

STATUS OF MADHESHI WOMEN IN NEPAL

A Case Study of Parsa District

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PREFACE

Development of the country is not possible unless women of all caste/ethnic and societies, covering half of the world population are developed. The status of women is the foundation on which any structure of equality can be built. There were some factors that led me to choose the Madheshi community for a case study in Parsa district on the status of women of the same community which I also belong. In my community many women are deprived in many ways. They are forced to live dependent on the men and also their elder family member especially mother-in-law/father-in-law after marriage. They have no autonomy to take part in decision making even within the household. I realized that it is necessary to bring the information on their actual status in front of policy makers as well as media so that they can make policies and programs to empower this community. In this respect, this research work would shed light on the status aspects of Madheshi women, who are living in Terai region of Nepal with relation to their decision making autonomy in different socio-economic and political status and examine them critically. However this study is descriptive in nature and provides enough information related to different status indicators and their overall situation. This study is limited in currently married Madheshi women aged 15-49 years who are living in Parsa district of Nepal.

In Nepal, this study is the first attempt to conduct research work on the status of Madheshi women in Nepal, a case study of Parsa district by the member of same community. I have directly involved in all process of the study to get both quantitative and qualitative information. Being a member of Madheshi community, it was very easier to get both quantitative and qualitative information. This research is limited within Madheshi caste/ethnic groups. There is no attempt to compare Madheshi women to Hill-origin women, because I think before making comparative study we need to know the situation and status of both different communities separately. There are many caste/ethnic groups within same origin and my attempt to know their overall status because they are deprived and less empowered in many sectors of development and empowerment.

This study has been basically divided into eleven chapters.

Chapter I of the study is attempted to touch on the introduction of the research topics and research work. It also highlights objectives of the study, methodology, significance and limitations of the study.

Chapter II: deals with women's status in different aspects. This chapter has focused on the overall scenario of Nepalese women and Madheshi women particularly. It has also touched various International Conferences on women and policies and programs of Nepal in different five years plans. This chapter also covers some empirical studies conducted in Nepal as well as in other developed and developing countries.

Chapter III: The chapter highlights the methodological parts of the research. It deals all the sampling process of the research and also described about the study area.

Chapter IV: This chapter devoted to describe household information of the study population.

Chapter V: This chapter provides basic information on demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the household population. It also provides information on household facilities and assets, which are important for identifying major indicators like wealth status of the household and characteristics of all members who are residing in the households.

Chapter VI: Analyzed, from the survey data socio-economic status of Madheshi women of this district. Socio-economic development that eventually leads to get status in the society and great source of empowerment

Chapter VII: This chapter is the most important chapter. It contains an important indicator of women empowerment and their autonomy. The information collected during the Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, mainly addressed fall into seven broad areas of decision-making autonomy at the households. In the first, questions were asked about who makes decisions to afford regarding women's income, about their husband incomes; about small and large household purchases'; about own health care,

how many children to have and about the mobility of the women. All the decision-making autonomy at the household's level analyzed in this chapter

Chapter V111: This chapter analyzed mainly sexual and domestic violence which are very common in India and Nepal and especially among Madheshi society of Nepal.

Chapter IX: This chapter looks at the respondent's knowledge and perception of basic issues and amenities in their area, awareness of government and non-governments programs, political activities and access to various services and facilities. Finally we asked to the respondents on the name of their Constituent Member to know their political awareness among Madheshi women.

Chapter X: The chapter described on the characteristics of husbands and wives

Chapter XI: This chapter contains the conclusion and recommendations based on the entire research. Some suggestions have been suggested to empower the decision making status as well as women's overall status in order to abolish discriminatory practices in Nepal.

In developing countries like Nepal, women have always been discriminated and have suffered silently and are still suffering in silence. Self- sacrifice and Self-denial are the common features of these women; yet they have been subjected to all inequalities, indignities, inequalities, and discrimination. In every decision they have to ask either their husband or their family members, otherwise they have to face many torture and troubles. This is more common in Terai region where majority of women have no autonomy rights, and no decision making rights even within the household and also outside of the household. This has resulted poor status in the family and the nation.

It is felt that various measures can encourage women's participation in decision making. The measures themselves included implementing existing national and international commitments, raising awareness of the overall benefits of women's empowerment, improved education, economic empowerment and increased advocacy for women's rights and strict legal against dowry, child marriage, and violence against women. These measures together with more women friendly policies and programs of

political parties and the civil societies would increase Nepalese women involvement in decision making inside and outside of the household.

Women have always constituted about half of the population and the fact that a society cannot advance without their moving forward along with men has been recognized from the beginning of planned development. Nevertheless, initially women were viewed as a welfare issue as all human development issue was. Expenditure on education and health and other social items was categorized as welfare expenditure as was the expenditure on improving women's access to such services. This was the first phase of attention to women's needs. They were viewed just as consumers and mothers and wives. Their well being and education was considered necessary primarily because they were mothers and companions to men.

All this started to change since 1975, when women were declared as an issue in development, the Women in Development (WID) approach. Their direct role in the production and hence in development started to be recognized. Women started to be seen as producers. But still they were viewed as a group left behind by the capitalistic production system, somehow outside the system. It seemed to assume that pulling them along while keeping the patriarchal structures and ideology intact, will change their status. Women's involvement at the decision making level both inside and outside of the house has been seen as necessary for success of development projects. All these concepts emphasized the women's position in relation to development and not her overall position in the society. In spite of much rhetoric during the two decades following 1975, the changes realized in women's status and rights, particularly in developing countries, was marginal. After a review of the progress made in advancing women's cause, the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) proposed a 12 point program. The distinguishing feature of this Platform as compared to earlier programs was its emphasis on the multi-dimensional nature of women's subordination and the need to attack it in all spheres by mainstreaming and empowerment of women. It adopted a gender framework for an analysis and solution to women's problems.

Gender approach to women's advancement is different from WID or WAD in the fact that it recognizes the multi-dimensional nature of women's subordination.

Despite the laws and policies guaranteed by Nepal's Constitution and the international commitments, made by Nepal's Government to uplift women and eliminate discrimination against them, nearly all indicators continue to show women's disadvantaged position in Nepalese society. These women still have very limited involvement in decision making from the household level through to high level legislative and bureaucratic positions. The causes of this deep rooted are chiefly the patriarchal social structure, the male biased socializing of children, legal and educational discrimination and economic limitations and especially in the case of Madheshi women, the deep rooted system of dowry. Similarly the political as well as bureaucratic structures where majority are affected by male dominant societies, sometimes both men and women, who always behave in his/her family as a hero, a main important decision-maker of his/her family, also prevent the entry of women into important decision-making autonomy. Thus the most basic of these primary data on Madheshi women on women's status basically socio-economic and their decision making autonomy and also some status indicators like literacy, education, work, age gap between husband and wife, political awareness, number of children, etc. The aim of my survey was first to describe the status of Madheshi women from a gender and social perspective and analyze social inequality and disadvantage and suggest some directions for empowerment based on the status of Madheshi women in Nepal.

Finally, being a active member of the same society, I feel privileged and proud to submit this research work, which in my opinion, will be a valuable contribution to the growing literature on Madheshi women in Nepal and also on South Asian women as it reflects the hope and aspirations, ideas and experiences of Madheshi women in particular. I am feeling very satisfied because my dream was to do research on Madheshi women especially in my district and this dream has become truth.

Sushma Tiwari

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ACRONYMS

ADB	—	Asian Development Bank
CA	—	Constituent Assembly
CBS	—	Central Bureau of Statistics
CDPS	—	Central Department of Population Studies
CEDAW	—	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
DDC	—	District Development Committee
DV	—	Domestic Violence
FP	—	Family Planning
FWLD	—	Forum for Women Law and Development
GAD	—	Gender and Development
GDI	—	Gender-related Development Index
GEM	—	Gender Empowerment Measure
GO	—	Government Organization
HDI	—	Human Development Index
ICPD	—	International Conference on Population and Development
IEC	—	Information Educational Communication
NGO	—	Non-governmental Organization
INGO	—	International Non-governmental Organization
ILO	—	International Labor Organization
MOHP	—	Ministry of Health and Population
NPC	—	National Planning Commission
TU	—	Tribhuvan University
UN	—	United Nation
UNDP	—	United Nation Development Program
UNESCO	—	UN Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	—	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	—	United Nation's Children Fund
UNIFEM	—	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNFPA	—	United Nations Population Fund
VDC	—	Village Development Committee
WHO	—	World Health Organization
WID	—	Women in Development
WAD	—	Woman and Development

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I. Background

The development of a nation cannot be measured through the quality of life the people live. The growth of a nation lies in its capacity to elevate the lot of weakest section of its society. In Nepal the status of women has been many ups and downs since ancient time to present day. A country's socio-economic growth cannot take place if half of its population is down and trodden. The women feel dependent, lack of decision making, powerlessness and looking up-to other's for her own identity, status and her own decisions. The identity and status of a woman come from her own family and decision-making autonomy also should start from the household so that women feel their status first in their own families. The status of women in the household is a one of the most important indicator of women empowerment. In this chapter the researcher has given introductory part of women's situation and their status in Nepalese society and especially focused on the issues of disadvantaged Madheshi women, majority of them are living in Terai ecological region of Nepal. The Madheshi are the native people of Nepal who reside in the southern, Plains region the Terai which they refer to as Madhesh. Madheshi people are ethnically, culturally and linguistically similar to people of Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh state of India (See, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madheshi>).

In Nepal discrimination against women exists across the country. But in the Madhes the situation is worst. The women of Madheshi community have been treated as symbols of izzat, but rarely does this translate into autonomous decision-making and personal agency. In general they are suffering in the preference for a son is higher, female infanticide is growing alarmingly and girls usually drop out after primary school. Dowry is widespread with education only reinforcing the practice and hiking up the rates for grooms. Widows are treated as sinners and deprived of the most basic human dignity, and a premium is placed on women being confined to homes. Early marriages, poor socio-economic status, dependency, low level of literacy rates are the common characteristics have seen in the Madhesh, See more in publications of National Women Commission (2067 B.S.).

1.1 General Context

Women are the voice of half of the world and that voice is too often silenced, marginalized or circumscribed among different communities in the developing world. Nepal experiences the problems common to many developing countries. The women of the region are not homogeneous. Caste/Ethnicity is rigorous aspect of our society to determine the social status of a person in Nepal. Madheshi people belong to the different strata of our society. However, it is problematic in its concept of vertical stratification. Moreover, as the caste is ascribed status, gender too, is one of the parameters of it.

Women's status has been defined as the degree of women's access to material resources like food, income, land and other forms of wealth, and to social resources like knowledge, power and prestige within the family, in the community and in society at large, Rothschild (1982). Thus, women's status refers to overall position of a woman of the given society.

It may be useful at the outset to introduce a distinction between the situation of women and the status of women in a given society. The situation of women, like that of any population group, can be determined by examining a variety of statistics (Demographic, Social and Economic statistics). The UN (1995) defines the status of women in the context of their access to knowledge, economic resources and political powers as well as their personal autonomy in the process of decision making. The status of women can also be determined by comparing their situation such as the corresponding situation among men and women and the autonomy of decision making at the household level. The researcher has used the term "autonomy" relatively, i.e., to describe the position and power of females vis-à-vis males within a given socio-economic strata in a particular society, C.Safilions-Rothschild (1982). Women's autonomy-their opportunity to make choices and affect their lives- is an important factor in demographic outcomes.

1.2 Nepalese Scenario

In Nepal when the Nepalese women's status in this light, the picture is generally black. The proportion of women involved autonomously in social and public activities is extremely less. Women are underprivileged, underrepresented and exploited in all spheres of society. Socio-cultural, political, economic and educational factors have forced them to live subjugation by

men, NWC (2010). Nepalese society is by culture and religion, still regarded as the male dominant society. Dahal (1992) has described that a woman in Nepal becomes a woman only when she performs her role as mother; her status is fully validated only after birth of many children, especially son, who is must to light parents' funeral pyres, can perform the Shraddha Ceromony for deceased parents. A surviving son ensures the continuity of the family line and inherits the parental property. Economically, administratively, socially and culturally women enjoy much inferior position to men in our society. Consequently, their roles have become marginal.

The researcher has examined some of the indicators of status of Madheshi women which are also the indicators of the empowerment of women. Women experience a variety of social and economic circumstances throughout the Terai region, but their circumstances are related to pervasive gender bias. In this study, several different indicators have used to examine women's status of the Madheshi Community in Nepal including decision making autonomy of women in the Household among different caste ethnicity of the same community, focusing on different and distinct status of Madheshi women, which provides part of a justification for why the researcher is interested to explore in the particular group among the Madheshi in Nepal. Women's participation in the decision making is an important indicator of their empowerment, NDHS (2006). In order to access women's decision making autonomy, the 2006 Nepal Demographic and Health Survey sought information on women's participation in four types of household decisions: her own health care; making large house purchases; making householdi purchases for daily needs; visits to family or relatives. The researcher has also selected the same types of indicators of household decision making which are the important indicators of the women's status and empowerment. These indicators had also included in NDHS (2011) national survey in Nepal conducted by New Era and Nepal Government but findings have still not come.

1.3 Who are Madheshi?

According to the Human Development Report (2009) "The Madheshis are people who originated on Nepal's Plains, who live in the Tarai, and who feel marginalized by modern Nepali nationalism, which has rested on the ideas of monarchy, a single Nepali language, and a Hill-centric identity. This restrictive concept has excluded Madheshis—who speak varied languages—among these, Maithali, Awadhi, Bhojpuri, Urdu and Hindi—and who have

extensive cultural, social and kinship links with Indian citizens living across the border in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. These differences have led Hill Nepalis to view Madheshis with suspicious and to question their fitness for citizenship”.

Madheshi community in spite of having long history and habitat within the present day Nepal is practically considered outsiders and they have been mostly marginalized and face exclusion in active political participation, administration, governance, decision making, policy planning and moreover, they face serious humanitarian problem of their true identity in their own relative land. The Madheshi people feel highly discriminated and has almost lost the sense of belongingness to this nation. Thus the concept of Madheshi inclusion in different area has been the research agenda by the different scholars and the organizations.

Although the use of ‘Madhesiye’ has been appropriated by Madheshi people and made powerful through its politicization. All Madheshi together with many Pahadi origin people living in Terai do not hesitate to be introduced themselves as Madheshi only after the Madhesh Aandolan in 2006. Equally Madheshi women should also feel proud to being an important member of this community. They had been suppressed and oppressed due to the Madheshi language and also Madheshi caste/ethnic groups, SIRF (2006). However when we see the past from both developed and developing countries, many women had been struggled for their rights and identity within and outside of the home. For example in Britain many black women were seen as a minority and outsiders. These women struggled on a daily basis with the racism of British society. Women of Madheshi society are living and struggling for the same problems.

The issue of Madhesh and Madheshi community have been raised by many scholars, see Acharya, M. and L. Benett, (1981); Morgan and Bhanu (1995); Chaudhari (2065 BC); Jha (1997); Shah (2002); Yadav (2003); Gupta (2004); Yadav R.P (2006); Gurung H. (2006); Sigdel (2007); Bennett Lynn and Dilli Ram Dahal (2008)); and few others. But unfortunately none of them raised the issue of women of the same society whose condition is more painful and vulnerable than men of the same societies and female of other communities. In this regard, the nation cannot ignore the issues of women who are also important member of the same society.

Table: 1.3: Introduction of Madheshi by different characteristics

**Nepal : Three Regions (Mountain, Hill and Terai Region
(Madhesh))**

Madheshi: Regions with significant populations

Languages: Maithali, Awadhi, Bhojpuri, Hindi, Urdu, Rajbanshi, Tharu

Religion : Hinduism, Islam, Others

Related ethnic groups :

Terai Upper Caste: Brahmin, Chhetri, Kayastha, Bhumihar;

Terai Caste: Yadav, Marwadi, Bangali, Sikh, Teli, Sudi, Kalwar, Koiri, Kushwaha, Kurmi, Sonar, Baniya, Thakur/Hajam, Kanu, Kumhar, Halwahi, Badahi, Rajbhar, Lohar, Lodha, Nurang, Kewat, Mallah, Nuniya, Kahar, Bing/Binda, Mali-Kamar-Dhuniya. Barahi, Kumhar;

Terai AAdiwashi/Janjati: Tharu, Santhal/Satar, Gangai, Dhimal, Bhediyar/Gaderi, Dhanuk, Rajbanshi;

Terai Dalit: Chamar/Harijan, Mushahar, Dushad/Pashwan, Tatma, Khatwe, Dhobi, Bantar, Chidimar, Halkhor, Dom, Patharkatta;

Religious Minorities: Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and others.

Source: CBS, 2001; SIRF, 2007

Table 1.3 presents the characteristics of Madheshi of Nepal by different languages, religions, caste/ethnic groups etc.

1.4 The Madhesh and Madheshi

The Madhesh is the most important region of the Nepal, geographically and culturally distinct from the Hills. Though the terms Madhesh and Terai are used synonymously, it is important to note that Madhesh does not cover all parts of Terai districts; it excludes Siwalik and mid mountain areas. Madhesh is well defined ecological regions, which is approximately 885 km long from its western boundry, the Mahakali River, to its eastern boundry, the Mechi River while its average width along its entire east-west axis is only 26km varying from 4km to 52km, CBS (2001)

Nepal is a country of strange diversities. There are varied geographical, climate and biological diversities culminations into the diverse socio-economic, political and cultural patterns in the country. It is divided into three ecological zones namely Mountain, Hill and Terai Plains (Madhesh) and five development regions, which are inhabited by people of different ethnic/cultural groups. While analyzing these groups in 1981 they were classified in two major groups, Indo- Aryan and Tibeto Burman, on the basis of their racial origin and socio-cultural space accorded to women. On the basis of their participation in labour market decision making roles within the household and freedom accorded to women in marriage and sexual matters, it was concluded that the Tibeto Burman group was more egalitarian towards women than the Indo- Aryan groups, who idealized seclusion of women. According to the 2001 census there were 100 ethnic/caste groups and sub groups in the country, of which the Indo-Aryan group constituted 57% and the Janjatis (Tibeto- Burman and some other Terai ethnic groups) about 37%. The religious minorities- Muslims, Sikhs, Christian, and others accounted for 4%. About 15 did not report their ethnicity/ Caste or religion. All three groups are divided into multiple sub-groups. Traditionally the Hindu high castes (Brahmin and Chhetri) and Newars among the ethnic groups have exercised power in Nepal and had the highest excesses to resources and education, while the Dalit and certain tribal groups have been most disadvantaged, with lowest access to power structures, resources and education, See Acharya and Bennett (1981).

The high mountains of Nepal, or the Hills attracted the attention of adventurous travelers, mountain climbers and scholars ever since Nepal was opened to the outside world after 1950. The Terai/Madhesh belt has been historically a marginal area in a number of aspects, However, the Terai region or the Madhesh of Nepal, could attract comparatively little attention of foreign scholars because it is hot, dusty and malarias. The Terai is situated in the Indo-Gangetic plain which is also known as Outer Terai. There is inner Terai, lies between the Mahabharata range south of the Himalaya also known as the Churiya or the Siwaliks. Ecologically Terai region was famous for heavy forest and synonymous with Malaria. Similarly the growing importance of the region has not only been in its forest produce, such as Timber and elephants, but also in the availability of fertile plain land for cultivation and residence for different business. Between 1860s and 1951, government encouraged and made efforts to migration of hill people in Madhesh region. Overpopulation and very complicated life in hilly regions pushed them to migrate in Madhesh region. Plain land for agriculture, better economic opportunity,

forest resources and eradication of Malaria and state encouraged involuntary migration into Madhesh, Gunerate (1998).

1.4.1 Social Exclusion and Inclusion of Madheshi and Madheshi Women

Madhesh and Madheshi have been a major flaming problem in the current days after establishing inclusive democracy in Nepal against feudal, one-caste/class and region dominant democracy. Madhesh and Madheshi have been suffering from the vicious problem of their identification and recognition of their existence with their own distinct culture, customs, language and region. Many unrealistic questions have been raised from different geographical corners of the country by the feudalistic, high ranked bureaucrats, planners, decision makers and political party leaders "What is Madhesh?, who Madheshi are? Many times hill-originated (Pahadi) people are also claimed themselves as Madheshi". In this context, Late H. Gurung has been given more relevant statement on the, who Madheshi really are. He stated "In Nepalese politics, there are three major social groups that have been extremely marginalized by the state's biased monopolistic policy". They are the Janjati, as ethnic groups on the basis of culture, the Dalits as untouchables on the basis of caste, and the Madheshi on the basis of geography, Gurung (2005)".

Even though, Nepal is a home to the mosaic of ethnic groups and diverse nationalities included Madheshi with their multiple socio-cultures, religions and languages, but it is facing a vicious circle of poverty incidence particularly high in Madheshi dominated Terai district as compared to hill UNDP (2004). This severity of poverty in Madhesh has been resulted due to the regional biased development pattern and process. Madheshi people and especially women have been excluded from politically peripheral in the power structure since time immemorial and dominated by hill origin rulers. Their nominal representation in the education, administration, economy, Judiciary- national legislation and police- army have been surprisingly declined to 3.2% in 2000/2001 in the candidate for gazetted.

Koirala (2007), in its analysis on the relationship between marginalized and marginalizers , it has described that "From topographic lens Pahadi (Hill-dwellers) are marginalized and Madheshi (Southern Plane dwellers) are marginalized; from caste lens, Dalits are marginalized and non-Dalits are marginalizers; from ethnic lens, caste groups, basically Brahmin and kshetri

are marginalizers and Tibeto-Burman groups are marginalized; from economic lens, rich people are marginalizers and poor people are marginalized; from educational lens educated people are marginalizers and illiterate people are marginalized; from gender lens men are marginalizers and women are marginalized; and from power lens position holders are marginalizers and powerless people are marginalized.” This statement has cleared that women are marginalized in all areas of lens which is given above. Madheshi women are more illiterate, poorer, powerless, economically dependent, than men in the same area of living and in whole Nepal

Gaige (1975) used the term ‘Hill People’ and ‘Plains People’ living in Terai districts, and defined :a “ Plains people are those who speaks plain languages as their mother tongues or first language, whether they were born or live in the plains or hills”; the plain languages being Maithali, Bhojpuri, Awadhi, Urdu, Hindi and Bengali, and dialects of these languages used by Janjati groups, and hill people whose mother tongue or first language is one that predominant in the Hill region of Nepal such as Nepali, Newari, Magar, Gurung, Rai and others”. It also describes that Terai region is culturally, an extension of Northern India; where caste, language, religious rituals, styles, dressing, eating, living are similar with the northern Indian people. Many Indian immigrants settled in this region has maintained close links to Rana state across the border. There were no systematic records kept or available for these immigrants and the complications began when the issue of citizenship came. At that time Terai was defined a Hindi speaking area but it was discouraged to speak Hindi language which has been a common language of Terai area In connection with religion, languages, culture, life style, position of women and other social rituals they share with the people of border area of Nepal and India, [Status-of- madheshi-in-nepal.html](#) (2009); Gurung (2006).

The Madheshi people, throughout the history, have struggled to maintain their group identity, languages, traditional beliefs, worldviews and ways of life, and the control of their lands, territories and natural resources. Madheshi Community is defined as one of the umbrella of social groups representing regional based discrimination, composing more than sixty ethnic and caste groups including Adibashi/Janjati, Dalit, and Muslim with variation in language, culture, customs and religion integrating them by their common feature of non-hill origin and deprived of their identity. This community has been extremely marginalized in all spheres such as politics, economy, civil service, education, police-military etc and human development dimensions ranging from their identity in their own land to livelihood strategies, Yadav (2006).

Gender discrimination is perhaps the most universal forms of social exclusion of women in the community and society. So protecting human rights and promoting gender equality between men and women must be seen as central to the humanitarian community's responsibilities to protect and provide assistance to those affected by emergencies. There are many causes and consequences of such discriminatory practices against women in the name of social taboos. In Nepal there are many programs but there is still lacking gender sensitive programs which can address the excluded groups so that they can participate in development processes. There should be elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. Madheshi women are backward than other Pahadi communities women because of restricted equality and discriminatory recognition. The policy is still weak. It has not address properly to all women of Nepal. The programs come for the name of disadvantaged groups, generally conduct in the head quarters of Parsa district. There is lacking of monitoring of the related institutions. Similarly lacks of local governance, especially representative of municipalities or District Development Committee, many programs are not running properly. The mentality of even well educated people is also very conservative. They still do not want to send their daughters or any female members of their families for work or for the higher education outside of the village or city. Such deprivation/exclusion has created unequal access to food, education and health care, limited opportunities to earn incomes, limited access to resources etc. Such situation and circumstances directly has created many forms of gender, caste-based discrimination against Madheshi women and indirectly has made them to survive in their traditional, cultural, and religious and superstition value added thought and beliefs deep rooted in rural areas of Madhesh. . In this context Late H. Gurung has expressed reality of exclusion problems deep rooted in culture, economy and political sector of feudal government and thus conceptualized the agendas for inclusion in terms of regional autonomy, proportional representation in every sphere of national life first time for the Madheshi community through the Social Inclusion Research Scheme of SNV in Nepal, SIRF (2009).

1.5 Caste/Ethnic Composition of Madhesh

The caste ethnic composition of the Terai-Madhesh population is categorized on the basis of caste based hierarchy and Indigenous group of population. More caste and ethnic group of

population is found in Madhesh rather than mountain and Hill due to the steady internal migration.

Table 1.5: Distribution of population residing in Madhesh-Terai by Caste/ Ethnic and Religion group, (2001)

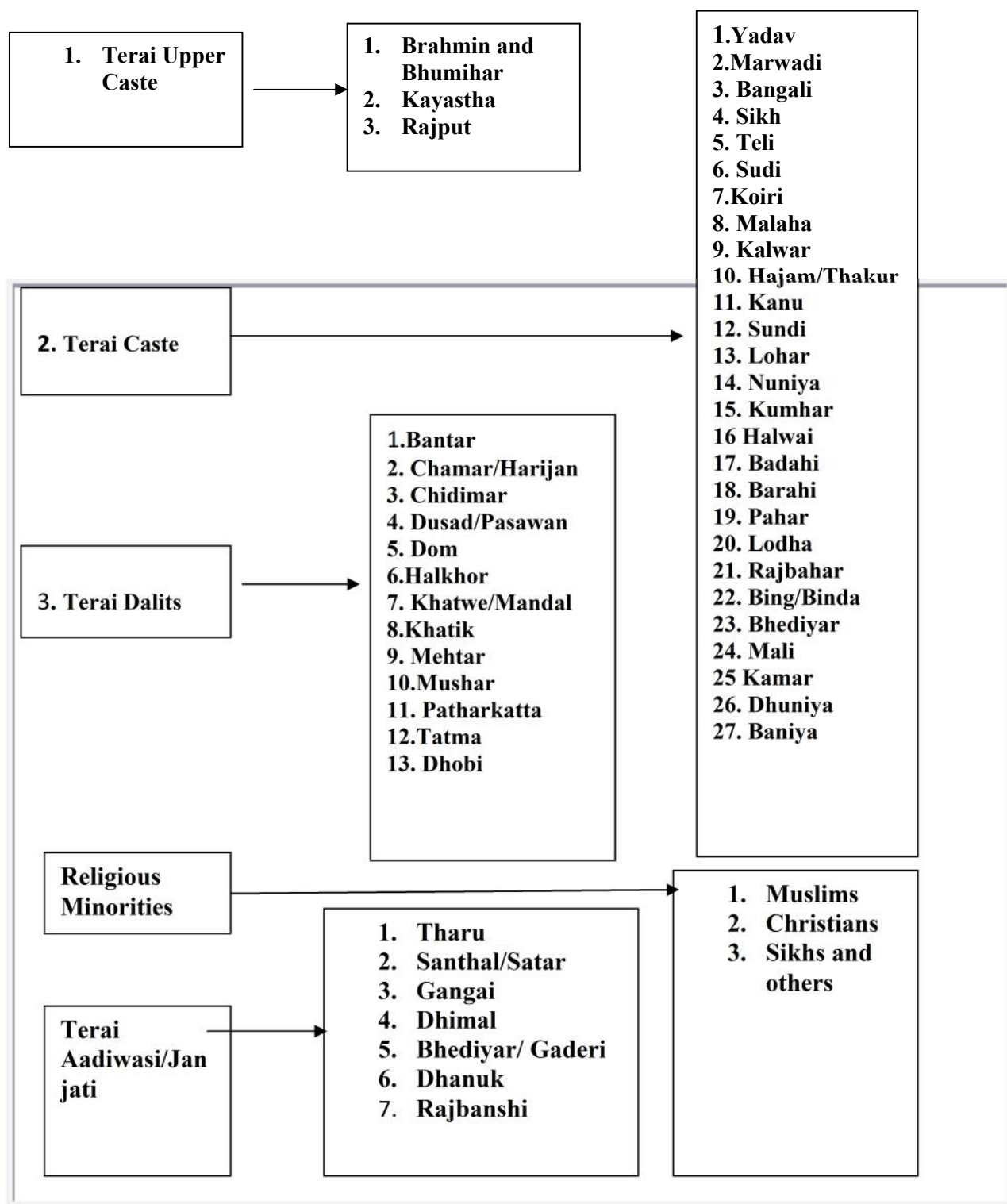
Caste/Ehtnic Group	Total Population	% Sharing in Madhesh-Terai Population	Religious group
Total Upper Caste Group	2,29,021.00	2.00	Hindu
Middle Caste Group	32,53,948	31.00	Hindu
Lowest Caste-Group(Dalit)	8,87,756.00	7.9	Hindu
Indigenous nationalities/ethnic	17,69,196.00	15.8*	Hindu (Claiming Buddhist)
Muslims(Minority Religious Group)	9,71,056.00	8.7**	Islam
Others(Marwari, Bengali, Sikh etc)	56,885.00	0.5	Jain,and others
Total Madhesh originated group	71,67,862.00	63.9	
Unidentified Madheshi Dalit	2,07,900.00	1.9	
Unidentified Madheshi group	1,38,600.00	1.2	
Migrated from Mountain, Hill and other places(All Hill originated, caste group, Indigenous nationalities, Dalits etc)	37,00,110.00	33.00	Hindu, Buddhist, Christian and others
Total Population of Terai-Madhesh	112,12,453.00	100.00	All religions

*Minority religious group in Nepal ** Indigenous Nationalities of Terai

Source: CBS, 2001, National Census

The Table 1.5 shows that Terai-Madhesh constitutes almost 50% of the total population of Nepal. Among the Terai-Madhesh population, there are many caste groups living in the Madhesh. Middle caste group including Yadav (10%) comprises of 31%, the absolute majority of the population of the Terai. The percentages of other caste groups consists of 15.8% of Indigenous nationalities, 8.7% of Muslims, 7.9% of Madheshi Dalit, 2% of Upper Caste(Maithali Brahmin, Kaystha, Rajput), 0.5 of Marwari, Sikh, Bengali etc. and 33% of Hill originated. The researcher has focused on the status of women of Middle caste group in Madheshi society in Parsa district.

Figure 1.5.1: Hierarchy of Caste among Madheshi: A General Model, Presented by Acharya (2009).



The model indicates that there are many castes in each group. The rural as well urban society of Madhesh is dominated by various types of social values, religious faith, traditional system etc. In this sense, inclusion effort requires the identification of such elements or characteristics that gradually lead to the identifications. The following caste hierarchy model elaborates the position of Madheshi in the broader madhesh in a Hindu framework. The caste hierarchy explains social interaction and relation between Madheshies. There is existence of conflict, clash of interest and competition in the stratified society and there is extreme inequality within different caste and ethnic groups of the same Madheshi community. In Madhesh, local originated three distinct caste groups as mentioned in above general model state that Madheshi higher caste groups are in higher caste rank followed by middle caste, Dalits, janjaties in caste rank of Hinduism.

Nepalese society is divided into two major categories- Indo Aaryan and Tibeto Burman. Most of the previous studies on the status of Nepali women have concluded that Gender roles are less stratified in Tibeto Burman than in Indo- aaryan groups. The women of occupational castes in the Indo- Aryan groups however enjoy considerable freedom both within and outside the family. The women of the Tibeti-Burman community not only enjoy equal status in the household, they also hold more power and authority than their men. It is also seen that women of Hill-ethnic-tribal and occupational castes are granted a higher degree of public mobility by their respective cultures and traditions. In Hindu community, a high caste groups, gender roles are much more stratified because of their religious prescription for “women’s subordination under men” and a cultural based on a strict ‘patrilineal inheritance system’ and a strict traditional belief “purity of the female body”. These women of high castes strictly follow these rules and regulation under the social system and they also get social prestige by following these things. They are hardly go outside and allow only controlled and regulated mobility, Pradhan (1981); Acharya and Bennet (1981).

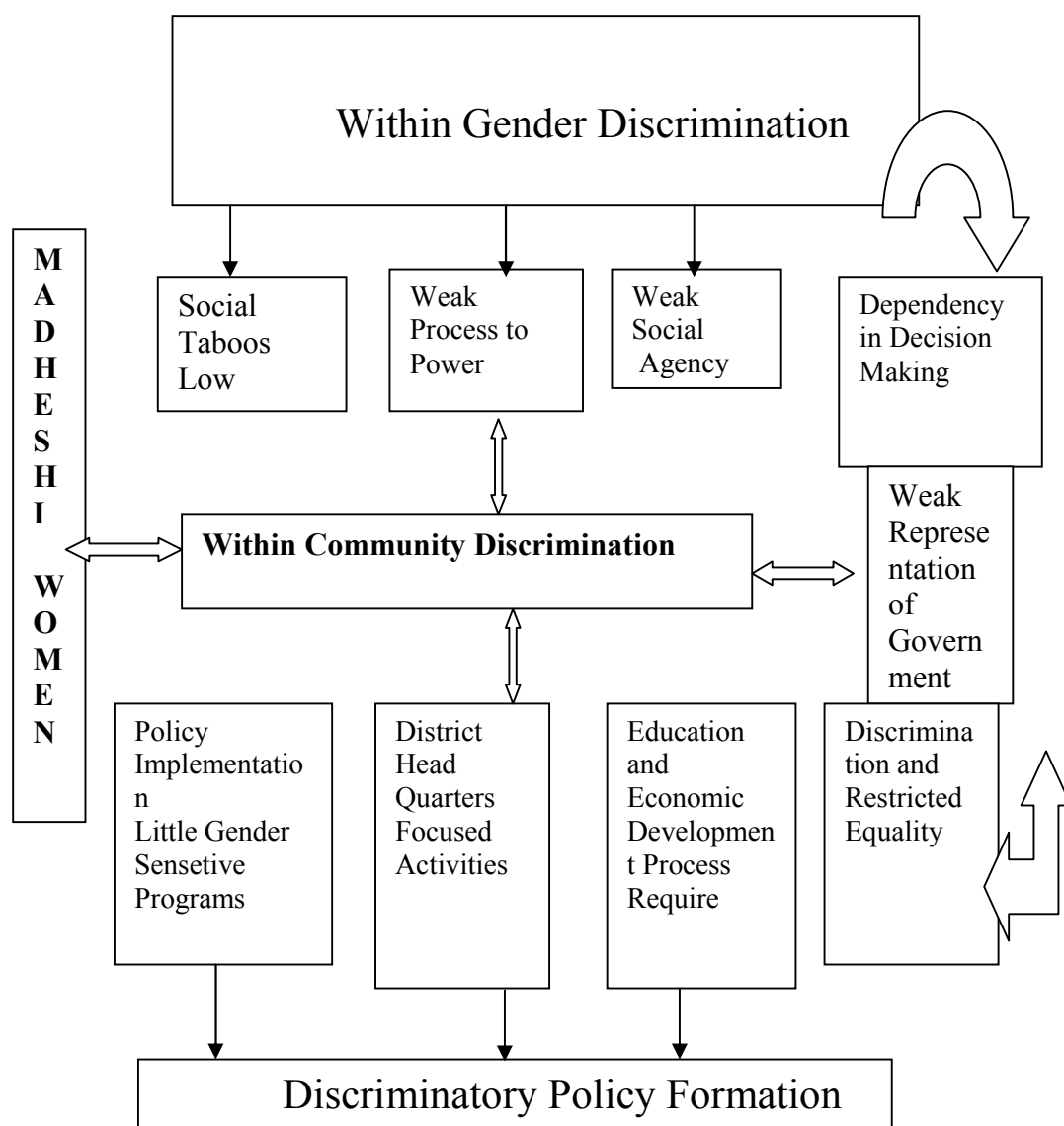
The positions of all castes are not similar and many of them are deprived not only by state but also by the same community. The position of women is more vulnerable and they are discriminated in many ways. Moreover, women in overall do not have direct access to monetary income because of their reproductive role on which home is center of nurture and socialization, maintaining households and productive role. In our context, the Madheshi Women as being on the lowest rung of caste hierarchy along with being "Women", are deprived from the accessibility of these different types of capital – symbolic, economic, cultural except the social

capital i.e. network of family and kinship. However, due to the gendered ideology, women are not even benefited as male members of the group that causes the personal level capability deprivation. However the issue of inclusion of Madheshi communities has been raised by many INGOs/NGOs but situation of both men and women of Madheshi castes are poorer than Hill-originated caste/ethnic groups UNDP, (2012). It has also increased voices from Madheshi people that they have not got respect, proper identity by the state.

Eventhough, Nepal is a nation where many ethnic groups, men, women including Madheshi women with their multiple socio-culturers, religioms and languages, but it has been obviously excluded and are politically dominated by hill origin rullers. These all reflects well in the education, administration, economy, judiciary-national legislation and police-army. The nominal representation in the candidates passing for gazetted post has been reveled from the fact that in 1984/85, the proportion of madheshi community in successful ones was only 8.5 percent and then this figure has also been drastically declined to 3.2% in 2000/2001 where as the Madhesh population has been increased 4.3 times during 1952/54 -2001 that is far greater than national increment (2.8 times), Gurung (2006).

In this context Late H. Gurung has expressed reality of exclusion problems deep rooted in culture, economy and political sector of feudal government and thus conceptualized the agendas for inclusion in terms of regional autonomy, proportional representation in every sphere of national life first time for the Madheshi community through the Social Inclusion Research Scheme of SNV in Nepal, SIRF (2009).

Figure 1.5.2: Discrimination against Madheshi Women



The above figure (1.5.2) clears that women of Madheshi community are discriminated mainly from three levels. These are within gender discrimination and within community discrimination and there has been also discriminatory policy formation towards women. Gender discrimination is perhaps the most universal forms of social exclusion of women in the community and society. So protecting human rights and promoting gender equality between men and women must be seen as central to the humanitarian community's responsibilities to protect and provide assistance

to those affected by emergencies. There are many causes and consequences of such discriminatory practices against women in the name of social taboos. In Nepal there are many programs but there is still lacking gender sensitive programs which can address the excluded groups so that they can participate in development processes. There should be elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. Madheshi women are backward than other Pahadi communities women because of restricted equality and discriminatory recognition. The policy is still weak. It has not addressed properly to all women of Nepal. The programs come for the name of disadvantaged groups, generally conduct in the head quarters of Parsa district. There is lacking of monitoring of the related institutions. Similarly lacks of local governance, especially representative of municipalities or District Development Committee, many programs are not running properly. The mentality of even well educated people is also very conservative. They still do not want to send their daughters or any female members of their families for work or for the higher education outside of the village or city. Such deprivation/exclusion has created unequal access to food, education and health care, limited opportunities to earn incomes, limited access to resources etc. Such situation and circumstances directly has created many forms of gender, caste-based discrimination against Madheshi women and indirectly has made them to survive in their traditional, cultural, and religious and superstition value added thought and beliefs deep rooted in rural areas of Madhesh.

1.6 Statement of the Problem

Most houses (homes) in the world are looked after and managed by women. It is in homes that all human beings are reproduced and survival needs met. It is in home that future generation, their character and values are shaped only if homes are happy, healthy and democratic, can countries be so. It should therefore be unthinkable that women have hardly anything to do in any development activities. Since the 1970s, the lower status and living conditions of women around the world have generated global concern or issues and later on, gendered concerns/issues were identified to show how unequal responsibilities, rights and values were felt to be unacceptable, ICIMOD, (2001). To balance the scales one needs power, therefore we often speak of empowerment of women (or men). Equitable development is closely related to participatory development. This means that women and men are able to voice their views and needs and to take part in decision affecting their situation. The better address the situation of women relative to men a distinction is made between condition and position in society. This

study goes on to argue that empowering women is important to securing their status in the family, society and the nation than that of men.

