her share of her death husband property.

If married women fail to maintain her chastity to her husband, she has no right to claim the partition share of her husband. Nepal, widowhood is not viewed as an inevitable period in the cycle of women, but as a personal and social aberration, to be deviously wished away. The census of 2058 hardly mentions the population of single women in Nepalese society are nonentity and they hardly figure in any census pick their tragic tale only when they carry news value for wider consumption.

The prospect of single women however, is not wholly frustrating at least when seen in light of the tenth five years plan which acknowledged the need to empower women and bring them into the mainstream of development thought gender mainstreaming.

The widowhood and evils associated with it has roots, which may be tracked to pre-Vedic era. According to an article, 'victim of Discrimination. " written by Dr. Ginny Sribastav, professor of Delhi University, the traditional word for widow is a symbolic identity for a women, whose husband is death. The term "Vidhawa" or "widows" is very old and can be tread to Vedic scriptures even beyond to Indo-Europe an origin. Despite social transformation caused by scientific advancement over the past 200 years leading to change in human outlook and the change in response to social problems and issues, they have hardly been any change in people attitudes towards widows. The report of a national workshop conducted by WHR postulated that single women in Nepal are discriminated against and denied a normal socio-cultural life. The report argued that widowhood has its own covert and overt rituals and that single women shouldn't make approaches in public particularly at any ceremonial occasions and the wearing of red and bright color is prohibited to them. The customary practices associated with widowhood further augment their marginalization.

### **Economic status of single women in Nepal**

Chamling (2008) writes on asking about present respondent's economic condition of widow, 71 respondents said they were able to survive in average condition getting access to primary food, cloth, simple education and health check-up while as 15 respondents said they were unable to survive in average conditions. Likewise, 15

respondents said that they had very good conditions with regards to primary needs and 4 respondents said of having no property at all. According to the answer provided by the respondents their widowhood at present was also changing in comparison to that of the period at death. The number of respondents who had no property had been decreased resulting in increase in the number of respondents of having very good condition and poor. The remarkable change was that the economic condition of respondents at present had been found to be very well being due to their involvement in different organizations and women groups. And another important cause was the present condition had made them to be decisive and confident in choosing profession for the betterment of children. She further states:

The single women have been looked down upon, trapped within a cultural and religious framework. The death of the husband was the start of woman's problem; it was harsher if the woman is young enough. A young single woman is often viewed as an adversary and the family often taunts her as being responsible for her son's death. Their own parents try to provide emotional support and prefer her to stay in her marital home rather than come back to them. One of the biggest traumas that the single woman faces after the death of their husband is the whole questions of support of shelter (p. 25).

My research also supports because in my study area, the social status and economic status of widow women is lower.

Thapa (2011) writes that the types of economic problems that they (widow) had been dealing in their every day life were collected. 76 respondents were found to have been facing daily economic problems while as 29 respondents said that they could not express their problems. Among the respondents who expressed their problems could be classified as under: A large number of respondents i.e., 52 of them said that they had been facing basic problems, 18 respondents said they were not trusted for money matters. Likewise, 15 respondents said that they had problems in shifting their shares. She further writes that, responding to the question “suggestion for economic development of widows” most widows i.e., 33 respondents said that their children should be supported with their education right, 26 respondents said that they should get opportunities of employment, 21 respondents said that they should be supported with their income generation activities and 25 respondents said that they couldn't express. My research also showed that the economic status of widow is very low. Mostly widow has not sufficient property to run their family.

## **Legal status of single women in Nepal**

As soon as a woman becomes single after husband's death. It is not only the loss of the beloved one, which troubles her but multidimensional issue like economical, psychological, physical, social and legal torment her. The women and her children usually the worst is conflict situations, upon widowhood, most women, who are often illiterate and unskilled are left distribute. Thapa (2006) further writes that only few Nepali single women enjoy social security or pension when their husbands die. Only the families receive some monetary compensation of security. A study of Forum of Women Law and Development (FWLD) shows "the property Rights" which has various provision of existing laws clearly shows discrimination against women as well as single women. Some of them are as follows.

- ) The son by birth has a right to the ancestral property where as only an unmarried daughter above age of 35 has the right.
- ) Once a wife takes a share of the husband's property, the husband is entitled to perform a second marriage without divorcing her.
- ) A widow below thirty years old, who receives food, clothing and expenses for religious observance cannot obtain her share of her dead husband property.
- ) On divorce, the women have to return the shear of property obtained from her parental property obtained from her husband thus, a divorced woman neither has inheritance right in her parental property or from husband property.
- ) If a married woman fails to maintain share of her husband.

The above-mentioned legal provisions clearly show discrimination and disparities in the relation to property right of all categories of women, whether she is widow, married women, divorce women or an unmarried daughter. As in most of south Asian countries, Nepal has a dominant patriarchal culture. Women face discrimination from cradle to coffin (Thapa, 2006). The birth of a female child is not generally an occasion to celebrate even the mother is unhappy at the birth of daughter in many cases. Girls grow up in the gender-culture from childhood and are expected to look after the house from a very young age. They are considered emotionally and physically weak and are expected to be shy, timid, and fearful.

Malla, (2005), argues that due to lack of financial security women become economically dependent, which render them to face problem like domestic violence, psychological domination, polygamy, no decision-making power in family, harassment for dowry, and in many cases acceptance of prostitution as a way of life etc. They hardly have any choice during marriage. As a daughter is taken as an obligation from her, and as the son's expected to take care of the family the priority is given to male family members, there by resulting in the neglect of her education and health.

The single women, particularly the conflict victims, are not merely traumatized but are equally victimized by the discriminatory policy which subjects them to sinful treatment. Different standards are applied to different victims in compensating them. Many of the legal provisions in national laws governing women issues in Nepal are yet to be broadened and made consistent with international charters and covenants to which Nepal has been a party. For instance, women's right to own property (CEDAW15), women's right to equal treatment in agricultural reform and land resettlement (CEDAW 9) women's right to bank loans, mortgages and other forms of financial credit (CEDAW 14.2 g) right to non-discrimination (UDHR, ICESCR2.2, CEDAW 1,2,3, ICED5e) etc.

The status of single women is influenced by ethnicity, religion, which are the social variables. Similarly, an economic variable as occupation also plays the vital role to determine the status of singles women. Also, the respondents own age, age at marriage, age at widowhood, children ever born, and family size which determines the demographic variables which affects the status of single women (WHR, 2005).