Besides, the empowerment and autonomy of women improvement of their political, social, economic, and health status is highly important in itself. Men control women's productivity both the household and outside. Within the household, women provide all kinds of free service to their family members throughout their lives. Outside the house, men control women's labor in several ways. Sometimes, women are forced to work with minimum wages, and/or, they may prevent or not allowed to work outside. Most productive work done by women is neither recognized nor paid. Which could be called shadow work, is completely discounted? There is no mandatory recognition of domestic work. Women usually do not have a right to choose their work inside the house or outside, men is considered the head or guardian and overall in charge of the household activities. Though All human beings are born free and are equally entitled to the basic rights and freedom set forth in the UN Declaration of Human Rights without distinction of any kind such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Similarly, everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person, UN (1995). But in all parts of the world especially in developing countries like Nepal women are facing threats to their lives, health and wellbeing as a result of being overburdened with work (inside and outside of the house) and lack of power in decision making that would improve the quality of their lives and help them to shape and adopt to social and economic change.

Gender- based discrimination is rampant in Nepali society. It affects all women, whatever is their economic status, caste, ethnicity, or regional affiliation. A patriarchal world view is embedded not only in social and cultural practices, but also in Nepal's system of governance and its legal framework, permeating all aspects of the lives of women and girls, NHDR (2009). In patriarchal society, the supremacy of men in every aspect of society and family-life, recognized as the guardian and family authority in decision-making. In such society, one sided ruling of men exists in economic, social life and also in political arena.

Motherhood, which is an enriching experience for many women and a key component of their self identification often, becomes a terrible burden for women under current societal pressure. Too often young girls who are not yet ready for marriage are forced into marriage and early

motherhood. Many women cannot even decide for themselves when and how many children to have, choice of contraception etc. This denied of control over her own body even leads her to hate her identity as a woman for want of any prospect of escape from her operation, Singh (2000).

In most parts of the Terai districts of Nepal and in developing countries, daughters are considered as a *paraya dhan* (an alien's wealth) going to other's home. From their childhood, they are taught that their real home is in the husband's home. In such a situation, daughters naturally consider themselves as temporary residents of their parental home and are excluded from full membership and identities of the natal families after marriage. They can be reduced to the status of refugees without the occurrence of war or even a riot (i.bid).

Meanwhile, they have been told since time immemorial that women's role is restricted to giving birth and feeding the family. Most of them are kept within the four walls and even in one room, not allowed to talk with any other male members of family except her husband. She has to cover her face with her shawl in front of guests. She has to follow all the rules and regulation of the family and society and if she doesn't follow these rules, she has to suffer many kinds of violence and torture. Similarly, girl child is trained to carry out household jobs. Confidence and self-esteem are not cultivated during the socialization of a girl child. Gentleness, sacrifice, unassertiveness and often- feminine qualities are encouraged in a girl child. Decision making, ability of self - expression, opinion formulation and assertion of their needs and interest are mostly discouraged, Chaudhary et.al (2065). However during the Vedic period, girls were also welcomed in families. They were given equal education opportunities in education and they could also select their life partner through the tradition of "swambhar". They had independence for decision-making, enjoied power and participated in political as well as cultural activities. History says women had control over finances, agriculture and geneal welfare. This period in history, could also be called a golden era for women. But now this situation is completely different from the golden era. Women have been struggling for their status and empowerment in many developing as well as in developed countries. In Nepal the status of women has been many ups and downs since ancient times to present day. The status of Madheshi women is relatively worse than other communities of Nepalese society.

The Madheshi community in spite of having long history of origin and habitat within the present day Nepal is practically considered as outsiders and they have been mostly marginalized and faced exclusion in all the development sectors of life. Among Madheshi people the socio-economic condition of women is very vulnerable especially within the middle caste Madheshi. No one NGOs/INGOs or government organizations have focused especially on madheshi women's issues. Only addressing Madhesh issues cannot solve all the problems of madhesh because there are many women in madheshi community have not got chance from any sector not only from government but from madheshi people also. Women's poverty issues is different from men in the sense that it is not only associated with bereft of material resources or distributional justice but it is also associated with institutional norms and values (visible and invisible) of society. The common manifestations of women's poverty and gender inequality are rooted in the practices of gender roles, gender divisions of labor, power relations including lack of access to resources and benefits both in the private sectors (households/families) and public (outside of households/families) spheres.

The social status depends on power and respect inside the household and also outside of the household. The following areas have been covered in Human Development Report (2009) which has described the reasons of poor and or low status of Madheshi women in Nepal. Gender based discrimination; Caste/ethnicity based discrimination;

Madheshi based discrimination; Linguistic based discrimination, have been facing Madheshi women and men. The unfair treatment to the languages of the nationalities by the state has been a long standing issue. Many Madheshis are not fluent in Nepali and many of them cannot speak, read or write Nepali language. The situation is worst for women, many of them are not familiar with this language because mostly they live in home and they are not contact in outside of the house. In this condition these women feel very shy and embarrassing to go to school and or to participate in any group discussion programme. They also face stiff competition in the examinations for the entry into the national civil services. This linguistic barrier narrows Madheshis futures in the decision making bodies of the government and administration level. Thus reports clears that Madheshi women are forced to excluded in decision making from house to National level. Similarly geo-political discrimination, where the location and socio-political differences also causes the exclusion. In Nepal we can give example of distinction between Pahadi (Hill dwellers) and the Madheshi (Plain dwellers). Among both dwellers women have

been excluded in participation in decision making level. Among Madheshis men always stand in front side, while women disappear or stand backside and always force to take decisions according to the suggestions of their male partners. However the situation is changing, the womens numbers in Constituent Assembly shows the increased numbers in participation which is the landmark gain for Madheshi people to achieve status in the Terai and country. This participation has been necessity not only for representation but also for socialization, for empowerment, for ownership and for control and access to the resources and decisions. The UNDP Human Development Report annuals can be addressed from its data available for global comparison which has categorized low status of women in Nepal. Many women are still suffering from domestic violence in their day today life. Every one in two women have suffered violence. Women suffer violence in politics, workpce, household and media, SIRF (2010).

The Nepal Demographic and Health Survey (2011) also find in its result, that in Nepal, over one third of married women aged 15-49 years experienced violence either emotional or physical by their spouse. The painful condition was that nearly two in three never shared to anyone that they are suffering violence with their husbands. The situation is worst in the Terai region. In this region 28 percent of the women had experienced violence with their spouse, which is largest than other ecological zones (17%). The survey results also show that the case of violence is higher among uneducated women. Similarly sexual violence is also highest in Terai (15.2%) than Mountain (13.1%), and Hill (9.8%) respectively. The ICPD conference declared that advancing gender equality and equilty and the empowerment of women and the elimination of all kinds of violence against women and ensuring women's ability to control their own fertility has been the cornerstones of gender related programs, UN (1994).

The violence and sexual crime against woman are serious crime. It is not only crime against one individual but crime against entire society, nation and humanity. The sexual crimes are the serious violation of woman's rights. It goes against the very dignity and worth of woman as human person. It is against the right to life of woman. Right to life means, life with dignity- not mere animal existence. The rape is not only the physical attack against woman, but it is also a attack against soul of a woman. The state is under direct obligation to protect the dignity and worth of woman. If the legal system is not good for woman, it is not good for nation as well. The security and dignity of woman is not only woman's issue, it needs to be the issue of entire nation and world community. The empowering woman is empowering the nation.

One of the fundamentals of democracy is to empower people especially those who are disempowered and since the half of the population are women, who are not only deprived of power and opportunities inside and outside of the family but also majority of them are poorest and poor lacking access to resources. Especially in rural areas women suffer further vulnerability through communities and family structures of their own caste/ethnic groups. Women living in Terai region have been suffering more in the name of traditional believes and practices in rigid male dominant societies. Thus there are many challenging issues that should focus to address Madheshi women and their challenging areas of concerns.

1.7 Research Questions

On such a context, following Research Questions of this research study were asked to take information among the Madheshi women of different caste/ethnic groups of Parsa District of Nepal.

Research Questions:

- What are the demographic, socio-economic characteristics of the household and their family members?
- What are the demographic, socio-economic characteristics of the Madheshi women of Parsa District?
- How they participate in decision making process of their household affairs?
- What is the status of accessibility and control over the major resources among them?
- What are the major socio-cultural practices led by caste and gender stereotype among the communities?
- What is the condition of domestic and sexual violence faced by the Madheshi women?
- What are the characteristics of their husbands?

- What is the condition of political awareness among women of Madheshi communities?
- Whether or not the national policies developed and implemented for these community to address the issues of the women of the mentioned communities distinctly?

1.8 Goal/ Objectives

The overall goal of the research study is to explore the status and situation of Madheshi Women in Household Decision Making. Following are the specific objectives of the research study:

1. To explore socio-economic status of Madheshi Women of different caste/ethnicity of the Parsa district;
2. To examine women autonomy in decision making at the household levels;
3. To analyze the situation of Madheshi women in Nepal;
4. To what extent they are empowered in decision making in male dominant society;
5. To recommend suggestions for the improvement of Madheshi women's status and also all the women, who are living different territory of Nepal.

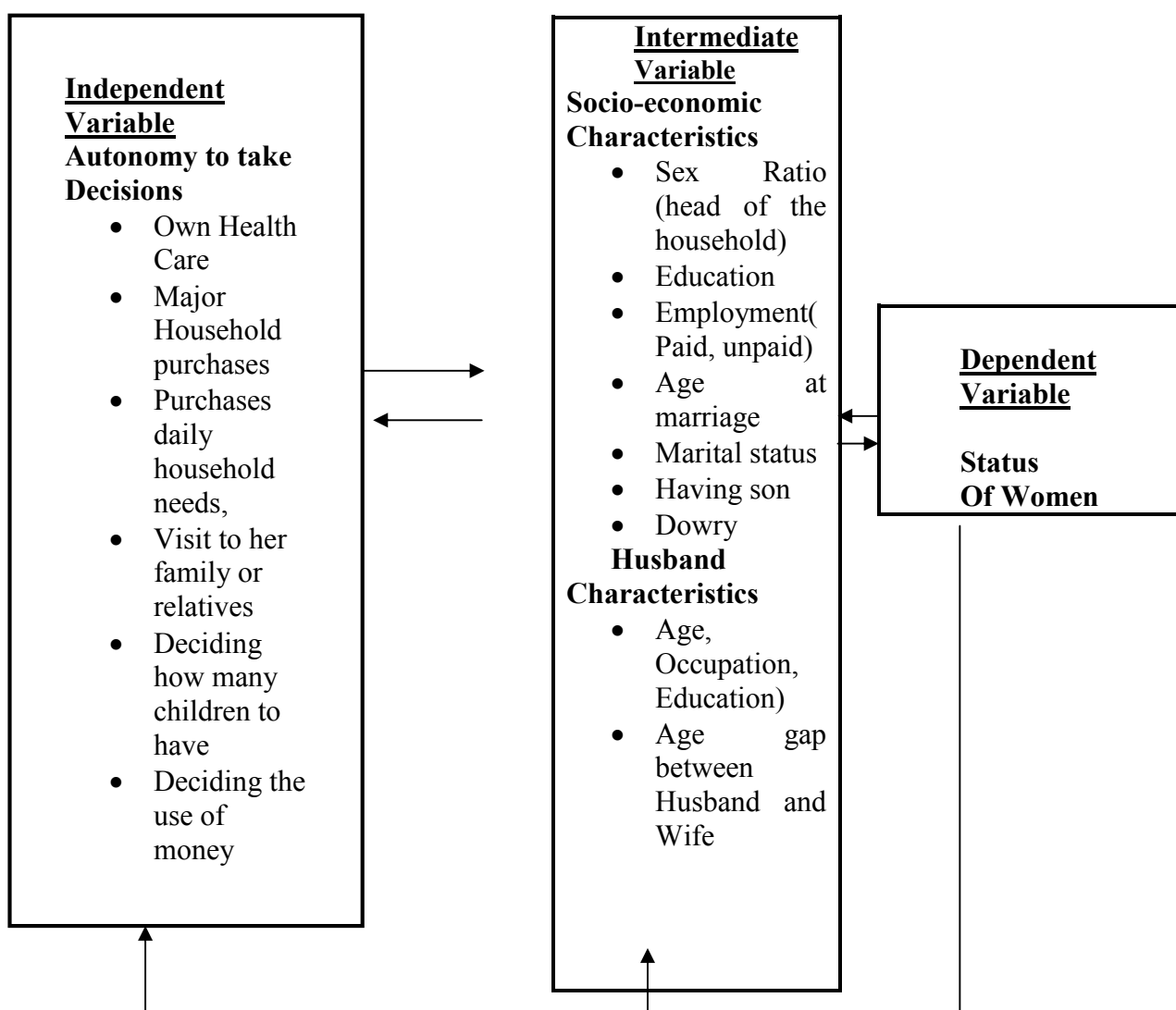
1.9 Conceptual Framework

The researcher has aimed to attempt new approach to examine the status of women. In this measuring domestic power in the households, four decision making statuses are important in determining the status of women of the respective communities. The researcher has focused on the indicator of status especially socio-economic is based on women autonomy to take decision in own health care, make decision in major household purchases, purchases and purchases of daily household needs and visit to her family or relatives, decisions to afford in her own earnings and her husband's earnings.

These all decision making autonomy at the household not only affects on the status of women within family or household, it also affects outside of the household. The socio-economic variables and political status of women directly or indirectly affects in getting good status in the

family, society and the nation. Since the Cairo International Conference on Population and Development in 1994, and the Beijing Conference on Women and Girl Child in 1995, gender equality has been a priority area of demographic research.

1.9 Conceptual Framework



There are some independent variables, which are determined by some intermediate variable, affect (as given in above Figure 1.9) status of a woman in the society. Among them educational status of women, employment status, child- care responsibilities, having at least one

son, etc are also important variables which help women to take part in decision making. Prevalence of son preference in itself does not signify more than an attitude according to women a low value. Wherever son preference is strong, it tends to be accompanied by discriminatory practices against daughters, many of which have serious immediate and/or long-term consequences for their health and well being. The status of women as defined by dependent variables increases significantly with the autonomy of decision making on their own health care, on the use of family planning, freedom to movement and the other socio-economic and political status of development indicators that are amenable to empowerment. While the effect of these empowerment variables are affected with socio-economic and demographic variables.

1.10 Strategic Significance

A nation in its concrete sense is a group of people with common cultural bond, common territory, shared history and strong belongingness. Binding every component of the society with strong emotional attachment is essential to build the nation. It is the issue of debate among the academicians and intellectuals that whether or not Nepal has become the nation, as it has not achieved the strong bond among the people because of various forms of social discriminations. And instead of addressing such issues in history, such discriminations are endorsed. In the present context, though officially abolished, such discriminations are even in practice. Among the different facets of discrimination, sex, caste, gender and spatial existence is pervasive that historically dragged one section of society to the state of deprivation- women.

UNFPA (2007) reports states that,

“Economic and social empowerment is a necessary condition for attaining positions of political power, access to political power enhances the opportunities for economic and social empowerment. Political ability to bring about changes in women’s legal status, to direct resources to women, to gain access to position of power, and effective participation in the political processes are of crucial importance”.

Empirically, a number of studies from a range of disciplines- anthropology, sociology, demography, economics, have attempted to measure various aspects of women’s empowerment, autonomy and women’s status, either as the outcome of interest, or as the intermediate factor affecting other development outcomes. Efforts at data collection and analysis, especially at the

household level and individual level, have become more common and sophisticated in recent years. It is also true that they continue to have limitations. They have also provided important guidance for future efforts at measuring women's status and or empowerment. There are still lacking empirical researches in the area of women's status or empowerment of many disadvantaged, backward caste/ethnic groups even within the same community like Madheshi community in Nepal. Thus considerable more work is required in this area. The lack of empirical research at regional level in Nepal presents an important gap, as does the relative lack of rigorous research on policy and programmatic efforts, my review of the empirical research suggests that in many cases researchers have done comparative studies by Morgan and Niraula (1995) by selecting one ward of VDC in both Terai and Hill ecological regions. I have tried to represent whole Parsa district by selecting VDCs and ward of Municipality with the Population Proportionate Sampling (PPS) sampling method, which is also a more representative survey method in getting information. This study is more representative to find out the status of women, according to the objectives of the research.

Thus empowerment of women of all caste/ethnicity is important for advancing development and reducing poverty. Therefore, it is very critical to empower and capacitate women in general and poor women from the discriminated castes and ethnicities in particular. It is equally important to address issues of human rights violations of women in the name of dowry, witches, giving birth of female baby and so on and to ensure women's effective participation and presence in all phases of the democracy movement. It is also important to clear that in Nepal the Madheshi people both men and women are less empowered in all sectors of development and the women lag further behind in this respect.

Among Madheshi community, the condition of Madheshi woman is appalling. Women of every section of societies are excluded in one or other form. They are entrapped in multiplicity of deprivation interrelated to each other. The strong facet of the problems that plays influencing. This research will be significant in the sense that it will be conducive to explore the in-depth insight of female status. It will be landmark for the planner, policy maker, academicians and development activists to unravel the intensity of female empowerment of all caste/ethnicity for inclusive development and inclusive democracy in nation building process, Gurung (2007).

This research study will be conducive, as an academic discourse on the field of women empowerment because it will fulfill the data gap on the issue of women of Madheshi Community, and will be complementary data and documentation on the national effort of women empowerment by increasing their status by adopting equity and equality in the all development activities since 10th plan. This issue is addressed by this research study in descriptive analysis and also touched in comparative terms with men in the same deprived community and Ethnic women of the Madheshi Community. It will not only be vital for the policy debate of the women of Madheshi community, but also give the reflection of overall status of the respective communities.

It has ever been a common observation that the women have been assigned a subordinate status to men in our society. They are bound to perform household responsibilities. These are the consequences of their position almost total exclusion from the structure of decision-making and power within the households. In this situation, such studies on women's socio-economic status are very important. This studies aims to provide the data on socio-economic status of women of Madheshi Community of Parsa district. The data thus generated may be helpful in drawing attention of concerned in planning and making programs at the local level.

This research will be leaping step to foster knowledge in the field of women's rights, long detached from the eyes of policy makers and politicians. More succinctly, this research will be milestone for other burning issues related to caste/based discrimination, region based discrimination, social inclusion and process of national integration through the process of the rights of women of all communities.

Why this research is rationale is because it may help assist in finding some current issues of Madheshi Women who believe that acquiring seats in CA is not a major problem they are facing. Rather, they constantly feel being pushed to the brink of social exclusion due to different ill practices like unsociability, caste based discrimination, gender discrimination within and outside of the family and lacking identification in Nepal. In this context, Madheshi Women, through all traditional practices are considered to be second grade citizen in their country. So attaining positive role in national building, there should be equality in decision making and recognized woman as a important member of that society as a man. Women's contribution to development is seriously underestimated, and thus its social recognition is limited. The full

visibility of the type, extent and distribution of the unremunerated work will also contribute to a better sharing of responsibilities. In practice, however, there are still a number of socio-cultural and traditional values in patriarchal society, which are less supportive to the advancement of these women. In this research, the researcher has tried to bring the major obstacles which are the important indicator of determining the status of woman in given society and these indicators can help to raise their socio-economic status.

1.11 Relevance

While concentrating on our research population- As there is gravitating concern in the issue of Madheshi women, it should be clear that what exists now is an outcome of systematic exclusion and discrimination begun in the past, and we have to deal with cause of the prevalent situation on the theme of exclusion of the this community not only by the male members of the same society but also by the proper state mechanism that can address to the core areas of exclusion within and outside the home.

At present, they are unable to make them heard due to lack of collective action for group interest because of the capability deprivation in individual as well as in community level. According to Lee's hypothesis, socio-economic rights are more important than the civil and political rights in developing countries. However, this idea has been refuted by many others, including Amartya Sen, see Sen (2000).

Among disadvantaged and marginalized groups, it is the women, which are marginalized by the male dominant societies and also by the state. The traditional social structure in Nepal is quite exclusionary on the basis of language, caste, religion and culture. These cause the disadvantage to the certain communities in getting fair share in education, government jobs and occupations with social status which negatively affect in their advancement. Because of this many disadvantaged groups in Nepal has been started to demand their rights for example the issues raised in the name of Madheshi rights, women's rights, Dalit rights, Indigenous rights, and so on Gurung, (2007).

The Madheshi community in spite of having long history of origin and habitat within the present day Nepal is practically considered as outsiders and they have been mostly marginalized and faced exclusion in all the development sectors of life. Among Madheshi people the socio-

economic condition of women is very vulnerable. No one NGOs/INGOes or government organizations have focused especially on madheshi women's issues. Only addressing Madhesh issues cannot solve all the problems of madhesh because there are many women in madheshi community have not got chance from any sector not only from government but from madheshi people also. Women's poverty issues is different from men in the sense that it is not only associated with bereft of material resources or distributional justice but it is also associated with institutional norms and values (visible and invisible) of society. The common manifestations of women's poverty and gender inequality are rooted in the practices of gender roles, gender divisions of labor, power relations including lack of access to resources and benefits both in the private sectors (households/families) and public (outside of households/families) spheres. Thus there are many challenging issues that should focus to address Madheshi women and their challenging areas of concerns, Gurung (2007).

In the context of research study on the issues of Madheshi women, there is wide gap of data regarding Madheshi Community despite its relatively rich diversity and significant contribution in National economy because. However, available data reveals that Madhesh has been excluded in various dimensions from the national mainstream and also Madheshi women. The population perspective plan (2002 -2007) stated that, (government policies have not seriously been directed towards identifying the disadvantaged groups). There is lack of district and regional level database concerned with female status by region (Mountain, Hill and Terai) basis and no consolidated baseline information on population and women in development planning. While raising the issue of Madheshi women, it is the very recent practices in Nepal to analyze the issue through the lens of gender. Therefore, there is gap of data for academic and policy debate on the issue of Madheshi and Ethnic women of Madhesh. Moreover, though different Governmental or non-governmental organization has been making efforts to ensure the integration of the overall Madheshi community and Madheshi women, almost action programs launched are found to be implemented without base line study of the project area. Furthermore, the study for action research by nature could not fulfill the gap of knowledge. The available literature on overall Madheshi women, on the one hand, is not sufficient; on the other hand, does not address the issues of Madheshi women of all caste within the same society. In fact, the problems of Madheshi community and that of the women of the respective community have been regarded as the representative of overall Madheshi and Pahaddi women for sensitization. This research

will be crucial to minimize the gap of data and knowledge, build up a ground to address the issue of the women of Madheshi of different castes of Madheshi (excluding Dalits, Janjaties, Muslims, marginalized groups) and provide the real facts, figures and statistics regarding different dimensions of status of them.

1.12 Scientific Part

For the reliability and validity of the research scientific part is crucial. This part provides the existing situations, statement of problems, objectives, methodology, significance of the study, Relevance of the study, Limitations of the study. Literature review (Theoretical and empirical information), Conceptual Framework, Primary data and study frame work, etc, which are the required for the qualitative and qualitative research.

1.13 Research Area (site)

The research study will be carried out in the Parsa district of Nepal. Parsa district lies in Terai region and in Central Development region. It is one of 20 Terai districts of Nepal. From the district, randomly selected clusters have taken from randomly selected village Development committees (VDCs) and Municipality. Population Proportionate Sampling technique (PPS) and systematic random multistage cluster sampling have used in the research study that is more representative sampling technique of the study population.

Parsa district (latitude 27° 26' N and longitude 84° 08' to 84° 27' E) is situated about 200 km south of the Kathmandu Valley with altitude variation from 122 meter to 925 meters from main sea level. The district ranges from the southern border with the Indian State of Bihar. Bara district lies to the east and part of Indian state of Bihar and Chitwan district of Nepal lies to the west. Likewise Chitwan and Makwanpur districts lie in the north. The district has a total area of 1353sq km., larger area of the district falls within the Parsa Wildlife Reserves and its Buffer Zone and Royal Chitwan Parks. From political and administration point of view, the district has divided into 5 electoral constituencies, 15 Ilakas, 1 Sub-Metropolitan and 82 Village Development Committees DDC (2060) .

According to DDC profile, only 32 percent of the area of Parsa is cultivated. Forests make up 56 percent of the total land area. About 9,000 hectares of land is barren and occupied by urban area. The only Sub-Metropolitan Birganj city occupies 27.2 square kilometers.

Parsa is home to diverse ethnic groups but the middle caste groups are highest among all caste/ethnicity. Many languages are spoken by these people. Among them Bhojpuri is the dominant language in this district and Hindi is common language to all people living in this area.

According to the 2001 census, the total population was 497,219 and among them female were 236,808 fewer than male population. The population is increasing at the rate of 2.89% which is higher than national population growth rate (2.24%). The sex ratio was 110 and literacy rate was 42.4%.

1.14 Limitations of the Study

The status of woman covers a wide range. Nepali society seems to have a value system, which can be differentiated in the context of various characteristics according to the caste, sex, religion, class position and region (Urban, Rural or Mountain, Hill, Terai). The position of women differs according to their residence and so on, Acharya and Benett (1981); Stri Shakti (1995) is evident that gender perceptions, roles and relations and their position tend to vary markedly among different caste and ethnic group in Nepal. This study is limited to the status of Madheshi women in Nepal. The data is collected only from currently married women of the respective community of different caste/ethnic groups whose mother tongues are Madheshi languages. There is not enough literature on Madheshi community and especially on Madheshi Women. There is overall data gap as well as lack of gender aggregated data due to the lack of ethnographic/anthropological study along with the gender-based study of the Madheshi of multi-ethnic group. The study is based on empirical and the numerical data and information obtained have been analyzed and interpreted in a simple descriptive and mathematical interpretational procedure. This is based on getting information and analyzing them. The sample population is taken only from sampled cluster of VDCs and Municipality of Parsa district.

So, the data generated in the name of Madheshi Women of Nepal in any volume could not reflect the situation of the respective community of Madhesh of Nepal.

1.15 Organization of the Study

Chapter I of the study is attempted to touch on the introduction of the research topics and research work. It also highlights objectives of the study, methodology, significance and limitations of the study.

Chapter II deals with women's status in different aspects. This chapter has focused on the overall scenario of Nepalese women and Madheshi women particularly. It has also touched various International Conferences on women and policies and programs of Nepal in different five years plans. This chapter also covers some empirical studies conducted in Nepal as well as in other developed and developing countries.

Chapter III: The chapter highlights the methodological parts of the research. It deals all the sampling process of the research and also described about the study area.

Chapter IV: This chapter devoted to describe household information of the study population.

Chapter V: This chapter provides basic information on demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the household population. It also provides information on household facilities and assets, which are important for identifying major indicators like wealth status of the household and characteristics of all members who are residing in the households.

Chapter VI: Analyzed, from the survey data socio-economic status of Madheshi women of this district. Socio-economic development that eventually leads to get status in the society and great source of empowerment

Chapter VII: This chapter is the most important chapter. It contains an important indicator of women empowerment and their autonomy. The information collected during the Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, mainly addressed fall into seven broad areas of decision-making autonomy at the households.

Chapter VIII: This chapter analyzed mainly sexual and domestic violence which are very common in India and Nepal and especially among Madheshi society of Nepal.

Chapter IX: This chapter looks at the respondent's knowledge and perception of basic issues and amenities in their area, awareness of government and non-governments programs, political activities and access to various services and facilities.

Chapter X: The chapter described on the characteristics of husbands and wives

Chapter XI: This chapter contains the conclusion and recommendations based on the entire research. Some suggestions have been suggested to empower the decision making status as well as women's overall status in order to abolish discriminatory practices in Nepal.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Woman is the companion of man gifted with equal mental capacity. She has the right to participate in the minutest details in the activities of men, and she has an equal right of freedom and liberty with him.

Mahatma Gandhi-1917

2.1 Gender/ Feminist Theories and Their Premises

The lower status and living conditions around the world have generated global concern. Many scholars, researchers and advocates have been writing on the status of women using different indicators. In this I have also tried to interlink different indicators of status by caste/ethnicity, region, language which helps to know the empowerment condition of these women. I have also linked the word power, empowerment, status with decision making autonomy. In this I have reviewed a fairly wide range of issues and evidences and theories on women and gender from both developed and developing countries.

Women are the pillars for the country's progress and the aim of women's movement has been for women to have the freedom to make decisions about their own lives for the complete development of any society, see Garcia (1994).

Liberal feminist theory on gender inequality focuses that those women who get less material resources, they get less social status in the given society. Similarly women get less power and opportunities for self actualization than do men. These differences are mainly the results from the organization of society not from the biological or personality differences. Thus the gender inequality is the result of a patriarchal and sexist patterning of the division of labour through of key institutions- law, work, family, education and media, Bem (1993); Epstein (1988); Friedan (1963); Larber (1994); Rhode (1997); Cited in Lengermann and Brantley (2000).

Status has been traditionally of considerable interest to sociologists, economists, and demographer. Sociological theory had traditionally argued that women's socio-economic role in the family is negligible. It is also accepted that female's socio-economic status is determined by

there husbands occupational status because a woman's major role is determined only as a wife and mother, Parsons (1943). In recent years, there has been a rapidly changing this concept. Now many researchers have been recognizing various measures which determine women's status. Parsons in his theory about women's economic role in the family, community and also occupation of their husbands, are the determinants of women's socio-economic role and status in their families. It has argued that sex-role segregation is a functional necessity for women's marital stability in the society. It is also argued that despite the economic and occupation affects on women's status but women are mostly excluded from the occupational system which results poor status, Parsons (1949).

Many Liberal Feminist have focused on marriage system which is the important element of the low status of women because institutionally marriage empowers the role of husband with authority and with freedom with sexual power and male power and it limits the wife into dependent, self-emptying and demands of the isolated domestic households where she has no autonomy to take part in decision making. Feminist have been fighting with this gender inequality in education, job description, pay equity, equal responsibilities for the activities of family life. Lengermann and Brantley, cited in Ritzer et.al (2000).

According to the Marxist Feminist theory, the root cause of women's oppression is the private property, which gives rise to economic inequality, dependence, political confusion, and ultimately unhealthy social relations between men and women. It also see gender inequality is determined by the capitalistic mode of production and gender oppression is class oppression and women's subordination is seen as a form of class oppression which is maintained because it serves the interests of capital and the ruling class. Marxist theory has also stressed about domestic labour as well as wage work for women to support their position in the given society, See (Marxism <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marxism>).

Marx about gender, the word gender is a term which is not widely used until the late twentieth century and the occasions in his work when he addresses ideas about sexual differences are few and far between. For example, in *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* of 1844 he recognises the prostitution of the wives and daughters of impoverished male factory workers, but this idea is located secularly within the context of heterosexuality male sexual needs and patriarchal construction of morality, Marx (1964). But Marx also says that in the family the

wife is the Proletariat and the husband the Bourgeois, this remark is heavily qualified by subsequent feminists who seized on it as an indicator of Marx's recognition of the subordination of women, by the placing of individual family within a class structure. Thus, while a bourgeois woman might well be a 'proletarian' in terms of the internal organisation of her family. At the time of writing certainly there was a few legal and civil rights as a woman from a proletarian family, she had access to and enjoyed, the privileges of her class, Marry (2003).

When Marx and Engel wrote their accounts of poverty and class inequality they saw the only form of human emancipation- be it for men or women as lying in the radical restructuring of industry the certain of socialism and the entry of women into 'social production'. In the 21st century this absence of recognition of gender differences appears as an important oversight: Sociologists today are expected to acknowledge the importance of gender differences and to list it as a major form of social differentiation. For Marx and Engels, women into the social world was essential part of human and social development and social progress was revolutionary in those societies and cultures which assumed that women's places was in the household. Even though, there were considerable numbers of women in paid employment in the 19th century, cited in Mary Evans (2003). Therefore we must give credit to Marx and Engels for challenging taken for granted assumption about the social role of women and the nature of relations between sexes which is more apparent in 21st century.

Evans (2003) also tried to find out the relations between the genders and between gender and the social world. She concludes that we cannot yet be human without gender identity but we cannot fulfil our humanity without recognition of the limitations and strengths of that identity.

According to the Sylvia Walby (1997) younger women who are highly educated and who are in good jobs has been resulted in reducing the gender gap while Evans Mary noted that women working outside allows to access high status but when the expectations as a motherhood comes it is predictable that women can have better job and better position in the society.

Some radical feminists have pointed that women occupied a different social space from that of men and in terms of experiences. Many empirical evidence have shown that many women were absent from the labour market and after that shift in capitalistic societies and most of them were

employed in many sectors at any previous time in the history and the women who remain entirely out of the workforce after the birth of children had become very small. Women have fought against various forms of discrimination to gain entry to the labour market and would remain in the labour market through out their lives, if child care arrangements could be changed. Declining birth rates through out Europe equally suggests that where contraception and paid employment are both available, then women will choose to limit their fertility. Thus we can say that woman, who carries the culture of the society and it is the woman who as a mother gives all the sense of expectations about the world to the children, Sylvia Walby (1997).et.al. In this Peggy says women of the third world do more than two thirds of the work in their countries. Although they are the poorest and most powerless, they are the people who are responsible for meeting the basic needs of the most of the people and in this century, all developing countries have been accepting that women's contribution is central to 'development' in a family, a house, a community and in a nation. The roles of women are mediated by class, race, ethnicity and the level of development of the society, cited in Wallance (1991).

Madheshi people have also been getting less privileged in many sectors of development and in this I would argue that policies should address according to the different class, race, ethnicity and also according to the development of society so that deprived women Nepal could be benefited by the development and this will help to increase status of the women of the society.

Another important issues regarding gender inequality in domestic works and non market care noted by Sen (2006) that on average, women are less active in the labour market than men and do worse jobs. He also says that to find out gender inequality we have to look at labour market participation, unemployment rate, annual hours of work and working conditions etc. Time autonomy is also determining factor for a woman because the allocation of time within the household is usually a collective and not an individual decision and is influenced by many individual household and community characteristics.

A world where inequality based on class, gender and race, is absent from the country and from the relationships among countries where basic needs become basic rights and where poverty and all forms of violence are eliminated, all these will help to relieve oppression, both inside and outside of the home. Sen and Grown cited in Wallance (1987). We can give examples of some more developed world where the human rights are protected for both men and women equally

and both are treated equally in every aspects of life at the household level to national level. This results the overall development of the country. What we have been seeing in Nepal is that all the rare initiatives which have taken place, where most of the women are already empowered and have better status at the household and outside of the household. There are women living in Terai area, have ignored, who are very important in this struggle, for example women of aged 15-49 years who also belongs not only from active population but also reproductive aged population, of Terai caste/ethnicity community have been forgotten by the Nepal Government, researchers, scholars, and NGOs/INGOs. This gap has not very interested by even feminists. It should be researched properly, not by comparing two different communities, but it is necessary to do study to know there status first. Without knowing there status it will be very difficult to do comparative studies in two different societies living in different regions. In an article by Sara Hlupekia Longwe, it is clearly linked with women and development with empowerment of women. It has focused on the prime issue of women's development is women's empowerment. For this it is necessary to enable women to take an equal place with men, and to participate equally in the development process in order to achieve control over the resources on an equal basis with men, Cited in wallance (1991). Otherwise society always favours males in a superior position, places women in an inferior position, having no decision making autonomy right. Donovan, (1998) says, women are totally dependent on men and they are neither paid for their domestic work nor allowed to use or spend without taking permission by their husband.

Chambers (1983) identified some of the biasness which works to keep women marginal in the development processes because it has seen that excluded women cannot get chance to include in development programs. Only a group of women repeatedly involve in such programs. Chambers said this happens only because of the seasonal biasness (visiting during the unfavorable time of the local people of that area) and roadside biasness (visiting only nearer villages of the road side). There is also gender biasness (only participate male members of that area). It has pointed that these biases are one of the important contributing factors to keep women marginal in the development processes.

The concept of women's empowerment is replaced by and large the concept of women's status in the ICPD document which had been dominant at that time, Jejeebhoy, (1995); Mason, (1995), see Sen and Batliwala, (1998) pp. 17.

Correa and Petchesky, 1995 propose certain ethical principles for the advancement of women's right. Among them:

Diversity concerns respecting women of different communities, religious, cultures, traditions, economic conditions, physical state etc. Similarly personhood is the humanity of each person including right to self determination, autonomy, respect for the individual and his/her desires, and decision making powers. See Sen and Batliwala (1998).

Kabeer (1991) pointed out the role of gender in heterogeneous society. She described the relationship between men and women and their power relations within the society as well as in the development activities. She stressed on the contribution of men and women in the households and how these contributions are valued in both within households and outside of the households. She stressed the requirements of radical transformation of interpersonal relations between women and men so that women have greater power over their own lives and men have less power over women's lives. For this gender training is needed to distinguish between what is natural, biological and what is socially, culturally constructed roles and values. She said these all roles and values constructed by the society is known as gender.

Several studies have examined the important determinants and effects of women's autonomy in different contexts, Dyson and Moore (1983); Basu (1992); Mason (1986); Morgan and Niraula (1995); UN (1995); and Jejeebhoy (2000); asserted that women's autonomy is essential to human dignity and must be considered a basic human right.

These works have helped to improve our understandings of different dimensions of women's autonomy as well as national and international policies to narrow gender gaps throughout the world. In this study women's autonomy has been defined as the decision making power/autonomy in the household. Power is also understood in this research the capacity to involve in decision-making in different sectors. For this number of socio-economic and political situation have to be reviewed to know the overall status of women in Nepal. Women's autonomy has long been central for many researchers as stated above, examining the socio-economic status of women in developing countries. As Jejeebhoy (2000) argues on various terms including "women's status", "Women's autonomy", and "empowerment of women", has been used over time to capture some important element of gender equality in the household and the community.

These three terms are also related with each other and refer to power relations and greater control over resources of power. This research therefore fits within the context of existing literature on autonomy. Here it is more focused on decision making autonomy at the household level, which shows the status of women in the family, community and the nation.

It has been seen that women who are employed in paid job have higher decision making autonomy in the households but the quality of time spent on an activity shows that women in dual career have more pressure than their husbands, Shelly Phipps, Peter Burton and Lars Osberg (2001), cited in Sen Amartya (2006). The author also argued that women have to cope with different sets of responsibilities and they are the main responsible person of the family to run family with full social norms.

Many scholars also agree with the social factor such as cultural attitudes, religious practices, caste, living area, and the legal systems influence gender roles, responsibilities and decision making authority, Cameron (1998); Cornwall (2001); Brown (2003). In an article, Mehta describes women as property which is still practiced in India, especially in Hindu society; women are treated as goods and seen as properties which are transacted through the dowry system. Men and other family members are the users of goods and husband treats his wife as property and none has right to interfere in a man's treatment with his wife, Cited in Wallane (1991). It is seen that this attitude is very much found in Madhesi caste/ethnic group where women are oppressed mainly at the household level. They themselves have accepted their status in the name of tradition. Those women who want to change the situation, are seen outside this system and they have to face number of problems in their path. According to Sarr Abdou, in a male dominant society where female themselves believe that tradition is the source of her responsibilities and problems, in such situation feminists have to do struggle to uplift women's situation from the present situation Cited in Wallance (1991).

Women can get equal rights, which is historically developed only by participation in political, Social, educational and economic arena. Women are incapable to establish their status in the society without ¹economic independence, Champan (1976).

¹ Economic independence could be defined as the earning of one's own living.

² Oppression defines, Some groups of people derive direct benefits from controlling, using, and oppressing other group of people.

While Gilman (1970) made the point of the economic contribution of the women and economic independence in her landmark work, “Women and Economics”, She says:

“For a certain percentage of persons to serve other persons to serve other persons in order that the ones so served may produce more, is a contribution not to be overlooked. The labour of women in the house, certainly, enables men to produce more wealth than they otherwise could; and in this way women are economics factors in society. But so are horses. The labour of horses enables men to produce more wealth than they otherwise could. The horse is an economic factor in society. But the horse is not economically independent, nor is the woman.”

It is also argued that working women with paid job are more likely to spend their income on food and other household necessities than economically active men. Similarly poor women of scheduled castes and tribes may have lower status in the community but have higher status in their families. Poorer women participate in wage labor and many of them have no or less land ownership but their status finds better in their families than so-called high caste groups, Desai and Jain (1994). Since families economic and social status is closely linked to land ownership. But in the case of disadvantaged groups’ i-e, Dalit women, Janjati women and also women of high caste or middle-caste have low or no land ownership. Although this focus on the relative status of men and women within households address an important dimensions of gender inequality. In this research it is argued that identifying the households at the primary source of gender inequality overlooks the complex relationship between different types of inequalities within the society and the family.

There are many classifications find, which determine the situation of a woman. In this Patricia and Jill describes, about the situation of women first depends on the location where women live and situations are different from that of men in almost many locations of the world. Similarly another situation depends on the power relationship between men and women in a society. Third important depends on the structural operation where women situation is different according to class, race, ethnicity, age, marital status and global location. However feminists have put all these in various types of feminist theories. While over viewing of varieties of Feminist Theory there are Gender difference theories, Gender inequality theories, Gender oppression theories and Structural oppression theories, Patricia et.al. In my discussion I have gone through Gender

Inequality theories, which gives stress on the situation of women is not only depends on the location but also unequal treatment between men and women.

Westwood and Bhachu (1988) introduced the status of black and minority women of Britain, in which it was studies the working conditions both inside and outside of the home of these women. That characterized their lives. The study concluded that social isolation has been a common problem for dependent housewives than for men. In the case of Panjabi Sikh women, Bhachu writes Panjabi Sikh women in Britain are able to exercise and control over the wages they earn. In their social structure both men and women have equal status in the family. Mostly these family lives in nuclear household where there is no authoritarian elders and gatekeeper who interferes in their decisions. This study shows nuclear family system has more autonomy to take decisions in the family. Bhachu also argues that Pardah system also put women in different status and position in the family. She has given example of Muslim women whose exposure to the external world of paid employment has lead to internal changes within the household which Sikh family both male and female jointly involve in all decisions and works including domestic tasks and child care. This trend is increasing than past. Women's entry into the labour market, consequences on equal power relation within the family and the structure of the domestic domain. Above paragraph also indicates that there is positive relationship between mobility and status of women. The women who have migrated from developing world to Britain have gain their equal status.

Many Liberal Feminist argue that the social construction of gender, the gendered division of labour, the practices and doctrine of public and private sphere where women are limited in private spheres while men are given privileged access to public sphere. The woman, who experiences within the public spheres of education, work, politics, and public space, still limited by discriminatory practices, harassment and discouragement. Woman who also has to do second shift duty after returning home from paid employment. They have to do all mothering work and thus women's ability to compete their career in this modern era is hindered by the demands of private spheres. In this theories marriage is seen culturally as a mixed blessings of domesticity, responsibility and constraint for men but when obligation move beyond the domestic responsibility creates not only inequality but also human stress. Feminist have shown remarkable creativity for equality between male and female by giving women equal education, equal economic opportunity and equal responsibilities for the activities of family life so that

both men and women of given society could feel equal respect and freedom to take part in decision making in their life, cited in Ritzer (2000).

Despite efforts to empower women, women are still living in poverty. Decision making and priority setting continue to be largely in the hands of men in all over the world. In democracy, by definition cannot afford to be gender blind. Women and men both should get chance to equally representation in decision making processes and in the opportunities to achieve social, economic as well as political rights equally, International IDEA (2005).

An essential tenant of any democratic framework is the principle of human rights, social inclusion, empowerment of women of all caste/ethnicity, minority, marginalized and disadvantaged groups including the granting and exercise with concept of equality and equality of the socio-economic and political rights of both men and women of different communities, International IDEA. et, al. (2005).

Tuladhar (1993) ties the status of women through gender issues in terms of social construct, the notion of power, equality and equity, condition and position and gender division of labour. Similarly Acharya, (1981) describes the status of women in terms of fertility, mortality and life expectancy, marital status, education, economic activity and socio-economic characteristics of the working women.

Sen stated that freedom is needed to get more opportunity to pursue our objectives. Similarly freedom is concerned with the ability to achieve what we want. It helps to promote the well beings of women according to their ability, Sen (2009). Thus for the empowerment of women freedom is also needed to achieve to reach the destination according to the ability of the women.

The socio-economic process of a society has a strong influence on demographic process and the determination of the status of women within the society. On the other hand the status of women is also important indicators of development of the society. Thus, the socio-economic development of a society can not be fully realized if women of every community enjoy a subordinate position to men and their talents remain fully unutilized or under-utilized. This study examines the socio-economic status of women of the Madheshi Community which are the part of one third population of Nepal. Thus it is clear that the majority of Nepali women have very limited opportunities to experience non domestic roles, that brings about a low status of

women and leads to a low decision making power among them. Women are busy from morning to night household chores, bearing and rearing children, looking, cleaning, bringing water and firewood from long distances. Women who works outside of the house they are bearing double responsibilities and when these women have low decision making power in the household it means they are more vulnerable and facing low self- esteem.

Datta (2005) also relates empowerment of women with power of women. She describes that empowerment is power implies a relational context that is, individual or group. She argues that power increases decision making authority in the family and in the community affairs. According to her empowerment of women is having greater control on decision making and those who participate in the development processes, lead to women's empowerment.

This shows that women's empowerment is affected by power and decision making autonomy in the family or in the society. In this Social scientist use a definition of power sometime like Max Weber's (1992) in Sen and Batliwala, (1998) as:

'Power is the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests'

According to Paula England in Sen and Batliwala, (1998), the basis of power is defined as:

'Which see anything that makes it possible for one to realize one's self interest as a basis of power'

Kabeer (1999) defines power in terms of the ability to make choices and the people who exercise a great deal of choices in their lives may be more powerful in a society and these people are more empowered in terms of decision making.

Each definition includes a better understanding of and control over social, economic, and/or political forces in order to improve one's status in the society.

A saying is prevalent in the world "Right is light", but right utility for Madheshi community has become a hypothesis though they are equally provisioned by the state. In these aspects Sen (2000) explained that men can get light in their life by getting right in social, economic and political opportunities and it can avoid deprivation. Thus it is considered as a key asset or means for overall socio-economic empowerment of an individual and household and getting status in the society. Hence, it provides basis for social inclusion in the Nepalese society.

(Dixon, 1978) defined autonomy as:

'the degree of women's access to, and control over, material source (including food, income, land and other forms of wealth) and to social resources (including knowledge, power, and prestige) within the family, in the community, and in the society at large'. Cited in Jejeebhoy (1997).

Autonomy is also defined by Dyson and Moore (1983) as:

'Autonomy is the capacity to obtain information and make decisions about one's private concerns and those of one's intimates'.

In this definition autonomy indicates the ability to take decisions about one's private concerns and those of one's intimate. Thus equality of autonomy between the sexes in the present sense implies equal decision making ability with regard to personal affair.

ICPD (1994), Para 4.1 defines autonomy which is commonly used term empowerment which captures similar dimensions of women's situation and indicates status of women of that society. For example empowerment is defined as:

'the process by which powerless gain greater control over the circumstances of their lives. It concludes both control over resources (Physical, human, intellectual, financial) and ideology (beliefs, values and attributes). It means not only greater extrinsic control but also a growing intrinsic capability- greater self confidence, and an inner transformation of one's conscious that enables one to overcome external barriers to accessing resources or changing barriers to accessing resources or changing traditional ideology'. Batiwala (1994).

Jejeebhoy (1996) had compiled some empirical evidences on the relationship between women's behavior changes and autonomy. She concluded that women's autonomy is largely affected by patriarchal authority and gender stratification in the society where they live. Similarly there are also some elements which also affect on women's autonomy, for example education and employment. Jejeebhoy focused more on education of women play more important role on determining different autonomy i-e, decision-making autonomy, economic and social autonomy, knowledge autonomy, physical autonomy and also emotional autonomy. Education gives women confidence of her ability to make a decision or voice an opinion. An educated woman has no hesitation to participate in family discussions as well contact with the outsiders

and she enjoys freedom of movement. She gave stress on the empowerment of women and autonomy are similar and common, which are differ in different patriarchal societies. She has concluded that groups are not empowered until their individual members feel the sense of empowerment by getting status in their society.

In another definition Jejeebhoy (1997) defined autonomy during paper presentation in seminar as:

'The term autonomy is used to reflect its more irrespective of process on the extent to which women exert control over their own lives within the families in which they live, and at a given point of time.'

Feminists has also been explained the social and economic order which deprived women to be empowered by getting power first in the family. For example Kabeer (1994) links the social values and economic order which deprives women in getting power and opportunities, which results women poor status in the family or in the society.

Kabeer (1999) advocates on behalf of women and for the empowerment of women in the socio-economic sectors. She presents three dimensions which are essential for the empowerment of women by increasing ability to exercise women's choice. The status of women is very much affected by the empowerment of women. The definition of empowerment used in the United Nations (UN) system, has captured all the components of empowerment. It includes the following components: Women's sense of worth; their right to have and to determine choices; their right to have the power to control their own lives, both within and outside the home; and their ability to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally.

2.2 Literature Review on WID and GAD

Feminist thought helps us to understand women's roles in both Women in Development (WID) and Gender and Development (GAD) literature. These literatures acknowledge the status of women of different periods of time and in different settings.

2.2.1 Literature on Women in Development (WID)

WID literature stresses to address the cause of women's oppression especially in the area of women's welfare, antipoverty, and equity. Most of the WID literature is based on the feminist theories. The main thought of WID literature is the women's unequal status and social position are the result of socially sanctioned division of labour between male and female and women's exclusion from the public spheres. Thus it is believed that equal economic opportunity is key to raising the status of women. During 1970s, WID literature explains the causes of women's oppression and their low status is the cause of economic inequity in the market place and the social inequality in the household as a cause of their inferiority. It is also argued that women's status can only be achieved by simply doing what men have been doing. In sum, WID literature depicts women as oppressed individuals who determine inferior status in the family, society and in the nation, Maslak (2003).

In social relations, power has to consider in gendered terms. Increased power of women will be reflected in their increased decision-making authority in family and community affairs. Empowerment thus becomes instrumental in changing status of women in society. However in WID literature there is no clear answer of who empower women, but women can empower by participating in development activities, Rowlands (1998).

2.2.2 Literature on Gender and Development (GAD)

GAD literature identifies women's status where a society plays a primary role that shape women's status and women play specific roles in their homes and communities that shapes family's status. But most of the GAD literature has failed to explore or examine the voice of women living in a poor condition in the society. However GAD literature has generally viewed women as an active participant in the society and has not always recognized their contribution for the society. It is also seen that GAD literature does not always recognized various forms of inequality, Maslak (2003). For example, the WID approach quite adequately explain and represent the case of the Madheshi women whose husband and wife both work but women are less paid than men for the same work. Maslak study on Tharu women in Nepal found that Tharu women are more empowered than other women of different caste/ethnic groups of Madheshi community. This study has also showed the condition of working women in paid job is better

than not working women (i.bid). It also explores the cultural, economic and political circumstances (caste, class, race, and religion) that shape women's oppression. Stromquist (1999), a western scholar argued that women themselves are not aware of her status and position within their social structure, unless scholars expose their status. Some critics have argued that empowerment is rooted in the western culture of individualism and personal achievement, cited in Haleh Afshar (1998). At the macro level empowerment is now characterized as a multilevel process. It has also widely used in the field of GAD literatures. Despite the concept of empowerment in its western origins, women's empowerment is equally involvement in organizational level; policy level as well as power over resources and power to make decisions are the different levels of empowerment.

2.3 Women's Position in Different Periods

Patricia and Jill (2000) both have focused on the social equality, social change, power, interests, beliefs and the social institution of family, law, politics, work, religion, and education. Men, the powerful section of the society as masters and women a slave or servant who invisible, unacknowledged, are living under the pressure of male dominant society, serving to sustain and recreate the society that we live in. They also give example that women are still subordinated group in many western societies a "minority" and feminist always protest this minority status which is always threaten by the more powerful and dominant "majority" men.

In the context of 19th century, the feminist argues that the relational basis for women's subordination lies in the family an institutional aptly named from the Latin word for servant, because the family as it exists in complex societies is overwhelmingly a system in which men command women's services. Although the ideology of contemporary societies treats family as a fundamental and universal feature of social life, see Ritzer (2000)

Engels and Marx produce archaeological and anthropological evidence to show about the humanity's existence in the family is fairly recent relational invention; In the past men and women lived in kin structures and women had relative autonomy to take decisions because they had an independent economic base as gathers, crafters, storers, and distributors of essential materials. But this social system destroyed after the replacement of hunting and gathering by herding and farming economies in which men's resources of strength, mobility, and increasing

development of technologies which directly benefited by men, gave them a systematic advantage over women. Since then men as a property owners and women as a wife servant was seen and started exploitation of labour and complex structure domination, most particularly class relations. The political action was created to safeguard these systems of domination. Engels and Marx finally concludes that women can attain freedom of social, economic, political, and personal action only after the destruction of property through class revolution, Lengermann and Brantley cited in Ritzer (2000) et.al.

While Socialist feminist analysis about patriarchy structure of a society is a major independent source of social oppression. Women's are oppressed by male dominant societies in the most part of the world but it is also find that women who are oppressed may yet actively participate in the oppression of other women, cited in Ritzer (2000).

It clears that women are themselves create obstacles of women empowerment. As we have seen in many day to day life in our societies of developing countries a girl from very early childhood oppressed by her own mother and after marriage by laws especially mother in law, sister in law or other female members of the family.

Yet, the ideology of male domination, which pervades our lives, is changing only slowly and it is hampering development in all sectors. It is well recognized by now that there is a large variation between the Indo-Aryan and the Tibeto-Burman groups and even within each of these groups in terms of social relations governing gender relations. In spite of this diversity, land is inherited universally in all communities from the father to the son and women lag far behind men in access to knowledge, economic resources and modern avenues of employment. Marriage is compulsory and seen as a primary means of livelihood for women in all most all communities, Acharya and Bennett (1981); Gurung (1999).

While Radical feminist described women are everywhere oppressed by the system of patriarchy and they also see in societies of heterosexuality, class, gender, caste, race, ethnicity, age, and gender in which people dominate others and among them in patriarchy system women are more suppressed by men. The feminist theory has mainly focused on the issue of gender inequality and the sex roles or the class system, women's situation and theories of gender oppression

which is centrally controlled, used and oppressed by men in many ways, cited in Ritzer (2000) et.al.

The women only get status when she equally involves in decision making at the home and participate equally in every roles as men. Rosaldo (1974) writes on women's status:

“Women's status will be the lowest in those societies where there is firm differentiation between domestic and public spheres of activity and where women are isolated from one another and placed under a single man's authority in the home. Their position is raised when they can challenge those claims to authority, either by taking on men's roles or by establishing societies, by creating a sense of rank, order and value in a world of their own”

This paragraph clearly shows women only can have equal decision making autonomy when they themselves developed in male dominant societies as men developed. However women of third world have to struggle to get equal status which majority of women of developed world have already got.

2.4 Women Scenario in Nepal (Demographic Aspects)

For the first time in Nepal the 2001 census and 2011 census attempted to engender the census with the theme: 'information is basic to the empowerment of women'. These censuses have covered all the related information including the gender specific approach in data collection and tabulation of results such as literacy status, age at marriage, marital status, land and house ownership, livelitock, number of children etc.

The data generated from census helped us to know various socio-economic variables of gender perspectives. It also gives information on the situation of women living in different territory of Nepal. Some information related with women's demographic status is given in the below Table 2.4.

Table 2.4: Nepal Socio-economic and Demographic situation of women

Regions	Immunization Rate(5 years+) M / F	TFR	CE B	FP U	F/M Literacy Ratio (per 100 females)	F/M Enrollment Ratio (per 100 males) Primary Level	Literacy rate (pop 15 years+) M/F Ratio per 100	Delivery in Health Facilities
Mountain	24.9/24.8	0.6	0.4	0.1	31	54.8	20	2.0
Hill	42.2/38.0	5	0.5	17.2	50	82.6	39	9.0
Terai	36.1/32.9	0.6	2.8	4.1	44	62.9	35	7.2
Urban	58.8/57.7	2.9	2.1	31.3	65	97.1	59	43.8
Rural	36.5/32.9	4.8	2.7	14.0	45	70.0	34	5.1
EDR	41.3/33.4	.1	2.4	14.5	—	80.0	43	—
CDR	43.8/40.2	4.6	2.7	7.5	—	—	35	—
WDR	34.0/32.3	0.7	0.7	0.3	—	77.1	43	—
MWDR	35.1/30.7	0.5	0.7	2.4	—	—	25	—
FWDR	23.2/25.1	0.2	2.4	0.5	—	57.3	18	—

Source: Nepal Fertility, Family Planning and Health Survey (1996), NLSS (1996), NFHS (1996).

Across the cultural diversity, the majority of communities in Nepal are dominated by patriarchal value system that accord overwhelming importance to early marriage and male children. Marriage is a social contract between two different families rather than personal affair of the bride and groom. Women and also men rarely have any role in their choice of their own life partner. It is more so in rural Terai area, both among educated and uneducated women. In Nepal mean age at marriage for women recorded for women 17 years and for men 20.6 years in Terai regions of Nepal. Similarly male marry at the age of 21.1 years in rural areas and 23.5 years in urban areas of Nepal. In the case of women mean age at marriage recorded 19.6 years in urban

areas and 17.9 years in rural areas CBS (1995). It shows that majority of both men and women are married before they reach 25 years. Marriage is one of the important components of demographic change in a country. Hence, a woman's power to accept or reject marriage partnership is evidently an index of the degree of freedom, she exercises in the management of her own life, and thus also of her status and empowerment.

In patriarchal society, women derive social status primarily from fertility as carriers of "clan seeds" and mother's of male pregnancy but they have little control over their own fertility or children. Most of the time women give number of births to fulfill family requirements. This has resulted high total fertility rate compare to others South Asian countries. However TFR is differ according to the educational level and localities. The TFR for women with secondary education was only 2.5 while for those with primary education; it was 3.8 per woman and for those with no education 5.1 respectively, NFFPHS (1996). Studies have also shown that there is negative relationship between overall literacy level and gender gap, Sharma and Chhetri (1996). Despite the gains in overall educational opportunities, the level of literacy is still lower especially in Terai and among women of this ecological belt.

Sex ratio is also one of the indicators of women's status. Sex ratio is defined as the total number of female in 100 males. In Nepal sex ratio is high in Terai, is related to the lower socio-economic status of women of these communities, Acharya (1981).

The 2001 Census data clears that the overall situation of men and women is different in almost all gender related statistics. In Nepal the life expectancy is very much similar for both men and women. It shows although biologically women are stronger than men but due to discriminatory practices women survive less than males. Similarly very few women are literate and have get primary education. Data also indicates that the representation in decision making level is very few than male. Only 10.83 percentages of women have land in their name but it is also true that they can not buy or sell these land by themselves. The above data clears that the position of women is worst in Nepal. This is also good indicator when we see the situation of women in previous census reports; Current Census data shows that female's status as household heads have been increasing. As for decision making concerns, female are still in greater disadvantaged compared to male-headed households. There are few families where female are respected as

male counterparts in day today life in the Madheshi families. It has seen that poverty is higher in female headed household. Infact the true picture of Nepalese women, are suppressed, exploited, neglected. Majority of such communities have forced to live in secured life due to illiteracy, ill health, poverty, discriminatory practices and also biased legal system. In Terai and especially in rural areas, social customs create greater vulnerability for women. In local level, even elected women have less voiced and very few of them occupied position in the DDC/VDC or key sub-committees where budgetary decisions are made, ADB (2004). However women's position at household has been gradually changing over time in our society. Male members are also joining their hands in assisting in their daily jobs and respecting women's works at the household.

Table 2.4.1: Gender Related Statistics (2001/02, 2011)

Census Year	2001	
Indicator	Men	Women
Life Expectancy	61.8	62.2
Literacy (Age 15+)	62.2	34.6
Primary School Net Enrolment Rate	75	82
Representation in Cabinet	5.55	94.45
Representation in Parliament	5.85	94.15
Representation in Upper House	13.33	86.67
Representation in Civil Service	8.55	91.45
Percent of Judge	26	74
Land ownership	10.83	89.16
Home Ownership	5.51	94.49

Source: The 10th Plan (2003); CBS (2001).

2.5 WOMEN IN DIFFERENT FIELDS IN NEPAL (SOCIO-ECONOMIC ASPECTS)

“Half of the sky, women have no choice and voice for different levels in decision making within and outside the household.” Koirala (2007).

This above statement indicates Nepali women are necessarily marginalized, disadvantaged, suppressed, sidelined, excluded and poor in the socio-economic and political spheres. Their status is relatively still very low in Nepal and particularly in Terai. Poor status of women is also a social problems related to gender and race. However since 1970s gender, race was recognized as a social problem in developed countries like USA and other developing countries of the world. It is varies from one country to another country. These social problems are described by Subedi (2009), as a big problems realized by society. In Nepal caste-based discrimination,

untouchability, exclusion from language, culture and religion, and most important gender-based discrimination, violations are recognized major issues evolved as social problems.

Nepal has experienced several social problems related with gender. All the social problems are related with socio-economic, political status of women in Nepal. The issues of Madheshi women, their socio-economic and political status are also societal problems which are widely recognized by the same community, society and the state. Different caste/ethnic groups of Madhesh have been raising their voice for their language, cultural and religion including their proportional representation in the state. Kunwar (1977), in his article, stressed that Nepalese women are regardless of being “the creator and maintainer of human life” are destined to live a “dependent and subjugated” due to lower position of these women by the society as a whole. So it is argued that attitudinal improvements among both male and female are necessary condition to reduce unequal condition between men and women. Based on the above situation of women, it is clear that women’s status was lower than today. Another critical thought at that time given by Lohani (1977) also focused that rural women were more economically active than educated urban women in Nepal.

However urban elite women have benefitted most from the development efforts to date and the recent advances in national legal provisions has opened new channels for their increasing self reliance and political participation. Thus it is needed to give more focus on rural women or disadvantaged women to enhance their roles and status, which would help to improve the shackles of poverty and unemployment, mal-distribution of power-prestige and assets for Nepal as whole.

The movement for improving women’s status all over the world has emphasized the role of education, employment, participation in politics etc are the important indicators of achieving status in the society and these all helps to get equal treatment for men and women and especially between husband and wife in decision making autonomy rights. Many feminists have studied on the different parameter, which directly or indirectly helps to improve status of women of given respective families or communities.

2.5.1 Social structure and Social Status of women

The family is the most important unit of the social structure in Nepal. According to 2001 census report the average family size was 5.4. There are two types of families found in Nepal. The nuclear family system has been increasing in urban areas of Nepal and joint families are common in rural and especially in Terai Belt of Nepal. Women has to make happy to all the family members by doing and following all the traditional rules including Pardah system in which Madheshi community, a woman has to cover her face in front of her elders and also for non family members. According to this social system of Madheshi, a woman should not go and talk to outsiders due to rigid traditional cultures where women's live and there freedom is nominal whatsoever is written in the Interim Constitution or in other laws.

At the time of making household decisions, especially on the property matters, she is not recognized as co-partner not counted as a family member. In the name of Dahej which is 'Stridhana' where a woman gets some gifts from her parents during marriage in order to establish new couple, but there are hardly women can get chance to use her property. Women have enjoyed very nominal rights on property as compared to men. The way of obtaining rights of a woman is always through a man. Woman herself is not recognized independent as the Dharmashastra indicates that a woman as a daughter always remain under the control of her father, as a wife under her husband and as a mother under her son's umbrella. If she breaks the family rules, she is looked down by the society. So, it is not so easy to change customary cultural and social attitude towards women which is deep rooted from hundred of years without legislative efforts through the concerned government. Today's demand for Property rights does not break social structure and norms but it helps in the establishment of peace, security and most important equality in the society. Since equality is recognized by almost all the countries for the development of the nation, and without equal participation of woman, Development is not possible. However there are many barriers and discrimination even today for a woman, it is very hard to break those barriers which are obstacles for her development. The woman who are living in strict traditional societies or families are not in position of totally change all those traditional rules and bring change in their rigid social customs which are not entirely favourable for getting equal status for both men and women in the society, Bista (1991).

In most of the families and societies in Nepal, favours son and regard him as a blessing where as daughter is like a temporary guest or regarded as others property. To marry a girl, it has always been a very difficult task for the parents, especially in Madhesh due to increasing size of Dahej (Pewa), Parents do feel social obligation to maintain social culture and traditional values. In Nepal and India mostly daughters are considered Paraya Dhan (an alien's wealth) who is supposed to go other's home and from childhood, they are treated that they are guest and their real home is the husband's home. In such a situation daughter naturally consider themselves as temporary residents of their parental home and are excluded from full membership of the natal families after marriage, Singh (2000).

Women of these communities have little choices in selecting marriage partners, or choosing when or whether to get marry. Among them Madheshi women almost do not get chance to take decision or give their opinion in their marriage. These decisions are made for them only by their parents or elders brothers. After marriage the role of mother in law is regarded decision makers of the family.

A empirical research on Community effects of women's education and autonomy on contraception use in India in 2003 shows that husband's education has little effect on women's autonomy to decide decisions on her fertility behavior, her own health care and the use of contraception. Both community education and wife education strongly affect on household decision-making autonomy, Anne and Kravdal (2003).

In majority of the patriarchal household in Nepal caring for the child is primarily belongs to the mother of the child. Father is mainly responsible for physical care. In such families a working woman has to face many problems in this era of competition for her career security. In most of the families, a married woman who does not bear a son is largely looked down upon and she has to listened many words from her family members and often she has no choice but to put up with a co-wife. It is also seen that in the name of son a woman has given a number of female babies, which is one of the important components of population change in developing countries.

The negative consequences of such cultural practices are far more devastating to their survival and well being. It makes too many women end up feeling dependent and worthless as compared to men.

2.5.2 Educational Status of Women

It is great say that 'Educate a girl, educate a family'. This concept has been accepted in this century by the societies. However there is still hesitation to send girls to school set up by many families in Terai/Madhesh of Nepal. It has seen that the women who are literate, more active in development programs. The study conducted in Plain high caste groups of Dhanusha District and the Gurung community of Kaski district of Nepal by Strishakti (1993), found that there is positive relationship between women's education and women's political awareness irrespective there caste or ethnic identity. It was also found that the participation in any development programme is high among both Terai and Hill high caste communities.

The International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo (1994) also focused on the women's education in its agenda no 4.2

"Education is one of the most important means of empowering women with the knowledge, skills and self-confidence necessary to participate fully in the development process."

Similarly the Universal Declaration of Human Rights also asserted that

"Everyone has the right to education."

But despite notable efforts by UN Conventions majority of women are still illiterate and have not get qualitative education in Nepal. Parents sent their son to get qualitative education in private schools and colleges and daughters are sent in nearer government schools where the education quality is not good. Although there are several schools and colleges opened in urban and rural areas of Nepal through the governments and private efforts, literacy rate has not been increased significantly due to poverty, poor economic conditions and ignorance about the importance of girl's education.

In all over the world, education is commonly considered as a vehicle for raising status. In Nepal CEFA (2003) reported that there is positive effects of education of girls and women on social and economic development of the society. Another study by UNESCO (1990) had revealed a different picture on girl's education. According to the study, socio-cultural beliefs, practices and attitudes do not favour girls in their pursuit of education to the same extent as boys. So people had a big question that why should they invest their daughters that will soon be some one else, cited in Chhetri (2007). The study conducted by Koirala and Acharya (2005) also found that Brahman girls were less educated because of parents interest for early marriage.

According to the 2001 census, the literacy rate was 51.4 percent for both sexes, 65.5 percent for the males and 42.8 percent for females. Similarly 2011 census reports states the literacy status for both male and female has increased 65.9 % for both sexes. Among them female literacy rate is 57.4 percent and male literacy rate is 75.1 percent, see CBS (2011). The lower literacy among females are the result of mainly social prejudices against female education restriction on mobility of females, lower social status granted to the females and the system of early marriages in most of the caste/ethnic groups in Terai area. Census reports (2001) also gives figure on different ecological regions where it is found that literacy rate is lower in Terai region of Nepal.

Compared to the position of Nepalese women in enrolment in schools and colleges have been remarkable increasing. The government has introduced free education especially for girls' upto SLC. The literacy rate and the percentage educated women have been increasing slowly. However still there are some parents who do not want to spend money on their daughters thinking that they are the temporary guest who will have to go their husband's house. There is very little gender awareness even in educated families. Government's policies to increase girl's participation by establishing schools in rural and remote areas, providing free books and stationeries and special incentives to encourage female teachers to work in these areas, all make remarkable increments in the number of female students in the schools. Similarly adult education has also been conducting by the different I/NGOs and Ministry of Education. Which have resulted increasing literacy rate for females 25 percent in 1991 to 51.4 in 2001 and 65.9 percent in 2011, CBS (2011). Now women have started to work outside and most of them are struggling for their overall development to get status in the male dominant societies where many families are supporting and encouraging their daughters to involve in competitions to stand in their own feet with their own ability. A study by CEDA (1995) based on the information for about 50 male and 50 female of factory workers in Kathmandu Valley also found that the attitude of parents regarding education of their children had been changing, Now men and women both wanted to educate both their boys and girls as much as their children wanted or they could afford, cited in UNFPA (2007).

2.5.3 Economic Status of Women

It is widely recognized that our development efforts will not have been fruitful to the desired extent until women who constitute about 50 percent of the total population, neglected or deprived by the societies and the nation. In this century, the contributions of women in the household chores and family cares have been demanded by many feminists and intellectuals. Despite the longer hours of their work which are assigned to women due to occupational segregation and discrimination, all these works are not considered as gainful occupation in the national accounting system in our country.

While considering the role of women in the Nepalese economy, it can be assumed that they contribute a substantial position in the country's labour force. A study on the status of women in Nepal revealed that 86 percent of all domestic works and 57 percent of subsistence agricultural activities were undertaken by women CEDA (1997). The study also showed the proportion of women engaged in unpaid family works was high in Terai region (75%) and 55 percent in Hill region of Nepal. During 1980s another study entitled 'The status of women', also showed that women's participation in different sectors of employment like manufacturing sectors and non agri-cultural sectors have been increased Aacharya (1997). From long time back, in Nepal women have been working both in the fields and within households and contributing directly/indirectly to the household. In this regard situation of Madheshi women is worst because majority of these women are limited in the household and very few of them are involved in paid jobs in governmental and private sectors. The women who work in agriculture sectors, they are less paid than male labour for the same works or sometimes not paid at all.

Several studies on the socio-economic status of women also showed that the situation has still not changed for women of different social groups in Nepal. The study based on survey found that education and employment have made women with more confidence in voicing their opinions and control over decision making at all level in mostly social groups. The study also focused from the findings that female decisions are equally powerful in economic activities in which women have proved that they can manage and do better jobs in non-agriculture sectors of employment. However women's status and their contribution vary according to the geographical settings, caste, class, culture and also religion. Similarly Social values, types of family, level of education all have affected women to have autonomy to participate in decisions.

Study showed that women living in nuclear family especially in urban areas have had more choices for working and earning for their livelihood Shakti (1995), Acharya (1997).

According to the 2001 census data on economically active population shows that, in Terai region only 45.6 percent of the women were economically active while it was higher 78.9 percent in mountain and 61.8 percent in Hill region respectively. Similarly 33 percent of the females stated that household chores were the main reason for not working outside in paid jobs.

Table 2.5.3: Economically Activity Rates by Ecological reasons

Ecological Regions	2001	2001
Mountain	79.9	78.9
Hill	70.2	61.8
Terai	71.9	45.6
Nepal	81.7	60.4

Source: Population Monograph of Nepal, (2001).

Despite progressive legal changes and efforts in economic development and real condition of the life of the Nepalese women at large have not changed. Among them Madheshi women are less visible in the decision making levels and also in policy-making levels. They suffer more barriers of customs, patriarchal norms and values and most important from the nation, which have placed these groups in the category of socially underprivileged people. The privileged classes have used to segregate the Madheshi people from the main stream of development. Some of them who have got chance to get some positions, are only from high class Madheshi Hindus (introduction <http://madheshee.blogspot.com/2006/02>). Madheshi population is subjected to extreme national oppression, poverty and exploitation. They have been politically, economically, socially, culturally depressed. In such condition one can easily imagine the situation of women of such oppressed societies which has been discriminated by the state and women of this community are oppressed and discriminated by the state and by the male dominant Madheshi communities. In this Ian Martin, special representative of the United Nations Secretary-General in Nepal once expressed his experiences in his own words for women of Nepal as:

“Life is still difficult for so many Nepalese women. Women’s struggle for the simple dignity of equality for opportunity to enjoy their human rights and live as equal citizens continues”.

UNMIN & UNFPA (2008).

Similar manner UNDP (2009) also states that there are different people who have been differently treated in terms of power relations which has resulted unequal citizens in the society. Power relations among various categories seem one of the causes of disparity among various social groups. However power relation is a very important and it should be deeply studied. This research has just touched this to prove that it is also a cause of different status and situation of women and Madheshi women particularly in Nepal.

There are also some studies which have also indicated that women’s involvement in outside works not only empowers them but it also helps to reduce population growth in developing world. Increasing population is one of the big problems facing by the most of the developing countries like Nepal. In this regard Oppenheimer (1972) gave message about the relationship between fertility and work participation in labour market. Her message addressed complexities of labour market imbalances which are related not only to fertility, but also to other factors among which were education and attitudinal or sex role changes. Her analysis of the limits of traditionally female occupations to fulfill employment needs relate to today’s realities, cited in Khan Hilda (1976). Polacheck (1975) found that women who are less educated and have many children spent her most of the time in rearing and caring of her children at home. They have no time to spend out their valuable time in the labour force; see Khan Hilda (1976). Another argument is that employed women spent less time each day on household chores, Robinson and Converse (1966) cited in Jane Roberts Champan. It has been found from these studies that those women who work outside of the house have less time to do household chores but in many societies of developing world, women have given same attention even involved in paid jobs.

2.5.4 Political Status of Women

The political status of women (men) is related with formal constitutional and legal status; political representation; political awareness; and capacity to influence decisions in the family, community, locality and nation. However, often the only indicator analyzed in this research, is

the political awareness of the women of the respective district. This section tries to extend the analysis to cover other aspects as well to know the political status of Nepalese women.

Women's participation in politics is strongly related with the socio-economic status of the women, Nadezhda (2005). Similarly it has also been seen that illiteracy and limited access to education and choices of professions and most important dual burden of domestic works and professional obligations are the obstacle of women lower representation in politics. The women who want to involve in politics or who already entered in it find that there are so many political, public, cultural and social environment are unfriendly to them. Similarly lack of confidence, societal perceptions on politics as dirty game, lack of party support and financial problems also discourage women to active participation into politics.

Some anthropological studies of women in South Asia recognize that women's participation in politics has been increasing. Their roles in local area have been recognized by the local communities, especially in rural areas after introducing compulsory representation of women at every post in local level. However most of the women still have not held positions of authority in the villages. This is also true for Nepali women. A study among Kham Magar communities of Hills of Western Nepal found same situation. Women of these communities had enjoyed higher autonomy in decision making inside the households but still they were excluded in political arena Molnar (1982).

Until the half of the population is civilized and developed, the society cannot advance. Women's participation in different fields including politics, which were not digested by earlier society, has been recognized a must in national development. Discriminatory practices and provisions are existed in traditional bound law, which should be changed in order to suit the demand of time to make social harmony in the society. So, Nepal Government has given priority to mainstreaming the women in the development efforts but very few needy and backward groups have benefited by these program. Women's access to political and other positions of power has not improved much in the last 10-15 years. However after the Local Self Government Act (1999), 20 percent reservation made to improve the status of women at the grassroots level. When we see the previous data on the access to various positions of power women constitute very less percentage in each political position.

Table 2.5.4: Access to Positions of Power: Percentage of women in various positions of power

Detail	1991/2	2000
Percent in Parliament	3.8	6.4
Number of women in the cabinet	2	2
Percent executives of the major political parties	7.8 ^{/1}	8.3 ^{/3}
Village Development Committees	0.45	7.7
Municipal Executives	0.38	19.5
District Development Committees	0.65	6.7
Government Administration	Na	7.8
Officers	4.39	6.2
High Government Positions	2.46	2.4
Professional and Technicians	15.1	19.0
Administration and Management	9.3	13.8

Source: UNFPA (2007).P.61 Gender Equality and Empowerment in Nepal

The above table clearly shows that representation of female in different positions of power is very less. However 20 percent reservation at the grassroots levels has been encouraged significant numbers of women of various caste/ethnic groups of Nepal to enter into politics. Among different caste/ethnic groups Madheshi women, Dalit women especially Terai Dalit and Janjati women are much lower than of men of the same groups. Similarly women of upper caste/ethnic group have more access to involve in politics as well other arena but still they are very few of them are got chance than those of men of their own caste/ethnicity (i-bid). A study by Bennet, Gajurel (2005), information collected from the 2000 men and women from 60 villages of different parts of the country found that women were more empowered and have more autonomy within the household decision-making than previous in 1978, cited in UNFPA (2007). This study shows positive sign of improvement in political status but still women are far behind in political empowerment as well other empowerment than men.

Another study based on the study among elected women ward representative, suggested that Nepalese women have got very less chance to involve in the active politics because woman consider household tasks (e.g., cooking, cleaning, washing, child care) as constrains, prevents them from taking on public responsibilities as elected representatives even when they had family supports in their decision to going politics. However those women who are elected experienced a positive change in their attitude but lack of education, political knowledge, confidence and financial resources, they are back or unable to hold political responsibilities effectively, Stri Shakti (1995)

The involvement in politics is also different in different societies and caste/ethnic groups. In Nepal women from the Hill high caste groups are more in numbers and more active in politics than women from others sections of societies. They have gained education, employment, to their active participation in every sector of development. It also gives woman a sense of empowerment and encourages them to overcome old traditional beliefs on social structures which is imposed by families and communities value system. This has also seen that women who are involved in mobility, has stronger co-relation with political participation and this is necessary for empowerment of women through their active role towards upliftment of poor women, Shrestha and Hachhethu (2002).

The April 2008 elections in Nepal marked an historic and unprecedented step forward for women who won one third of the 601 seats in the Constituent Assembly. This was the remarkable achievement to participate in Constitution building process from previous election in Nepal. The women CA members are from different religious families and socio-economic backgrounds. These groups of parliamentarians have experienced common problems in our societies and they also share a common goal which is committed to achieve gender equality through creating opportunities for women in all areas of social, political and economic life. It is realized that women's political, economic and social right never work equally in every sense with respect to men and women until the principle of equal access and inclusion of women and men in decision making processes, including the nation's policies and programmes.

Globally more than 95 percent countries in the world have granted women's right to vote and also granted women's right to be a candidate for public office. However there are some states where women have still not right to vote or participate as a candidate in election. According to the International Parliamentary Union (IPU), there were 11.3 percent women represented in the national parliaments of the world in 1995, which increased 16 percent in 2005. In July 2010 the number of women parliamentarians in the world stood at 19.2 percent. This figure shows that globally women's participation in politics is increasing and they have also hold grater positions. Involving women in politics is the centre of making decisions which affect all the sectors of women development.

In Nepal, for the first time every political party has realized the necessity of women's participation in every level and structure of the state including right to citizenship, representation of women at every level of inclusive state and its institutional structures. In the past, participation of women in politics was very limited and was not seen positively. The number only increased only after the end of Rana rule in 1951. Women played remarkable role by fighting against the party less Panchayat regime after 1960s by supporting the 'Peoples Movement' for the restoration of democracy in 1990 and also struggled during the Peoples Movement II (Janaandolan -2) in 2005-06. There were also thousands of women played militant and active political role during Maoist Armed Movement (Jan Yuddha). However women's representation in 1991 parliamentary election was 2.15 percent, 3.45 percent (1994) and 5.85 percent (1999). The number increased 33 percent only in 2008 Constituent Election. Sambad, (2011)

The National Democratic Institute (NDI) (2010) interviewed with some women CA members to know their perceptions towards women's role in politics and the obstacles they face while involving in politics. During interview almost all have stressed on the women's issues such as equal right of women's parental property, issues of citizenship and political right and elimination of discrimination based on gender, caste, ethnicity, class and region. Some Madheshi female CA members, for example Basanti Devi Jha, CA member of Terai Madhesh Loktantrik Party, stated during her interview that Madheshi women have a big role to play to plead for the rights of marginalized women and strive to secure the constitutional rights for all women. She also believes that being a politician she is more empowered and now her opinion is important for her family members.