### **Overall situation of single women**

Physical and mental violence

- ) Evil sight towards single women
- ) Do not use of single women in good assumption moment
- ) Control sexuality of single women from different aspects
- ) Don't identified the problems of single women by state
- ) Obstacles to move freely
- ) Weak economic and health status
- ) Negative present of media

- ) Freed from authority and opportunity
- ) Decrease self attitude of single women
- ) Need permission to take citizenship and passport to promote traditional custom
- ) Less access and control up on resource and mean
- ) Freed from skill and opportunity
- ) Dependent upon other and stay to under control
- ) To be accused difference blame
- ) Single women were taken as burden/load
- ) To get mental effect
- ) Restriction on foodstuff and wearing
- ) Lack of statistical data of single women

Upreti (2008) states that the binary opposition between men and women construct two antithetical sets of characters that position men as superior and women as inferior. This dichotomies between rational/emotional, assertive/ passive, strong/weak, or public/private. These are strategic oppositions, which place men in the superior position of a hierarchy and women in the inferior position, as the second sex. For her, wherever women are subordinate, and they have been subordinated almost always and everywhere. She puts forth view, Death is inevitable. But, the bereavement due to loss of husband creates a severe problem in the role adjustment for a woman. The oppressive social structures founded on patriarchal construction make widowhood personally problematic for individual widow. In a male-dominated society, women are most unfortunately viewed as household workers and child bearers. It is only natural that in such an atmosphere, women are neither properly educated nor informed of their rights and legal procedures. This takes a worst turn after a woman is widowed.

Upreti (2008) states that, the sudden and abrupt loss of marital status happens due to death of the husband. The loss of the husband is not the only suffering that a widow, has to encounter. When a woman becomes a widow, she is further required to obey very stern and rigid rules and regulations to curb many areas of her freedom. These types of normative requirements prescribed for widows differ as per different types of castes, ethnic and religious communities. However, economic dependence is the major problem that outweighs other types of restrictions to keep them in marginal social position. (p-248).

On one hand, women are taken as second class citizen compared to men and on the other hand, widows are the discriminated among women, in doing so we can perceive the situation of widow in patriarchal norms.

Beechey (1979) mentioned that patriarchy has been used in feminist movement widely which is the male supremacy but in the sense of the different feminist it is differently used. Radical feminists talk about the deconstruction of the patriarchy however, socialist feminists deal that not only patriarchy but we have to deal with capitalist system which promotes patriarchy (Eisenstein, 1999, Lerner, 1986, Kandiyoti, 1988, Millet, Kate 1969) radical feminist states that patriarchy means organized two sets of principles are; that male shall dominate female; and that older male shall dominate younger male. Due to patriarchy, women are facing problem and their social status lower.

UNICEF (2001) has categorized there are several domestic violence against women in South Asia in different areas:

**Physical violence:** is related with physical pain that the victim faced in her daily lives with physical violence. This includes slapping, beating, arm-twisting, and stabbing, strangling, burning, choking, kicking, threats with a weapon, murder, traditional harmful practices likewise female genital mutilation and widowhood are common violence.

**Sexual violence:** occurs due to women's incompetence (maybe due to unwillingness or any other reasons) in fulfilling the sexual desires of men. This includes coerced sex through threats, intimidation or physical force, forced prostitution, or any unwanted sexual act.

**Psychological violence:** includes all intimidating and threatening behavior, persecution, abandonment or threats of abandonment, confinement, surveillance, verbal abuse and mental torture this also enhanced by emotional violence causing fear, shame, public embarrassment, continued threats and taunts, isolation and humiliation. They faced economic violence as denial of funds, exploitation, controlling access to healthcare, food, basic necessities and denial of rightful income. (UNICEF, 2001).

In the history of single women movement, the name -Yogmaya Devi stands first in Nepal. She revolted against the Rana regime instead of burning herself in her husband's pyre which challenged the prevalence of Sati custom at that time. The time



was not favorable for widowhoods she remarried and this was a step for renovation of culture and beginning of new leaf in the life of widows (Chamling, 2008: 18).

### **Government's Policies on Women**

Nepal's policy on women in its development endeavor initiated since its First Five Year Plan (1956-1961). Nevertheless, during that period the State policy on women was formulated with a "welfare approach" focusing on the reproductive role of women as mothers and homemakers.

A shift in the focus on women occurred during mid and late 1970s with Nepal observing the International Women's Year and participating in the First World Conference on Women in 1975; and the subsequent study on the Status of Women in Nepal (1979). Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-85) initiated the WID (Women in Development) policy assigning a separate chapter about the role of women in development, which was followed by the Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-1990) and the Eighth Five Year Plan (1992-1997). Sixth Plan adopted an "efficiency approach" to WID recognizing the productive role of women for the first time in Nepal's planned development. The Seventh Plan adopted a "(equal) participatory approach" along with the efficiency approach and the Eighth Plan adopted an "equity approach" along with a realization of the need to mainstreaming women in development.

A paradigm shift occurred from WID to GAD (gender and development) in Nepal's development policy during the Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002), which is given continuation in the Tenth Five Year Plan (2003-2008). These Periodic Plans have adopted the policy of "gender equality" and "women's empowerment" by adopting the strategy of "gender mainstreaming" (Thapa, 2007).

Realizing that the widows have been neglected by family, society and state, a 3 day international conference of single women had been held in 2062 Baishak in Kathmandu which included representatives from 74 single women groups of 34 districts and representatives from UK, USA, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, India, Bangladesh, Germany, Japan and Russia. The conference passed a 10 point Kathmandu declaration. Similarly, different national and international networks of I/NGOs and loose forums have been now established to raise voices for single women, their social inclusion and rights. The 'Red Tika and Wearings' movement has been done in different parts of nation which helped reduce the age-old ill practices against widowhood and raise the level of awareness in community (Chamling, 2008).

## **2.2. Theoretical Review**

Theoretical framework of this research is radical feminist theory. Radical feminist theory believes those women's oppression and suppression is due to patriarchy. Patriarchy is the social system which inhibits all the process of women. According to Kamla Bhasin "Patriarchy is the social system" which is connected with cast, religion and gender. This research is based on feminist theory; among them the radical feminist theory is near to my research that is why I used radical feminist theory as theoretical framework. Because all the women suffering are based on patriarchy. Patriarchy, all the feminists have taken problem of women's oppression based on sexual division of labor, however, some feminist provoked that the sexual division of labor in the primitive society were not different as male exaggerated because they were compulsory for group working for survival. Engle's *origin of the family, private property and the state* taken as the manifesto for the origin of the patriarchy. In the initial period differentiation between male and female was lesser in degree. Tasks performed by both sexes were indispensable for group survival where both were regarded equal. With development of the state, monogamous family changed into patriarchal family which is the origin of the patriarchy and started male dominant behavior. Similar expressions from Gerda Lerner and Kate Millet in their ground breaking books that the wife's household became "private sector" and became head servant, excluded from all participation in social production however male took command in the home also (Lerner, 1986 Kate, 1969).