Similarly Sandhya Devi Dev, CA member of MJFN from Nepalganj, Banke also says that women in her constituency suffer from many kinds of social evils and deprivations. She observes women have fought with tooth and nail during democratic movement as well as Madhesh Movement. She focused to fight against social taboos which are deeply rooted in the Madheshi society. Madheshi women particularly suffer from domestic violence because of dowry demands. She believes that women's entry in politics will help to transform such society. Madheshi women politicians feel that all Nepali women should not just the Madheshi women should join hands to raise consciousness and to uplift the material conditions of the Madheshi

women. Similarly Tham Maya Thapa Magar CA member of CPNUML from Myagdi district believes “meaningful involvement of women in politics is the only means to liberate them and transform the society”, (i.bid).

A Muslim women CA member of Nepali Congress from Banke, Mohammadi Siddiqui expressed her view on the social restrictions and obstacles in order to uphold human right and women’s freedom. In her opinion “ women participation in politics actively show that women presence in political life can be asserted and to prove that women too can serve the nation and fulfil their aspiration of having equal participation of women in all decision making bodies of the nation. She believes that she got voice to present her decision in her chosen areas of concern (i.bid).

The unequal distribution of power among different caste/ethnic groups who are living in different ecological regions of Nepal is the main cause of Madhesh Aandolan in Nepal. In that Aandolan the citizenship issues were also one of the issue. Nepal has a fairly a long history of women’s struggle for active citizenship. Women now need freely involve in interaction with the state and its machinery. The meaning of citizenship is the identification of the person with the nation he or she belongs to. Thus, citizenship stands for equality, liberty, freedom and independence in human relation, including gender relations in Terai. Since the status of woman, as citizen is different from their position as subjects (dependent housewife). A subject is dependent upon the father, husband, son and the family.

There are also some women even in South Asian Countries, we have witnessed the strong leadership of Mrs. Indira Gandhi (Prime Minister of India), Late PM Benajeer Bhutto, Khalida Jiya, Chandrika Bhandaru Naik, Shaeleja Acharya, Smt Soniya Gandhi, Pratibha Patil (President of India), Aang Sang Suchi and also in Nepal Dr Arju Deuba, Leela Devi Koirala. Bidya Bhandari, Sapna Pradhan Malla. These women are the proud of their representative nations as well for all South Asian countries. CNAS (2010).

2.6 Research Works in Nepal and Other Countries

Empirical research in recent years has brought out clearly the extent to which women occupy disadvantages positions in traditional economic and social arrangements. While gender

inequalities can be observed in Europe and North America and also in Japan. Nevertheless in some fields women's relative deprivation is much more acute in many parts of the third world. In family behavior inequalities between women and men (and between girls and boys) are often accepted as natural or appropriate in these areas. Sometimes it has also been seen that women themselves provide more health care or nutritional attention to the boys than girls. The below empirical literature also focused the attention on the status of women in different areas and in different countries.

2.6.1 Research Works on Women and Gender in Nepal

The wide gender disparity in Nepal is a major development concern. Many women, particularly those who reside in rural areas, are deprived and severely underprivileged. Disadvantaged castes and ethnic communities have shown even greater discrimination against women in terms of access to education, health care, and economic opportunities, contributing to higher levels of poverty. Thus empowerment of women is essential in the spheres of governance, economic growth, and human development.

There have been voluminous reports on women and development since the year of 1976. One significant study as benchmark was the status of women series by Lynn Bennett and others done by CEDA (1979). Another is the landmark study on the progress review on women's status and gender discrimination done by Sapna Pradhan Malla (2003); Cited in SIRF (2007) also found that there is unequal relationship between men and women in Nepal. Women have suffered in many ways in the name of Dowry mostly in Terai and women's poor status has resulted underdevelopment of the country as a whole.

In Nepal, "the status of women" study, published in 1981 by Center for Economic Development and Administration (CEDA), is the main source of information on the status and roles of women on eight ethnic groups (Parbatiya, Baragaonle, Lhorung Rai, Kham Magar, Newar, Maithali, Tharu, Tamang), taking into account the socio-cultural religious and economic variables that influence the status of women, Acharya (1981).

Acharya and Bennett (1983) also pointed that women in most groups in Nepal greater or lesser degrees traditionally had a high degree of economic and socio-political dependence on males.

The relationship between husband and wife is similar under the Hindu ethos, but the practices find different as stated by Manu Smriti, women should be under the strict control and supervision of their fathers until marriage, under the control of the husband after marriage and that of a son after the death of a husband, Bista (1991).

According to the World Bank report in 1995, investment on women is vital not only for social justice but also for achieving economic efficiency and growth, World Bank (1995).

A study by Acharya (2000) focused in its study that most of the women work in households but recognized as family helpers. Women who help in agriculture own do not get wage or salary for this. Similarly woman who works outside earn less than man for the same work. Women of both Indo-Aryan and Tibeto-Burman caste/ethnics are less educated and lack of access to resources, social and cultural restrictions on mobility and low levels of skill trainings, they are economically dependent. Those women, who earn, spent their more income in land and housing than men. Their household expenditures on education and food are also higher.

The above picture of women's status clears that those women who are economically empowered, are more involved in decision making on their health, education, food and in overall well-beings.

Similarly according to the Asian Development Bank Reports the female groups better manage with regularity/ frequency of meetings, decision making process and program formulation and implementation, ADB (2004). This reports clears that women who got chance to involve in decision making level in different fields have proved by doing better job than men.

The report also states that:

“Recognition of the need to improve status of women to promote their potential role in development is no longer seen as human rights or social justice. While pursuit of gender remains strongly within the framework of fundamental human rights and gender justice, investment on women now also recognized as crucial to achieving sustainable development. Economic analysis recognize that low level of education, training, poor health and nutritional status and limited access to resources not only depress women's quality of life but also limits productivity and hinder economic efficiency and growth, Asian Development Bank (2004), P. 41.

According to the National Planning Commission report indicates that the Nepali women have very limited income and political power and significant gender disparity in the educational status. Women still lay behind men in terms of all the indicators of development indicators of socio-economic status, NPC (2003).

Although the constitution of Nepal guarantees ‘equality between all people irrespective of religion, caste, gender, race, ethnicity and ideology’ and the women of Madheshi community score lower on the quality of life than hill based groups, but there are also significant differences between people belonging to different castes and religious groups. Among them women have been facing inequalities treatments by their society. Tenth Five year Plan (2002-2007) had specific goals and strategies for women’s empowerment to increase status in the society, family where discrimination takes place both in the household and in the political and social life of Nepal, Dahal and Dhruba Kumar (2009).

Evidence from a number of studies suggests that the health condition of women of different groups have improved (Karki (1988); Stash (1996); Pant, Subedi, Pradhan, Hutton, and Maskey (2008); Karki and Krishna (2008); Quinley and Govindasamy (2007); Aryal, Pathak, Dottel, and Pant (2008); NDHS (2006). The maternal mortality (MMR) rate has declined. The subsequent review of key maternal health utilisation and socio-economic indicators demonstrates an important at every level, which contributes to the decline in maternal mortality. Improved family planning and status for women have resulted the declined maternal mortality rate. This is an impressive achievement for a country coping with political instability. The mass media have been promoting the health status of women in different parts of Nepal and in many Asian countries. However Infant Mortality rate is still high in Nepal and in most of the south Asian countries. One of the main reason of this situation is social pressure to bear male children combined with poor nutritional status which create enormous stress on women’s health

The review done by UNFPA in (1997) on ‘Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women’, the report concludes that women have faced multiple inequities patriarchal socio-cultural practices and discriminatory structures have emerged as economically dependent, unequal access to position of power, education, health and other services. In Terai region the practice of Dowry/Tilak is greatly hindered in women’s education. Gender discrimination on women from

excluded groups have faced more discrimination and among women, certain ethnic groups have the lowest access to education, health, political power and civil services compared to both women of higher castes and men of their own caste/ethnicity.

Women are unable to avail themselves of educational opportunities or to move ahead in the public sphere in Terai districts. The study clearly indicates that increasing demand from the bridegroom family (Dowry System) is also the most important causes of low literacy rate and also domestic violence in Madheshi communities, Dhungana (2006).

According to the empirical research by Maslak (2003), at Butwal among Tharu women of Nepal, the Study shows that Tharu women who interacted with high caste Brahmin and Thakuri women, had more voice in the educational decision making process for their daughters. These women also followed the same characteristics as women of high caste do in their households. It had also seen during the research, language was another most important indicator to express women's views and to get status in the society. For example in Butwal, study showed that The Tharu women who don't know the national language 'Nepali', well are compelled to speak the language of high caste or maintain an inferior status because they did not know the national language. This study also focused on the relationship between powers in terms of ethnicity and concluded that there is corelationship between high caste/ethnicity group and decision making status and social environments help women to get status by taking part in decision making.

Another study by Bennett and Gajurel (2005) found information from 2000 men and women from the 60 villages of different parts of the country; women are much more empowered today than in 1978. They have more voice within household decision making and are involved in mobility than previous years. It is also found that women of upper caste have higher autonomy in taking part in decision making than women and men from other caste/ethnicities.

Acharya (2005) studied on attitude towards socio-political changes found that many parents in rural areas wanted to educated their both their boys and girls but in Madheshi community they also want to see prettiness in bride first rather than education, employment or other qualities.

A review study by Bennett, Dahal and Govindasamy (2008) pointed to the fact that the Terai/ Madheshi-origin groups are doing worse on almost all health, education, and employment indicators compared with the Hill/ Mountain groups. The women of Terai/ Madheshi origin are

less empowered in decision making autonomy than women of Hill/ Mountain groups. Among the Terai/ Madheshi groups Muslim women are very less empowered in all the indicators of women empowerment. Women's is vital as they mostly work long hours and carry the double burden of work in the family and farm. Women's contribution in the family and in the society hardly recognized.

Nepal conducted three Demographic Health Surveys at five years intervals- in 1996, 2001 and 2006. Nepal's nationally representative Demographic Health Surveys are important source of information of national trends over time in key population and socio-economic and health indicators. Studies have repeatedly shown that when women have the ability to make key decisions for themselves and for those their care, health and population outcomes are improved.

The Demographic Health Survey reports clearly indicates women's decision making autonomy have been increased and the biggest changes occurred in women's participation in decisions about large purchases, which increased from 34 percent to 53 percent between the two surveys. While there has been a small increase (20%) in the proportion of women who decide for themselves about seeking health care for themselves. However, the considerable increases have found in women's decision making autonomy in female household headship, see Kishor (2000); Turmen (2003); Koenen et.al. (2006); Johnson (2008); DHS (2006).

For example the Demographic Health Survey (2006) collected information on four decision making autonomy which are the important variables of empowering women i.e., the decision of their own health care; making decision in major household purchases; purchases of daily household needs and about the autonomy to involve in mobility. It also collected data on two other indicators of empowerment: about wife beating and refusal of sexual intercourse with their husband. This survey found that women who participate in these four specified decisions and who do not support to wife beating for any reason more often tend to justify their right to refuse sexual intercourse with their husband for all reasons (86%). The survey also found that women who scored well on these indicators also generally had higher levels of contraception use, wanted smaller family size, better reproductive health care which are also indicator of social status of women of given community. However, refusing intercourse with their husband and no beating to their wives stand out as highly disempowered in the women of Terai/ Madheshi groups. Among them situation is more vulnerable among Muslim women and Dalit women.

The review study also mentioned that due to the centuries of Parbatiya political dominance which has long rendered Madhesis of “second class citizens” in their own country. These people of hierarchical caste, ethnic, women have found inadequate resource allocation and are less empowered in different areas of development, MOHP, New ERA, Macro International (2007) and DHS (2006).

Over the last 20 to 30 years, women in most communities had very little social and economic role beyond the family and the maintenance of the household subsistence enterprise. Women mainly work as unpaid family labour in home and in agriculture and they were not empowered and had very low status in the male dominant society.

Nepal has recently emerged from a decade of civil war and got peace after a long period of time. Thus for protecting these vital achievements requires managing popular expectations through rule of law, transitional justice and most important improving access to services by the poor and excluded disadvantaged groups in nation building process. In Nepal we can easily know the condition of people of Nepal from the Nepal Human Development Reports (2009). According to this report participation and exercise of power are very important for a human development in which people have to right to determine their own destiny, express their views and actively participate in the decisions that helps to shape their lives. For this both men and women of various caste/ethnic groups have to be equally participated in decision making process. It was also realised that the views should have heard and heeded by the government and or related persons. The reports also highlighted on the exclusion and inclusion, which are the vital causes of unequal human development in different regions according to the different caste/ethnicity and gender. Among them women of Dalit community, indigenous nationalities community and Madheshis community are more oppressed and neglected. A vast literature already exists on marginalisation of these groups. This report highlighted on those people who are deprived and living in poor condition where discrimination based on gender, class, caste, language, culture, religion and region highly persist and it gives stress to eliminate all forms of discrimination while making ‘New Nepal’ and ‘New Constitution’. The report found HDI value of Terai is 0.494 in 2006, in which it occupied second rank in HDI, while Hill was in first rank 0.543 respectively. The worst condition was found in 0.436. The Human Development Report 1995 measured Gender related Development Index (GDI) and Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) to measure inequality between men and women. Gender related Index (GDI) shows the

capability of women by Gender Empowerment Measure shows the use of these capabilities in taking advantage of opportunities in participation and decision making power in political and economic affairs and power over economic resources. The GDI shows low difference incapacibilities between women and men is low for the entire country but still high for the Terai region of Nepal. This implies that greater resources will be required to decrease gender inequality in this region. Similarly GEM in 2006 also shows the situation of women is very poor in Terai region where GEM was 0.469 and for Nepal it was 0.496 respectively. Reports also stated that women's share of earned income was about one third of that of men. While there participation in political processes was only a fifth of the male rate.

However women of Nepal and especially of Terai have got a landmark towards enhancing women's representation holding one third of the total 601 seats of the new Constituent Assembly 2008 where Terai women represent 33.2 percentages in CA. This is also true that among these women most of them have less voice and power over economic resources as well in political decision making. The HDI among the people of different ethnicity across the country was different from each other and within the same Terai Belt where Dalit have the lowest 0.383 and Brahmin and Chhetri have the highest 0.625 respectively. The findings also show the people of three caste that is Madheshi Brahman and Chhetri, Newar and Hill Brahman have had higher HDI than that of Dalit and Janjati from both Hill and Terai, Bennett and Dahal (2008). The condition of women also focused in DFID and World Bank (2005) reports, in which it is concluded that women are more poorer than male in Nepal. Women access to the household productive assets and household production and income is mediated by men. In this patriarchal society women tend to lag behind men in access to almost all available opportunities and resources.

The inequality and exclusion also found in Health facilities. According to the 2006 NDHS reports, literacy status among women of 15 to 49 years of Madheshi community. Among them men's literacy rate was higher than female. This inequality found in all higher caste groups. Similarly the Health condition was poorer for girls and women than boys/men in Terai/Madheshi caste and ethnic groups than that of Hill/Mountain groups. The findings concluded that the situation of women is still worse than that of men in access to opportunities and resources, DFID (2006). Study has also shown that the women who enjoy more freedom and take part in decision making at the households, were found healthier. This clears that there

is positive relationship between autonomy of decision making and good health of both woman and her children, Keera (2007). Many scholars were also focused that in Nepal, even within a single cultural group, there are people with different socio-economic status. For example people are educated or uneducated, rich or poor, living in urban or rural residence or different ecological regions and even within a family or household, people related to each other by blood or by marriage. In another words, family members may be kin within the family, some women are considered sacred and accorded higher status while other may live in dangerous situation, Benett (1983). However the favourable attitude towards and treatment of daughters, compare to daughters in law changes once, the daughter gets married. After that she is treated as 'outsiders'. Thus women's self image and decision making power depends on their different roles as mothers/mothers-in-law and daughters/daughters-in-law, Shrestha (1999).

In Nepali society Violence against women is also widespread in all communities. Violence, both in the domestic as well as in the public arena is still used extensively by the patriarchy to establish domination over women. Ninety five percent of women surveyed in one study, Sathi et. al (1997) reported firsthand knowledge of some kind of violence against women. The form of violence ranges from mental torture to mild beating to extreme selling and trafficking for commercial sex work.

As per the 2001 Census more than five hundred fifty-five thousand women are living in polygynous marriages. Alcohol and polygamy related violence in the domestic arena is reported high all over Nepal and across all communities New ERA (1998). Dowry related violence was reported to a lesser extent, but it does exist. A large group of young widows, particularly, in the Indo-Aryan community, are subject to covert and overt violence and face both psychological (as forerunners of misfortune) and physical violence, often for her share of property. In Nepal many women have been facing various forms of violence, in the name of dowry and many other reasons, especially occur in the border area of Nepal, see Dhungana (2006). Trafficking is also violence, widely reported but hard data are impossible to collect. Police estimate trafficking of about 5000-7000 women for commercial sex work annually. In the past, girls and women from the Tibeto-Burman groups, coming from poor rural areas were prone to trafficking. But in recent years this is spreading all over the country and girls from all communities are falling victim to this extreme form of crime and violence. Younger and

younger girls are more find more victims, New ERA (1998). In Nepal poverty and lack of adequately paying jobs, due to progressive decline in demands for the services of the village craftsmen and accelerated impoverishment of lower peasantry due to land division and subdivision, is pushing households to sell their own girls. Some times their own family members, relatives and neighbors sell their daughters, wives, sisters for money. Modern consumerism and drug use among youngsters has made it easier for the traffickers to lure young women even from the middle class. The patriarchal socialization, which establishes marriage as a respectable livelihood option for the girls, is one of the causes of girls falling to trafficker's traps. The Maoist insurgency has compounded the problem of violence against women and children.

An empirical research conducted in Duhari VDC, eastern part of Nepal, the reports indicates that there was greater gender disparities found in this VDC. Most of the female who have had last child male, they were using family planning methods. On the other hand very few women, who had female last child, were using family plannings. This shows the gender preference and because of this many women were giving birth to large number of children to deliver their selected child. The study also found that the desire of male child found more among Muslim women than Hindu women. Similarly young mothers expected lesser degree of male child preferences than the elder females Dr. Upreti (2011). In Nepal religion, socio-economic and cultural norms, values and belief systems of a society affect the attitude of the people towards family formation and family preference. These are the most influential factors for any dimensions of social life in a traditional society. However, various modernization influence in changing attitude of the people towards gender roles in the society. Above study shows that people still desire son not one but more than one, which also indicates the women's status in such societies. The study pointed that socio-economic setup of the society, cultural believes, literacy status, occupation, cultural restrictions on woman, family size, patriarchal male dominance society all are directly indirectly affecting on the status of the women in any society.

In Nepal poverty is also one of the reason of lower socio-economic status of women in Nepal. Recently published NLSS, 2010-2011, data shows that female household head have better situation than male household heads. But in Nepal female are still poor than male. However poverty has reduced in the families according to the level of education, especially female

education. The study reports also highlights that those families are dependent in agriculture are poorer than other occupation groups. Similarly poverty status is also different in different caste/ethnic groups living in different ecological zones in Nepal. The survey found that 20.18 percent Muslims, 25.13 percent Terai Janjati, 33.16 percent Terai Dalits, 28.69 percent middle caste population of Terai and 18.61 percent upper caste of terai population were living below the poverty line. Maximum numbers of the caste/ethnic groups of Terai population are more vulnerable in poverty status than pahadi populations.

A study in Nepal among low caste groups and upper caste groups indicates that low caste women are more empowered than female of high caste groups. Low caste women work outside of the house and enjoy more because all the responsibilities of their households are in the hands of women. They take most of the decisions in households by themselves. Similarly low caste women bring more cash and grain incomes to the household but they have to work long hours and harder to do so in the variety of the households. In this area women of upper castes dominate these women because low caste women are hired by upper-caste mainly for domestic works and also for agriculture labor. However these low caste women have higher status in their own families. The study has focused that women's mobility and economically active can help women empowerment, Cameron (1995).

Census data shows that women's status as household heads have been increasing. As for decision making concerns, female are still in greater disadvantaged compared to male-headed households. There are few families where female are respected as male counterparts in day today life in the Madheshi families. It has seen that poverty is higher in female headed household. Infact the true picture of Nepalese women, are suppressed, exploited, neglected. Majority of such communities have forced to live insecure life due to illiteracy, ill health, poverty, discriminatory practices and also biased legal system. In Terai and especially in rural areas, social customs create greater vulnerability for women. In local level, even elected women have less voiced and very few of them occupied position in the DDC/VDC or key sub-committees where budgetary decisions are made ADB (2004); CBS (2011).

Another important empirical research for the U.S. Agency for International Development USAID/Nepal (1996), surveyed rural women of Nepal to know what extent these women felt

empowered and their views on their empowerment. The study found that women feel empowered when they are literate and stand economically on their own legs, making decisions in the households and also when they feel confident to keep their words in front of others.

This research as well other above mentioned researches all have showed that women empowerment is the indicator of women's status and for the empowerment women's socio-economic and political status should improve to feel women themselves empowered.

2.7 Research Works on Women and Gender in Other Countries

The family status variables directly affect wife's employment; they also influence the level of education and need for additional family income, which likewise affect employment, Sweet (1973), a demographer and a sociologist contributed literature on economic status of wives by focusing in an analysing data of 1960 census data specifically on the relationship between demographic and socio-economic composition of the family as a unit and the employment characteristics and earnings of married women. He analysed the relationship between family status which is measured by age of youngest child and number of children and paid employment of white and non white wives with husband present for different educational and economic classes. His analysis documented. He concluded that the wives were employed with increasing age of child about 12-13 and after that the proportion of wives remained constant at about 43%. There were also a less strong but independent negative influence on employment of mothers was the numbers of children in the family under age 18. He also found that low levels of educational attainment frequently prevented meetings the economic needs posed by low family income because jobs were not available.

In 1974, over 38 million adult American earned no income whatever; of the 30 million women who were employed their median earnings were \$ 6335 per year, compared with \$ 11,186 for men. These none earning or low earning women cannot be said to have adequate control over their own lives, cited in Champan (1976).

Amartya Sen's work provides a number of concepts for understanding the well beings of women and the role of freedom that support the notion that women as human beings should be able to make their own choices for promoting their personal well being and good life. He

focused that for facilitating women's agency achievements and for enhancing their positive freedoms, the state should offer the means to achieve these goals (such as education, health, land, well paid jobs and so on). He also suggests that for achieving well-being we should have well nourished and healthy to having self-respect, human dignity and ability to participate in community life, Sen Amartya (1985); (1996).

Most of the empirical research has been somewhat narrowly focused on the relationship of single indicators like women education, employment with fertility or contraception. Researchers have now recognized that women's status depends on many factors and has multiple dimensions, Mahmud and Johnston (1994); Mason (1995) in Sen and Batliwala (1998). However it has also described in theory that women are themselves masculine in their mentality. But they want right on the decisions of the next child so that they can control birth and it was supposed to take prosperity after birth control see, Ungern-Sternberg's theory of Rationalism in Shriwastava (2004).

Sen's concept of well being helps us to understand those women who are still backward and living in no self respect and identity and also less empowered in taking decision about themselves or about their children as well as the elements intervening in such decisions, such as women's educational levels, their assessment of paid work, their possibilities of employment and the need of population policies for women empowerment (i.bid).

According to a study on the relationship between contraception use and women's well being by taking decision about their own health care in six Mexico rural communities on 300 women of age 30-39 years in 1998, the study explores that there is positive relationship between paid work and increasing power to take decision of their own health care. However in rural Chiapas, a fair number of women do not participate in the decisions that directly concern their bodies and their health. Among them there were few employed women who were denied autonomy in decision making but the percentage is high among home-based women, Nazar, Zapata, and Vazquez, (1998) Cited in Sen (2003). Thus Sen's work provides both gender identity (individual) and socio-economic elements which determine the status of women.

There are triple role of women, which should be recognized by the state and the society. Generally in both developing and developed countries women are only recognized in productive works. Reproductive work and community managing works are both seen as their natural and compulsory task, which is not valued in more specifically in the third world. Women's need and interest are different than men needs or interests. The different needs and interest are widely determined by the socio-economic status and also particular class, ethnic and religious structures of individual societies. Women's most of the work that they do is made invisible and fails to be rewarded by the society and most important by the state. On the other hand men's works are always valued, either directly through paid remuneration or indirectly through status and political power both by the society and the government; see Wallace Tina and Candida (1989).

The worldwide empirical evidences indicates that women's empowerment generally has a positive correlation with women status variables like education, employment etc. However most of the researchers and advocates have recognized that women's status depends on many factors including education and employment. In this study, researcher has focused on the decision making autonomy at the household level is the first most important indicator of empowerment because in many societies where women are employed and well educated have been facing unequal treatment between male and female and are still force to live in lower status in male dominant society cited in, Agrawala Rina and Scott M. Lynch (2006).

Gita Sen and Srinath Batiwala have presented paper in seminar entitled 'Female Empowerment and Demographic Processes: Moving Beyond Cairo, held in Lund, Sweden, 21-4, April, 1997 both have focused on different indicators of women empowerment of south Asian countries. They argues that empowerment of women is necessary for securing reproductive and sexual rights and for getting autonomy to take part in decision at the household levels and also outside of the households which indicates the status in a society .Presser and Sen (1998). The research goes on argue that empowering women is important to secure their decision making rights at the household, community and the country.

According to Sen (1998) empowerment is that thing in which women have to do for themselves. They have to change their awareness and confidence level, policies and actions or attitudes of

those people who are in charge of programmes. Who can either create supportive environment or act as disturbing variables. These problems face those women who have less decision making status in the household or the community and have less control over resources. She also argues women empowerment is the powerful within the households, communities, control over their resources and decision making and getting all health facilities and other services to be healthier women.

However the woman who suffers from the multiple oppressions of gender, class, race or caste often led such disadvantage and marginalized lives. In this condition empowering of these women of individual groups is difficult task for any country. In this condition group processes may be the one of the mechanism to give them coercive pressure unless the groups develops an ethic of mutual respect for each other through their greater sense of worth. Batiwala (1996).

Paula England (1998) argues that women's empowerment is related with actor's self interest which is influenced by the use of power. Jejeebhoy, 1995 also focuses on gender power relations which help to measure the status variables. Naila Kabeer, a socio-economist in 1999 advocates on behalf of women for the empowerment of women. She presents three dimensions of power which are essential for the getting ability to exercise women choice. One of them Resources include not only material resources but also various human and social resources which help to enhance the ability to exercise choice. For example family, market, community, help to reflect the rules and norms of the society. The second dimension is agency which includes process of decision making where women exercise their own life choices according to their goals and desires and finally they achieve which is also a third dimension, for well being outcomes as their goals. According to Sathar and Kaji (1997) analysis female empowerment and autonomy is based on control over resources. Control over resources is measured by the women who have final say in decision making of keeping earnings and expenditure within the households. In this the women who enjoy more are more empowered than who do not. While Kabeer (1999) argues that the ability to choose is central to the concept of power and decision making autonomy depends on this power. Jejeebhoy (1997) also focuses that some women have autonomy to control of their own lives and have equal voices but they have no control over material resources and other resources like access to knowledge and information.

A woman always wants to serve herself for the well being of her society. She very rarely thinks about herself as a individual and she should act according to her wish but in many developing countries these women are very less empowered and have less capability to make choices. In this Fierlbeck (1995) suggests that women would be more capable to make choices if they view themselves as individuals than members of a social group, cited in Kabeer (1999). While Jackson (1996: 497) says women generally prioritise their children needs. But there is only chances of empowerment and status in a society when one think for her by being a little less selfless and self-sacrificing. In such contexts Lloyd (1995:17) gave some different suggestion. According to his analysis if income permits it is better to live separate from mother or joint family to enjoy more autonomy in decision making which does not find in joint family Kabeer (1999).

This argues is not completely suitable for countries like Nepal. Where joint family system is seen prestige for society and for getting autonomy it is not applicable for all communities. However single family system is increasing day by day. It also indicates better position of women. The world wide empirical evidences indicates that women's empowerment is generally has a positive correlation with women's status variables i.e education, employment etc. However most of the researchers and advocates have recognized that women's status depends on many factors.

Shaffer's (1998) study from West Africa found that women themselves have internalized their own lesser status in society by following social norms and practices associated with son preference, discrimination against daughters, the dominance role of mother-in-law to their daughter-in-law. These women discriminate against other females in that society. Similarly violence against women is also one of the serious problems. Studies have shown that violence against women through state agencies in the community and in the family is a manifestation of poor and unequal status of women in the family and in the society. It also indicates gender discrimination and inferior status of the society. The study conducted in India, Srilanka and Pakistan reported that dowry violence was common and also many forms of violence like beating, burning, psychological abuse as well as internal abuse were also very common in these countries, Goonesekere (2004).

This finding from the study clears that all gender inequalities are not always the cause of lower status of women but sometimes women themselves create obstacles to other women's development. This is not only seen in African Countries but also true for South Asian Countries. For example Kabeer (1999) clears that mostly women have internalized their social status as persons of lesser value. Such behaviour can have adverse effect on their own well being and also to other family members.

In such society women easily digest the torture given by husband or other male/female family members. They think that female should make happy to their husband and all family members according to their desire and wish. These women feel happy if they do and follow all the rules, regulations and given responsibility as their wish. Basus (1992) study observed notable contextual effects on a variety of dimensions of their autonomy. The study compares autonomy status of women of North and South India residing in the same slum Delhi. The study findings show that women's autonomy was different among Muslim and Hindu women. It has also studied on the decision-making autonomy on the movement of women, care of the children, small and big household expenditure etc. This study can be used as basic ideas of women's autonomy status for the present study.

Correa and Petchesky (1994) propose certain ethical principles for the advancement of women's right. Among principles Diversity concerns respecting women of different communities, religions, cultures, traditions, economic conditions, physical state, etc. Similarly Personhood is the recognition of the humanity of each person including right to self determination, autonomy, respect for the individual and his/ her desires and decision making power .See Sen and Batliwala (1998). In the absence of these desires and rights women are deprived from achieving social status and empowerment.

There is a traditional assumption among demographers that employment women's employment discourages fertility which is important indicator of empowerment, Cherlin (1981); Rindufuss and Brewster (1996); Casterline, Lee, and Foote (1996) as it is more in Southern nations but in Northern nations it is quite mixed. In an era some countries of Northern have adopted Pronatalist population policies to increase population growth by encouraging them by providing additional facilities like maternity paid leave, job offer, without loss of seniority benefits etc which might

help to increase fertility with empowerment of these women, England (1998). While this study does not explore all these links between women empowerment and demographic variables, However empowerment decision making rights approaches are relatively new to population studies, they have not been adequately researched or measured to date and there is much we do not know about the sensitivity of indicators of different ethnicity and communities of the same country or and different countries to the type of research method used. In this research the researcher has tried to find out the status of women from different socio-economic and demographic indicators which are also important for women empowerment. Some evidences studied by the social demographer, Cherlin (1981) also shows that increasing labour force participation of women and their earnings also determine the important indicator of empowerment but this has also increased divorce, non marital child bearing and age at marriage, see England (1998). Paula England (1998) presented a model of women's empowerment for the highly industrialized nations of the north. She has examined the empowerment indicators of USA and noted that women who have increased their earnings have been decreasing claim on men's earnings. In this countries the increasing single motherhood, divorce rates disproportionately bear the cost of children may be increasing even as the number of children per woman has declined. Paula England gives stress on the need to achieve women's goal as are males, as a fundamental principles of rights. It results the cost of rearing children and their wishes are shared relatively equally with men and women are equally happy with their lives. Otherwise women may gain access to resources by better job from one source but loose access to those from another source England and Farkas (1986); Cherlin (1981), cited in Sen and Batliwala (1998).

Pietla (1985) describes the gender roles which has been a growing trend towards seeing women as agent and beneficiaries in all sectors and at all levels of the developments processes in the 1980s, Cited in Wallance Tina and Candida (ed) (1991). Development is the process that should involve all members of a society to the same extent, according to their individual needs. So it is vital importance to address the specific needs of women whether working with women alone or within the community as a whole the primary objectives would be to enable women to perform their ability and existing roles better and with self respect.

In both developed and developing countries norms, values play vital role for women empowerment and disempowerment. Anthropologist Peggy Sandy (1981) in its cross- cultural analysis show that many cultures with norms and values have more male dominance and less female empower mainly in pre-industrial societies. The study also show the involvement of men in child- rearing and in household works help in advantage of women and there is less practice of male dominance and women get prestigious roles in the society. This is seen especially in high industrialized societies. Paula England in it's writing presents the countries of highly industrialized of the north, generally the boy and girl children are equally treated in health and nutrition but there is still norms where males are more benefited in parental investment in education or family business. The writer in her basic model focuses on the economic resources which can be both determinant and outcomes of power and power affects outcomes and one's self interest. Such interest would be anything that the women might want. It could be job, education, property, privacy, freedom, freedom, respectful treatment, the desires and so on, Sen and Batliwala (1998).

In less developed countries women are seen as a caretaker of home and their children within four walls of the house. They are generally treated only as a dependent, home taker and have no right to take any decision without getting permission from their husband or other family members. The women of this countries who are very limited no of literate and among them very few do paid job outside of the home have to face double responsibilities and backbites from family members and from others. This unequal treatment results lower quality in performance in employment sectors. Agrawal (1994) says there is more difficulties in owning land for women in South Asia. And this intra-household inequality is very common in consumption of basic things such as food and medical care in Southern nations. See (Blumberg (1991); Behrman (1992); Dwyer and Bruce (1988); Tinker (1990) in Sen and Batliwala (1998).

Decision making and women's empowerment in different social structures, it is needed to identify key features of decision making environments that could contribute to more favorable decision making rights outcomes for women. The situation of women in decision making power is influenced by different factors. In this Caldwell (1982), describes decision making power depends on his/her situation and on different cultural norms and values in the family, the community and the nation. For example Dixon-Mueller and German (1998) puts example from

some parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, powerful elders may restricts to do some activities or control the marital arrangements of young women but sometimes permit them considerable premarital sexual experimentation. But in South Asian countries where Purdah system strictly restricts the women to have premarital sexual relation or to take any decisions without taking permission or consent from the husband or other family members, see, in Sen and Batliwala (1998).

The social inequality are determined by the distribution of material and social resources across and within households and communities according to age, sex, caste, class, occupation, ethnicity, place of residence etc. It also emphasizes that opportunities structures on access to schooling, occupational trainings also results autonomy to take decisions on sexual, marital, health seeking and child bearing, Mason and Plan (1981). In this the role of media, empowerment programs of income generating, access to legal and social services and other forms of social support make women capable to participate in decision making in different areas, Sen and Batliwala (1998). Another example of gender inequality and sex discrimination found in Guinea that there is differences in income and consumption level as well as public decision making level, men are recognized as a male domination in these sectors where female are recognized with heavier workloads at household levels and this persists gender inequality within their own community, Shaffer (1998) .

The family planning programs, increased literacy rate and popular media has been contributing culturally transformative messages in developing countries that can empower women and these key features have identified as a key features of the second demographic transition in Europe .It has been also argued that the role of husband also influence on the status of women, Lesthaeghe (1980); Van de Kaa (1987). Bongarts emphasises on the male responsibility to support not only in households responsibilities but also in economic as well as emotional supports are very much essential for increament of socio-economic and political status of women and their empowerment for change, cited in Sen and Batliwal (1998).

Among the most important indicators of women's status is the positive association between education of women and their employment. Educated women are believed to have greater control in taking decision of their children's health and are more capable of taking decision not

only within home but also at the outside of the home, Caldwell (1979); Cleland (1990) cited in Kishor (1997).

UN (1995) also clears positive association between women's education and women's employment which is also determining factor of demographic change and women empowerment. However Mason (1986) gives examples of some proxies which affect women's status such as age at marriage, age gap between husband and wife etc. Hobcroft (1996) has also linked the women's status with education and health of the infants and he concluded in his summarization that, there is a positive relationship between infant health and survival with women's education, cited in B. Presser and Sen (1998).

The first Egypt Demographic and Health Survey (EDHS) in 1995/1996 from a nationally representative sample of ever married women age 15-49 years provides descriptive information on women's status for large number of indicators of women's characteristics, attitudes, decision making roles, marital and household characteristics, circumstances under which husbands are justified in beating their wives etc. Which are sources to know the situation of women and how much and how many of them are empowered. According to the survey report empowered women follow nontraditional ideas and there is more probability of a child being completely immunized at the right age and survival rate is also high. Similarly those women who participate in all decisions including expenditure decisions have improved their infant health and survival. According to this survey there are still potential restrictions on women's autonomy in such a traditional environment. For example most women (86%) believe that men are justified in beating their wives. There are still restrictions on women's mobility. However all these restrictions on women's autonomy still permits the development of large number of indicators of women's empowerment with the increasing media exposure, economic development and the spread of education. The findings also focus on parent's education and continuity in employment and their familiar environment affects on the status of Egyptian women, Kishor (1997).

Research data from 70 countries showed that only 27 percent of the positions in power and in authority post hold by women. It has also shown that women empowerment has increased but the increment is seen only in informal sectors, which is generally insecure, poorly paid and not

covered by labor legislation or social prestige, cited in [http://www.awid.org/issues-and-analysis/Library/Women-still-sidelined-in-Economic-Decision Making](http://www.awid.org/issues-and-analysis/Library/Women-still-sidelined-in-Economic-Decision-Making).

In South Asian countries, study suggests that women's position at the household mainly in decision making, employment, education etc are mostly influenced by the families, where young women have less voice, less influence over material resources and mostly excluded in the household matters. This results poor status of women in their families. There is also communication lacking between husbands and wives and authority is generally used by senior female of the households. In the case of Nepal study shows that even educated women have less voice in the family in any decision makings. They are not supposed to take advice from women and especially younger women of the families, see Furuta and Sarah (2006).

John Hobcraft in his writing presents the consequences of female empowerment to their children in the case of both developed and developing countries. His view on the female empowerment is the measurement of degrees of control over material assets, intellectual resources and ideology for both women and men by the nature of the state and society and by their class, race and social status. He concludes that partial empowerment in a gender-inequitable society can have negative consequences because on one side female have to be overburdened with both responsibilities children caring/rearing and all the household chores which are assigned as traditional role of a woman and on another side the women who are employed have to prove herself that she can do the job as men can do. He ends with his writings that education and employment both are beneficial not only for the woman herself but also to their children wellbeing, see Presser and Sen (1998). A comparative study by Jejeebhoy's (1997), on women empowerment and their status from Tamil Nadu which is a Southern State of India and categorized with very high literacy level and Uttar Pradesh which is one of its northern state and both states lie at two extremes of the social and cultural spectrum in India. Her study explores the effects of range of variables on women's autonomy. She used the measures of women's autonomy in both states including women's role in decision making; mobility of women; freedom from threat by the husband; access and control over the economic resources. The findings of her studies explore that the women in Tamil Nadu have experienced better position in all indicators of autonomy than women of Uttar Pradesh. She also found that the traditional factors play greater role in household deciding decision making autonomy and

greater freedom from domestic violence. For example in Uttar Pradesh the woman who brought large dowries with them to their marriages, who have given birth to a number of son children, who have engaged in paid and the women who lived in nuclear family residence are closely related with women's autonomy in UP than more egalitarian context of Tamil Nadu where women are more empowered not due to bringing large dowry or having more son. In Tamil Nadu women are empowered mainly due to female education and female employment. However in UP education was seen less important and less significant with autonomy of a women. It is also found in this research that age differences between spouses and household economic status appear to have little influence on decision making authority in UP. Similarly this study also explores that traditional factors, norm, values and practices are powerful determinants of women's autonomy in different regions like Tamil Nadu and UP. Gender discrimination is deeply rooted in many societies in most of the developing countries. There is gender equality which promotes women to be empowered and reduce power imbalances and give women more autonomy to manage their lives. Women empowerment refers to the process of fortifying the status of women in pursuit of equality in every path of life.

According to an empirical research in Bangladesh on the indicators of women's empowerment also found some more indicators of women's empowerment. It included mobility, economic security, and ability to make purchases, involvement with husband in major decisions, participation in political and legal awareness programs, Schuler and Riley (1996). Women were of the opinion that above all areas are important and needed in practice in their families and the nation to empower Bangladeshi women. Similarly in Bangladesh women's status as a whole also determines by the norms of 'Pardah' and 'Lajja'. A study among Bangladeshi women also found that women's status in terms of decision-making autonomy, freedom etc was high among lower caste ethnic groups. These women were not dependent on their male members of the family and women equally exercise power in the households. These women did not follow the Pardah system because of the poor socio-economic condition and they had to do work outside. On the other hand upper caste women or in rich families women had to follow all the rules and restrictions of the family, their status increased when they followed lajja and pardah system, Stoeckel (1980). Another study in Sri Lanka on gender and domestic decisions demonstrates that women who control family decisions do not necessarily control the other social and organizational power. The findings of this research also showed as have shown in many studies

that education and employment are the first important variables which played an important role in determining women are input in financial decisions and increase women's status, Malhotra and Mather (1997). While in Indonesia, another empirical research shows better socio-economic status than other Muslim countries. Women's role in financial management authority is very central in their household. Having this authority women are more economically and socially active both inside and outside of the household, which is restricted in other predominantly Muslim societies in Western and Southern Asia, Dwyer and Bruce (1988). This is the very good example, which encourages many Muslim women as well other caste/ethnic groups of women to be empowered. The situation of Indonesian women is now in 21st century has been better than in 1988.