### **Violence against women theory**

While there is no feminist approach to family violence, most theoreticians in this field look to the power imbalances that create and perpetuate violence against women. These imbalances exist at a societal level in patriarchal societies where structural factors prevent equal participation of women in the social, economic and political systems. Societal level imbalances are reproduced within the family when men exercise power and control over women, one form of which is violence. Interventions are targeted at a broad range of factors including day care, pay equity, suffrage, social resources, and law reforms.

Interventions with women focus on empowerment and the recognition of power and control dynamics. Empirical support of this view takes three forms. First, qualitative documentation of women's experiences is used to develop models such as the cycle of violence and the power and control wheel. In turn, these models have utility when

applied to advocacy and clinical work with women. Second, cross cultural research examines the prevalence of family violence across cultures with different levels of patriarchy. The third technique is to evaluate batterers programs designed using feminist principles. Feminist-inspired programs may be the most common type of batterer treatment, typically using a group format with education in the dynamics of power and control and on egalitarian relationships. Critics believe the confrontation of abused men with the inappropriateness of their actions will not necessarily translate into changes in behavior. Violence against women theory emphasized that the main hindrance of VAW is the patriarchy system. Kamala Bhasin (2001) has mentioned that in patriarchy, male takes his wife as his property that is why he beats his wife. He thinks that wife is his personal property. Widows are taken as weak and helpless. They are suffered from violence because they are not able to raise their voice against such misbehavior. If the person tortures the widow, then all the blame goes to widow.

What causes family violence? This is an important question for those who seek to prevent, predict, or intervene to avert re-occurrence of violence within the family. Where prevention is concerned, current evidence strongly points to the need to intervene early with Widows who experience or are exposed to violence in their community. In terms of prediction, the literature can aid in identifying factors associated with varying degrees of risk: who needs treatment, how much do they need, was risk attenuated by the intervention, will they offend in the community? This review focuses primarily on the role of theory violence against women: definition of treatment targets and approaches.

### **Sexuality theory, control over widow's sexuality**

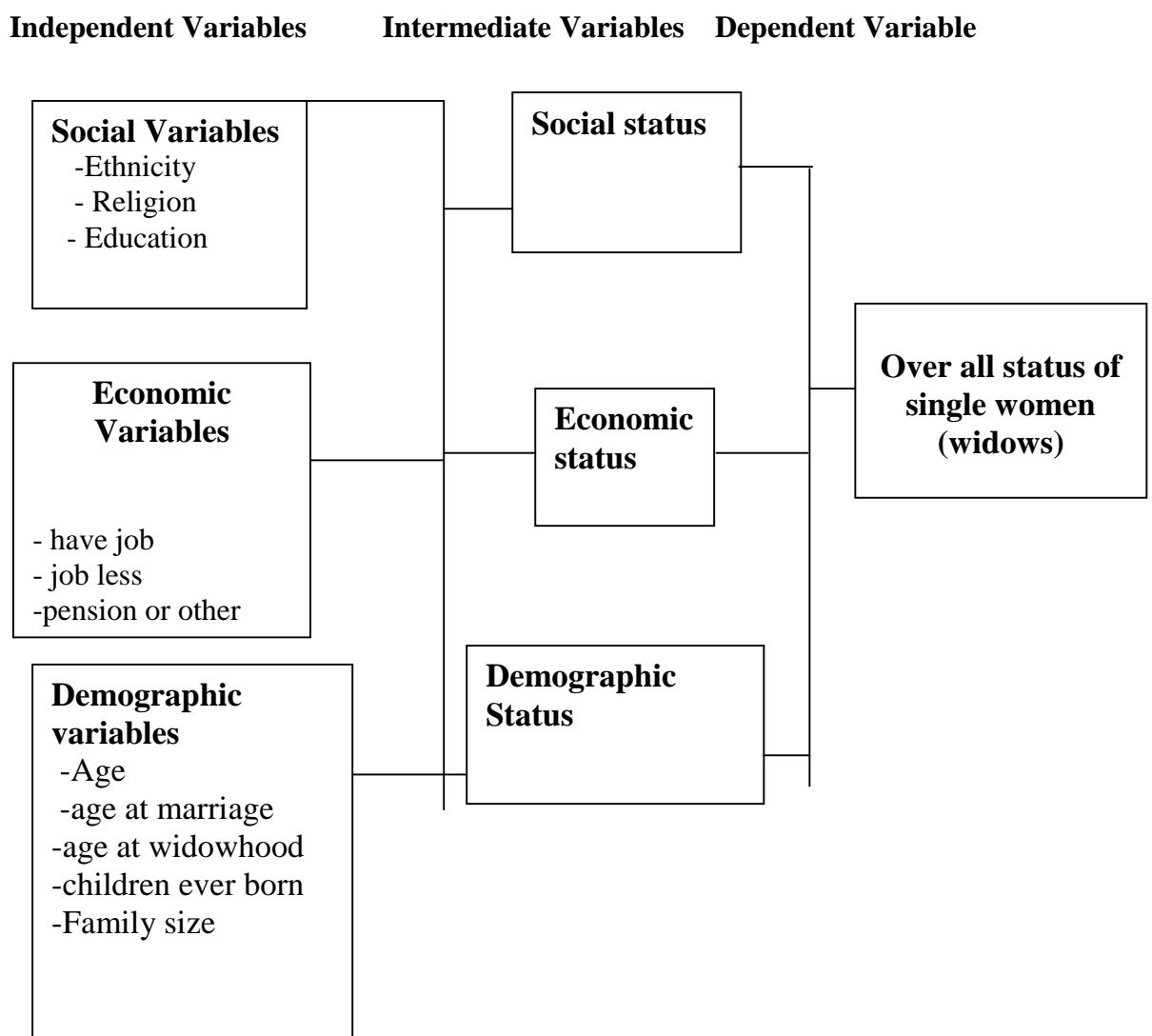
Sexuality is vague and ambivalent topic. Psychosexuality theory Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) says there are certain stages which are expressed differently as male sexuality and female sexuality. Male always does sexual politics and dominates women. Kamala Bhasin (2001) shows that man controls female sexuality and he controls each and every sector because he thinks that he is superior and has full authority to control women. In the case of widow women, to make them wear white dress, without makeup, means the power of male to control over female. After the death of husband, female has to obey. All the behavior against widow are the mechanism of control sexuality. It shows that the power of patriarchy.