The status of women has been changing somewhat over the few years. But women are still powerless and dependent upon men, their isolated and vulnerable positions among their husband's kin puts her in a poorer position. In Northern Kinship women must give son as her husband and his family sex preferences and woman herself internalized this sex preference. The woman who gives birth of only daughters has to suffer in many ways. A study in India by Dyson and Moore in 1983 compared the social status of women of the North India and South India. In this comparative study it was concluded that North Indian women usually had no choice in the selection of their husband. The wife givers were socially and ritually inferior to the wife takers. Dowry was more common and senior female members dominate young female members in the families. In this society women are strictly controlled in mobility and they had to follow Pardah system and they only can interact with women or female teachers. On the other hand the situation of South Indian women was opposite. They were more empowered where neither marriage nor dowry was important. They enjoyed a higher social status and they had ability to influence and make decisions covering the full range of personal and household affairs. According to the very recent research report conducted in India on the 'Status of Women in Bihar: Exploring Transformation in Work and Gender Relations', in rural Bihar founds the same situation of Madheshi women in Nepal Datta and Rustagi (2012)

This study shows that within a country like India there is vast difference in socio-economic status of women in different states, which is also true in Nepal. The situation looks almost same

in Nepal because in Terai districts women are less empowered than other Hill and Mountain districts of Nepal.

In south Asian Countries data shows that women and children especially young girls are likely to be discriminated against in the distribution of food, clothes, health facilities and so many other life preserving resources, Sen (1990).

In Sub-Saharan Africa, the position of women and children are often nutritionally better-off in households where women have controlled over the income and crops earned by them, Longhurst (1988). The situation of Somalian has been also changing. They undertake local trading and other activities not related to their household chores. They can now buy and sell the agriculture products by themselves. It indicates that they have autonomy to buy and sell at least agriculture products. But in rural areas they are still economically weak and dependent on their husbands. Female land or house ownership is marginal women are brought up from childhood to be very loyal and obedient to her father and her society and her all decisions concerning her life take by the male members of her family either her fathers and or brothers and after marriage her husband or father in law or brother in law. Somalian women who are living in urban areas generally do job as teachers, nurses, street sweepers, office cleaners and so on. However after the adaptation of compulsory education and written in local Somali language in 1972 and 1975, female literacy status has remarkably changed. But parents still prefer to send their sons thinking that boys increase their social status through education while girls improve their status through early marriage, Ibrahim (1991). The situation of Somalian women is not very much different with the situation of Madheshi women in Nepal. Only after the Madhesh Aandolan, the issues of Madheshi people have been recognizing by the Nepal Government. Many women of this community are coming outside of the house and actively involving in decision making level but the situation inside the household is still worse. So it has recognized that in every community gender awareness is necessary to minimize gender discrimination. Gender awareness in any developing society generally means able to recognize women's issues and the central issue is the equality with men in different areas of development. Longwe (1991) suggested that women's social and economic situation are dependent on women's access in productive works on the basis of equal access to land, labour, credit, education and marketing facilities as well as all the facilities given by the state. It is also described that one can feel equality only the removal of all forms of discrimination against women. Women are the

creatures and producers of their material need and they should be given autonomy to take decisions in the family matters as well as national matters which produce a higher degree of empowerment and development.

In developed countries like Canada have also facing same problems which women of developing world have been facing. According to a survey conducted in Canada among adult women found that education is important to get status in the society but many adult women across Canada and developing countries leave school early mainly because of shyness, early pregnancies, work load at home and also embarrassment. Women are still forced to stay home from school. They have no choice rather than doing household chores (especially in rural areas). Women face cruelty or abuse experience in school, socialization to wife/mother roles. The most general conception of men's attitude why women need education at all also hampered many women's desire to get education. It is also felt during study that women, who had participated in women's literacy program, felt shy, stupid incompetent and also very poor level of confidence and ambitions, Miller (2004). The findings of the research in England also reveals that many women of this country were financially better off after leaving their husbands, despite the fact they have to survive on state welfare, Pahl (1984).

This shows that both in developing countries as well as in developed countries women's status is lower but those women are involved in productive works they enjoy more autonomy in decision making. Similarly men keep maximum amount of their incomes for their own use or other purposes and it deprives to get needed resources to their wives and children. A study conducted on the status of Muslim women in India concluded that Muslim women are far behind in the area of gender equalities in education, employment, marriage. Despite of improvement in many socio-economic sectors in many caste/ethnic groups in India Muslim women are still facing discriminatory practices in the families and in their societies. Their status is lower than Hindu caste/ethnic groups, see Hasan and Menon (2004). The same situation finds in Nepal. Madheshi women of all caste/ethnic groups have lower status than other Pahadi Hill caste/ethnic groups of women.

The following areas of empowerment indicators illustrate the consistency among definitions of empowerment/autonomy in decision-making. Since in many developing countries like Nepal,

most of the marriages take place at the adolescent age and lower age at marriage is also an important determinant of population change and status or empowerment because it affects on their education, employment, fertility, mortality, decision making autonomy etc. In these countries there is lacking proper research on adolescent and lacking proper policies and programs which could help to empower these groups and they can get status in their society by taking proper decisions according to their desire. For instance, Gage writes empowering adolescent girls by providing them knowledge or information for effective and responsible decision making about future sexual activity; the freedom to decide how many children to have and when to have them; the right to family planning information. See Presser and Sen (1998). There is very little known about how a woman becomes empowered to make decisions according to her desires. There is still much to be done in the area of women's autonomy and empowerment. Because it has been seen that both educated women and employed women have been facing same problem as uneducated and unemployed women face in rigid patriarchal society where women are also many times responsible for not giving chance to take part in any decision at the household level, Chaudhari (2008). Another remarkable study by Dreze and Sen (1995) in India, noted from the findings that the women's literacy and employment status affects the child mortality and especially female mortality among children. According to the study on Islam women it was found that most women preferred to live in seclusion on the grounds which reduces their work load and increase their prestige in the society, Barkow (1972) cited in Chapman (1976). Similarly the practice of seclusion, or Purdah, is regarded by us as an extreme form of backwardness. Yet such seclusion or Purdah is spreadly today in parts of Asian and many Muslim countries in the world. This system is mostly followed by upper caste women in Asian Countries. They think it helps to increase their status in the society, Smith (1954), cited in Chapman (1976)

A study in America by Morgan, Sirageldin, and Baerwaldt (1966), identified the three important variables which are affecting the supply of wives in labour market are age of wife, income of husband, and education of wife. Similarly Ross (1974) in his research also looks in white non farm couples in the timing (birth of first child) and spacing (length of interval between child births) of children as a reflection of economic forces. More highly educated women, for whom the price of time is higher, had their first birth sooner after leaving school and had shorter birth

intervals, reflecting Ross' suggestion of cost efficiency in decision making about child bearing in a situation where the price of time was high and the earnings profile steeply rising.

Ideally, the researcher would try to identify the key sources of influence or social condition of the women who are residing in Terai area where women are treated differently and have different norms, values and culture in different caste/ethnicity residing in the same place called Madhesh, which lies in Terai ecological region of Nepal. Women's work (outside the home), research continues to be important as a reflection of changing attitudes and sex roles. But number of additional issues also reflecting the changing times for women of different societies. For example the economic activities are influenced by the number of children and the interval between first birth and second birth of a child. In this (Ross research looks variation in economic forces among white nonfarm couples at the time of first child birth and length of interval between child births, Ross (1974).

2.8 Efforts of Women Emanicipation in Nepal

2.8.1 National Efforts

I present here how specific issues gain recognition of problems as problems, the development of arrange of solutions and the engagement of the political sector with particular problems and solutions. Most importantly, it draws attention to the crucial role of local leaders, national leaders, Madheshi leaders, and all policy activists, who can role as a social motivator by making women friendly policies and bringing programs in needy area and needy people.

It has been great importance in effective gender mainstreaming policies. These policies have ensured for the ratification of Optional Protocols to CEDAW for promoting gender equity and women's rights. Similarly women development offices in all 75 districts in Nepal are working for gender related issues at the local level to empower women and for the disadvantaged groups of the society. Some measure programs include women's development programs, mainstreaming gender equity programs (MGEP), Beyond trafficking, district women level Task

Force against trafficking, various women empowerment programs, gender friendly reproductive health programs. There are many groups like Mother Groups, Women Farmer's Groups, Forest Users Groups; Women Health Volunteers are also working directly/indirectly for the women empowerment.

There was separate Ministry established in 1995 as the Ministry of Women and Social Welfare and now it is converted as the Women Children and the Social Welfare in 2000. The MWCSW and the Department of Women's Development have been successfully coordinating several programs/projects that have been directly dealing with gender related concerns of men and women. There are also some publications on the gender related issues in different communities of Nepal published by these sectors, are one of the important source to know situation of women in Nepal.

Nepal Government has formulated there major plans, namely CEDAW Action Plan, Action Plan as a follow-up to Beijing Platform for Action and Action Plan for Anti-trafficking. These all programmes are mainly coordinated by Ministry of Women Children and Social Welfare (MWCSW) and implemented by the respective line ministries in close collaboration with various NGOS/INGOs and civil societies, MWCSW (2005).

In this fiscal year 2011/12 (2068/69 B.S) President Dr Ram Baran Yadav has presented Governments Policies and Programmes in the parliament. In this policies and programmes it has stressed on Gender equity and Gender mainstreaming to develop economic, social and political empowerment. In which Nepal Government has made policies to empower women in all VDCs. It has also addressed to make effective laws to discourage gender violence. Similarly the policies have also covered adolescent girls and eradicate poverty among women who are below the Gender Development Index (GDI). To decrease drop out rate of girls and encourage girls enrollement in schools, there is policy to make toilets especially for girls in schools, Nepal Government's Policies and Programs (2011/12).

2.8.2 Policy and Programmes in different periods

The Local Self- Governance Act 1999 specifically adopted strategy at the village level and district levels to promote women's empowerment. According to the Local Self Governance Act

(1998), sections 172 (2), 176, 190 (2) describe 'at least one-woman representative on each district Development Committee, and on District Councils'. It has also made provisions for women to be included in various sub-committees of the DDC. Similarly sections 80 and 76 (2), there is provisions of the two nominated members in municipalities, one should be female and altogether forty percent of nominated members in Municipal Council should also be women. There should be one woman ward member in all wards and municipalities, Social Protection Study (2004). These steps show there is range of legislation in Nepal that promotes positive steps for the protection and empowerment of women in politics so that women can raise their status in the society.

Similarly the government has made several efforts to address gender issues through plans and policies such as the periodic plans (Eight Plan, Ninth Plan, Tenth Plan, and current Three Years Periodic Plan in particular), National Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment, although planning processes in Nepal was started since 1956 (2013 B.S) but there was no specific policy on women development at that time. Prior to the Sixth Plan 1975-1980 (2032-2036 B.S), there was still not specific programs which address women's issues. The plan to uplift the status of women began with Sixth Five Year Plan. The sixth five year plan attempted to increase empowerment of women with their participation in development processes by improving their socio-economic conditions.

The Seventh Five Year Plan 1985-90 (2042-2047 B.S) recognized illiteracy and poverty and poor health facilities as the main obstacles for women's development. During this period Women's Division was created by the Government of Nepal under the Ministry of labour in 1987 to paid attention to the welfare of women in labour force and productive sectors.

The Eight Five Year Plan 1992-1997 had adopted inclusive policy for women in national development to improve their situation. While Ninth Five Year Plan 1997-2002, took a strategic direction further with more initiatives that sought to abolish gender discrimination and empower women. The Tenth Plan (2002-2007), has moved ahead by endorsing the Gender and Development Approach (GAD) to address the gender issues. GAD focuses on the relationship between men and women in terms of social, economic and political relations in development activities in the nation. The Tenth plan also gave emphasis to abolish gender discrimination to

empower women by removing social, legal, economic and other social taboos which hamper women's status, NPC and MOPE (2003). The tenth plan had integrated gender concerns in the program of some major sector; including education, health, agriculture and decision making positions of government services. These plans no doubt adopted a four pillar strategy of women's development. In this National Five Year Plans women have been the heart among the priorities. Today necessity is to make women self reliant for their advancement and to enable them to spend their life with dignity in order to integrate women in the mainstreaming of the nation building process.

The Interim Plan has also adopted some important objectives as:

- (i) The Interim Plan have ensured that women have equal rights in all national development activities as well as in social, political, and economic aspects of women's life;
- (ii) Build an inclusive and equitable society on the basis of women's empowerment and affirmative action;
- (iii) Ensure active participation by oppressed and marginalized women from indigenous groups, dalits, differently able people and the victims of poverty at all levels by enhancing their social, economical, and political development at all levels and in all aspects;
- (iv) Eliminate all kinds of violence and discrimination against women;

It has also made commitments to ensure different rights of women under various national and international documents including different policies and programs as given in above paragraph and in constitutions. The government policies and the legal framework are still far from complete to achieve the desired goals of these governments' efforts on women's empowerment.

Nepal Population Perspective Plan 2002-2007 proposed guidelines to future periodic plan and also by identifying gaps in existing policies. PPP realized that gender issues are the one of the most important problem for the population management. It has focused on legal, institutional and socio-economic discrimination against women and also control over resources with intervention measures, New ERA (2006).

Similarly PPP has also focused on poverty dimensions, Reproductive Health, migration, regional socio-economic development and also suggest implementation mechanisms and

institutional arrangements for the affective results with respect to population management programmes. Gender equality is the heart of the PPP where women are placed at the centre and allowed to make their own decisions and both preventive as well as curative measures will have focused on the burning issue of violence against women. PPP has treated both male and female as couples. It has seriously targeted to eliminate social practices like child marriages, dowry system and discriminatory practices all have resulted low status of women.

In this plan Gender is described at policy level as:

“ Nations are judged by the well-being of their people: the overall status of their health, nutrition and education, the civil and political liberties they enjoy, the protection guaranteed to women and children and the position made for the vulnerable and the disadvantaged, most nations today are opting for the concept of sustainable human development since it places people at the core of development”

UNFPA (2003).

Thus PPP, takes due account of the vulnerabilities of women who rank at the bottom of several indicators of socio-economic status and devices measures adopt to minimize discrimination against them.

2.9 History of Constitution of Nepal

A review of the history of constitution agency in Nepal indicated that women participation in the constitution making process has been extremely limited. It is also limited policies regarding women's empowerment in 6 constitutions till Interim Constitution. In previous 1948 A.D, the first Constitution of Nepal, prepared by Rana Prime Minister had not addressed gender issues in it. Some provisions such as equality, equal salary, and reproductive health care were only addressed in the second Constitution by King Tribhuwan on Chhaitra 2007 B.S. The third Constitution promulgated by king Mahendra on Falgun 2015 B.S.This constitution also did not contain any special provisions for women except for the right to equality. There was no participation of any woman in this Constitution making process in those three periods. First time Angur Baba Joshi was the one woman member of the Constitution drafting committee in 1963 A.D. The Constitution drafted the provisions of equality that children could obtain citizenship in the name of either father or mother.

The Constitution of Nepal-1990 guarantees equality to women in all aspects of life. Article 11 (3) of the Constitution enables the government to take special measures for the empowerment of women in all parts of Nepal. The right to participate in decision making level influences one's individual and collective life, which is also the essence of democracy. In Nepal the Constitution has already provided equal rights to both male and female and the fundamental rights are also guaranteed, but the people of Nepal are seen to be enjoying them in unmeaningful way in the absence of opportunities for economic and social advancement at the same place. This Constitution was considered progressive in recognizing the Nepali citizen as sovereign and a number of fundamental rights, including equality. Still there was some discriminatory provision in getting citizenship for women and children. It stated that, if Nepalese woman marries with a foreign citizen, her husband cannot become a citizen of Nepal. On the other hand, if a Nepalese man marries with foreign citizen, she is easily entitled to Nepalese citizenship. Similarly another discrimination also found in this constitution that is a child cannot get citizenship in the name of mother, Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal (1990).

Women's activists started to demand the end of such discriminatory legal provisions and practices against women. As a result after long struggle in 2002, the 11th amendment of the Muluki Ain was drawn up. This amendment was considered a milestone in the Nepalese women's movement in the country. It has still not fully guaranteed the rights of women and ended other discriminatory legal provisions but women got partial property rights and rights to conditional abortion. These legal rights have helped many women to save their and their children's lives and also helped in population control indirectly. During The Constitution drafting some special provisions also included like right to equality, protection of backward women, and special provisions for development, rights against exploitation and improvement in women's health and empowerment. It also included the provisions of five percent women's candidate in the House of Representative and three seats representation in the Upper house. However there was no any woman member in the Constitution Drafting Committee.

Nepali women played a tremendous role in the success of the 2006 A.D., second democratic movement of Nepal after 12 years violent conflict, ending the autocratic system of monarchy and a newly drafted Constitution, 2006. This Constitution made some historically progressive provisions in favors of women. Many discriminatory provisions including women's property

rights, provision of getting citizenship from father or mother's name, inclusion of women's right under fundamental rights, the inclusion of 33 percent women representation in the Constitution Assembly were amended. Similarly it has also adopted inclusive policy on state restructuring to address the deprived, marginalized communities (women, Dalits, Janjaties, Madheshi) who has been oppressed, neglected by the state, by ending discrimination based on class, language, sex, culture and religion, CEDPA Nepal (2008).

The present Constitution the interim constitution of Nepal 2063 B.S. (2006 A.D.), also known as a more inclusive role in the protection of women's rights and addressed the women's issues very broadly. For example:-

Article 12. Right to Freedom

Article 13. Right to Equality

(1) There shall be positive discrimination against the citizen, for the protection of interests of women, dalit, janjati, indigenious ethnic tribes, Madheshi, or peasants, labourers, economicall, or peasants, labourers, economicall, socially, culturally backward and children, the aged disabled and those who are physically or mentally incapacitated. There shall be no discrimination with regard to remuneration and social security between men and women for the same work.

(2) All citizens shall be equal before the law. No person shall be denied the equal protection of the laws.

Article 14. Right against Untouchablity and Racial discrimination

Article 17. Education and Cultural Right

Article 18. Right regarding Employment and Social Security

Article 19. Right to Property

Article 20. Rights of women

- (1) No women shall be discriminated against in any way on the basis of gender.
- (2) Every woman shall have the right to reproductive health and other reproductive rights.
- (3) No physical, mental or other form of violence shall be inflicted on any women, and such an act shall be punishable by law.
- (4) Sons and daughters shall have equal rights to ancestral property.

Article 21. Right to Social Justice

- (1) Women, Dalit, indigenous tribes, Madheshi community, oppressed groups, the poor and the laborers, who are economically, socially, or educationally backward, shall have the right to participate in the state mechanism on the basis of proportional inclusive principles.

In the context of Nepal, although there have been the provisions in the constitutions that state can initiate special arrangements for women's development. The state has not been sensitive towards this provision. As the result, majority of women are victims of domestic and other forms of violence, and women's representation and participation in the decision making level of the state is negligible. All these events show the situation of gender discrimination and unequal power relations between men and women and also between one community and another community, see CEDPA Nepal (2008) and The Interim Constitution (2006).

In 2007 A.D. for the first time in Nepal history of the 601 Constituent Assembly members, 197 CA member has taken responsibilities to make Constitution but still not drafted, even in the given time periods.

In fact, women only can get meaningful progress which favors women's status when all women unite to make the best possible constitution. The huge participation of women of different caste/ethnic communities in the CA can only be successful, when they bring positive changes in socio-economic status of all women who are living around Nepal by making women friendly Constitution. Even now women who occupied 33% of the seats in CA, their meaningful participation remain a challenge. Every woman has hoped that 197 women will bring women friendly Constitution which will help to develop all women's status by ensuring their position in all sectors and at all levels.

2.9.1 International Efforts

As addressed in the topic national and international efforts, women have been struggling very hard since many decades. Today due to national and international efforts, drastic changes have taken place in the women's life. International efforts at various levels are indicated to achieve equality without sex discrimination not only women but also men are equally supporting the movements of women's development. In 1910, women of the USA, China, Brazil, and Dominican Republic struggled for the elimination of discrimination between men and women and for the first time in 1911 March 08 was celebrated as the 'Women's Day' in Austria, Denmark, Switzerland and the U.S.A. They all had equal voiced for economic and social rights as equal to male counterparts, Subedi (1999). It was landmark international efforts to advancement of women in all over the world. As a result in 1945, when United Nations was set up, many nations committed to work for the women's rights by getting equality between men and women. With these efforts UN Commission on Status of Women was set up in 1946 in order to promote political, economic, and social rights of women. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations in 1948, provides that "all are equal before law" and that everyone is entitled to all rights and freedoms "without distinction of any kind", specifically listing sex as an impermissible basis for distinction. In 1949, UN Conventions adopted a Treaty against Women Trafficking and Prostitution. In 1951, International Labor Organization (ILO) adopted a treaty on Equal Wages for Equal Labor without Discriminating Men and Women. In 1952, UN Convention adopted a treaty on the Right to Vote as Women's Political Right. The convention also recognized that everyone has the right to exercise political rights, to take part in the government of his/her country and has the right to equal access to public service with equal status of men and women. It also underlines the importance of full participation of women as both agents and beneficiaries in the development processes. Which were also important for sustainable development of the country. In 1957, UN Convention on the Nationality of Married Women adopted their right to change their citizenship after their marriage. In 1972, members of UN finally did agreement to celebrate International Women's Year and in 1975 all the member nations of UN celebrated as International Women's Year with the slogan of Equality, Development, and Peace, MOWSW (1998). Thus UN began to support women by realizing women's role in the society and their contribution to economic and social development. It was realized that women's increasing status and empowerment is necessary for country's development. Since then there are many international women's movements to

promote women's status. There have been various efforts at international level on advancing women's status. Various International Conventions have adopted and endorsed by the member nations including Nepal.

2.10 Conventions on gender and women

Recognizing the need of women empowerment and eliminating all forms of discrimination against women or girl child, The CEDAW (1979), documented women are discriminated, actions and policies are needed in those necessary areas, areas of trafficking and sexual exploitation of women, exploitation in political and public life, nationality, education, employment, health, social and economic benefit, marriage and family status, law and in civil society and international representation and participation. The comprehensive and milestone document in the process of improvements in women's status and empowerment is the convention in Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Woman (CEDAW), is signed by Nepal in 1991. Nepal has committed itself to making rapid progress towards Constitutional and legal equalities in all fields to promote women's status by ending discriminatory practices against women. However the issues identified in this convention were challenging issues to raise the status of women.

In 1993, The Vienna Declaration and Program of Action also stated the equal status of women and the human rights of women should be monitored for the advancement of women. It also urged to address the issue of gender-specific abuses and human rights abuses and also encouraged to do work for the needy groups, Bhandare (2008).

International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo from 5 to 13 September in 1994, stressed on the empowerment and autonomy of women in economic, social, political and health status to achieve status in the society. This conference advised the member states to adopt bold steps in fighting various kinds of discriminatory practices between male and female in the society. It was realized that improving status of women also enhances their decision making capacity at all levels in all spheres of life and population and development programs are most effective to improve the status of women. Cairo conference was the landmark for putting

the issues of women empowerment in the world. There is a separate chapter 'Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women'.

The main objectives of this chapter are:

- a) *To achieve equality and equity based on harmonious partnership between men and women to realize their full potential;*
- b) *To ensure enhancement of women's contributions to sustainable development through their full involvement in policy and decision making processes at all stages and participation in all aspects of production, employment, income generating activities, education, health, science, technology, sports, culture and all population related activities and other active decision makers, participants and beneficiaries;*
- c) *To ensure that all women as well as men, are provided with the education necessary for them to meet their basic human needs and to exercise their human rights.*

To achieve these objectives there are many programs of actions in different agenda in which member states have had signed. This will help to improve women's access to secure their livelihood and economic resources.

The action No.4.29, p.29

"National and Community leaders should promote the full involvement of men in family life and the full integration of women in community life. Parents and schools should ensure that attitudes that are respectful of women and girls as equals are instills in boys from the earliest possible age, along with an understanding of their shared responsibilities in all aspects of a safe, secure, and harmonious family life, ICPD (1994).

The ICPD recommended each country should take action to advance the status of women through their full participation in social, economic, political development including decision making, Dangol (2007:78).

Another landmark event in efforts to achieve full equality for women was the Fourth World Conference on women held in Beijing in 1995. The Beijing Platform identifies "12 critical areas" of action needed to empower women and ensure their human rights: women and poverty; education and training of women; women and health; violence against women; women and

armed conflict; women and the economy; women in power and decision making; institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women; human rights of women; women and the media; women and the environment; and the girl child. It calls on all governments, organizations and individuals to promote and protect women's rights and to work to ensure that equality of both sexes and non-discrimination based on gender exist both in the law and in the practice, United Nations (1996). The critical areas of concern of Beijing Conference, emphasizing that the advancement of women and the achievement of equality between men and women are a matter of human rights, social justice and women's empowerment. All the actions of Beijing has given focus on women's right and empowerment, which is directly related with status of women, through their equal participation in all aspects of domestic life as well as other socio-economic, political, production, employment, income generating activities and full involvement in decision making at all levels including policy making activities.

In 1999, a United Nations review of progress in the five years, since the conference (ICPD+5), recommended a new set of benchmarks to improve women's condition, especially in developing countries. It had concerned universal access to primary education, with special attention to closing the gender gap in primary and secondary school education, universal access to primary health care, universal access to a full range of comprehensive reproductive health care services, including family planning; reductions in maternal mortality rate/ratio, child mortality rate, infant mortality rate and morbidity and increased life expectancy. The ICPD+5 program of action also recommended promoting inclusive policies and programming towards gender equality. During this, governments were encouraged to protect and promote the human rights of women and girls UNFPA (2000), which has also addressed in Universal Declaration on Human Rights on gender equality in 1948, which recognized no discrimination between any groups of population at least in terms of sex, religion, caste/ethnicity/race, place of residence. The declaration further confirmed that no one would be abused; discriminated, exploited or suppressed on any grounds they are not responsible for (Pokharel, 2005). Another review conference ICPD+10 in the year 2004 again conform the principles and objectives adopted earlier and urged all the participant governments in order to meet the targets. The conference also affirmed the earlier declarations and recommends developing plans and policies in response to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

As in ICPD, review conferences ICPD+5 and ICPD+10, Beijing+5 in the year 2000 and Beijing+10 in the year 2005 were also organized in order to review the achievements of Beijing Conference and obstacles encountered during the implementation of the Platform of action. The review meetings further committed to take the issues of women seriously for the sustainable development of the country. It was recommended to develop women's status focusing on economic opportunities and autonomy, should be given to marginalized women of the country. Similarly participation of women in decision making bodies, strong legislation to prevent sexual violence as well as domestic violence, accessibility of reproductive health services were also recognized during this review conference. Governments were committed to do their best to achieve these goals declared in Beijing conference in their respective countries, UNFPA (2000); (2005).

Despite important progress, women's status is still lower in many developing countries as well as some societies living in developed countries. The rights written in the treaties and consensus documents should address in national laws, policies and programs. Government must take the fundamental decisions to move ahead on gender equality. Legal changes are a matter for sovereign decision; also, in many developing countries civil societies is relatively small and powerless. In such conditions governments are major employees and their rules and practices have a powerful influence on social change. Government is major suppliers of sources such as education, health, and other developments, especially targeted disadvantaged and backward groups. In the case of Nepal women are more disadvantaged, backward and highly discriminated in such patriarchal rigid societies. However in our country NGOs often find it easier than government to work in these sensitive areas and issues.

Nepal has committed to address women empowerment issues as well as other population development issues in various international forums, particularly ICPD 1994 which is presented above and MDGs 2000-2015. There are eight major goals are:

- Eradicate poverty and hunger,
- Achieve universal primary education,
- Promote gender equality and empower women,
- Reduce child mortality,

- Improve maternal health,
- Combat HIV/AIDs, malaria and other diseases,
- Ensure environmental sustainability, and
- Develop a global partnership for development.

All the MDGs have directly/indirectly related with overall development of the human beings and the nation but the third goal is directly related with women empowerment which has been the immediate concern for human resource development. The goals focused that by empowering women, sustainable development will be achieved. To achieve these goals Nepal Government has been launching many policies and programs under the Ministry of Health and Population, Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare and related ministries. There are many programs such as: Reproductive Health Programs, Safe motherhood Programs, Adolescent Reproductive Health Programs, Youth Empowerment Programs etc., have been conducting in different parts of the country, MOHP (1995); (2000); (2001); (2010).

The conference ('World Summit for Social Development, 1995') also addressed on gender equity and equality between men and women and involvement of all parts of societies into development arena. As earlier commitments, this conference also realized and advocates increasing employment opportunities for the poor, marginalized; which are necessary conditions for the overall development of the nation, UN (1995).

All the attempts towards the progress of women are based on the dignity of these rights. In many countries of the world including Nepal, however, lack of awareness of women on their rights and how to utilize them has been obstacle to progress. It is quite clear that because of their poor participation in highest levels to household levels of decision making autonomy, women of this community are dishonored. They should not remain as the show piece or as the decorated dolls covered with pallu (Pardah). In Nepal as well as in whole Nepal with lot ups and downs, women's movement of five decades brought them, feel that they should get justice from the state and the government. Women of all caste/ethnic groups have been demanding their rights to get equal status as men in their respective societies.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Approaches to Methodology

This research study is guided by the conceptual framework and theoretical understanding of social status of women of the Nepalese context. This research study is based on interlink between status of women and the determining factors for exclusion/inclusion of these women in the autonomy to take part in decision making within the household in different caste/ethnic communities of same place of origin (Madhesh). However the issue of social inclusion and exclusion has drawn enough attention of many scholars, researchers, donor agencies, and policy makers in recent years in Nepal, Gurung (2007). Many scholars as well as UNDP have pointed out

“Exclusion is bad, inclusion is desirable and we have to find ways to include the excluded ones”

Subedi (2009).

In the context of Madheshi people in Nepal, has been excluded in many development sectors and when we see the situation of Madheshi women, it is more vulnerable where many women have been discriminated, have very little voice not only at the household but also in outside. They have very little decision making autonomy at the household which is prerequisite for the getting status in the society and increasing status helps both directly and indirectly to empower women. In Wendy (1994) analysis, stresses that women inferior status and social position to their exclusion from public spaces largely result of their limited employment opportunities. Upadhya (1996) also argues same as above that is paid employment will eventually bring women positions with decision making power. There are many arguments about the determining factors of status of women, given by scholars, researchers and most of them placed argument that women's status only be achieved when women involve in paid employment and get education.

My study argues that there are also some socio-economic determinants which determine women's status. Giving attention from recent surveys (Nepal Living Standard Surveys

(2007/08) and reports from Unequal Citizen (2009), these reports argue that in the context of poor countries such as Nepal with full of poor and deprived communities where gender inequality is highly persist in some localities and caste/ethnic communities, the issue of the person's own status either as an insider or as an outsider to the household matters as well as community matters much in the discourse and it should be examined from the sub-regional and local level. Their may be no different from their neighbours because in the case of Parsa District it is closer to Indian Border 'Raxaul' but it has our district has it's own characteristics however some cultures are similar because of open border and marriage relationship between two countries, especially between Terai region of Nepal and Bihar and Uttar Pradesh of India.

However, for getting intensive information regarding socio-economic status of these women, qualitative methods will be given equal weight. Regarding the area coverage, this study will cover selected clusters of Parsa district; however, all the clusters have equal chance to be incorporated within sampling frame. Following methodology will be pursued for carrying out the research to achieve the objectives set up.

3.2 Operational Definitions of Madheshi Women for this research

The currently married woman (who is living currently with her husband) belongs to Madheshi caste/ethnic group living in Parsa district.

3.3 Study Area

Most of the Madheshi people generally reside in the country's Southern most area of Nepal. The Terai region, consisting of the Outer Terai and the Inner Terai, both inhabited by the Madheshi, is a low-lying, fertile and flat land of Southern Nepal. The long, broad valleys at the base of the outer foothills of the Himalayas serve as the northern boundary of the Terai. The area slopes southward to the Nepalese-Indian border at the southernmost area of the country. This southern area is slightly warmer but shares many of the characteristics of the rest of the Terai.

This section of the Terai is of special interest to me because of the Madheshi populations of different caste/ethnicity groups reside there. I choose Parsa district from this region because I

wanted a location at the demographic intersection of the Madheshi, high, middle and low caste/ethnicity groups of different religion of Nepal. In this area women's status is compared with non-Madheshi but has not been properly studied and recognized the status of these women at their household first. I have seen very closely the situation and status of these women whether they belong to high caste groups or other groups, the decision making status is not same. So I decided to know the status of these women at the household level because women should have decision making status at the household then only women could be empowered at the national level.

Parsa district was selected for the study by the researcher because she belongs to the same district and has always been interested to do study on women's decision making autonomy to know their status in their family.

As per the Terms of Reference, this study has covered all the Village development Committees and Birganj sub-metropolitan city. All the 82 VDCs of Parsa district and 19 wards of Birganj sub-metropolitan city had chosen for the sampling universe population. Among them 10 clusters had selected 8 from Village Development Committees and 2 from municipality using Population Proportionate sampling (PPS) technique.

3.4 Data Collection Methods and Instruments

3.4.1 Sources of information

Women of Madheshi community currently living with their husband have been the primary source of the qualitative and quantitative data. Quantitative data generated from the survey from the core of the study, which have been minimally supplemented by a few qualitative data. However, the sources of qualitative information have also included some individuals working for the women empowerment in the governmental and non-governmental organizations for findings out the past achievements and the on going activities of the women empowerment programme. Similarly for both quantitative and qualitative information were reviewed during literature review from different journals, PhD dissertation, research reports, Books and from websites.

3.4.2 Preparation of questionnaire and its contents

Status of women is related to a number of social, cultural, economic, and participatory behaviour. To examine these variables, according to the objectives of the research a number of variables were gathered and put together to frame the questionnaire. Before finalizing the questionnaire, a number of reviews had done to get needed information. The questionnaire was prepared in English language and translated into Bhojpuri language for field survey. To address the maximum possible variables which are important to know the status, the questionnaire was segregated into various sections.

Section 1: There were two sub-sections included General information and household roster information. General information included information on the sample cluster, district, VDC or municipality, household head and respondents and some information for the enumerator and supervisor. Similarly household roster that included information on each individual of selected family of sex, age, literacy status, caste/ethnicity, employment, work in the government sector, marital status, having citizenship, household level facilities, language spoken in the family, types of structure of the house and migration related question were also included.

Section 2: This section attempted to collect information regarding age of the respondent, age at the first marriage, literacy status, participation in saving/credit groups, age gap between husband and wife, involvement in any empowerment programmes, the activities done before marriage, the age at first birth, number of children, perception of son preference and dowry system etc.

Section 3: It deals economic activities of the respondent. It included occupation of the respondent, land ownership, autonomy to buy and sell the cattle and some questions also included related with their perception of the job.

Section 4: This was the most important section of the questionnaire for this study. It included decision making autonomy in different sectors at the household level.

Section 5: Some questions included related with domestic violence for example the respondent suffered any kind of torture by their husband or other family members.

Section 6: It included the knowledge of human resources, communication and awareness. This dealt the condition of women who are closer to different media.

Section 7: Related to political status, this section attempted to address the participation in casting the vote and their knowledge on their name is in voter list or not.

Section 8: The last section of the questionnaire attempted to collect information regarding characteristics of the husbands for example: the age of the husband, their literacy status, occupation status etc.

All the questions used were structured and the language of the question was very simple and in local as well as in English language. The answers of the question were vertically arranged.

3.4.3 Pilot test and its experiences

Pilot test of the survey was conducted three months earlier before the main field survey. The non sampling area had been selected for the pilot test. I and a senior person were involved in pilot test to ensure the quality and utilize the experience for editing the questionnaire and make field operations better. A number of wordings in questions were re-arranged after the pilot test. Pilot test also gave idea the about the total time required to interview.

3.4.4 Instruments

In this research both quantitative and qualitative methods had used for the collection of the data from the field settings with a firm conviction that the combination would contribute to triangulate the findings and arrive at valid generalizations. For this a structured close ended questionnaire was framed and administered among the chosen representative sample groups with a view to collecting all the relevant quantitative data/information. Before drafting the questionnaire, relevant literatures were reviewed to get insight into the issue to be covered to meet the objectives of the research. Before finalizing the questionnaire a pilot test was conducted in non sampling area of some wards of VDC and in some area of municipality. Pilot test also gave some idea about time required to interview a household would be around 45 to 60 minutes, and including the travelling and walking time an enumerator would do some plus minus of 3 questionnaire per day. Researcher herself and one lecturer of Thakur Ram Multiple Campus were involved in pilot test to ensure the quality and utilize the experience for editing the questionnaire and make field operation better. The survey took almost three months to take

information in the study area. Due to political strikes, national holidays and enumerator's personal leave, the time took long in the field survey.

In this study secondary data used to get qualitative information related to the women and their status reviewed. Similarly for quantitative data close ended questionnaires used by taking interview.

A group of qualitative methods were also used to supplement the understanding gained from the qualitative results. The “why” and “how” aspects of the problem under investigation were given importance to know necessary qualitative information. The researcher and two senior supervisors involved in getting qualitative information from the given qualitative methods

3.4.5 Key Informants

Key informant interview was conducted in the village development committees especially where different empowerment program had been running , for collecting the information from the working institutions for the women empowerment.

3.4.6 Focus Group Discussions

Four FGDs conducted among different caste/ethnicity groups and one in mix communities. The main objectives of the FGDs were to ascertain the attitudes of the Madheshi women towards their socio-economic condition and their autonomy to take in decision making at the household level. There were 10-14 participants. Before conducting FGDs researcher had made checklist to utilise for this. The FGDs results were collected and edited in the field only for the clarity and coherence.

Key considerations for focus group discussion were as follows:

- An expert facilitator was carried out the focus group discussion.
- Trained note taker was actively collected information of the discussion.
- There were no more than 15 participants in the discussion.
- The main task of the facilitator was to encourage the equal participation in each discussed issues.
- The group arranged for the discussion was homogenous as well as heterogonous by gender, age group, caste, economic status, education etc.
- A checklist was developed for discussion for each group.

The information obtained from above discussions was analyzed based on Terai regions, caste, age group, income, social security/services/resources accessibility, job, and other Madheshi women related issues.

3.4.7 Case Study

Case studies were generally recorded by the researcher during the field survey. In an attempt to have a better understanding of the factors which inhibit Nepali Madheshi women to challenges the existing/ prevailing sex discrimination, gender discrimination, case studies have focused on information about childhood socialization, natal family environment, schooling, marriage, dowry, son preference, decision making etc. The case studies were recorded initially in the forms of point in the field using checklist, and as far as the possible on the same day they were re-written without distorting the major issues and stories of the cases and finally it was translated into English for the analysis.

A separate checklist was developed and used for each of the above qualitative methods. A copy of each of the checklist appears in the annex?

3.5 Review of the relevant Literatures

Both qualitative and qualitative information is collected during Literature review. In this all the relevant literatures and documents reviewed within the entire phases of the research from designing the conceptual/theoretical framework, data collection tools, analysis and up to final documentation. Human Development report and National Living Standard Surveys of 1997 and that of 2003/4, Nepal Demographic and Health Survey (2006), Population Perspective Plan (2006), Population Monograph of Nepal, District profile as well as National reports published by CBS and different journals, books, articles related with my research etc reviewed to get related information . During this some articles were also reviewed from different websites by searching google. At policy /plan level review of documents including five year development plans, three year plans, relating to the women empowerment was done.

3.6 Field Work Process

Once the research instruments for the collection of quantitative and qualitative data were developed by the researcher, an elaborate training session was organized for the field

enumerator for a period of two days. I hired three female teachers of local community and one supervisor. As a researcher I gave training basically focused on the sampling process to be adopted in the field, contents of research, instruments and each section of the individual questionnaire and household questionnaire. The enumerators did mock interview in pair with a view to enhance their efficiency to interview in the field by helping in possible problems and ways of facing them.