Sexuality theory argues that control over the female's body, or more specially, in terms of their sexual relationship towards men is very vague. All the system derived

from the patriarchal norms because the male has perception that. Sexuality theory also argues that in the same time women taken as second sex and again the widow should obey all the rules, fundamental Hindu norms which are the sign of male supremacy. *Sexuality* and economic dependence on men is still a means of *control* of women's sexuality. Introducing this *theory*, arguing, much like men controls and women lose *control over* their own bodies. Wearing the dress such as white sari is the manifestation of male supremacy and it seems that how male is powerful because after his death also male shows his power. Sexuality theory states that the control over widow's sexuality due to patriarchal social system and male supremacy. This theory is all about patriarchal norms and its root which are rooted in society.

## 2.1 Conceptual Framework

Based on objectives, of the study and available literature, this study has designed the following conceptual framework.



In this research, the conceptual framework assumes to explain the status of single women as influenced by social, economic and demographic factors. The status of single women is influenced by ethnicity, religion, education, which are the social variables. Similarly, an economic variable as occupation also plays the vital role to determine the status of single women. Also the respondents own age, age at marriage, age at widowhood, children ever born, and family size which determines the demographic variables which affects the status of single women.

## **CHAPTER- THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This was based on representative sampling research covering all identified single women with qualitative and quantitative research methods in Gujara municipality of Rautahat District in Nepal. With respect to area coverage, this study has covered Gujara municipality of Rautahat District where the concentrations of single women are high in order to achieve the objectives of research, the following methodologies was adopted.

#### **3.1 Research Area**

This study has fully focused on Gujara municipality of Rautahat District in Nepal. The target population was single women in Municipality. It is situated in the Terai region of Nepal. In my study area mainly Yadav, Chaudhari, Mandal, Mushahar, Paswan and Magar. The research was conducted in above-mentioned municipality by purposive sampling method of non random sampling method was used in this research.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

Ontology of the research is relativism and epistemology of the research is participatory/advocacy and methodology of the research is qualitative and qualitative survey is the method of the research and interview, case studies and observation are the tools of data collection. Because, my justification of research design is, feminist perception is different than male, and to understand widow's subjective understanding is near to my research thus qualitative research covers my thesis. The research explorative in nature, mostly the nature of the research was in qualitative and that quantitative information was supplementary for the qualitative

#### **3.3 Nature and Sources of Data**

The research was based on primary data. The primary data were collected through field work. The secondary data were used complementary supplementary information to substantiate the research. Those collected data and unit of analysis was in individual level.

### **3.4 Collection of the Information**

To find out the overall situation of single women the key informants interview was conducted. Checklist for focused group discussion and key informant guidelines were used.

### **3.5 Selection of the Respondents/ sampling and sample size**

Respondents are the people who are single women. And widows, woman who has lost her spouse by death and has not married again are called widows. The single women were selected as respondents are all single women from Gujara municipality of Rautahat District. Personal information on 'Socio-economic status of single women were collected through personal interview with single women, in selected households of all wards. The population of single women from ward no 1, 2, 3 and 5 the total population was 220. Amon the population, from each ward, 10 respondents were purposively selected. The 40 of single women were selected based on purposive sampling method, because this research was based on mostly qualitative. Qualitative research method needs the purposive sampling method. The sample size of this study was 40.

### **3.6 Tools for Data Collections**

In this present research, there were mainly two types of data collection; Primary and secondary; which were qualitative and quantitative. Various techniques were used to get the facts and figures of the status of single women. In the formal way, the primary data were collected from the set of interview schedule which was mostly open ended. Some references were taken from some informal interviews and observations too. But main emphasis was given to the interview.

#### **3.6.1 Interview (Semi-structured interview)**

Semi structured interview was conducted. Basically, main key questions were about their experience felt in the house, society and working areas, and similarly their property rights and their social status were asked. This technique was used to collect primary data for the research study from sample respondents using mostly open ended interview sets. It was useful to provide information about the social and economic status of single women and the situation they were facing.

#### **3.6.2 Case studies**

Case studies in which researcher explores in depth a program, an event, activity, process (Newman 2000). Researcher collects data individual or collective through

case studies. To get in depth information and to explore the center phenomena of the single women's status, case studies was carried out.

### **3.7 Data Analysis**

The collected data were tabulated under different headings and sub-heading. The data collected through various instruments and sources were analyzed, coded, tabulated to describe the data and very simple statistic tools e.g. percentage, average, mean etc were applied.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

This chapter deals with analysis and interpretation of obtained data. The data were analyzed and interpreted under the following sub headings.

#### 4.1 Social status of the single women.

Researcher has asked them about social discrimination if they were personally discriminated by the agents of society the following results were outlined. Majority of the respondents said they had felt being discriminated in the walk of life. Discrimination against them while participating in social functions. Single women were felt discriminated while they were participating in public ceremonies, in festivals, and also in different socio-economic opportunities. Thus, they seem to be excluded from social reality.

**Table1. Age structure of the Respondents**

S.N.	Age Composition	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	14-20	5	12.5
3	21-32	10	25
4	33-38	12	30
5	38-44	12	30
6	45-49	1	2.5
7	Total	40	100

(Source: field survey, 2021)

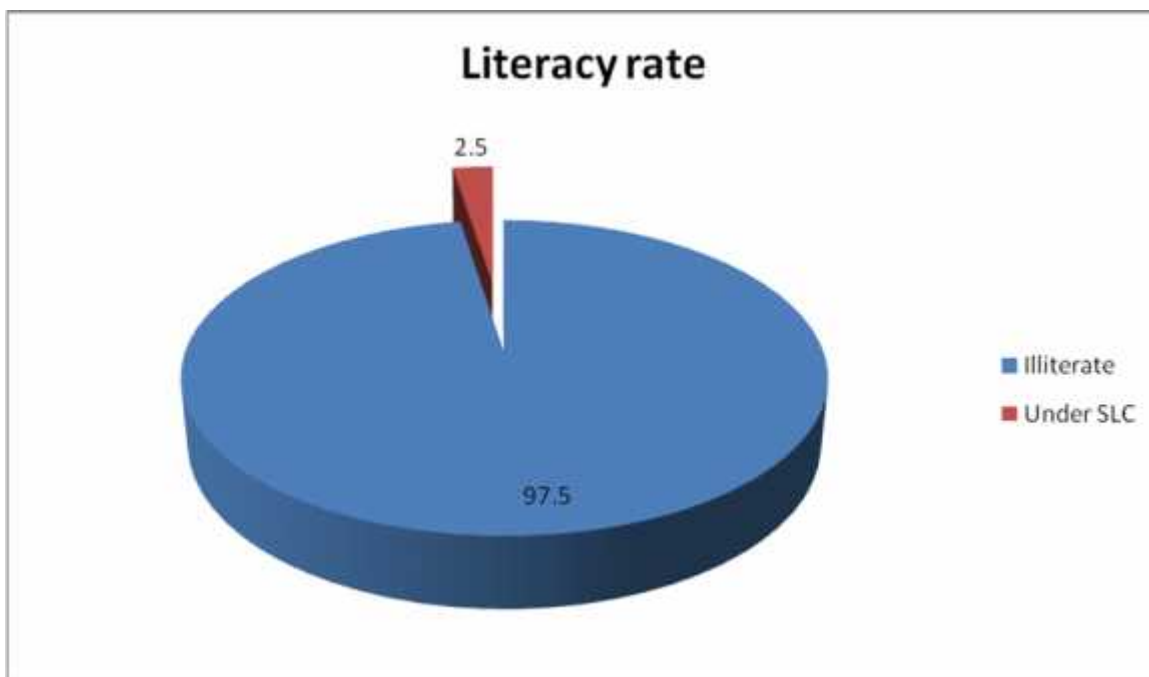
Age composition is an important factor. Through this, we can be able to find which age group respondents suffered more from violence. According to survey data, table no. 1 shows that only 12.5 percent respondents were under 20 years and 85.5 percent respondents belong to above 20 years. It shows that the majority of respondents who were single women from were above 20 years 18 respondents were suffered from domestic violence. Similar research by Gaise (2011) writes that 18 respondents suffered from domestic violence who were single.

Among them 21-30 age group respondents were more suffered from domestic violence. Being an early aged, they could not have courage to speak against violence and social status of single women is lower. So they were suffered from violence. Generally, from 19 to 50 years women, who were single, suffered from domestic violence in that survey. It can be said that according to age group violence frequency may be different and age group should be divided for the study. It is very common that single women and their social status is critical due to patriarchal social norms, women are subjugated, dominated and oppressed, and the status of single women seems critical because domestic violence against single women shows the status of single women in society. (Bhasin, 2004)

#### **4.2 Literacy and Education**

Education plays an important role in determining social and economical aspects of the people. Education directly or indirectly affects on the multi-dimensional development of the people, their personality and productivity. In this study, ability to read and write and if able to read and write sources of literacy, education and if learnt from formal schooling then grade completed was asked to single women and interviewed.

**Chart 1**



**Table 2. Literacy rate of the respondents**

Education	No of Respondents	Percent
Illiterate	39	97.5
Under SLC	1	2.5
Higher Education	-	
Total	40	100

(Source: field survey, 2021)

Table 2 shows that majority of the respondents 97.5 percent were illiterate only 2.5 percent were literate under SLC. It shows that level of education effects on different types of understanding such as anatomy is destiny, we are dominated because our fate cheated us. Most of the respondents did not know that gender is social construction. Because education is the third eye of the human beings. Many reports have shown that the level of education and social status are interrelated because educated women are able to raise their voices. Education plays vital role for all-round development, most of the Madhesi women are illiterate without education it is impossible to know where to inform and what is their right. Our society portrays traditional Hindu dominant social norms where social structure plays vital role for

division of work. In my study area, those single women who were illiterate, they did not know their rights and legal provision. Due to illiteracy, widow women were not able to revolt against superstition. As Bhasin in 'What is Patriarchy' exposed girls do not need to be educated as they have to be sent after marriage, the Nepalese society still practices that which is a deprivation of human right.

### **Table .3 Prevalence on Different Forms of Domestic Violence**

The majority of respondents answered that physical attack such as beating, battering, is the domestic violence because they had seen these types attack easily in their lives. Who is suffered by physical they couldn't hide their pain. The table shows the attitude of respondents about different forms of violence 50 percent respondents thought that physical attack is violence. Most of the respondents answered that violence means physical attack. 25 percent respondents reported that verbal assault is domestic violence where as 10 percent respondents put their view on force to pregnancy is domestic violence and other 10 percent respondents reported that misbehave at delivery is domestic violence. Only 5 percentage respondents put their view on sexual harassment is domestic violence against women.

It shows that many single women are known about domestic violence against women. They have seen violence act in their friends and neighbors. Because Nepali society is still based on the traditional thinking practices and regulations. Mostly in villages, these thought practices and regulations were made by male members (Ahuja, 1996). Such patriarchal mindset has always dominated the female. For example, women are always in chain. They are never free. When she is child, father controls her. Then in adult age, after marriage husband controls her. After the death of husband, son controls her. So women are never free. Through the cause of orthodox tradition the female are still the victim of social and cultural institutions.

### **4.3 Single women and the violence**

According to the religious books, women are respectable (in Upreti, 2008). But in real life, they are suffered by different types of domestic violence because the male dominant social authority and superiority of male as well as the economic condition. Male represents the breadwinner where as woman as a household worker.

Most of the single women were familiar about domestic violence against to them many organizations provide knowledge but according to single women domestic

violence means the physical attack was major because it was physically painful, they can tolerate other types of violence but physical violence was very danger which was perceived. They faced forceful sexual intercourse, economic violence, verbal and mental torture. Main cause of domestic violence against single women was having no access to economic access and low social status.

**Table 4. Women suffering from violence**

Suffering from violence	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	35	87.5
No	5	12.5
Total	40	100

(Source: field survey, 2021)

Through the research, out of the total 35 respondents, 87.5 percent were suffered from domestic violence. It shows that single women were suffered from domestic violence and they have knowledge of domestic violence. Only 12.5 respondents were not suffering from domestic violence. Those who were suffered from domestic violence, they cannot protest against their dominator who made them victim. In the research are as, people thought that men and women are the two wheels of the same cart. If women lie in the back position, that affect the male's progress. Socially neglected, economically deprived and psychologically traumatized, the condition of more than 6000 young widows, who have lost their husbands in the last eight years of conflict, is heart-rending (WHR, 2010). Overburdened and helpless, these young widows are faced with extreme circumstances. Again, it cited that due to early marriage practices; most of the widows already have a couple of children who are at the age of school going. The mother who is young has little choice as her decision can change the fate of small innocent child.