The interviewer were asked to make a good rapport building with local communities and once the sample household/individuals were chosen, the field enumerators with the advice and instruction of the immediate supervisor and myself approached the relevant respondents for filling in the survey questionnaire. The enumerators left the cluster only after the acceptance of the filled in questionnaires by me and the field supervisor. I and field supervisor both were randomly examined the filled questionnaires to ensure the consistency to the extent possible.

I directly involved in collecting qualitative data. All the interviews/discussions were recorded in the notebook. Thus the researcher had given attention during field survey from training to field survey. The study on the Madheshi women issues has based on this data. So researcher was very serious while observing interviews so that real answers come.

3.6.1 Sample Size

One of the first tasks in Primary data collection is the choosing sampling units. While choosing sample it should be not overlapping and taken together. They must cover the entire population of interest and research objects, Scheaffer et al; (1990). Thus sample population and sampling units must be defined so that the error is minimized and there is very less chances in overlapping. In this study there were 10 clusters were selected by using Population Proportionate Sampling (PPS) from the sample of different caste/ethnic groups of Parsa district. All the Village Development Committees and the wards of Municipality were listed and all the female population was taken as Universe Population from all respective Village Development Committees and wards of municipality respectively. Sample size of each listed clusters in a district was determined following **Population Proportionate sampling (PPS)** technique. After identifying 10 clusters from listed clusters the sampled households in each of the clusters was taken by using systematic random sampling by selecting the first sample household randomly,

the rest of the samples of the households were taken by calculating and using a household interval as:

$$I_i = N_i / n_i$$

Where: I_i = required household interval for i th cluster

N_i = total number of household in i th cluster

n_i = total sampled households in i th cluster

The first household (x_1) was drawn randomly from between the household number '1' and the second (x_2), third (x_3),.....households were selected as: $x_2 = x_1 + I$; $x_3 = x_2 + I$; $x_4 = x_3 + I$;.....respectively. Only one respondent was selected randomly by convincing female members about the selection process of respondent among the female members from each selected sample household. Number of clusters was selected according to the sample size of the study population. While conducting the survey among currently married women, all households in all sampled clusters were visited to take complete list of households as well as to ensure the boundaries of clusters. In the case of Hill-origin household in some VDCs and wards of municipality, it was selected next nearer household, leaving hill-origin household because of the nature and objectives of the research, which would required women only from Madheshi community. 350 currently married women aged 14-49 years had selected randomly for the interview.

3.6.2 Methods of Selecting Sample Households and Respondents

For household level information, household will be selected from each sampled cluster. The systematic random sampling techniques had used. For the purpose, first, the entire households were listed from each selected cluster, then as per requirement, households were selected for study by systematic random sampling techniques. The sampling interval had determined based on the sample size and total population of each cluster. Interview is conducted at household level only. Interview will be taken with the 15 years above respondents only.

Key consideration for the household level interview will be as follows:

- One set of household level questionnaire had developed,
- The questionnaire for the household level only finalized after pilot test, with full consent of research team before final field survey.
- Sample size or sample households considered not be less than 300 households

- Well-trained interviewers with enough probing skill had conducted the interview.
- The interviewers were closely supervised and monitored by the researcher and the Supervisor
- The emotionally loaded and leading questions were avoided.
- Careful consideration had given for the overall structure of the questionnaire such as flow, logical order, grouping in different sections connecting specific issues.

3.6.3 Method of selecting sample households

In this research household is defined as a family shares same kitchen and also shares economic and social activities together. Similarly the family members have its own family members including domestic helpers who usually live and sleep within the family. The total number of 300 households selected from Parsa District. Almost all households were easily identified in this district with the help of the chairperson of the VDC and active local organization NGOCC.

3.6.4 Methods of selecting sample respondents

In this study there were two types of respondents. The head of households was the first respondent of the household. The researcher had chosen the head of the household to know the some important characteristics of the family because normally, the head of the household is considered the most knowledgeable person in the family. Enumerators also filled this part from knowledgeable person in some cases. So the enumerators filled in the questionnaire up to 'Household Roster' with the help of household head or any another knowledgeable person of the household. Since the respondents are the most important category for this research especially for those variables in which their personal opinions have count.

The enumerators filled rest part of the questionnaire with the respondents who were the mainly target population of my research. The criteria for the selection of respondent:

1. Currently married women
2. Belongs to Madheshi community (as defined in this research)
3. Age between 15-49 years
4. Not mentally disabled, and
5. Present at the time of survey

6. Only one female of each household

7. In the case of not availability of required respondents in the households, Closer household were selected.

This method provided equal opportunity to all currently married women living in the same family. However the non- Madheshi women had been excluded in this survey. The enumerators filled main part of the questionnaire from randomly selected currently married women who were living in the household. So the biasness was minimized while selecting the respondent randomly.

3.6.5 Composition of the sample and respondent rate

The respondent had cooperated with the enumerators in the survey; however a very few people had persuaded the respondents not to cooperate in the survey but that did not affect the enumeration. Researcher herself actively presented during field survey and observed to the enumerators and in any troublesome, she was presented herself there and during data collection she gave advice in any trouble while asking question to take information qualitatively. Researcher had also mobilized two supervisors to observe and monitor to the enumerators. Due to long distance of some VDC, the time took more. Otherwise, the response of the people in general was reported highly satisfactory.

3.7 Data Analysis

The quality of the research depends on the qualitative and quantitative information. This research has covered both types of information to get more reliable results. The information collected by using quantitative and qualitative techniques and analysed, which are given below.

3.7.1 Quantitative Data Processing and Analysis

Like in every survey research, quality of the fieldwork also could not ensure the quality of data/information in this study and therefore, data entry, processing and interpretation were also equally important aspects of the research process. The data collected through the structured questionnaire were added in electronic version and for this Epi-data management computer programme had used especially for the entry of raw data and for analysis data was transferred into SPSS software package programme and tables were generated accordingly for analysis and

interpretation. The researcher herself has carried out the data processing and management. Tables, graphs, figures, diagrams are composed from the data information fed in the SPSS programme. Simple statistical tools such as frequency distribution, percentages, means, etc. were used to analyse the quantitative data. A cross-sectional analysis of the data has also been done to compare significance of socio-economic variables within the community. Similarly simple correlation and regression have also been used to know the relationship between decision making autonomy and status of women. For data analysis, required indicators analyzed with different variables like age group, age at first marriage, number of children, employment status, caste/ethnicity, educational attainment, accessibility to and control over resources, decision making status according to their socio-economic variables and so on.

3.7.2 Qualitative Data Processing and Analysis

A detail research report has developed on the basis of data/information obtained from field study and available literature review. The qualitative data generated through the use of qualitative data gathering instruments/methods were analysed by searching for patterns in data and for ideas that helped to explain the existence of those patterns. In so doing, the qualitative data generated from focus group discussions, key informants and case studies have been summarized under a particular conceptual category and presented in the form of boxes to supplement the findings of the survey.

3.7.3 Strengths and weakness of quantitative and qualitative data

3.7.3.1 Reliability and Validity:

A good rapport had made with the respondent during interview. Similarly to get reliable information privacy was made strictly during interview. The questionnaire was translated in Bhojpuri language and all the questions were asked in local language to make them easier to understand and give the right information. I myself had involved in the total process of field survey; checking and observing interview, giving them immediate feedback. I had directly involved in qualitative data collection to bring more reliable data.

The validity of the research depends on the procedure of data collection. The sampling procedure has done to take information of Madheshi women of different caste/ethnicity in the same community. In this sample design, there was very less chance of biasness while taking information and in taking sampled household and respondent. The secondary information, field level information, observation and my personal experience all triangulate to prove the validity of the study. The missing information or doubtful information was immediately corrected by reaching the same respondent before completions. The research draft had brought into discussion among the stakeholders before finalizing to make it valid.

3.7.3.2 Triangulation

To increase the reliability and validity of the data, both qualitative and quantitative techniques used to collect information from the study area.

3.7.3.3 Ethical considerations

The success of the study depends on the respondents and the research team. The researcher was very sensitive during field survey. All the team members were strictly asked to follow the code of conduct during the field study. Respondents were informed and almost all of them cooperated. The enumerators filled questionnaire only after taking permission from them and their guardians. The enumerators were presented themselves in local dress-up (Sari). The enumerators were strictly asked to maintain privacy while asking sensitive questions and they also made sure that the information would not be showed or utilized in other than the research purposes. During field survey researcher team was unbiased and kept themselves honest throughout. Enumerators were asked not to lead the questions and give preferences of the respondent's answers. Researcher had also used female enumerator of local community so that they could convince in their own local language to bring real information as possible.

Conclusions and Lesson Learnt

This research is guided by women's experiences and analyzed through the women's standpoint. However, as a female researcher, it was a not very challenging work for me to approach, communicate and understand women because of the similar cultures, language and being a inhabitants of same district, between them and my self. I was able to listen to the women's

experiences and activities through women's standpoint. Whenever I visited, I tried to listen to them carefully. But in some cases it was very difficult to convince family members, especially head of the household and/or husband, or the parent in-laws to take permission for interview. Quantification of women's problems appears to be difficult endeavours especially ones associated with patriarchal system such as domestic violence, sexuality, and decision making rights, involvement in politics, violations. In this case, qualitative data are of significance. Some questions associated mostly with household assets and property – land size, sources of income, house ownership, and selling rights – seem to be sensitive for women, either their responses are close to the truth or they just avoid that they do not know about it.

A major concern of my field work was the worsening security situation in the countryside due to some political parties personally; I did not feel threat from them. Villagers were very cooperated with our team members. First, I contacted with local people and school teachers in order to assess the situation whether or not I would be able to conduct the survey. I explained my study's objective with the women; they just kept on listening to me pepping them and us without responding to me. I talked with them and finally they were convinced and ready to give information.

The forthcoming chapters are based on information collected through the research methodology adopted and described in this chapter.

CHAPTER IV

SETTING OF THE STUDY

This chapter presents information on the geography, demography, economy, population and the human development level of Parsa district, based on secondary information i.e. census data, CBS, Parsa, Birganj, village profile published by Birganj sub-metropolitan city, and DPCP baseline Survey published by DDC, Parsa district and UNICEF. Information presented in this chapter serves as a background to know socio-economic condition and demographic condition as well as political participation of women in this district.

4.1 Geographical Location

Parsa district lies in Narayani Zone of the Central Development Region. It is one of 20 Terai districts of Nepal. It is bordered by India in the South, and Bara district in the east, Chitwan in the north. Parsa district has 82 VDCs and one sub-metropolitan city. The headquarters of the district is Birganj.

Geographically, Parsa lies between elevations 122 and 925 meters above sea level and between latitudes 27° and $27^{\circ}26'$. Almost 34 percent of the total land of this district lies in the Siwalik range and 66 percent of it is in the Terai (Plain) region. The land is composed of recent alluvium, boulders, sand, clay and silt. It lies in both the tropical and sub-tropical hypothermic zones and has an average maximum temperature of 37.3°C and average annual rainfall of 1,760ml. It is the most productive Zone of Nepal (DDC, 1998).

Birganj, the main gate-way to the capital is one of the old and historic cities of Nepal. The city was established in 1897(BS. 1954) by the Rana Prime Minister Bir Shamsher J. B. Rana. Since he was the founder of the city, it was named after him.

The city is considered the economic capital of Nepal. It has been playing an active role in the economic development of the country. It is a full-fledged commercial and industrial city. Birganj is committed to the development of its economic capabilities which is obvious from the successive investment in many industries including the Inland Containment system or “Dry Port”. This Dry Port has made easier the flow of commerce entering the city. Birganj is the head

quarter of Parsa district in the Narayani Zone of Nepal the whole area is divided into 19 wards (published by Birganj sub-metropolitan city).

4.2 Demographic Indicators of Parsa District

Sex ratio was also high in urban area. Table 4.1 shows the demographic indicators of Parsa district, based on the census 1981, 1991 and 2001 and 2011 census reports. The total population of Parsa district is 497,219 in 2001 and it has increased 601017 in 2011. The size of the female population was lower (288659) than male population (312358) in 2011. Similarly the report of 2011 census also shows that the sex ratio is still negative for women population (109 number of males in per 100 females) sex ratio in Parsa district. The average household size had been increased from 6.2 in 1981 to 8 in 2001 census and 5.55 in 2011. The literacy rate has also increased in last 40 years but still it is not satisfactory condition. The average age at marriage for male is 21.1 years and female marry at the age of 17.2 years in the study district. This shows the age at marriage is very low in this district. One forth of the populations is living in urban area (municipality) and the proportion of the urban population has increased steadily over the past 30 years from about 15.35 to 22.62 in 2001.

Table 4.2 Demographic Trend of Parsa district of Nepal 2001

Particulars	1981 census	1991 census	2001 census	2011 census	Nepal 2011
Total Population	284,338	372,524	497,219	601701	26620809
Male	146,342	193,174	260,411	313270	12927431
Female	137,996	179,350	236,808	288431	13693378
Sex Ratio	106	108	110	109	94
Total Households	45,785	60,630	79,456	89,212	4767196
Average Household size	6.2	6.1	6.26	5.55	4.70
Literacy Rate (%)	21.3	33.4	42.4	NA	NA
Population Density Per Sq Km	210	275	275	NA	NA
Children Women Ratio(CWR)	592	725	657	NA	NA
Total Dependency Ratio	-	90.22	84.75	NA	NA
Children Dependency Ratio	81.4	80.8	75.3	NA	NA
Old aged Dependency Ratio	12	9.4	9.4	NA	NA
Average age at marriage of men	18	18.9	21.1	NA	NA
Average age at marriage of women	13.7	15.1	17.2	NA	NA
Total Urban Population(%) in the district	15.35	18.56	22.62	NA	NA
Sex ratio in urban	111.36	113.65	118.3		

Source: CBS, 2001 p.386

4.3 Population Composition by Religion and Language

Despite its small size, Nepal accommodates an amazing cultural and religious diversity including linguistic popularity. The 2011 census has defined major five religions. Among them 81.3 percent are Hindu religion, (9%) Buddhism, (4.4%) Islam, Kirat (3%), Christian (1.4%) and others (0.9%) respectively, CBS (2011). Among them, in the study district the 2001 CBS report says that 82.37% are from Hindu religion followed by Islam (15.40%), Buddha (1.98%) and very few people belongs to other religions like Christian, Jain, Sikh, Kirat etc.

Table 4.3 Population Composition by Religion of Parsa District, and Nepal, 2001.- 2011

Religion	Hindu	Buddha	Islam	Kirat	Jain	Christia n	Sikh	Othe rs
Population in Percent	409,541	9,842	76,567	45	137	301	63	892
Percentage(%)	82.37	1.98	15.40	0.01	0.03	0.06	0.01	0.18
National (2011)	81.3	9	4.4	3		1.4		0.9

Source: CBS, 2001, pp-388; CBS, 2011

In Nepal speakers of different languages are sometimes settled in the same area and some times some different languages are spoken by some specific communities. In Terai districts the languages are commonly spoken are Maithali, Bhojpuri, Awadhi, Tharu, etc. However, educated people from the Terai region often tend to use Hindi as a lingua franca for inter-community communication in the region. The people of Parsa district also speak different language but majority of them speak Bhojpuri language which is their mother tongue.

Table 4.4: Population Composition by Language in Parsa District

Mother Tongue in Percent	Bhojpuri	Nepali	Tamang	Newar	Maithali	Hindi	Marwadi	Tharu
Percentage of Population	83.56	8.15	1.58	1.41	1.12	0.91	0.31	0.71
Parsa 2011								
Nepal 2011	6	44.6	5.1	3.2	11.7	--	--	5.8

Source: CBS, 2001, pp-388

4.5 Caste/Ethnicity Context

Nepal from the ancient time has been a country of different/caste/ethnic groups with distinct language and culture. From the very historical period, Nepal has been the meeting ground of the Indo-Aryan people from the South and Mongolian people from the north. After the unification of modern Nepal, King Prithvi Narayan Shah also declared Nepal the garden of four jat and thirty six warna. In the Nepali social context, Jat commonly means in the hierarchical, stratified sense of the Hindu caste system. “One can not choose one’s jat; it is defined by birth”, Quigley (1993).

Table 4.45 Caste/Ethnic Composition of Parsa District 2001.

Caste/Ethnicity	Total	Male	Female	Total(%)
Muslim	76609	39707	36902	15.41
Tharu	40970	21050	19920	8.24
Kurmi	40797	21439	19358	8.21
Yadav/Ahir	31690	16905	14785	6.37
Kanu	27165	14474	12691	5.46
Chamar/Harijan/Ram	21052	10935	10117	4.23
Teli	17868	9487	8381	3.59
Brahmin(Hill)	16410	8712	7698	3.30
Chhetri	15244	8027	7217	3.07
Kalwar	13786	7359	6427	2.77
Koiri	11894	6208	5686	2.39
Dushadh/Pashwan/Pasi	11661	6023	5638	2.35
Newar	10831	5544	5287	2.18
Mallah	10380	5418	4962	2.09
Tamang	8716	4450	4266	1.75
Dhanuk	8179	4226	3953	1.64
Baniya	7943	4199	3744	1.60
Brahmin(Terai/ Madheshi)	7825	4165	3660	1.57
Nuniya	7478	3963	3515	1.50
Sonar	6908	3699	3209	1.39
Mushahar	6774	3433	3341	1.36
Bing/Binda	6433	3311	3122	1.29
Badhai	6140	3270	2870	1.23
Lohar	5897	3156	2741	1.19
Hajam/Thakur	5783	3020	2763	1.16
Tatma	5711	3010	2701	1.15
Marwadi	5004	2622	2382	1.01
Kayastha	4828	2558	2270	0.97
Sanyashi	3921	2083	1838	0.79
Sudhi	3280	1729	1551	0.66
Gurung	3247	1710	1537	0.65

Kumhar	3175	1698	1477	0.64
Rajput	2915	1590	1325	0.59
Dhobhi	2740	1435	1305	0.55
Chidimar	2545	1357	1188	0.51
Kewat	2511	1294	1217	0.51
Kumhar	2372	1235	1137	0.48
Magar	2176	1143	1033	0.44
Kami	1566	800	766	0.31
Rajbhar	1460	756	704	0.29
Kamar	1386	729	657	0.28
Barai	1336	671	665	0.27
Majhi	1258	673	585	0.25
Sarki	1221	636	585	0.25
Sunuwar	1088	550	538	0.22
Jhangad	1075	550	535	0.22
Dom	899	457	442	0.18
Mali	879	480	399	0.18
Halkhor	874	451	423	0.18
Thakuri	815	421	394	0.16
Kahar	797	414	383	0.16
Damai	764	367	397	0.15
Rai	461	235	226	0.09
Bhote	439	235	204	0.09
Yakha	289	152	137	0.06
Santhal/Satar	282	154	128	0.06
Halwai	270	138	132	0.05
Bangali	267	141	126	0.05
Dharti/ Bhujel	248	123	125	0.05
Bhediya	235	127	108	0.05
Limbu	109	55	54	0.05
Nurang	103	66	37	0.02
Panjabi/Sikh	94	56	38	0.02
Chepang	85	44	41	0.02
Others	--	--		1.99
Total	497219	260411	236808	100.00

Source: CBS, 2001, Parsa District.

In the context of diversity of Nepal, Nepal is multilingual, multiethnic and multicultural society, where different communities like Madheshi (Terai oriented), Pahadi (Hill oriented) have been living. The study district, Parsa is a Terai district of Nepal where different people of different caste/ethnicity have been living. Table 4.4 shows the caste/ethnic population of Parsa district based on census data 2001. The given data demonstrated that nearly 15% of the population belongs to Muslim followed by 8.24% Tharu, 8.21% Kurmi, 6.37% Yadav/ Ahir, 5.46 percent

Kanu, 4.23% Chamar and so on. Similarly the other backward communities (Middle- Caste) are highest position followed by Dalits/janjati, Muslims and very few upper caste people are living in this district. The shadow box represents the Middle caste people which are the main focus area of castes in this study. Among these castes the size of the female population is lower than male population. It also indicates the situation of these women of the respective community.

CHAPTER V

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF HOUSEHOLDS

This chapter provides basic information on demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the household population. It also provides information on household facilities and assets, which are important for identifying major indicators like wealth status of the household and characteristics of all members who are residing in the households. There are variations in the socio-economic status of communities. In this study women's status, an important question has been whether individual or the household should be taken as the unit of analysis. In recent years feminist claimed that women's status is considered with the socio-economic status of the household (Hasan and Ritu, 2004). In developing societies generally social factors such as cultural attitudes, religious practices, caste and the legal system influence gender roles, responsibilities which affects decision making authority to a women in their families, Cameron (1998). The household questionnaire of the status of Madheshi women survey collected information on a number of socio-economic variables of each house. These include caste/ethnic composition, language, ownership of house and types of house, situation of land, types of employment, household assets and so on. The different important household information is presented below.

5.1 Population Composition of Caste/Ethnic Groups of Parsa District

The social structure of the caste/ethnic groups in 10 clusters of Parsa district identified were given in table 5.1. In Nepal, though there are more than 100 caste/ethnic groups with distinct languages and cultures, CBS (2011). In this survey there was mainly Terai high caste, Terai caste, Terai Janjati castes, Terai dalits and Muslim altogether mainly five caste/ethnicities reported. In total 350 families Terai high-castes constituted only 9.3 percent.

Table 5.1: Percent distribution of the population by caste/ethnic groups

Caste/ethnicity	Terai caste	High Caste	Terai Janjati	Terai Dalit	Muslim	Total
Numbers	193	922	394	408	150	2067
Percent	9.3	44.6	19.1	19.7	7.3	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011

The Terai caste population was 44.6 percent of the total population. Historically, many of the Janjati groups used to occupy a particular habitat or territory. So in this study the population of Terai Janjati reported only 19.1 percent. According to the CBS (2001) report, in Terai there were only 3.9 percent Madheshi Dalits found. In this survey there were 19.7 percent of the Madheshi Dalits and only 7.3 percent Muslims were included in this study.

The above table clearly indicates that the majority of the populations are Terai castes, which is normally true for whole Terai districts of Nepal. The caste/ethnicity composition shows that Terai Janjati has dominated the area numerically (Table 5.1).

5.2 Population Composition by Age Groups and by Sex

The two characteristics of the human beings that receives the most attention in demographic analysis are age and sex. Age and sex composition of a population has significant implications for the reproductive potential, productive, school attendance, man power supply, service delivery, ageing etc.

Table 5.2: Percent distribution of household population by age group and sex

Age Group	Sex					
	Percent	Male	Percent	Female	Percent	Total
0-14	35.3	380	39.1	385	37.1	765
15-59	59.9	646	56.0	552	58.1	1,198
60 and above	4.8	52	4.9	48	4.8	100
Total	100.0	1078	100.0	985	100.0	2063

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

Table 5.2 shows the sex composition and age composition in different age groups. The percent distribution of the sample population shows that the proportion of the population of the age group 0-14 is 37.1 percent. Among them male are higher 35.3 percent that female population 37.1 percent respectively. Similarly the younger population was higher than other age groups. In Nepal generally dependent populations has been categorized as child dependent population aged 0-14 years (now it is changed in 00-18) and old dependent population aged 59 and above age. In this study data shows that 4.8 percent of the populations are old dependent populations and 37.1 percent child dependent populations.

It is surprising that the female population of almost all age groups was lower than male population. This clearly shows the situation of female of the respective community because biologically female are stronger than male but the lower numbers indicates that female mortality is higher than male. In Nepal there is high mortality found in the reproductive age groups of women where many women are dying due complications related with reproduction. Similarly female babies also die due to carelessness and lacking proper care, see Nepal Reproductive Health Report (2010).

5.3 Population Composition by Head of the Household and by Sex and Caste/ethnic Groups

Head of the household head has high respect in Nepalese societies as well as neighboring countries like India, Srilanka. Generally, the most active member mainly male member of the household is regarded as the household head. In this study more than 87 percent of the male were reported as household head while around 13 percent were female as household head. However census data shows that the female household head has been increased over the years. In Terai the female headship was 5.17 percent in 2001, CBS (2001). In case of Madheshi communities Table 5.3 clearly shows that still male are supposed to be a household-head in the families.

Table 5.3: Percent distribution of respondents by household head by gender and caste/ethnicity

Sex of Household Head	Male	Percent (%)	Female	Pertcent (%)	Total	Percent (%)
Terai High Caste	29	82.9	6	17.1	35	100.0
Terai Caste	133	92.4	11	7.6	144	100.0
Terai Janjati	67	92.0	6	8.1	73	100.0
Terai Dalit	60	81.0	14	19.0	74	100.0
Muslim	16	66.7	8	33.3	24	100.0
Total	305	87.1	45	12.9	350	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

The data presented on Table 5.3 shows that female headship is found lower in all caste/ethnic groups. Nationally male headship is higher than female headship but according to the census report, among Terai Janjati community the female headship has increased, CBS (2001). In this study majority is higher among male as household headship in each caste/ethnic groups. This is mainly because Madheshi people generally report the elder male member of the family as the household head.

5.4 Population Composition by Religion

Table 5.4: presents the distribution of Population by different Religion. In recent years, particularly after the onset of multi-party democracy in Nepal in 1990, religion has become a sensitive topic. Now Nepal is secular state and there are many people with different caste/ethnic and religion backgrounds living in this country.

Table 5.4: Percent distribution of the Households by religion

Religion	Numbers	Percentage
Hindu	331	94.6
Muslim	24	6.9
Total	350	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

By simply considering the data on religion of the field survey in the study area, Table 5.4 shows that majority of the populations were Hindus (94.6%) and only 6.9 percent of the populations were Muslim religion. In Nepal still majority of the people follow Hindu religion but there are also regions like Christian, Buddhist, Sikh, Jain etc are living in this country. In this study there was only the population of two religions found.

5.5 Population Composition by Languages (Mother Tongue and Second Language)

There have been identified 92 mother tongues in 2001 census but in this study area there were mainly 5 languages found to use as mother tongue and as second language.

This below Table 5.5 presents the situation of Madheshi peoples' mother tongues and their second languages. The term 'mother tongue' has been defined as the language acquired first by children in their childhood from their parents and used in their households since they start speaking. Similarly second language has been defined as the language mostly used outside of the households, speaking either with the neighbors or any other places see CBS Guidelines (2001)

Table 5.5: Percent Distribution of Population by Mother Tongue and second language Spoken in the Families

Language	Nepali (%)	Bhojpur i (%)	Maithali (%)	Tharu (%)	Hindi (%)	Others	Total (%)
First Language	0.5	74.3	3.4	19.4	0.9	1.5	100.0
Second Language	54.4	18.3	0.3	6.3	19.5	1.5	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

The above data shows that majority of Madheshi people speaks Bhojpuri language as their mother tongue (74.3%). Similarly 19.4 percent of the people speak Tharu language as their

mother tongue. There were also People who speaks Maithali language comprise 3.4 percent respectively. Very few Madheshis speak Hindi language (%) as their mother tongue.

The situation of second language is also given in the same Table 5.5. The data shows that Madheshi people mostly prefer Nepali as a second language. In the study area there wee 54.4 percent of the people used Nepali as a official or second language. After Nepali language, 19.5 percent of the people used Hindi as a second. There were also 6.3 percent of the Madheshi used Tharu as a second language and Very few people used Maithali or other languages as a second language.

5.6 Nuptiality Status of the Families Members in the Households

Table 5.6: Distribution of Married Madheshis by gender

Ever been Married	Yes	(%)	No	(%)	Total	(%)
Male	520	66.9	257	33.1	777	100.0
Female	506	74.1	175	25.9	681	100.0
Total	1026	70.4	432	29.6	1458	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

In this study gender differences were assessed according to the respondent's family's characteristics. For example Table 5.6 reveals that more than 74 percent of the females in the households were married. The proportion of male marriage was found lower 66.9 percent than female. However there is lacking information on the marital status of the individuals of the family members but above figures shows that in our Madheshi society both male and female marry and the National figures also show that female of Madheshi communities marry at the very early ages and very few means rarely any one find living without marriages. However above information were collected to the whole family members individually whose age was 10 years and above.

5.7 Literacy Status of the Household-Head by Gender

Table 5.7 presents the educational status of the household-head by gender. The figures clearly indicates that majority of the household heads, both male and female were educated in less than grade one. Similarly data also shows that female household head had educated less than male household head at all the educational levels. However there were no very low differences found between male household head and female household head education level.

Table 5.7: Distribution of Household-Heads by Educational level and by Gender

Gender	Male (%)	No	Female (%)	No	Total (%)	Total No
Less than Grade 1	34.0	104	49.1	22	40.4	126
Primary Level	18.0	55	18.5	8	18.3	63
Lower-Secondary	12.7	39	9.6	4	11.3	43
Secondary Level	17.4	54	10.6	5	14.4	59
SLC or Intermediate	13.2	40	10.1	4	12.2	44
Bachelor	3.5	11	1.5	1	2.6	12
Degree and above	0.9	3	0.7	00	0.8	4
Total	100.0	305	100.0	45	100.0	350

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

5.8 Literacy Status by Gender and Caste/Ethnicity of the Household Members

Literacy is the most important means of attaining socio-economic development of a society and the Nation. Literacy enhances the information and makes people aware about their situation but in Nepal illiteracy has been the serious problem. However many NGOs/INGOs and Gos has been providing non-formal education at the grass- root levels but many of the people especially Madheshi people are still illiterate.

Table 5.8: Distribution of the Madheshis by gender and various caste/ethnicity

Sex	Male		Female	
Literacy Status Caste/ethnicity	Literate	Illiterate	Literate	illiterate
Terai High Caste	90.9	9.1	75.9	24.1
Terai Caste	61.5	38.5	40.4	59.6
Terai Janjati	68.2	31.8	52.7	47.3
Terai Dalit	30.8	68.6	18.7	81.3
Muslim	60.0	40.0	26.7	73.3

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

5.9 Ownership of House

Table 5.9: Distribution of HHs with their Ownership of House

House Ownership	Own House	Percent (%)
Yes	309	88.3
No	41	11.7
Total	350	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

The overall literacy rate for individuals 6 years and above is given in Table 5.7. The above table shows the literacy status of different caste/ethnic groups and among male and female. It has been said that if a female member is educated in the family, it is supposed to educate all her children be educated. But above data shows that in all caste/ethnic groups female are less literate than male. Women of high Terai caste/ethnic were more literate 24.1 percent than other caste/ethnic groups of Madheshi communities. Women of Muslim community and Terai Dalit community were found to less literate only 26.7 percent and 18.7 percent respectively.

In all over the world, education is commonly considered as a vehicle for raising status. But Madheshi people were seen less interested to educate their daughters because of early marriages. According to this study, socio-cultural beliefs, practices and attitudes do not favour girls in their pursuit of education to the same extent as boys. So people had a big question that why should they invest their daughters that will soon be some one else.

Information on Household ownership is an essential part of good physical settlement planning. Ownership of house refers to the legal status of ownership of house that usually used by household. In Nepal Census report also reveals that many households have their owned house for residence in the country, CBS (2011). In this study area there were also many households had their own house 88.3 percent. Only 11.7 percent of the households did not have their own house.

5.10 The Types of House

The information collected on the types of house mainly by observing the households. These houses are divided into four categories on the basis of types of construction materials used in walls and roofs of the residential house. These categories are Kachhi, Ardha Pakki, Pakki, and Hut. The data is mainly taken by observing the house by the enumerators. TTable 5.10 presents, the types of houses, where the respondents were living, at the time of survey.

Table 5.10: Distribution of HHs by Types of House

Types of House	Kachchi	Ardha pakki	Pakki	Hut	Total
Numbers	150	91	52	57	350
Percent	42.8	26.0	14.8	16.3	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

The above figures clear that majority of the Madheshi people are still living in Kachhi type of households. Data also shows that there were 14.8 percent of the households were Pakkis type and 16.3 percent were living in hut. However among households whether own house or living in other house, the percent distribution is not so different between different types of houses.

5.11 Household Amenities

Table 5.11 shows that most of the households of Madheshis had radio, TV, bicycle, Mobile 45.9 percent, 49.6 percent, 81.1 percent, 60.2 percent respectively. Similarly only 2 percent of the households had Tractor, which is generally used for cultivation and other agriculture related sectors. There were only 4.5 percent of the households had Refrigerator. It is well known that in Terai districts people generally use firewood for cooking purpose. Question were also asked to know the percentage of Madheshi people used LPG gas for cooking purposes and very few 7.8 percent reported that they had used gas for cooking purpose. This figure is very close to census data which was 7.7 percent of the Terai people dependent on LPG gas for cooking purpose, CBS (2001). This shows the data generated from survey is very much closer to the national data.

Table 5.11: Distribution of the Household by Household Accessories

Household Amenities	Yes	Numbers	No	Numbers	Total
Radio	45.9	161	54.1	189	100.0
TV	49.6	174	50.4	176	100.0
Bicycle	81.1	284	18.9	66	100.0
Cart	3.3	12	96.7	338	100.0
Tractor	2.0	7	98.0	343	100.0
Rikshaw/Tempo	1.2	4	98.8	346	100.0
Motorcycle	17.6	62	82.4	288	100.0
Electricity	56.1	196	43.9	154	100.0
Refrigerator	4.5	16	95.5	334	100.0
Cooking Gas	7.8	27	92.2	323	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

5.12 Main Source of Drinking Water of the Households

Main sources of drinking water refer to the place from which households draw water for drinking and cooking foods for the household members. In Nepal water sources may differ from place to place because of its geographical location. In mountain and hilly regions people mainly dependent on river, streams, spring, Dhunge Dhara {naturally comes from

underground) etc. In the case of Terai region of Nepal there are mainly five types of sources of water for drinking and cooking purposes, which is given in the Table 5.11.

Table 5.12: Percent Distribution of the Households According to the Source of Drinking Water

Source of drinking water	Numbers	Percent (%)
Own piped water	5	1.5
Public piped water	7	2.0
Own tubewell	134	39.0
Public tubewell	189	55.1
Neighbour's tubewell	13	3.8
River	2	0.6
Total	350	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

Overall 55 percent of the people of the study areas were dependent on public tubewell and 39 percent had used own tubewell for drinking, or cooking purposes. Generally in village areas people either draw water from own tube-well or public tube-well. According to the survey Madheshi people had drawn water from the same two sources. Only 1.5 percent of the households had facilities of own piped water and about 2 percent drawn water from public piped water. Only two households were reported that they had drawn water from river for drinking and other household purposes.

5.13 Households with Toilet Facilities and Types of Toilet Facilities

In this study if households have their own toilet within the households or within the compound of households were considered as households having toilet facilities. It was also at least once visited to know the types of toilet used by the households, to make sure that what types of toilet the respondents had.

Table 5.13: The Distribution of Households by Types of Toilet Facilities

Households with Types of Toilet facilities	Types of toilet facility at home			
	Khalte (only pit) toilet	Toilet with Safytank	Flush Toilet	Total
Yes	42	30	7	79 (22.6)
Percent (%)	53.2	37.9	8.8	100.0
No	—	—	—	271 (77.4)

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

Table 5.13 shows that only 23 percent of the households have toilet facilities at their home. Majority of them (77.4%) had no toilet facilities at their households. Those households had toilet facilities, only 8.8 percent had modern flush types of toilet facility. More than 50 percent of the households had pit toilet while around 40 percent of the households were using toilet with saftytank. These figures are not surprising because earlier census data also shows that very few of the Madheshi people have had toilet facilities at their households (CBS, 2001, 2011). Still many people go outside for toilet mainly because of poverty and ignorance.

5.14 Main Occupation of the Households by Sex

The occupation here refers to persons “usual” activity. However occupation also refers to the economically active populations, who contribute to the supply of labor for the production of goods and services disregarding whether they actually employed at the time of survey or not. The gainful work approach has no explicit time reference, Shryock and Siegal (1976).

Table 5.14: Percent Distribution of the Occupation of the Family Members (10 years and above years of age) by Household by Sex.

Occupation	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Housewife/Housework Only	0.3	39.4	18.8
Agriculture (own)	16.8	6.4	11.4...
Agriculture labour	14.5	12.0	13.3
Non Agriculture labour	6.5	0.2	3.5
Service	3.3	0.5	2.0
Teacher	2.1	1.6	1.8
Foreign employee	2.2	0.5	1.4
Work in India	1.4	0.0	0.8
Own business	5.7	1.2	3.6
Dependent	4.6	6.5	5.5
Student	31.1	27.0	29.3
Tailor	0.5	0.4	0.4
Others	9.4	4.6	7.0
Not Stated	0.2	0.4	0.3
Total	51.5	48.5	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

Table 5.14 presents the information on the occupational status of the household members. The information collected from the household members aged 10 years and above. There was also option for housewives because in recent years many scholars and economists have focused on the contribution of household chores in the household, should be also counted. The data shows that most of the females work household chores rearing and caring household and children which occupied 39.4 percent. In Nepal Terai region is popular for agriculture and data generated from survey shows that around 25 percent of the people were involved in agriculture as a main occupation either own or other's field. In non-agriculture, as a labour mostly worked by male than female of the respective communities. In service sector only 2 percent of the population

employed in which 3.3 percent male and less than 1 percent female employed in service sectors. Similarly teaching occupation is done by only 1.8 percent of the Madheshi and among them the proportion of female employed in teaching, was lower (1.6%) than male (2.1%) employed in the teaching profession. Foreign employee and worked in India occupation together accounts 2 percent and there was very few women employed in these areas. More than one third male and female were dependent and student. This shows the situation of Madheshi families where majority of the family members were dependent and students, who were economically not active and supposed to dependent. It should be noted here that elementary occupation, which has been categorized under “others”, constituted 7 percent of the employed population. The above figures for both male and female shows that the gender differences in the activity rate in different occupation are more pronounced.

5.15 Citizenship by Caste/ethnicity

Citizenship is one of the major issues among Madheshi. Citizenship Certificate is the proof for national identity of a citizen and it is also permanent citizenry rights. It is required to get a job, buy land. To do business but many of the people of different caste/ethnicity did not have citizenship certificate (see Table 5.15).

Table 5.15: Percent Distribution of Citizenship by caste/ethnicity

Caste/ethnicity	Terai High Caste	Terai Caste	Terai Janjati	Terai Dalit	Muslim	Total
Male	80.8	71.4	61.6	62.5	93.8	517
Female	53.8	51.1	50.4	44.1	56.2	393
Total	67.3	60.5	55.4	54.1	75.0	910

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011

Among Terai high caste only 81 percent male had citizenship while only 54 percent of the female of the same caste had citizenship. Similarly among Terai castes only 60.5 percent of the male and female had citizenship. The situation is worse among Terai janjati and Terai Dalits where 54 percent had only citizenship and the situation of women was worst among all caste/ethnic groups of Madheshi society. Citizenship certificate is national as well social rights of Madheshi people. But Table 4.14 shows that many men and women were deprived by this right.

5.16 Land Ownership of Households

Land is the central livelihood to large majority of population in developing countries. The household economy depends on agriculture income. Many literatures produced in the last three decades consider landlessness as the main cause and consequences of poverty and underdevelopment in Nepal. Like wise Nepal Living Standard survey (2003-2004) reveals that the poverty incidence is high among landlessness. In Nepal Terai region is known as green land but many people are still landless or low land. Similarly agriculture is the backbone of the economy of the Parsa district. Land ownership and size of the agriculture land for farming is more associated with socio-economic status of the household and has linkage with the availability of food for them.

Table 5.16: Households with land (in Katthas and Bigah, 20 Dhur=1 kattha 20 Kattha= 1 Bigah)

Land Ownership	Numbers	Percent
Family with Land	243	69.2
Households with no Land	107	30.8
Total	350	100.0
Land less than 1 kattha	74	30.4
Land 1 Kattha-9 Kattha	53	21.8
Land 10 Kattha to 20 Kattha	42	17.3
Land 1 Bigah to 1.5 Bigah	32	13.1
Land 1.5 Bigah to 2 Bigah	29	11.9
2 Bigah to 5 Bigah	6	2.5
6 Bigah to 9 Bigah	2	0.8
10 Bigah and above	5	2.1

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

Table 5.16 indicates that in the study areas of Parsa district more than 50 percent of the households had land ownership but majority of them had very small size of the land for agriculture. The size of the land is counted in Bigah and Kattha because here in this district the measurement of land counted in Dhur, Katthas and Bigahs.