Through the research data, it was found that out 87.50 percent of the respondents suffered the domestic violence. Those who suffered from violence didn't have power to speak against the oppressors. Generally, females are dominated by males. But in some cases, females are dominated by females. In many families, there is no good relation between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. By the causes of conflict, many

good families were destroyed. So, female also needed to feel the female problem. Then, violence ratio may be decreased.

Table 5: Prevalence's on different forms of domestic violence

<b>Forms of DVASW</b>	<b>No. Of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Physical attack</b>	20	50
<b>Verbal assault</b>	10	25
<b>Force to pregnancy</b>	4	10
<b>Misbehave at delivery</b>	4	10
<b>Sexual</b>	2	5
<b>Total</b>	40	100

(Source: Field Survey 2021)

Regarding to male dominations Kate (1969) writes that patriarchy is the social system where male dominates women as second-class citizen. She further states 'Patriarchy' is the main obstacle for women domination, subordination and subjugation. Because patriarchal social norms are male supportive. Death is inevitable; however, society constructs dichotomy dividing gender relation and roles. Due to patriarchal social norms, male dominates female because gets motivation from that system. Domestic violence also occurs due to patriarchy.

#### **4.4 Major causes and consequences of Domestic Violence**

Regarding the violence majority of the respondents accept they are suffering from various types of violence. According to their view, economic disempowerment is the major cause of violence. Also, less access to education, traditional socio-cultural practices, gender discrimination prone to violence.

Similarly, they stated that issue of violence is not public matter, so victims also do not share and report to formal sectors as they have internalized patriarchal norms and values.

Violence against women is socially sanctioned and manifested in a range of outcomes for women at different ages of the life cycle. When a woman loses her husband, her

social status undergoes a dramatic change. Labelled a 'widow' for her whole life, she has to face many difficulties of life along with different forms of violence.

Widowhood is the most neglected of all gender and human rights issues among women's issues. Conflict, violence, HIV/AIDS, and natural disasters have created a phenomenal number of widows of all ages. Many of them are victims of cultural practices and violence, have been displaced and have no access to resources. Widows tend to be invisible and their voices unheard at all levels (WHR, 2010).

Article 6 of Widows' Charter endorsed by Widows for Peace through Democracy, 2005 deals about violence against widow, the term "violence against women" includes any act of gender-based violence against a widow that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to her, including threats of such acts, coercion, or deprivation of liberty. Discrimination against and abuse of widows of all ages occurs across a wide spectrum of cultures, religions, ethnic groups, regions irrespective of the economic or education status of the women subject to this oppression (Widows' Charter of WPD).

Widows in particular bear the brunt of discrimination, are one of the most marginalized groups in Nepal. In many cases, they are blamed for the deaths of their husbands and barred from attending public ceremonies and events. Due to this low status, widows are highly vulnerable to opportunistic manipulation by society, such as witchcraft accusations. In many cases, utilizing accusations of witchcraft enables families to commit atrocious abuses, including humiliation, sexual assault, torture, and even death, justifying their actions in the name of protection from evil. Families bickering over land and other assets often reportedly take advantage of the vulnerability of the widows ([asiafoundation.org/in-asia](http://asiafoundation.org/in-asia)).

#### **4.5 Economic status of single women**

On asking about present respondent's economic condition, 71 respondents said they were able to survive in average condition getting access to primary food, cloth, simple education and health check-up while as 15 respondents said they were unable to survive in average conditions. Likewise, 15 respondents said that they had very good conditions with regards to primary needs and 4 respondents said of having no property at all.

According to the answer provided by the respondents their widowhood at present was also changing in comparison to that of the period at death. The number of respondents who had no property had been decreased resulting in increase in the number of respondents of having very good condition and poor.

The remarkable change was that the economic condition of respondents at present had been found to be very well being due to their involvement in different organizations and women groups. And another important cause was the present condition had made them to be decisive and confident in choosing profession for the betterment of children

**Table 6 present economic conditions of single women**

Condition	Respondents	Percent
No property	2	5
Enough	1	2.5
Average (those who can efficiently run their family)	20	50
Poor (having own property but below the average)	17	42.5
Total	40	100

(Source: field survey 2021)

On asking about present respondent's economic condition, what 50 percent respondents said they were able to survive in average condition getting access to primary food, cloth, simple education and health check-up while as 42.5 respondents said they were unable to survive in average conditions. Likewise, 2.5 respondents said that they had enough (very good conditions) with regards to primary needs and five percent respondents said of having no property at all.

According to the answer provided by the respondents their widowhood at present was also changing in comparison to that of the period at death. The number of respondents who had no property had been decreased resulting in increase in the number of respondents of having very good condition and poor.

How widow was treated after the death of husband was critical. Most of the single women suffered from different types of cheating behavior of during the property separation.



In fact, social inclusion is a multi-dimensional concept, involving economic, social, political, and cultural aspects of disadvantage and deprivation. Therefore, social inclusion can be defined as a process of promoting equitable access to both economic and social benefits of development without any discrimination of caste, descent, gender, religion, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, opinion or other characteristics. It is often defined as socio-economic and political empowerment of the particular groups who have been victimized by the stark discrimination, segregation and exclusion. For ensuring social inclusion we should really enhance the access of all people to economic and social opportunities, assets, resources; voice; knowledge; skills; and last but not least- information.

Depending on the context and time, social inclusion has been used as a “buzzword” by the state authorities, political parties and many organizations. While talking about inclusion, we should also define exclusion. Exclusion is a barrier in mainstreaming. Social exclusion refers to a process through which individuals or groups are wholly or partially deprived of full participation in the society in which they live; they are closed out from participation in the society, as a consequence of low income and constricted access to employment, social benefits and services.

#### **4.5.1 Property and single women**

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**Table 7 Behavior of family member during property (land, house) distribution**

Behavior	No of Respondents	percent
Cheating	18	45
Try to cheat	11	27.5
No property given	4	10
Helpful	7	17.5
Total	40	100

(Source: field survey 2021)

Upon asking the respondents about the reaction of family members to them during property separation, 17.5 respondents said they got their share naturally and 10 could not get their property. Likewise, 45 were engulfed in the situation of cheating and out of which were cheated and given less property than they should get. 17.5 respondents got help from family members during separation.

Similarly, HDR (2004) study also shows women have only limited access to resources and only limited control over those they can access. Of the total landholdings, females own only 8.1% and the average size of their land is just two-thirds that of an average male holding. Only 4% of the households have female ownership of both house and land. Moreover talking about single women, their situation in our society is generally pathetic and miserable. Women who got no support of any kind from the male counterparts in their families are called single women. Single women may be a widow, divorce, separated or an unmarried woman over 35 years.

**Table 8 Occupation of Single Women**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Government job	1	2.5
Private sector	4	10
skilled labor	6	15
Daily wage	20	50
HH work	9	22.5

(Source: field survey 2016)

The table 8 shows that only two percent have access to government job. And half of the single women are involved in daily wage labor which is not sound profession economically. Only six percent reported that they worked as skilled labor. And nine percent work as household work.

#### **4.5.2 Case Studies and key informant's views**

Case study 1

Sangita Mandal (Name changed) age, 34, Rautahat

She got married when she was 14 years old. Now, she has three children but they do not go to school. She sometimes works as a labor. It's not easy to find work for women in village and if she gets, she gets unequal pay. Her husband died in 2060 BS. Now, she is getting different types of problems. Her fathers in law and mothers in law scold her as widow and always blame that she brought bad omen thus, and killed her husband. Thus, she thinks now anatomy is destiny. She didn't kill her husband, however, she was always blamed that she was the cause of her husband's death. Her life is critical. Her own family members also neglect and accuse her. Neighbors also did same and if she appeared in public function it is shameful for her. Due to superstitions and conservative social system, women are victimized; among them single women are double burden. *I think to be women is the sin because if, wife dies, husbands gets another partner, however, if husbands dies, women have to follow social rules.* According to her, to be women is asin because our social system and patriarchal social norms are male supportive and there are separate ebehavior for male and female. Due to different rule for male and female, women are suffering from oppression, suppression and hatred. That is why Sangita laments regarding her own birth. She mentioned that if I were a male, I would have earned money to bear children need. I worked but there is unequal pay for women and

men. We work much more than male, however, we get less amount than male counterpart. Patriarchal social system inhibits women to work freely. Sangita is only are presentative of the single women. There are lots of women are suffering from social system and victimized. Until and unless, the social system treats fair for women and men, the suffering of women wouldn't come to an end. Single women are victim of the victims because women are treated as second class citizen and single women again taken as second class of women because of their social status.

**Table 9 Income and Expenditure**

<b>Income per year</b>	<b>No of respondents</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Below 100000	21	52.5	Below 100000	26	65
100000-150000	18	45	100000-150000	14	35
150000-200000	1	2.5	150000-200000	-	-
Above 2000000	-	-	Above 2000000	-	-
Total	40	100		40	100

(Source: field survey 2016)

Table 9 shows that respondents reported 52.5 percent reported that their income level was below 100000 where as 65 percent reported that their expenditure was below the 100000. It shows that their income and expenditure level is very low. And only one person was earning is 150000 to 2000000 annually. Income of single women is very low.

## Case Study 2

Ranju Chaudhari 38 (Name changed)

She has three sons and one daughter. Her husband died five years ago. During the property separation, her family cheated her and most of the properties were hidden and she got only one third. When she raised her voice against the family. She was blamed that she had an affair with neighbor. However, she was innocent but family member always used to seek the way to cheat her. She started crying while being asked about her husband's death. I paused a moment, and she after 3 minutes she started saying that when her husband was with her at that time her days were better. They can afford their family easily. All family were lovely, however, after the death of her husband all member accused her as *allachhina, poe tokuwa*. After her husband's death the bad day started. One side, she is unable to afford economic activities and another, her social and family status is critical. Death is natural phenomenon and inevitable it cannot be stopped or delayed. Due to husband's death Ranju got problems one hand, she lost the person who was breadwinner of the family and on the other hand, the property which was her right to inherit, she got cheated due to absence of her husband. She sometimes felt apathy because as women, how they have to face problems in her family, in society and in community. Ranju told that she was respected when she was with her husband and nobody raised question regarding her character, however, now if anybody helps her also gets trouble due to her inferior status in family. She promised that she did not have any affair with another man. But the society creates havoc and gossip due to her inferior status. She argues she was strong because of her husband and when she is single, she is weak. No, because she is same person after and before the death of her husband but the status given to male and female is different that is why she is now inferior and helpless. In my experience, doing research in single women is quite difficult sometimes I was speechless and got tear in my eyes. I could not bear her suffering and feelings thus first day I stopped and return to home and another day I continued to ask question and gather information. In conclusion, I argue that all the sufferings are rooted in the patriarchal social system. Women are taken as inferior and among them single women (widow) are taken inferior of inferiors. All the root cause of the women suffering and lower status is due to patriarchy. Until and unless the patriarchy collapse and equality establish, the women suffering continues for good.

Most of the single women (widow) I rarely used the term widow because it is really difficult to pronounce. It seems dominated word and often as curse because to be widow means done something wrong in past birth. Sometimes single women stop talking and start crying because it really hurts their heart. They feel double problem. One is they have lost their life partner and another is their social status is low. All the problems occur due to patriarchy. Patriarchy is deep rooted in that society where other system are prevailing such as gender, cast, and religion.

#### **4.5.3 Key informant's views on situation of single women**

Mostly, the single women are treated as inferior and inauspicious, however, practice and behavior are different according to caste, ethnic orientation and so many more. As per Brahmin community, there is strict rule for the widow; however, in some Madhesi community it is preferable for remarriage or widow marriage. Long ago there was a practice of *Bhauju Bibaha* (Brothers widow marriage) which at least provides some help and cooperation for widow. But now it's been taken as bad system and started hatred and lower position and devalued. Our society creates different role and different position for different people. Widow are devalued because of they are not dominant because of the position of their in society. Those who are in good condition in economic status are valued at least in economic condition. The system here is to provide oppression, suppression, domestic violence because there is not any supportive role of any person for the widow. Our system is victim blame there is saying *jo hocho uskomukhma ghocho* (the person who is helpless has to bear more sorrow) that is why widow are dominated.

Per key informants regarding to violence of widow is still existing in their village. And the cause of hiding violent act or not reporting are patriarchal norms and values, culture of maintaining silence, poverty, ignorance, lack of access on education, awareness, dependency, family pressure and so on.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This study was conducted at Gujara municipality of Rautahat District. The main thrust of this study is to identify the real situation and social, economic status of single women.

#### 5.1 Summary

Due to evil social norms, values, superstition and customs, single women's lives are directed towards as second citizens. But except these, there is no any other specific reasonable logic. Mainly women are only limited in inside household work like cooking, washing, cutting grass, take caring the children etc. They do not have any opportunities for involving in income generating work and outside work. Due to this, there is not access of women on various services like health, education etc. That makes them to be far from the track of mainstream of development.