One third of the households had land ownership only for name. Similarly 22 percent of the households had land between 1-10 Katthas, 13 percent had 10 to 1 Bigah land, 12 percent had owned between 1 Bigah to one and half Bigah. Only 7 households had land between 6 Bigah and above.

5.17 Status of Income and Time Duration for Income is Enough

**Table 5.17: Distribution of HHs with Agriculture Income Enough
For HH Expenditure and Time Duration for Enough Income**

Income Enough	Number of Households	Percent
Enough	112	46.3
Not Enough	131	53.7
Total	243	100.0
If Not Enough the Time Enough to Carry the HH Expenditure	Number of Households	Percent
Less than 3 Months	62	47.1
3 to 6 months	49	34.5
6 to 9 months	20	14.1
Total	131	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

Table 5.17 shows that those household who had land ownership for agriculture was enough only for the 46.3 percent of the households. More than 50 percent of the households claimed that agriculture production is not enough for whole year. Among them 47 percent of the households

were dependent only less than three months for household expenditure. 34.5 percent said agriculture production is enough for 3 to 6 months and 14 percent said 6 to 9 months.

Above information clearly shows that there were no any households who were totally dependent for household expenditure from agriculture production for whole year.

5.18 Household with Saving and Credit Groups

In Parsa district there are many organizations and programs conducted by DDC, UNICEF, UNDP, Lumanti, working for the common and needy people, providing Bank facilities through co-operative societies with easy loans and with different names and schemes. The information collected to know, how much people were aware and benefited from these schemes.

Table 5.18: Distribution of HH by Seving/Credit groups and the areas where the loan was used

Member of Saving/Credit Groups	HH No.	Percent
Yes	169	48.2
No	181	51.8
Total No. of HHs	350	100.0
HH Drawn Loan	HH Numbers	Percent
Yes	127	75.1
Used in agriculture	59	46.7
Animal farming	28	22.0
Household expenditure	33	25.4
Others	7	5.9
No	42	24.9
Total	169	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

Table 5.18 shows that more than 50 percent of the household members were not in any saving/credit groups. It is also true that still many households were involved in such groups and among them more than 75 percent households were benefited by such groups by taking loan for

different purposes. Most of the loan used in agriculture and in animal farming. 25.4 percent of the loan used in household expenditure. It might be drawn for daughter's marriage and other household expenditure.

In these VDCs according to a key informant (representative of DDC) there are so many organizations, providing saving/credit facilities. Many women are member of such saving groups (Sahkari Sanstha). For example there is DACAW program conducted by UNICEF and DDC parsa, which have been working for poor people especially disadvantaged women, providing loans through various schemes of Sahkari Sanstha by making groups of women. Similarly in each wards of Birganj sub-metropolitan city, Lumanti Non-governmental organization has worked for poor women, and now more than two thousand women are the member of this Sahkari Sanstha (Co-operative society) and they take loan from their own Sanstha.

Summary of the Chapter

There were different caste/ethnic groups with distinct language and culture, living in Terai districts. In this survey there was mainly Terai high caste, Terai caste, Terai Janjati castes, Terai dalits and Muslim altogether, mainly five caste/ethnicity reported in sample families of Parsa district. In total 350 households, more than 50 percent of the households had land ownership but majority of them had very small size of the land for agriculture. The socio-economic status was found different among different Madheshi caste/ethnic groups. Literacy status was found very low among females. Similarly women of this society were mostly worked in household as housewives. Very few of them had worked in other non-agriculture sectors of employment. Majority of families were living in their own households but more than 74 percent households had no toilet facilities. In development activities many household head reported that, they were benefited with such programs. Locally there were many schemes launched by many organizations for providing loans i.e. Poverty Alleviation Funds conducted with DDC at VDC level and, Lumanti at the municipalities etc.

CHAPTER V1

SOCIAL-ECONOMIC STATUS OF MADHESHI WOMEN

Women experience a variety of social and economic circumstances throughout the country, but their circumstances are related to pervasive gender bias. Data generated by the field survey can be used to illustrate the socio-economic status of Madheshi women of this district. Socio-economic development, that eventually leads to get status in the society and great source of empowerment.

The focus group discussion presents the socio-economic situation of Madheshi women of Belwa VDC.

Box 1: Focus Group Discussion, conducted in Belwa VDC

Ten female young participants who were generally daughter in-law or daughter of the Madheshi community of Belwa VDC ward No 5 voiced that the principle reason for lower status of Madheshi women is the conservative patriarchal society. They argued that women are compelled to tolerate all the ill treatment by the men at homes. Women are financially dependent on men, even for a couple of rupees. They cannot go against the wish of the men (husbands). More than 90 percent of the participants said, "Women are blamed for any small mistakes or many times without mistake because since the childhood women are treated as foolish and everyone thinks that women can not revolt". Women of this community are also treated as foolish and pan without base only because of unemployment and lower level of literacy. The young participants also put their pains by saying that the socio-economic status is worst of the younger age groups of women because they have to face both their husbands and in-laws and have to follow all the rules and regulations of the family for their prestige.

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Focus Group Discussion, Field Survey, 2011.

These informations collected from focus group discussions suggested that still many women are living in inferior condition than men and other elder family members. These women cannot go against the poor treatment because of prestige of the family and male dominant society.

6.1 Age Distribution of Currently Married Women

Age is an important demographic characteristic. Table 6.1 shows the age distribution of currently married women aged 15-49 years. The proportion of women in lower age group 15-19 and higher age groups 45-49 years was 5.1 percent and 9.1 percent respectively. Majority of women were found in the 25-29 age groups (23.4%) and second majority was in the age groups

30-34 (18%). The women's number had decreased in the age group 40-44 (10%) and 45-49 (9.1%) respectively. These age groups are also important for reproduction. Data shows that the women population was high in the high reproductive age group 20-34 (56.5%).

Table 6.1: Age distribution of the currently Married women aged 15-49 years

Age Groups	Numbers	Percent (%)
15-19	18	5.1
20-24	53	15.1
25-29	82	23.4
30-34	63	18.0
35-39	67	19.1
40-44	35	10.0
45-49	32	9.1
Total	350	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

6.2 Age at First Marriage

Many empirical studies have shown that early marriage is common in developing countries and it is also one of the indicators of women's situation in the society. A demographic survey conducted in 40 countries showed that there was negative relationship between early marriage and socio-economic development of women especially it affects on paid employment, formal education and urbanization, Yemen Times (2008).

The marriage age is one of the most important variables because it changes the women's role and duties in the society. Age at marriage also effects on the education, employment, fertility, mortality, life expectancy and most important on the women's lives. In this study the respondents were currently married women who were living currently with their husbands. Table 6.2 presents the age at first marriage by specific age groups of the respondents.

Table 6.2: Age at marriage of the currently married women aged 15-49 years

Age at First Marriage	below 15 years	15-19 years	20-24 years	30-34 years	Total
Numbers	209	118	22	1	350
Percent (%)	59.7	33.7	6.3	0.3	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

Information on age at marriage was obtained by asking respondents the month and year, or age, at which they married first time. Data shows that marriage occurs relatively early in Madheshi communities in Nepal than other communities. However age at marriage is low in Nepal but among this respective caste/ethnic groups, more than 59 percent of the women married below 15 years of age groups. Similarly 33.7 percent of the women had married at the age groups 15-19 years and 6.3 percent of the women were married in the age groups 20-24 years. Very few (0.3%) women were married at later ages 30-34 years. It was also find that almost all Madheshi women marry within 25 years of age. Age at marriage has direct influence on education and employment of women and above figure clearly shows that mostly women marry during study times and career making times. This is also cause of poor socio-economic condition of these women.

6.3 Time of First Intercourse

Age at first marriage is often used as a proxy for first exposure to intercourse and risk of pregnancy, force sexual relation (marital rape), etc. But the two evens may not occur at the same time because in Madheshi communities there is a system of Gauna in which bride does not go with her husband just after marriage. After some times it may be years, months or days, only after bride goes to her husband's house (in-laws house. Some women may engage in sexual activities before marriage. Table 6.3 shows the proportion of women who had first sexual intercourse

Table 6.3: Percentage of women who had first sexual intercourse

Woman Living with her Husband first Time	After Marriage	After Gauna	Before Gauna	Not Stated	Total
Numbers	113	221	13	3	350
Percent	32.3	63.1	3.7	0.9	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

32.3 percent of the women stated that they did sexual relation just after marriage and 63.1 percent said they made relation after gauna. It should be noted that around 60 percent of the female married below 20 years of age groups and 32 percent of the sexual relation conducted only just after marriage. This clearly indicates that most of the Madheshi women entered into their sexual life in very early ages and this might be resulted high fertility, poor educational

status and poor economic status. There were also few women (3.7%), said that she did sexual relation before Gauna with her own husband.

6.4 Age Gap between Husband and Wife

Table 6.4 presents the years of age gap between husband wives in the study area. In many caste/ethnicity unmatched marriage is very common. In Madheshi caste/ethnicity it is said that “var can be duguna elder than badhu”, means there is no limitations for marriageable age for men but woman should marry at the very early age mainly because of dowry system and ignorance of parents.

Table 6.4: Age gap between husband and wife

Age Gap Between Husband and Wife	Numbers	Percent
Wife is older than husband	9	2.6
No age gap	12	3.4
Husband is 1-3 years older	83	23.7
4-6 years older	127	36.3
7-9 years	58	16.6
10-12 years older	38	10.9
13-14 years	5	1.4
15 +	18	5.1
Total	350	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

Surprisingly in this study there were 2.6 percent of the women reported that they are older than their husbands, which is very rare in madheshi communities. Studies have shown that the 5.1 percent of the husbands were 15 years and above older than their wives. Almost 97 percent of the husbands were older than their wives. Among them 17 percent were 10 years and above older than their wives. Similarly 23.7 percent husbands were 1-3 years older, 36.3 percent 4-6 years and there were also some couples who had no age gap between them, constituted 3.4 percent respectively. These data clearly shows that unmatched marriage is very common in the study areas. The high age gap between husband and wives may create some troubles in their lives to understand each other rather than living as *jiwan sathi*.

6.5 Children Even Born

Data on children even born collected to know the number of children giving births by the women of different age groups. Table 6.5 shows the percent distribution of all women by children even born.

Table 6.5: Percent distribution of women aged 15-49 years by children even

No. of women who have given live births	No. of women	Percentage (%)
Yes	323	92.3
No	27	7.7
Total	350	100.0
below 15 years	37	11.5
15-19 yrs	187	57.9
20-24 yrs	86	26.6
25-29 yrs	13	4.0
Total	323	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

As expected, 92.3 percent of the respondents had given live births and among them, most of the birth occurred (70%) before the age of 19 years. Adolescent pregnancy and motherhood is a major social and health issue in Nepal.. Similarly 26.6 percent of the mothers gave birth at the age of 20-24 years and very few only 4 percent of the respondents were given births at the medically and socially perfect age 25-29 years. These figure shows that at the time of study and work almost all women were not only married but also many of them become mother of their babies.

6.6 Number of Children Even Born

Early pregnancy causes health problems for both mother and child and it also reduces the educational and employment opportunities of women and is associated with higher levels of fertility. Table 6.6 shows the number of children even born to the mothers by different caste/ethnicity of Madheshi communities.

Table 6.6: Percent Distribution of Women by Number of Children

Number of Children Even Born	Number of Respondent	Percent
None	27	7.7
One	32	9.1
Two	79	22.6
Three	108	30.9
Four	54	15.4
Five	37	10.6
Six and above	13	3.7
Total	350	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

As stated above 7.7 percent of the women had no children even born while 9.1 percent of the mother had only one child, 22.6 percent had given live births of two children and most of the women (30.9%) had given 3 children live births during survey period respectively. Similarly around 26 percent of the mother were given 4-5 children live births. There were also 13 respondents who had given 6 and or more than 6 children. Above figure have shown that in this community there is high fertility rate and more than 60 percent of the respondents had more than three children which also indicates high fertility rate in the context of Nepal.

6.7 The Place of Delivery by Respondents

Maternal health care is also important indicator of social status of women. The Millennium Goals has also targeted to reduce maternal mortality by the year 2015 (NDHS, 2006). In Nepal World health Organization (WHO), United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), UNFPA, DFID, USAID, GTZ and Ministry of health is working for safer delivery and better quality service to improve maternal health. But in the study area Table 6.7 shows that still many women are dying because of lacking maternal health facilities. Survey result shows that still in rural areas of this district, women delivered births in unsafe and unhygienic places. Despite many activities conducted by many health sectors, most of the women (77%) percent of the births delivered at home. Only 18 percent of the mother delivered their last baby at the government hospitals and very few 4.3 percent delivered at the private clinics or nursing homes.

Table 6.7: Distribution of Women according to the Place of Delivery

Place of Delivery	Home	Governmental Hospital	Private Medical	Others	Total
No. of women	250	58	14	1	323
(%)	77.4	18.0	4.3	0.3	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

6.8 The Causes of not Delivering Births at Health Facilities

Nepal is promoting safe and clean environment under the trained supervision of health professional to reduce complications related to child birth during delivery. But the previous Table 6.7 showed that many births had occurred at home. To get better understanding of why these women delivered their babies at home, the respondents were asked to know the causes of not delivered births to their children at health facilities. Table 6.8 presents the information on the causes of not delivered birth to their children at health facilities.

Table 6.8: Percent distribution of women by the reasons for not delivered birth at health facilities

Causes of not delivering at health facilities	No. of women	Percentage (%)
Cost too much	79	31.5
No proper facilities at the health post	110	43.8
too far	17	6.8
Husband/family does not allow	32	12.7
Others	13	12.7
Total	251	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

Among respondents 31.5 percent mentioned that it cost too much and 43.8 percent mentioned that there were no facilities of delivery at nearer health posts. In addition 6.8 percent of the respondents cited that health facility was too far from their house and lack of proper transportation they delivered birth at their home. 12.7 percent of the respondents said that they delivered at home mainly because of their husbands and other family members who did not allowed to go health facilities. Similarly same percentage (12.7%) of the respondents shared that

ignorance of importance of health facilities, and also delivery occurred before reaching the health posts, was the reason for not going health facilities for delivered their last child.

6.9 Literacy Status of Madheshi Women

Literacy involves not recognizing words and numbers, but also becoming socially, economically and politically aware. If women become literate, they are sure to become active participants in development activities. In common interpretation, literacy is the knowledge of reading and writing. In this study information on the literacy status collected for literate, those who can read and write.

Table 6.9: Literacy status and level of Educational Attainment of Literate Women 15-49 years of Age and above

Literacy status of Madheshi Women	Total Numbers	Percent (%)
Literate	101	28.9
Illiterate	249	71.1
Grade 1-5	39	38.6
Grade 6-8	23	21.8
Grade 9-10	25	24.8
Grade 10+2	7	6.9
Graduate	2	2.0
Masters	5	5.0
Total	101	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

In Nepal considerable improvements in the level of literacy had been achieved in the country over the years. In the case of Madheshi women in Terai region of Nepal, above data on literacy status indicates that 71 percent of the women were illiterate and only 29 percent of the total women were literate.

Table 6.9 presents the percent of women by levels of educational attainment. The proportion of women who have attained primary education (1-5) was 38.6 percent which is the higher proportion of the female aged 15-49 years age groups. Similarly 21.8 percent had studied (lower secondary education (Grade 6-8) and around 25 percent of the literate female was studied in secondary level (9-10). Those who had passed 10 and studied up to Intermediate level (10+2) accounted 6.9 percent of the literate women.

Illiteracy is a serious problem for Madheshi communities today. The communities where more than 70 percent of the woman was found to be illiterate, in this condition how can citizens who do not have access to literacy and primary education attain essential information affecting their daily lives. Education is the natural right for all human beings to have equal access to education. Education is directly related to the status of women in general. A woman with increasing level of education enjoys higher status than one without education. So no doubt education liberates women from their traditional roles (Datta, 2005). It has seen that schooling is most important mechanism to increase women's autonomy. It opens the door to learn and get new experiences outside the home (Niraula and Morgan, 1996).

It is also necessary to enhance the role of education to control population growth in country like Nepal, where population growth is very high. It is also seen that educated women learn more the value of family planning and the contraceptives will therefore be more meaningful in a situation where women have the basic education to understand the value of family planning. However with opening more and more schools, closer to the villages, as well as free education upto class ten for every child in government schools, now Madheshi people have started realizing that there must be literate family members at least men member of family to deal in different problems with the concerning areas.

6.10 Causes of not Studied of Women who were Illiterate

It was also asked to the respondents that what the cause of being iliterate because in Parsa district there are many schools located at each VDC. The causes of not literate are presented in below Table 6.11.

Table 6.10: The Causes of not Studied of Women who were Illiterate

Causes of not studied	Total Numbers	Percent (%)
Poverty	116	46.6
Help to mothers in household works	100	40.2
To care younger brother and sister	13	5.2
Marriage	4	1.6
Too far from house	11	4.4
Others	5	2.0
Total	249	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

The data presented in Table 6.10 indicates that the majority of women shared that poverty was the main causes of not studies accounted 46.6 percent. Similarly 40 percent of the women said that they had no time to go school because they had to help to their mothers in household works. 5.2 percent said they had to take care of their younger brothers and sisters. Those woman who said marriage was the main reason for not studied accounted only 1.6 percent while 4.4 percent of the women said school was too far from their living places. This shows that education for Madheshi women are still found to be low due to ignorance of parents as well as poverty.

6.11 Women Participated in Literacy Programs

Education is the strongest variable to get status in the society because it provides some of the basic skills and confidence to live better life. But in this study large majority of the women were illiterate. In Nepal there are many literacy programs such as adult literacy programs conducted by the organizations. So it was also asked to the illiterate women to find out the participation of these women in such literacy programs. Table 6.12 shows that only limited number of women (21%) participated in the literacy programs. Most of the respondents (79%) did not participated literacy programs.

Table 6.11: Distribution of women who ever participated in literacy programs

Participated in literacy programme	Total Numbers of Women	Percent (%)
Yes	52	20.9
No	197	79.1
Total	249	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

6.12 Who Can Speaks or Writes or Read Nepali Language

Despite its small size, Nepal accommodates an amazing cultural diversity including linguistic plurality. But in Nepal the speakers of different languages are sometimes settled in the same locality, especially in urban areas. So they need to link language to communicate with each other. However in Terai region Hindi language is most common language to communicate each other. In Nepal Nepali language is officially regarded as the Rastriyabhasha ‘the language of the naton’ and all mother tongues spoken in Nepal as National languages. However the Nepali

speakers has been always benefited in all areas of development and many rural women especially illiterate women, who are living in rural areas rarely know Nepali language.

Table 6.12: Percent Distribution of Women who can Read, Write and Speaks Nepali Language

Women who can Speak and Write Nepali Language	Total Numbers of Women	Percent (%)
Yes	163	46.6
No	187	53.4
Total	350	46.6
Only can speak	56	34.4
Only can write	4	2.5
Can speak and write	6	3.7
Can speak , write and read	56	34.4
Can only read	3	1.8
Only can understand	38	23.3
Total	163	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

Table 6.12 presents those respondents who can speak, read and write Nepali language. 46.6 percent of the respondents said that they can read or write and speak Nepali language. Among them 34.4 percent of the respondents said that they can only speak Nepali language, 34.4 percent said that they can only write Nepali language. 34.4 percent of the respondent said they can speak, write and read Nepali language clearly. 23.3 percent said that they only can understand but can not reply.

6.13 Work did by Respondents before Marriage

The respondents were asked types of work generally done by them at their parental house before their marriage. An overwhelming proportion (84.6%) reported that they helped in kitchen works. While 61.7 percent of the women reported that they assist to their parents by helping in caring and raring to their younger brothers and sisters. The proportion of women, who reported that, they used to help in ringing goods and grazing the animals and collecting grass and wood were around 51 percent, (see Table 6.13).

Table 6.13: Types of Work done by Women at their Parental House before Marriage

Women usually helped in households chores before marriage	No. of Women	Percentage (%)
Helped in kitchen	296	84.6
Helped in caring younger sisters and brothers	216	61.7
Helped in agriculture	199	56.9
Helped in bringing goods from the shop	180	51.4
Helped in grazing the animals collecting grass and wood	185	52.9
Others	143	40.9

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

The above information shows that women were almost in every household works had helped in their parental house. The traditional system also affects on the work of women at the household. Girl child is generally treated that they should do all the household chores so that in their husband's house there will be no complained.

6.14 The Dowry brought by the Respondents

The dowry system is so deeply rooted in Madheshi societies, that sometimes one feels that this system is increasing day by day in different forms of demand. Dowry is an evil, evil system and all of us, at some level, condone it and even contribute to it. Even modern, well-educated families start saving up money for their daughter's dowry as soon as she is born, so what one can expect from the uneducated masses. When demands for dowry are not met, the bride is subject to torture, and often even killed. The reason many parents don't want to have daughters because of the dowry they will have to shell out at her marriage and the stress they go through due to never ending demands from her in-laws.

The practice of dowry abuse is rising in Nepal as well as our neighbouring country India. The

most severe is bride burning” the burning of women, whose dowries were not considered sufficient by their husband or in-laws. Most of these incidents are reported as accidental burns in the kitchen or are disguised as suicide. It is evident that there exist deep rooted prejudices against women in India. Cultural practices such as the payment of dowry tend to subordinate women in these societies. In this context, respondents were also asked to know the types of dowry brought by them during their wedding.

Table 6.14 presents the types of dowry brought by the respondents from their parent’s house. Most of the respondents (61%) said that they brought mainly cash in the name of dowry. 8.6 percent of the respondents shared that parents gave vehicles to their husbands. 23 percent recorded that they brought animals mainly cows, buffalows, goats and some jewellery in the name of dowry. There were 7 percent of the respondents very happily claimed that they had not brought dowry at all.

Table 6.14: The Percent Distribution of Women Who Brought Dowry

Brought Dawry	No. of Women	Percentage (%)
Cash	214	61.1
Veihcles for husband	30	8.6
Others(cow, buffalo, jewellery)	81	23.1
Not brought dowry at all	25	7.1
Total	350	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

6.15 Attitudes of Women who thinks Dowry Increases Social Status

The important of dowry in securing a woman in her husband’s home is increasingly apparent in Nepal. Many harassment and death cases recorded only in the name of dowry. According to the study large number of dowries reduces domestic violence, Rao and Bloch (1993) cited in Sen (1998)

Some people and even women think that dowry is a symbol of their parental status and women’s social status inceases according to the size of the dowry. Many parents still don't give enough emphasis on educating their daughters. They believe their daughters will get married eventually, and husbands will support them, so why push them so hard? Poorer sections of society would rather send their daughters out to work and earn some money, to help them save

up for her dowry. Those from regular middle and upper class backgrounds do send their daughters to school, but don't emphasise career options.

Similarly, very wealthy parents will happily support their daughters until they get married. Because of the family status and their ability to fork out a high dowry, they know they will get good matches for their daughter, and don't take their daughters education very seriously. Table 6.15 presents the attitudes of the respondents who thought that bringing dowry increase social status of women.

Table 6.15: The percent of Women who Thinks dowry Increases Social Status

Increases Social Status	No. of women	Percentage (%)
Yes	245	70.0
No	105	30.0
Total	350	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

The survey data shows that 70 percent of the respondents thought dowry increase social status of women in their respective caste/ethnic groups. There were also many women (30%) said that bringing dowry cannot increase social status. This shows that the concept of dowry is changing slowly in Madheshi communities.

Similarly Table 6.15.1 presents the perception of respondents that dowry increases social status by the literacy status of the respondents. Data clearly says that literacy status does not very much influence on this perception. 73.3 percent of the literate female said that dowry increases social status and among illiterate 68.7 percent said dowry increases social status while 27 percent literate women were of the opinion that dowry is not necessary for the better status of women.

Table 6.15.1 Percent Distribution of Women Who Thought Dowry Increases Social Status by literacy Status of the Women

Literacy Status	Dowry Increases social status					
	Yes	Percent (%)	No	Percent (%)	Total	Percent (%)
Literate	74	73.3	27	26.7	101	100.0
Illiterate	171	68.7	78	31.3	249	100.0
Total	245	70.0	105	30.0	350	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

Above Table 6.15.1 shows that literacy status has not very much influenced on the attitude of the women on the dowry. Majority of literate women stated that dowry increases their social status in the husband's house (73.3%).

The focus group discussion among Paralegal Committee of Parsa district, study also shows that the system of dowry is highly affected on the women's status.

Box 2: Focus Group Discussion among Paralegal Committee of Parsa district

Total of 13 Madheshi women represented from different VDCs of Parsa district and are also a member of Paralegal Committee. All the participants in FGDs are very active women in their societies. Among them it is asked that how many of them are active in their households and more than half of the participants reported that they are the household heads in their respective families. Similarly almost all participants argued that most of the decisions of their family is done by either their husbands or in-laws. But it was also interesting that those women participants whose age was around 40 years and above claimed that they took all the household decisions in their families. These perceptions also favor previous perceptions that young women have to listen both their husbands and in-laws. In this focus group discussion it was also tried to find out on the attitudes of women related with dowry system, son preferences, involvement in politics etc. Majority of the participants argued that dowry system is not good but it is also true that the amount of dowry increases the social status of woman in the society. Similarly they had strongly voiced that son is needed to extension of generation and it has also played role to get status in the society. They claimed that educated or uneducated and employed or unemployed all need son.

6.16 Who Thinks Birth of a Son Increases Social Status

Gender discrimination in Nepal has its roots in the prevailing social and cultural norms and values in the society. Parents want to have children; generally they prefer to have sons rather than daughters. This study founds that more than 88.6 percent of the women thought that birth of a son child increase status of women in their societies. Among literate women almost same proportion said that son is necessary and it increases women's social status. Here data clearly shows that both literate and illiterate were the same opinion on the preference and importance of son.

Table 6.16: The Respondents Who Think Son Increases Social Status

Son Increases Social Status			
Literacy Status	Yes	No	Total
Literate	86.1	13.9	100.0
Illiterate	89.6	10.4	100.0
Percentage (%)	88.6	11.4	100.0
Total Number of women	310	40	350

Source: Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

In Madheshi societies, a son normally lives with his parents while a daughter goes away to live her husbands after marriage. Thus parents think that the responsibilities of the parents directly go to their son. After Kanya Dan daughters are seen as guest of the families. In this study both literate as well as illiterate respondents stressed that son increases their social status in their families (see Table 6.16). This shows that the concept of traditional attitudes towards their son has still not changed and this has resulted less value of daughter in our families.

Case Study 1: Situation of Woman of Terai caste and Preference of Son in the Family.

When I was 13 years old I started living with my husband after Gauna in a joint family. My husband was the elder of two brothers and two sisters. He is also 9 years older than me. One sister was already married but living with us with her two sons and one daughter. I gave birth to my elder daughter at the age of 15. Again only after 9 months I gave birth of my second daughter. Now my all in-laws family members started to do back bites and also blamed me that I can not give birth of son. They were started continuously tortured me by saying 'Banjh' even I had given births of two children. They did not recognized daughter as a 'Santan'. I was totally hopeless because her in-laws were making planning to remarry her husband only for son. My husband started to neglect me and I had to do all the household chores but did not have autonomy to take any decision even related to her health. One day I became pregnant and gave birth of a son. Then my days returned, all the family members started to love and care me. My mother in-laws says, 'babu k Ma' with very happy. Now I feel I have got status in my family.

The Case study shows that, son preference is generally viewed as a socially determined bias; in a patriarchal society, couples prefer to raise a child who has the culturally accepted characteristics, status and economic potential. This preference often influences behaviour and may result in gender biases that negatively affect the welfare, health and survival of girls and women. Thus, preference may lead to discrimination. For better understanding of son preference, it is important to bear in mind the socioeconomic and cultural settings of the country. As son preference is largely sociocultural, its effect should not be underestimated in traditional poor societies.

6.17 Parents Ever Discussed before the final Decision of their Marriages

In Madheshi societies there were very few parents who ever discussed on the marriage topics before marriage (see Table 6.17). More than 81 percent of the respondents remembered that their parents never discussed or involve in their life partner selection process. However very few of them (18.3%) stated that, they were asked in the process of their husband or life partner selection but they were stressed that it was only for name.

Table 6.17: Percent Distribution of Women who's Parents Ever Discussed on the Selection of Their Husband before Marriage

Parents Ever Discussed	Number of Women	Percentage (%)
Yes	64	18.3
No	286	81.7
Total	350	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

6.18 Economic Status of Madhshi Women

For a long time, women's work or contribution in the economy was either largely ignored or dismissed, for traditionally women worked in the informal sector and within the household. Recently international organization such as the UNs as well as economists have begun to stress the importance of work that contributes income or profit directly or indirectly work inside the household or outside the households. This all constitutes the economically active population, UN (1991). This situation is not unique in Nepal. It is a trend particularly in developing

countries and developing societies specifically. In this research question were asked to know the economic status of women of Madheshi community.

Employment is one of the important indicators of women's autonomy of decision making in their households. Women's employment enhances women's economic independence and improves access to and control over economic resources as well as women's ability to rely on themselves, rather than on their children or husband to attain social status, Jejeebhoy (1996).

It is also realized in many workshops in Nepal that one of the most promising means of women empowerment is for women to establish their own enterprises, providing financial incentives and training courses to raise confidence level in our male dominant societies.

Economic independent is the main basis to build up self-confident of an individual. Madheshi women especially who lives in village spent most of their times in their domestic works. Here own income points out income generated from the works such as daily wages and small business, services etc are presented in below Table 6.18.1.

Women who are able to earn money and make visible contribution to the household enterprises may be expected to have a higher status because they could be perceived as equal partner rather than dependents. However women's household works is generally not counted in economic activities but it should be counted work because it helps other family members to work and manage their time in economic activities properly. Women were more likely to be excluded from the active labour force because if they were working within the household economy, they did not consider themselves receiving any incomes. In a subsistence economy, production of the 'use value' within the domestic unit is the main economic activity of the majority of women. About 76 percent of the female were worked in household activities. Whose main occupation was housewife, in Nepal and especially in Madhesh mostly women work within households. Similarly the distribution of the economically active female by major occupation groups (Table 6.18.1) shows that employment of women in the formal sector is indeed quite insignificant. With less than two percent of the economically active female worked in service sector, it is quite clear that they can make at best only limited impact in decision-making autonomy. It is

also clear that among the female employed in the non-agriculture sector were less than one percent.

Table 6.18.1: Main Occupation of the Respondents

Main Occupation	Number of women	Percent (%)
Housewife	267	76.3
Agriculture own	27	7.8
Agriculture labour	37	10.6
Non-agriculture labour	2	0.8
Service	6	1.6
Teacher	10	2.9
Own buiseness	1	0.4
Total	350	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

Most of the women were working as agriculture labour, in low paid areas. Similarly 7.8 percent worked in their own agricultutr farm for this most of them did no get any direct any payment. About three percent of the women were worked in teaching profession in their own village. The traditional attitude that women should not go outside of the village or city for the work is highly found in Madheshi communities. Still many parents or laws family do not want to send their female members for the work out side of the village especially for their prestige. It has seen in the study area that many women of Pahadi origin were working in the village but women of same village very few found working in NGOs or any other sectors of non-agriculture employment.

Table 6.18.2: Distribution of Women According to the Occupation and the Working Time Period

Occupation	The time of work			Total
	Throughout the Year	Seasonally or part of the years	Once in a while	
Housewife	80.7	18.3	0.0	100.0
Agriculture own	17.6	82.4	0.0	100.0
Agriculture labour	16.0	80.0	0.0	100.0
Non-agriculture labour	100.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Service	100.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Teacher	85.7	0.0	14.3	100.0
Own business	100.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Total	37.8	61.0	1.2	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

The women were asked the time period of work done by above women with different occupations. Table 6.18.2 shows that more than 80 percent of the housewives do the household chores through out the years while 18 percent said they do only some times of the years. Only recently researches and international organizations have begun to consider women's work within the household as economically productive. But those women who were reported themselves as housewives, categorize in this research as main occupation. It is also true that these housewives were not paid for this household works. So they were not included as economically active population.

In both working areas of agriculture, (Agriculture own and Agriculture labour) more than 80 percent women said that they work in the field only in seasons, a part of the year. Those whose occupation were service, teaching and own business, they worked almost throughout the year respectively. This shows that most of the women who worked in agriculture related works, had worked only a part of the year and rest of the time they were economically inactive as housewives.

Table 6.18.3: Percent Distribution of Women who were not satisfied with their Occupation and Causes of not satisfying

Occupation	Respondents Satisfied with their Occupation					
	No of women	Yes (%)	Number of women	No (%)	Total number of women	Total
Housewives	230	65.7	37	10.6	267	76.3
Agriculture Own	24	6.9	3	0.8	27	7.8
Agriculture labour	21	6.1	16	4.5	37	10.6
non-agriculture labour	1	0.4	1	0.4	2	0.8
Service	6	1.6	--	0.0	6	1.6
Teacher	8	2.4	2	0.4	10	2.9
Own business	1	.4	--	0.0	1	0.4
Total	293	83.7	57	16.3	350	100.0
Main Reason for not Satisfying with their Occupations						
Reasons	Low Income	No respect		Low wages	Others	Total
Number of women	24	16		7	10	57
Percentage	42.5	27.5		12.5	17.5	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

Table 6.18.3 presents the proportion of women who were not satisfied by their occupation and the causes of not satisfying with their occupations. The majority of women (83.7%) said that they were quite satisfied with their current jobs. Only 16 percent of the women were not satisfied with their occupation and among them housewives were mostly not satisfied with their house job.

From the recorded response of dissatisfied women with their occupations said that the main reason for not satisfied with their current jobs were low income (42.5%). Other reasons, included no respect (27.5%), low wages (12.5 percent) and 17.5 percent were mentioned not specific causes but they were not satisfied with their works.

Table 6.18.4: The Causes of Worke done by Women

Works Mainly Done for	For Family Members	For Someone Else	Self Employed	Total
Number of women	321	16	13	350
Percent	91.8	4.5	3.7	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

Those women who were not satisfied with their present works due to different causes were also asked the reasons for working in the respective areas of work. Table 6.18.4 presents the main causes of working in these areas of works. More than 91 percent said that they had worked for their family members. Self employment is also one of the indicators of empowerment of women but very few (3.7%) stated that they were self employed.

6.18.5 Land Ownership of Women

Land is an important and measurable indicator of socio-economic status in the context of Nepalese societies. Not only a productive possession, it also determines phenomena of social power prestige, pride, dignity, and a symbol of prosperity (muller-Boker, 1981). In the case of female land ownership it is more important because generally there is very land ownership among female. Table 6.18.5 also presents that more than 92 percent of the respondents had no land in their name. Only 8 percent had land ownership among women of the respective communities.

Table 6.18.5: Percent Distribution of Women According to their Land Ownership

Land in the name of women	Numbers	Percent (%)
Yes	27	7.8
No	323	92.2
Total	350	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

Those women who had land in their name were also asked that can they buy or sell land by themselves. Majority of them (83.4%) said that they can not buy and or sell their land even in their own name by themselves. However 16.6 percent of the respondents said that they can do by themselves (see Table 6.18.5.1). The land ownership according to the caste/ethnic groups is not available here but as recorded in the field only women of Tharu communities reported that they have ability to buy and sell their land by themselves.

**Table 6.18.5.1: Distribution of Women who can Buy and Sell
Their Land or House by themselves**

Women can Buy and Sell their Land or House by Own	Number Of Women	Percent (%)
Yes	5	16.6
No	22	83.4
Total	27	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

Summary of the Chapter

Women experience a variety of social and economic circumstances throughout the country, but their circumstances are related to pervasive gender bias. Data generated by the field survey can be used to illustrate the socio-economic status of Madheshi women of this district. Socio-economic development that eventually leads to get status in the society and great source of empowerment

In Madheshi society study found that almost all Madheshi women marry within 25 years of age. Generally in Madheshi communities husbands are older than their wives but in this study 2.6 percent of the wives were older than their husbands. Age at marriage has direct influence on education and employment of women and above figure clearly shows that mostly women marry during study times and career making times. This is also cause of poor socio-economic condition of these women. Similarly entry very early in sexual union, this might be resulted high fertility, poor educational status and poor economic status. In this society unmatched

marriage was also found to be very common . The high age gap between husband and wives may create some troubles in their lives to understand each other rather than living as jiwan sathi.

Illiteracy is a serious problem for Madheshi communities today. The communities where more than 70 percent of the woman was found to be illiterate, in this condition how can citizens who do not have access to literacy and primary education attain essential information affecting their daily lives.

Economic independent is the main basis to build up self-confident of an individual. Madheshi women especially who lives in village spent most of their times in their domestic works. Here own income points out income generated from the works such as daily wages and small business, services etc Women who are able to earn money and make visible contribution to the household enterprises may be expected to have a higher status because they could be perceived as equal partner rather than dependents. However women's household works is generally not counted in economic activities but it should be counted work because it helps other family members to work and manage their time in economic activities properly. The socio-economic position of Parsa district shows that although Madheshi women are responsible for maintaining the family, that is, the material reproduction of the labour, their socio-economic position is much poorer than that of men. This results from the unequal access to means of production between the sexes. Access to land, capital, are determined by the male dominated society.

CHAPTER V11

DECISION MAKING AUTONOMY OF MADHESHI WOMEN

Several studies have found that women's autonomy in decision-making is an important factor for the positive development of the family. Gupta (1996) suggested that women's joint decision making is insufficient for improving women's status in the family. It can only improve women's position in the families by individual controls over decision-making. Similarly Kabeer, (2001) also gives importance of women's autonomy in decision making. He says that joint decision-making is not necessarily a poor outcome for women and that women themselves often prefer joint to control over the household resources. Another view given by Caldwell (1978), (1982) suggests that demographic decision-making is not totally in the hand of women. Some of the decisions related with fertility are largely decided by the senior members of the families. Mason's (2000) argument is also linked with above arguments. There are so many decisions related with social, economical and also political; generally taken by the elder members of the families. In Nepal Sedden (1995), suggests that women's status is not uniform in all caste/ethnic groups.

Thus women's decision-making capacity and their presence and participation in decision-making-within the family, community, in public, at work, and in decision-making bodies, whether institutional or political are an important indicator of women empowerment and their autonomy. The information collected during the Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, represent a very modest attempt at trying to understand the decision-making autonomy among Madheshi women of different caste/ethnic groups in the sample. The issue mainly addressed falls into seven broad areas of decision-making autonomy at the households. In the first, questions were asked about who makes decisions to afford regarding women's income, about their husband incomes; about small and large household purchases; about own health care, how many childrens to have and about the mobility of the women. The following results obtained from the field study.

7.1 Autonomy in Decision-making

About 63 percent of the respondents reported that decisions regarding the expenditure of money earned by the respondents were made by them jointly with their husband, with another decisions regarding expenditure of money earned by the respondent's husband were made by them both jointly accounted 47 percent. Roughly 7 percent of the decisions related with expenditure of income either earned by the respondents or their husbands and also expenditure of large items at households, took by the respondents. Otherwise most of the decisions related with these mostly made their husbands only (Table 7.1). The proportion of female was high (29%) who had autonomy to take decision in the purchages of small items. But in the decision regarding mobility, very few women (7%) reported that they had autonomy to go outside to meet their relatives or friends. Generally women go outside by taking permission from the in-law-family members or from their husbands. However large proportion of the respondents mentioned that they made decision jointly for going outside of the house. Similarly decisions regarding the number of children and own health care, both respondents and their husbands jointly make decisions. The Table 7.1 shows that in almost all decisions, very small proportion of women had made decisions in all seven areas of decision-making autonomy.

Table 7.1: Decision-making Autonomy Status of women

Decision Making Autonomy Status	Husban d	Wife	Both Jointly	Other Family Members	Total
Who decides the money earn by the women will be used?	22.0	7.7	63.1	7.1	100.0
Who decides the money earn by the women's husband will be used?	35.7	5.7	47.1	11.4	100.0
Who decides the large household purchases?	22.0	7.4	54.9	15.7	100.0
Who decides the small household purchases ?	14.0	28.6	46.6	10.9	100.0
Who decidesto go outside, visits to relative or any other places?	22.0	6.9	52.6	18.6	100.0
How many childrens to have?	11.1	5.4	71.4	12.0	100.0
About own health care?	31.1	9.4	43.7	15.7	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011

7.1.1 Decision Making Autonomy Status of the Respondents

Table 7.1.1: Decision Making Autonomy Status of the Respondents

Decesion taken only by the female	Numbers	Percent
The money earned and used only by the respondenmt	28	7.7
Respondents take decision to use the money earned by the husband	20	5.7
Respondents take decision in small Household Purchages	99	28.6
Respondent take decisions in large Household Purchages	26	7.4
Respondents decide, how many children to have	19	5.4
Respondents decide on their own health care	33	9.4
Respondents decide to visit to the relatives or friends	24	6.9

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

Table 7.1.1 presents the decision-making autonomy status of the respondents. The figure clearly shows that in almost all areas of household's decision-making status no more than 7 percent of the respondents report taking decisions themselves excluding expenditure of small household items (29%). Similarly question on their mobility autonomy were asked to know the mobility status of women especially visit to health centres, the parental home or relatives, markets and in working place outside the village. The data shows that very few women (6.9%) had autonomy to go outside for any given reasons.