This study has analyzed social status and economic condition of single women of Gujara municipality of Rautahat District. Descriptive type of research design with qualitative and quantitative data information was used for this study. For the quantitative data 40 single women were interviewed through semi structured questionnaire. Qualitative information was gathered from observation and case studies were taken.

Most of the single women were suffered from domestic violence due to their social status.. Majority of single women were aware and they have knowledge although they have not formal education. Many factors play vital role for domestic violence against single women among them economic dependency was the major factor. If single women earns, then their status automatically become high in their family. The findings of the research are summarized below.

It was found that 85.5 percent respondents belong to above 20 years age group where 14.5 percent under 20 years age group. It shows that majority of respondents 75 percent and 5 percent dowry related factor and 20 percent respondents on unequal pay. Suffering from domestic violence were 87.5 percent where is not suffering were Majority of the respondents put their view on alcoholism was the main cause for violence against single women. The 42 percent single women were poor and only 50

percent single women reported that they were average condition. Mostly single women were suffered from cheating problem of family member while property separation. The 45 percent single women reported that they were cheated by the family members during the property separation. Main insight of this study was the economic condition of the people plays vital role in social status. Single women were maltreated, dominated and suffered from domestic violence.

## **5.2 Conclusions**

This study clearly shows that the situation of single women is critical. Due their low social status they were suffered from domestic violence. Single women's issue is one of the most neglected issues in Nepal. Basically, a woman's life is viewed as no specific and individual value without her husband. Additionally, the single women are doubly discriminated against as women and as being single.

Living in trauma, social discrimination and economically deprived conditions, the widows have to live in isolation. According to Nepalese social and cultural practice, a widow has to learn a way of life, which is completely different than that of others.

The single women have been looked down upon, trapped within a cultural and religious framework. The death of the husband was the start of woman's problem; it was harsher if the woman is young enough. A young single woman is often viewed as an adversary and the family often taunts her as being responsible for her son's death. Their own parents try to provide emotional support and prefer her to stay in her marital home rather than come back to them. One of the biggest traumas that the single woman faces after the death of their husband is the whole questions of support of shelter.

Death is a natural law. Having to live a life without life partner, bitter feeling and loneliness occupies in the mind of a widow. Our society labels the widow as “*Poi Tokuwa, Boksi and Radi etc*” instead of solacing her heart in the difficult situation. This harasses her self confidence. She is forbidden to even touch the bangles and red clothes which she has been wearing since her childhood. Moreover, the early marriage system still prevails in many parts of Nepal. Girls are married off before they have the opportunity to stand on their own feet. If their husbands meet untimely deaths, there comes the question of survival.



Most of the single women were suffered from domestic violence due to their social status. It can be concluded that due to their social status they are suffered from domestic violence. Many factors play vital role for domestic violence against single women among them economic dependency was the major factor. The finding of the research shows that majority of the respondents suffering from domestic violence were 87.5 which shows that the single women are suffering from domestic violence.

The role of widows was found to be stereotypical that confined them to the household. Most of them were confined to self-employed, unpaid and low-wage informal sector activities. Widows doing daily wage had been found to be paid discriminatory wages in comparison to their male counterparts. They had only limited access to resources and control over those resources is far less than access to them. All these limitations, along with household confinement and low educational attainment, restrict their empowerment.

The government of Nepal has ratified many international conventions to guarantee the basis of human rights addressing gender equality. It has provided constitutional and legal provisions as well as programs on violence against women. But, violation of women's right is pervasive phenomena and widow are still suffering from it in my study areas.

In conclusion, single women in my study are in lower social status, victim of domestic violence, economically deprived and their property right was mostly cheated by the family members. Due to patriarchal social norms, single women are in multiple jeopardy as not only women, but also as single women. Single women are suffered because of their social protection.

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### Background information

Name -----  
Age ----- Place of birth ----- Present Address -----  
Family member..... Occupation: -----  
Ethnicity ----- Religion -----  
Education ----- Husband's education-----

#### A. Check list for economic status

1. Land
2. Job
3. Income
4. Expenditure
5. Business

#### Annex 2

##### Interview schedule

- 1) Could you tell me about your background?.....
- 2) Can you tell me your belief about status of single in society?.....
- 3) How are you managing your household?.....
- 4) Since how long you are heading your hose hold?.....
- 5) Is legal provision enough for women empowerment?.....
- 6) Are you suffering from domestic violence  
a) Yes b) No
- 7) If yes how.....
- 8) In your opinion, what types of activities are domestic violence?  
a) Physical attack (beating, battering) b) Verbal assault  
c)force to pregnancy d) Misbehave to pregnancy  
e) Sexual harassment (absence calling, unwanted touching)  
f) Other.

- 9) How do you feel in society to be single?.....
- 10) What do you think, that from where power comes?.....
- 11) Which is the source of power?.....
- 12) What is your opinion on the reproduction?
- 13) Should it count that reproduction also a production?.....
- 14) What do you believe that male dominant? Equality? Or female dominant should be?.....
- 15) Do you think that women are weak? Comparing to male?.....
- 16) Should patriarchy be destroyed or reformed?.....
- 17) What are the major causes of domestic violence?
  - a) Lack of education b) Failure of legal system
  - b) Economic dependency d) alcoholism
- 18) What is your economic status?
  - a) No property b) sufficient c) average
  - d) Poor
- 19) What behavior showed your family head during the property separation?
  - a) Cheating b) try to cheat c) no property given d) helpful

**Observation check list**

1. Behaviors
  2. Work
  3. Discrimination
  5. Equal behavior
  6. way of doing
  7. Practice
- 10 activities

Annex 4

Interview list for key person

- 1) How are widows perceived in society?
- 2) What is the role of widows in the community?
- 3) How are widows playing the change role to empower themselves and society?
- 4) How are widows treated in society?
- 5) How are patriarchal social norms affecting the status of widows?

### **additional check list**

- 1) Perception of different religion upon the widow
- 2) Role of different society upon the widow
- 3) Daily undergoing practices about the widow and within different cast and ethnicity
- 4) Undergoing practices
- 5) Are there differences or gap between different religious norms and its practices?
- 6) Forms of violence
- 7) History of the widow
- 8) Different behavior in different time towards the widow
- 9) Linkage between socio-cultural norms and widow practice.
- 10) How could be minimize in society such type of practices, if it is wrong practice. .
- 11) Trust by community and individual reengaging the economic activities of widow.
- 12) Barriers to develop the social and economic condition of widow