7.2 Decision- making Autonomy Status by Caste/ethnicity and Education and Occupational of the Respondents

The correlation between literacy and the status of women is controversial. Studies has shown that illiterate women whose poverty forces them out of domestic confines in search of employment seem to have better control over their own lives than literate women of higher socio-economic groups (see Government of India (1974); Acharya (1980); Hasan and Ritu Menon (2009).

As shown in Table 7.2, most of the decisions regarding the use of money earned by the respondents themselves also made decisions by respondents themselves.

Women's economic status has also affected on the decision-making autonomy status. In this Table 7.2 housewives have not included because they directly do not paid for their work. The women who were economically employed mainly in service and teaching profession more likely to made decisions (55%), (79%) respectively than agriculture own (42.5%) and agriculture labour (24.2%).

Women's educational level upto 10+2 did not see to have an impact on the respondents decision-making, but higher level of education had seen that 80 percent of the decision regarding expenditure of their own income made by the respondents who had studied master level. Similarly data shows that illiterate women had very little decision-making autonomy (4.8%). Among different caste/ethnic groups the situation was not very much different.

Table 7.2: Decision Making Autonomy by Caste/ethnicity and Educational and Occupational Status of the women

Who Decides the money earned by the Respondent will be used?				
Occupation of the Women		Husband Only	Respondents Only	Others
	Agriculture Own	7.5	42.5	50.0
	Agriculture Labour	15.2	24.2	60.6
	Non-Agriculture Labour	0.0	1.2	98.0
	Service	25.0	55.0	20.0
	Teacher	11.0	79.0	10.0
	Own Business	0.0	100.0	0.0
What is the Highest Grade have you Completed?	1-5	28.2		71.8
	6-8	18.2	13.6	68.2
	9-10	15.4	30.8	53.8
	10+2			100.0
	Graduate			100.0
	Masters		80.0	20.0
	No Education	23.3	4.8	71.9
Caste/ethnicity	Terai High Caste	1.1	2.6	6.3
	Terai Caste	9.7	1.7	29.7
	Terai Janjati	5.7	2.0	13.1
	Terai Dalit	5.1	1.4	14.6
	Muslim	0.3		6.6
	Total	22.0	7.7	70.3

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

The only decisions in which women took slightly more decisions than men in the expenditure of income earned by the respondents themselves. This shows that women had autonomy to take decision on their own earnings. However significant number of their husbands and other family members took decisions regarding the respondent's income expenditure (roughly 70%).

7.2.1 Decision-making Autonomy Status on the Use of Money Earned by the Respondent's Husband

Regarding decisions on expenditure on husband's income, husband themselves played important role in decision-making authority on their own incomes.

Table 7.2.1: Decision-making Autonomy Status of women

Who decides the money earned by the respondent's husband will be used?				
Occupational Status	Occupation	Husband only	Respondent only	Others
		31.2	7.8	60.9
	Agriculture Own	67.5	0.0	32.5
	Agriculture Labour	36.4	0.0	63.6
	Non-Agriculture Labour	0.0	0.0	100.0
	Service	25.0	0.0	75.0
	Teacher	0.0	0.0	100.0
	Own Business	100.0	0.0	0.0
What is the highest Grade have you Completed?	1-5	35.7	5.7	58.6
	6-8	25.6	5.1	69.2
	9-10	40.9		59.1
	10+2	23.1	7.7	69.2
	Graduate	--	28.6	71.4
	Masters	--	--	100.0
	No Education	--	--	100.0
Caste/ethnicity	Terai High Caste	3.7	1.1	5.1
	Terai Caste	10.0	3.7	27.4
	Terai Janjati	10.3	0.3	10.3
	Terai Dalit	7.1	0.6	13.4
	Muslim	4.6	--	2.3
	Total)	35.7	5.7	58.6

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

Women of all occupational status had found no autonomy to take decisions on the oncome of their husbands. Similarly higher level educion of the respondents had found some autonomy

(29%) to use their husband's income. Similarly very less number of women of all caste/ethnic groups reported that they had autonomy to decide the money where to use earned by their husbands. Among all caste/ethnic groups the situation seems better for the Terai caste women (3.7%) among total 41 percent of women of Terai caste/ethnicities, had autonomy to afford their husband's income by their own which was higher than other caste/ethnic groups of women.

7.2.2 Decision-making Autonomy Status of women in Small HH Purchases

Table 7.2.2: Decision-making Autonomy Status of women

Respondents take decision in small Household Purchases				
Occupation		Husband only	Respondent only	Others
	Housewife	22.7	7.4	69.9
	Agriculture Own	20.0	7.5	72.5
	Agriculture Labour	24.2	6.1	69.7
	Non-Agriculture Labour	0.0	0.0	1.0
	Service	0.0	0.0	2.9
	Teacher	0.0	0.0	1.1
	Own Business	50.0	50.0	0.0
What is the highest grade have you Completed?	1-5	--	10.3	87.2
	6-8	--	13.6	77.3
	9-10	--	26.9	65.4
	10+2	--		100.0
	Graduate	--		100.0
	masters	--		100.0
	No Education	--	25.3	66.3
Caste/ethnicity	Terai High Caste	2.6	0.9	6.6
	Terai Caste	8.9	4.3	28.0
	Terai Janjati	5.1	1.1	14.6
	Terai Dalit	4.9	1.1	15.1
	Muslim	0.6		6.3
	Total)	22.0	7.4	70.6

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

The only decisions in which women take slightly more decisions than men were in small household purchases. Generally men do not want to take burden of small items of households. So women and other family members take decisions in small items of household. Table 7.2.2 presents the distribution of respondents, their husbands and other family members who took decisions in small household purchases. Data shows that women who were housewives, and who had involved in agriculture related occupation had less autonomy in decision making around (7.%). Similarly almost all respondents and other family members themselves took decisions regarding small household purchases (see Table 7.2.2). Among caste/ethnicity the situation of higher caste women is worst, less than 1 percent of women had made decisions on this among 10 percent of the respondents of the respective caste. There were no any Muslim women who had made decision even in small household purchases. The situation was similar for women of Terai Dalit caste and Terai Janjti caste (1.1%) respectively.

7.2.3 Decision-making Autonomy Status of Large Household Purchases

Respondents were asked that who take decisions on the large household purchases in the households. Large household purchases include large items like television, refrigerator, radio, cupboard, table, chair and so on. Table 7.2.3 presents the status of women in decision-making autonomy of large household purchases at the household.

Table 7.2.3: Decision-making Autonomy Status of women

Respondent take decisions in large Household Purchases				
Occupation Total		Husband only	Respondent only	Others
	Housewife	14.8	27.3	57.8
	Agriculture Own	7.5	42.5	50.0
	Agriculture Labour	15.2	24.2	60.6
	Non- Agriculture Labour	0.0	0.5	0.3
	Service	25.0	0.0	75.0
	Teacher	0.0	10.0	90.0
	Own Business	0.0	100.0	0.0
What is the Highest Grade have you Completed?	1-5	20.5	15.4	64.1
	6-8	13.6	45.5	40.9
	9-10	7.7	34.6	57.7
	10+2	14.3	14.3	71.4
	graduate	--	--	100.0
	masters	--	--	100.0
	No Education	14.1	29.7	56.2
Caste/ethnicity	Terai High Caste	2.6	3.4	4.0
	Terai Caste	4.0	12.6	24.6
	Terai Janjati	2.6	5.7	12.6
	Terai Dalit	4.0	5.1	12.0
	Muslim	0.9	1.7	4.3
	Total)	14.0	28.6	57.4

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

In expense on large household purchases mostly decisions took by the other family members or both jointly husbands and wives. Similarly data shows that respondents who had done business as a main occupation, 100 percent of the decisions regarding large household purchases were made by themselves. There is no variation found among different educational level of women. For example as stated above women who were educated 10+2, 14.3 percent of the decision regarding large household purchases made by themselves which was similar 14.3 percent men respectively.

Among caste/ethnicity as stated above analysis situation of Terai caste women (12.6) was better than high caste women (3.4%) and Muslim women (1.7%) respectively.

7.2.4 Decision-making Autonomy Status to Decide on the Fertility of women

Regarding the question on when and how many children to have by occupational status, educational level and by caste/ethnic groups have been presented in below Table 7.2.4.

Table 7.2.4: Decision-making Autonomy Status of women

Who decides how many children to have?				
Occupation	Occupation	Husband only	Respondent only	Others
	Housewife	79.5	0.5	20.0
	Agriculture Own	20.0	7.5	72.5
	Agriculture Labour	24.2	6.1	69.7
	Non-Agriculture Labour	0.0	0.0	1
	Service	0.0	0.0	2.9
	Teacher	0.0	0.0	1.1
	Own Business	50.0	50.0	0.0
	Total	--	6.9	6.9
What is the highest grade have you Completed?	1-5	20.5	8	74.4
	6-8	22.7	5	77.3
	9-10	23.1	6	76.9
	10+2	14.3	1	71.4
	Graduate	50.0	1	50.0
	Masters	--	--	100.0
	No Education	22.5	56	69.1
	Total	22.0	77	71.1
Caste/ethnicity	Terai High Caste	4.0	0.6	5.4
	Terai Caste	9.1	2.3	29.7
	Terai Janjati	4.3	1.7	14.9
	Terai Dalit	4.0	1.1	16.0
	Muslim	0.6	1.1	5.1
	Total	22.0	6.9	71.1

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

Data has again shown that decision related with fertility, had also taken by the husbands and other family members. However situation is somehow better among Terai caste women (2.3%) among 41 percent of the total female population. Most of the decisions were taken by the other family members (see Table 7.2.4)

7.2.5: Decision-making Autonomy Status of women's Health Care

Respondents were also asked about the decision-making autonomy on their own health care especially on the consult with health personal for their own health check-up, visits to a doctor, types of care for themselves, selection of contraception devices etc.

Table 7.2.5: Decision-making Autonomy Status of women

Who decides about own Health Care?				
Occupation	Occupation	Husband only	Respondent only	Others
	Housewife	10.2	5.9	84.0
	Agriculture Own	22.5	2.5	75.0
	Agriculture Labour	9.1	6.1	84.8
	Non-Agriculture Labour	0.0	0.3	0.3
	Service	25.0	50.0	25.0
	Teacher	0.0	10.0	90.0
	Own Business	0.0	0.0	100.0
	Total	11.2	5.4	83.4
What is the highest grade have you Completed?	1-5	5.1	10.3	84.6
	6-8	9.1	--	90.9
	9-10	7.7	--	92.3
	10+2	--	--	100.0
	Graduate	--	50.0	50.0
	Masters	--	--	100.0
	No Education	13.3	5.6	81.1
	Total	11.1	5.4	83.4
Caste/ethnicity	Terai High Caste	0.6	1.4	8.0
	Terai Caste	2.9	2.6	35.7
	Terai Janjati	3.4	0.6	16.9
	Terai Dalit	2.9	0.9	17.4
	Muslim	1.4	--	5.4
	Total	11.1	1.4	8.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

The Table 7.2.5 presents decision making autonomy on the respondent's own health care. It was found from the field study that women who were working in service sector, had mostly (50%) taken decision themselves regarding their own health care. Similarly those women who were in teaching profession, 10 percent of them had autonomy to take decisions regarding their own health care. Rest of the women who were involved in different other types of occupation had found very little autonomy to take decision on their own health care (see Table 7.2.5).

Educational status has also affected on the decision-making autonomy at the household . For example those women who were Graduate and above 50 percent of them made decision by themselves on their health related decisions.

Among caste/ethnicity the situation was better among Terai caste women (2.6%). However in all caste/ethnic groups and in all educational level, women had very less autonomy in taking decisions on their own health care.

The decision-making autonomy status among Muslim women were also tried to find out by conducting focus group discussion. The Box 3 presents the perception of Muslim women on their decision-making autonomy status in their families.

**Box 3: Focus Group Discussion among Muslim Women on Decision-making
Autonomy Status**

A focus group discussion conducted among women of Madheshi Muslim communities in Allaw VDC, all the 10 participants strongly argued that their status is very poor in their male dominant societies. Male of this caste/ethnic groups treat and recognize women as economically unproductive but physically reproductive. Their most of the time goes in rearing and caring of their children and their families. Almost all the participants argued that they have no autonomy to take part in decision making even in the households matters as well as in the decision of the number of children. More than 70 percent of the participants were married at the child age before 18 years old. They said that they are socially, economically dependent on their husbands. Only 2 participants reported that they can take some decision related to households. Remarriages is very common for male of this community. Similarly son preference as well as dowry system is very much practiced in their communities. Around 30 percent of the participants of FGD reported that domestic violence is very common and marital rape is still not considered as rape in their society.

Table 7.2.6: Decision-making Autonomy Status of Women

Who decides to visit to the relatives or friends?				
Occupation of the Respondents	Occupation	Husband only	Respondent only	Others
	Housewife	27.0	9.8	63.3
	Agriculture Own	65.0	7.5	27.5
	Agriculture Labour	24.2	9.1	66.7
	Non-Agriculture Labour	0.5	1.5	98.0
	Service	25.0	0.0	75.0
	Teacher	10.0	20.0	70.0
	Own Business	75.0	0.0	25.0
	Total	30.9	9.5	59.6
What is the Highest Grade have you Completed?	1-5	35.9	7.7	56.4
	6-8	27.3	18.2	54.5
	9-10	15.4	34.6	50.0
	10+2	--	--	100.0
	Graduate	--	50.0	50.0
	Masters	--	20.0	80.0
	No education	34.1	6.0	59.8
	Total	35.9	7.7	56.4
Caste/ethnicity	Terai High Caste	2.9	2.9	4.3
	Terai Caste	11.7	3.7	25.7
	Terai Janjati	7.1	0.3	13.4
	Terai Dalit	6.3	1.4	13.4
	Muslim	3.1	1.1	2.6
Total		31.1	9.4	59.4

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

Decisions related with mobility of women generally made by either husbands of the respondents or other family members. The occupation status has not affected on the decision-making autonomy of women. However literacy status has affected on the decision-making autonomy on the mobility of women. As stated in above Table 7.2.6, decision-making status has been increases according to the increament of educational level. The respondents who had passed graduation level, 70 percent of the decisions on their mobility made by themselves. This shows that educated women have had autonomy to go outside of the house for variety of reasons. The

respondents who studied upto primary level 7.7 percent of the respondents had autonomy to go outside to meet their relatives or friends. Among caste/ethnicity Terai high caste and Terai castes enjoy higher autonomy status in taking decision making autonomy on mobility (see Table 7.2.6).

During field survey, it was also collected some supporting information through focus group discussion among Dalit women, Which has been presented in Box 4.

Box 4: Focus Group Discussion among Madheshi Dalit Women on their status in the households and the society

The ten Madheshi Dalit women from Lalparsi VDC participated in the focus group discussion reported that most of the women of this community are illiterate. Only (23%) of them are literate and most of the women are housewives. It was also asked to find out the social status of these women in their own community. In this more than 60 percent of the respondents said that they had autonomy to take decisions in both areas, into the households and outside of the households. 70 percent of the participants stated that they can buy and sell the agriculture products and also cattle by their own. Very few said that they have to take permission for this. However they stressed that in their caste, son preferences is very high but dowry system is very low. They claimed that their overall status in their own communities is better than upper caste/ethnic groups of women.

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011

This study also shows the same situation of women of Madheshi Dalits which has been also presented in above Tables.

Study has also shown that schooling and work of women does not always favour in decision-making autonomy at the household levels. There are also traditional domestic roles which slowly give autonomy to these women. In South Asia anthropological evidence shows that married women gain domestic autonomy to take decision as they become older. Family members have less interest in women's mobility when she becomes older. Similarly Dysoon

and Moore (1983) also described that the decision-making autonomy increases after the birth of the children because at that time most of the domestic decisions are related with their children.

As the case of Karela in India, education enables women to exercise more power and decision making authority in the family but vast majority of educated middle class and caste women are still confined in domestic activities in unproductive areas, see New York Times, 6 September (1994).

7.3 : Decision Making Autonomy (Age Groups of Women, Age Gap between Husband and Wives, Total Number of Children, Sex of the household, caste/ethnicity and husband's Literacy status)

Study conducted in Srilanka found that women's status in the family is better when there is small age gap between husband and wife. Similarly small educational gap between spouses determines the decision making status in the households. All the socio-economic development of a woman also affects on women's domestic power, Malhotra (1997). Results presented in below Tables list decision-making autonomy of women in seven areas of household decision making level by age group of women, age difference between spouses, number of children, and sex of the household head and also educational level of women.

Table 7.3.1: Decision-making Autonomy Status of women

Characteristics of the Respondents		Who usually decides how the money you earn will be used?					
		husband only		respondent only		Others & Jointly	
		(%)	No	(%)	No	(%)	No
Age Group	15-19	16.7	3	5.6	1	77.8	14
	20-24	13.2	7	3.8	2	83.0	44
	25-29	19.5	16	8.5	7	72.0	59
	30-34	28.6	18	9.5	6	61.9	39
	35-39	14.9	10	11.9	8	73.1	49
	40-44	31.4	11	--	--	68.6	24
	45-49	37.5	12	9.4	3	53.1	17
Total		22.0	77	7.7	27	70.3	246
	No Age Gap	25.0	3	--	--	75.0	9
	Husband is 1-3 years older	15.7	13	2.4	2	81.9	8
	4-6 years older	28.3	36	5.5	7	66.1	4
	7-9 years	17.2	10	8.6	5	74.1	43
	10-12 years older	18.4	7	15.8	6	65.8	25
	13-14 years	40.0	2	20.0	1	40.0	2
	15 +	27.8	5	16.7	3	55.6	10
	wife is older than husband (1-12 years)	12.5	1	25.0	2	62.5	5
Total children Ever Born	None	18.5	5	7.4	2	74.1	20
	One	25.0	8	25.0	8	50.0	16
	Two	21.5	17	3.8	3	74.7	59
	Three	24.1	26	6.5	7	69.4	75
	Four	24.1	13	7.4	4	68.5	37
	Five and above	16.0	8	6.0	3	78.0	39
Sex of Household head	Male	20.6	72	4.9	17	61.7	216
	Female	1.4	5	2.9	10	8.6	30
Educationla Status of your Husband	Primary	25.4	15	1.7	1	72.9	43
	Seconday	23.7	18	3.9	3	72.4	55
	Higher Secondary	19.5	8	9.8	4	70.7	29
	Graduate and above	6.3	1	50.0	8	43.8	7
	No education	22.2	35	7.0	11	70.9	112
Total		22.0	77	7.7	27	70.3	246

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

Table 7.3.2: Decision-making Autonomy Status of Women

Characteristics of the Respondents		Who usually decides the money earned by the respondent's husband will be used?					
		Husband Only		Respondent Only		Others & Jointly	
		(%)	No	(%)	No	(%)	No
Age group	15-19	16.7	3	--		83.3	15
	20-24	22.6	12	1.9	1	75.5	40
	25-29	35.4	29	3.7	3	61.0	50
	30-34	44.4	28	6.3	4	49.2	31
	35-39	43.3	29	3.0	2	53.7	36
	40-44	28.6	10	14.3	5	57.1	20
	45-49	43.8	14	15.6	5	40.6	13
Age Gap between Spouses	No age gap	58.3	7	8.3	1	33.3	4
	Husband is 1-3 years older	31.3	26	8.4	7	60.2	50
	4-6 years older	35.4	45	5.5	7	59.1	75
	7-9 years	41.4	24	5.2	3	53.4	31
	10-12 years older	39.5	15	--	--	60.5	23
	13-14 years	40.0	2	--	--	60.0	3
	15 +	27.8	5	5.6	1	66.7	12
	wife is older than husband (1-12 years)	12.5	1	--	--	87.5	7
Total children Ever born	None	11.1	3	7.4	2	81.5	22
	One	40.6	13	3.1	1	56.3	18
	Two	25.3	20	3.8	3	70.9	56
	Three	41.7	45	5.6	6	52.8	57
	Four	46.3	25	9.3	5	44.4	24
	Five and above	38.0	19	6.0	3	56.0	28
Sex of Household head	Male	29.4	103	5.4	19	52.3	183
	Female	6.3	22	0.3	1	6.3	22
Educationla Status of Respondent's Husband	Primary	33.9	20	3.4	2	62.7	37
	Seconday	42.1	32	9.2	7	48.7	37
	Higher Secondary	29.3	12	2.4	1	68.3	28
	Graduate and above	18.8	3	6.3	1	75.0	12
	No education	36.7	58	5.7	9	57.6	91
Total		35.7	125	5.7	20	58.6	205

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

Control over economic resources is extremely limited among Madheshi women. As expected, the above Table 7.3.1 also gives clear picture on the economic decision-making autonomy status of women of the respective communities. Age of women has not very much affected on their autonomy status however in higher age groups 11.9 percent of the women reported that they had made their own decisions on their own incomes. Similarly 25 percent of women who were older than their husbands, 25 percent of them stated that they made their own decisions regarding their incomes. Similarly same proportion of women who had only one child reported that they made their own decision making on this economic sector. Among graduate women 50 percent of them had made their own decisions on their own earnings.

Above figures indicate that women's autonomy on decision-making to use their own earnings was not same in all socio-economic situation of women. Education, age gap between spouses, sex of the household head and women's age all found to be affected in the decision-making status of a woman. It has seen that in our society who are educated with small number of children and living and doing works as a household head, are more conscious on how and where to use their own earnings because economic status of women affects the status of women (Sen (2006); and Kabeer (1999).

Women's access to husband's income is also limited among Madheshi communities. Table 7.3.2 presents women's decision-making autonomy status on their husband's income.

As presented in above table, suggests that women's autonomy increases by increasing her age groups 45-49 (15.6%). But very few respondents had autonomy to take decisions on their husband's income in every given condition of women. For example 8.3 percent of the respondents whose age was similar to their husbands had made decisions regarding their husband's income while only 5.6 percent of the women who were 15 years and above younger than their husbands reported that they made decisions on their husband's incomes. Similarly the number of children, sex of the household and educational level had not very much influenced on the decision-making autonomy status of women (see Table 7.3.2).

Table 7.3.3: Decision-making Autonomy Status of women

Characteristics of the Respondents		Who decides making large household purchases?					
		Husband only		Respondent only		Others & Jointly	
		(%)	No	(%)	No	(%)	No
Age group	15-19	16.7	3	--	--	83.3	15
	20-24	17.0	9	7.5	4	75.5	40
	25-29	28.0	23	7.3	6	64.6	53
	30-34	15.9	10	7.9	5	76.2	48
	35-39	22.4	15	1.5	1	76.1	51
	40-44	34.3	12	8.6	3	57.1	20
	45-49	15.6	5	21.9	7	62.5	20
Total		22.0	77	7.4	26	70.6	247
Age Gap between Spouses	No Age Gap	66.7	8	8.3	1	25.0	3
	Husband is 1-3 years older	22.9	19	7.2	6	69.9	58
	4-6 years older	22.0	28	9.4	12	68.5	87
	7-9 years	15.5	9	--	--	84.5	49
	10-12 years older	23.7	9	10.5	4	65.8	25
	13-14 years	20.0	1	--	--	80.0	4
	15 +	16.7	3	11.1	2	72.2	13
	Wife is Older	--	--	--	--	100.0	8
Total		22.0	77	7.4	26	70.6	247
Total Children Ever Born	None	3.7	1	7.4	2	88.9	24
	One	28.1	9	3.1	1	68.8	22
	Two	21.5	17	8.9	7	69.6	55
	Three	23.1	25	8.3	9	68.5	74
	Four	20.4	11	7.4	4	72.2	39
	Five and above	28.0	14	6.0	3	66.0	3
Total		22.0	77	7.4	26	70.6	247
Sex of Household head	Male	20.3	71	6.6		60.3	211

	Female	1.7	6	0.9	3	10.3	36
Total		22.0	77	7.4	26	70.6	247
Educationla status of your husband	Primary	22.0	13	5.1	3	72.9	43
	Seconda y	21.1	16	7.9	6	71.1	54
	Higher secondar y	17.1	7	7.3	3	75.6	31
	Graduat e and above	18.8	3	--	--	81.3	13
	No educatio n	24.1	38	8.9	14	67.1	106
Total		22.0	77	7.4	26	70.6	247

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

As Table 7.3.3 suggests that women's autonomy increases by inceasing her age groups. There was no one female in earlier age groups 15-19, who had made decisions on their children. It might be less number of children and earlier age they had not taken any decisions regarding their children. In age group 45-49 still less than 22 percent of the women made their own decision regarding large household purchases. Table 7.3.3 suggests that, in contrast of similar socio-economic condition of women, using various indicators, not very much variation found in decision-making autonomy in large household purchases among women. Most of the decisions related with large household purchases, made by either their husbands or jointly and by other family members.

Table 7.3.4: Decision-making Autonomy Status of women

Characteristics of the Respondents		Who usually decides making small daily household purchases					
		Husband Oly		Respondent Oly		Others & Jointly	
		(%)	No	(%)	No.	(%)	No.
Age group	15-19	5.6	1	11.1	2	83.3	15
	20-24	15.1	8	24.5	13	60.4	32
	25-29	22.0	18	22.0	18	56.1	46
	30-34	9.5	6	28.6	18	61.9	39
	35-39	10.4	7	37.3	25	52.2	35
	40-44	14.3	5	42.9	15	42.9	15
	45-49	12.5	4	28.1	9	59.4	19
Total		4.0	49	28.6	100	57.4	201
Age Gap between Spouses	No Age Ggp	33.3	4	33.3	4	33.3	4
	Husb and is 1-3 years older	12.0	10	31.3	26	56.6	47
	4-6 years older	11.8	15	29.9	38	58.3	74
	7-9 years	17.2	10	29.3	17	53.4	31
	10-12 years older	18.4	7	10.5	4	71.1	27
	13 to 14 years	--	--	60.0	3	40.0	2
	15 +	16.7	3	27.8	5	55.6	10
	Wife is older	--	--	25.0	2	75.0	6

	than Husb and (1-12 years)						
Total		14.0	49	28.6	100	57.4	201
Total children ever born	None	11.1	3	7.4	2	81.5	22
	One	9.4	3	25.0	8	65.6	21
	Two	17.7	14	22.8	18	59.5	47
	Three	12.0	13	31.5	34	56.5	61
	Four	16.7	9	42.6	23	40.7	22
	Five and above	14.0	7	30.0	15	56.0	28
Total		14.0	49	28.6	100	57.4	201
Sex of Household Head	Male	134	47	226	79	511	179
	Female	0.6	2	6.0	21	6.3	22
Total		14.0	49	28.6	100	57.4	201
Educationla status of your husband	Prim ary	11.9	7	39.0	23	49.2	29
	Seco nday	19.7	15	28.9	22	51.3	39
	High er secon dary	9.8	4	34.1	14	56.1	23
	Grad uate and above	--	--	12.5	2	87.5	14
	No Educ ation	14.6	23	24.7	39	60.8	96
Total		14.0	49	28.6	100	57.4	201

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011

Women's decision-making autonomy status was also found to be very low in small daily household purchases. But it is also true that a large proportion of women reported that they had autonomy to take decisions in daily activities of small household purchases. There was still as

noted in all the decision-making autonomy status women of higher age groups had more enjoyed their autonomy (48%) than younger age groups of women (11.1%) respectively. Similarly autonomy status was higher among no age gap between spouses (33%) and proportion of women found lower among women who were younger than their husbands (27.8%). It is also remarkable to note that age gap between husband and wife has also affected on their decision-making autonomy. Higher the age gap lower the autonomy and no age gap or lower age gap higher the decision-making autonomy found in this study (see table 7.3.4). The data also shows that educational status and the sex of the household head had not influenced on the women's decision-making autonomy to purchase in small household items.

Child related decision-making autonomy is represented by information on whether the woman is the main-decision-maker on such issues as how many children to have, what basic necessities should provide to her children; what to do if a child falls ill; what types of school should children attain.

Results presented in Table 7.3.5 list women by age group, age difference between spouses, number of children, sex of the household head and also educational level of women.

Table 7.3.5: Decision-making Autonomy Status of women

Characteristics of the Respondents		Who usually decides how many children to have?					
		Husband only		Respondent only		Others & Jointly	
		(%)	No	(%)	No.	(%)	No.
Age Group	15-19	5.6	1	--	--	94.4	17
	20-24	9.4	5	1.9	1	88.7	47
	25-29	4.9	4	8.5	7	86.6	71
	30-34	19.0	12	4.8	3	76.2	48
	35-39	6.0	4	3.0	2	91.0	61
	40-44	20.0	7	8.6	3	71.4	25
	45-49	18.8	6	9.4	3	71.9	23
Total		11.1	39	5.4	19	83.4	292
Age Gap between Spouses	No age gap	16.7	2	8.3	1	75.0	9
	husband is 1-3	12.0	10	3.6	3	84.3	70

	years older						
	4-6 years older	11.0	14	5.5	7	83.5	106
	7-9 years	13.8	8	-	--	86.2	50
	10-12 years older	5.3	2	0.5	4	84.2	32
	13-14 years	20.0	1	-	--	80.0	4
	15 +	11.1	2	--	--	88.9	6
	Wife is older than husband (1-12 years)	--	--	37.5	4	62.5	6
Total		11.1	39	5.4	19	83.4	292
Total Children ever born	None	--	--	--	--	100.0	27
	One	9.4	3	6.3	2	84.4	27
	Two	10.1	8	2.5	2	87.3	69
	Three	7.4	8	13.9	15	78.7	85
	Four	20.4	11			79.6	43
	Five and above	18.0	9	--	--	82.0	41
Total		11.1	39	5.4	19	83.4	292
Sex of Household Head	Male	9.4	33	4.6	16	73.1	256
	Female	1.7	6	0.9	3	10.3	36
Total		11.1	39	5.4	19	83.4	292
Educationla Status of your Husband	Primary	16.9	10		--	83.1	49
	Seconday	5.3	4	11.8	9	82.9	63
	Higher secondary	--	--	4.9	2	95.1	39
	Graduatea nd above	25.0	--	50.0		25.0	16
	No education	15.8	25	5.1	8	79.1	125
Total		11.1	39	5.4	19	83.4	292

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

As Table 7.3.5 suggests that women's autonomy on the decision regarding their children increases by increasing her age groups. There was no one female in earlier age groups 15-19, who had made decisions on their children. It might be less number of children and earlier age they had not taken any decisions regarding their children. In age group 45-49 still less than 10 percent of the women made their own decision regarding their children. Still most of the decisions made by either their husbands or other family members (see Table 7.3.5).

Those women who were older than their husbands had more autonomy (37.5%) than wife is younger than husbands (3.6%). However autonomy status found better among spouses where there was no age gap (8.3%) respectively.

The number of children had also affected on the decision-making autonomy of women. Data shows that women who had more than three children had made more decisions regarding their child (13.9%) than who had two children (2.5%). Similarly among educated women decision-making autonomy found higher (50%), who had studied graduate and above than who had primary level educational attainment (see Table 7.3.8).

Table 7.3.6: Decision-making Autonomy Status of Women about Own Health care

Characteristics of the Respondents		Who usually decides about own health care?					
		Husband only		Respondent only		Others & Jointly	
		(%)	No	(%)	No.	(%)	No.
Age group	15-19	--			--	100.0	18
	20-24		11	3.2	7	66.0	35
	25-29		22	.7	3	69.5	7
	30-34	39.7	25	.9	5	52.4	
	35-39	38.8	26	7.5	5	53.7	36
	40-44	34.3	12	20.0	7	45.7	6
	45-49	0.6	13		6	40.6	13

Total		1.1	109	9.4	33	59.4	208
Age Gap between Spouses	No Age Gap		4	--	--	66.7	8
	Husband is 1-3 years older	2.9	19	2.0	10	65.1	4
	4-6 years older	3.1	42	7.1	9	59.8	76
	7-9 years	6.6	27	6.9	4	46.6	27
	10-12 years older	0.7	9	0.9	3	68.4	26
	13-14 years		2	0.0	1	40.0	2
	15 +	7.8	5	1.1	2	61.1	1
	Wife is older than husband (1-12 years)	12.5	1	0.5	4	50.0	5
Total		1.1	109	9.4	33	59.4	08
Total children ever born	None	1.1	3	0.4	2	81.5	22
	One	5.6	5	8.1	9	56.3	8
	Two	9.1	23	8.9	7	62.0	9
	Three	8.0	41	7.4	8	54.6	9
	Four	8.1	26	0.6	3	46.3	5
	Five and above	2.0	11	8.0	4	70.0	5
Total		1.1	109	9.4	33	59.4	08
Sex of Household Head	Male	6.6	93	6.3	22	54.3	90
	Female	5.6	16	4.4	11	40.0	8
Total		1.1	109	9.4	33	59.4	208
Educationla status of your Husband	Primary	4.1	26	--	--	55.9	33
	Seconday	8.9	22	1.1	16	50.0	38
	Higher secondary	6.6	15	.9	2	58.5	24
	Graduate and above	--	--	5.0	4	75.0	12
	No education	9.1	46	0.0	11	63.9	01
Total		1.1	109	9.4	33	59.4	08

Source: Field Survey, 2011.

Women's health needs are generally accorded low priority. It is well know from the studies conducted by various scholors. In this study on the status of Madheshi women, what is notable in our data is the decisions regarding own health care either made by husbands of the respondents or other family members (see Table 7.3.6). There is no difference found in decision-making autonomy on their own health in all socio-economic status given in above table. It is notable that decision-making autonomy increased with the increment of age of the

respondents (19%). Similarly majority of women (37.5%) who were older than their husbands stated that they took decision by themselves which is higher than small age gap between spouses. Decision-making autonomy was also found higher among those women who had only one child (28%) than who had 5 and above children (8%) respectively.

Decision-making status among female on their own health care was low in those families where household was male (6.3%) than female headed households (24.5%). The decision-making status was also low in lower educational attainment; all the decisions were taken by either their husbands or other family members. The respondents who were graduate and or above, 25 percent of them had made their own decisions in their health care.

Above figures indicate that women's autonomy on decision-making on their own health care was not same in all socio-economic situation of women. Education, age gap between spouses, sex of the household head and women's age all found to be affected in the decision-making status of a woman. It has seen that in our society who are educated with small number of children and living and doing works as a household head, are more conscious about own health care because she manage herself and her all own health by herself.

Box 5: Focus Group Discussion among Madheshi Women Living in Municipaliy

The 9 participants of the focus group discussion in ward no 14 (Shreepur) of Birganj Sub-metropolitan City of Parsa District consequently said that, "In a patriarchal society like ours, there is a perception that wives are the daughters of others. Even worse, women are considered as shoes of the legs, such prevailing social perceptions have made the women to be socially dependent on the husbands". Among 9 participants 3 were the economically active Madheshi female but they were argued that in their social structure, it doesn't matter women are educated or not or employed, she has to obey her husband and his families. However 60 percent of the participants reported that their husbands are busy in their works. So women have to take decisions in all the household matters. But they also argued that they can not go against the decision of their husbands either in household matters or outside of the households. They have autonomy to take decision in the households but in some areas of household but they have to take permission to their husbands before taking final decision. Similarly only approximately 90 percent of the participants said that they can go outside alone but only taking permission from their husbands and their in-laws family members. Only 10 percent of them claimed that they did not need to take permission.

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, FGD, 2011.

The above discussions show that women of all caste/ethnic groups either living in rural areas or urban localities, status of decision-making autonomy is almost similar. However due to less time to manage household activities mostly husbands have given some autonomy to their wives but still they have to consult with their husbands in taking any decisions of household affairs.

Freedom of movement and of association is fundamental rights in all parts of the world, and in Nepal, are guaranteed and safeguarded by the Constitution of Nepal. However many rights are guaranteed by the Constitution but there is gap between percept and practice, and in the case of women, there is very high gap found. In Nepal and especially among Madheshi women, women are severely restricted in almost all caste/ethnic groups of this society. In this regard few serious attempts have been made by asking to the respondents on their mobility status for the combination of activities that are personal, familial, political, and economic or work or for health check-up, visiting family and friends, going to the cinema etc.

Table 7.3.7: Decision-making Autonomy Status of women

Characteristics of the Respondents		Who usually decides when to visit the family or relatives?					
		Husband only		Respondent only		Others	
		(%)	No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.
Age group	15-19	16.7	3	--	--	83.3	15
	20-24	18.9	10	.9	1	79.2	42
	25-29	23.2	19	2.4	2	74.4	61
	30-34	19.0	12	4.3	9	66.7	42
	35-39	29.9	20	6.0	4	64.2	43
	40-44	20.0	7	0.7	2	74.3	26
	45-49	18.8	6	8.8	6	62.5	20
Total		22.0	77	6.9	24	71.1	249
Age gap between spouses	No age gap	66.7	8	--	--	33.3	4
	Husband is 1-3 years older	27.7	23	3.6	3	68.7	57
	4-6 years older	17.3	22	9.4	12	73.2	93
	7-9 years	24.1	14	0.3	6	65.5	38
	10-12 years older	13.2	5	0.6	1	84.2	32
	13-14 years	40.0	2	--	--	60.0	3

	15 +	11.1	2	0.6	1	83.3	15
	Wife is older than Husband (1-12 years)	12.5	1	--	--	87.5	7
Total		22.0	77	6.9	24	71.1	249
Total Children Ever Born	None	7.4	2	0.4	2	85.2	23
	One	12.5	4	0.1	1	84.4	27
	Two	20.3	16	5.1	4	74.7	59
	Three	27.8	30	0.2	11	62.0	67
	Four	20.4	11	9.3	5	70.4	38
	Five and above	28.0	14	2.0	1	70.0	35
Total		22.0	77	0.9	4	71.1	249
Sex of Household Head	Male	20.3	71	0.1	8	61.7	216
	Female	1.7	6	1.7	6	9.4	33
Total		22.0	77	6.9	24	71.1	249
Educationla status of your husband	Primary	13.6	8	6.8	4	79.7	47
	Seconday	22.4	17	9.2	7	68.4	52
	Higher secondary	29.3	12	--	--	70.7	29
	Graduate and above	6.3	1	0.3	1	87.5	14
	No Education	24.7	39	0.6	12	67.7	107
Total		22.0	77	6.9	24	71.1	249

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

For this question were asked, do they need permission from their husbands or other family members or they can go by their own; whether or not the permission required for this.

A very high proportion of the respondent's husband and other family members made decision for the respondent's mobility. The significant finding is that percentages of the respondents do not require permission to visit friends or relatives only in older age groups (19%). The degree of mobility is restricted in lower age groups 15-19 years of the respondents. There were no any respondents had made decision on their mobility.

The freedom of movement illustrates that the consequences of this has hampered to get proper education, to do work outside of the house, in treatment etc, which has also resulted poor socio-economic status of these women.

Summary of this chapter

The objectives of this chapter were to explore the different dimensions of Madheshi Women's decision-making autonomy of Parsa district. Result suggests that women's autonomy is indeed multidimensional. Given that the among sample population of women, majority of them were severely constrained; the findings with regard to their decision-making autonomy status are not surprising.

This study finds that Muslim women are at disadvantage in terms of women's autonomy in almost all given areas of decision-making autonomy. However all the Hindu women had not similar autonomy status. Women of Terai caste enjoyed higher level of decision-making autonomy than upper caste/ethnic groups of women. Similarly the situation among Dalit women and janjati women was almost similar in all decision-making autonomy.

It is usually household head, a man in most cases, who makes the final decision about almost each and every decisions regarding household. As shown in above Tables, most of the decisions were made by husband, the remaining decisions being made either jointly by both sexes. But in the case of small items of households, women were the main decision makers.

The evidence also suggest that age gap between husband and wife, age of a woman, along with economic activities, and to a lesser, higher educational level especially graduate and above are powerful determinants of almost every indicators of women's decision-making autonomy in this study, but these effects are generally mild.

The findings also have implications for policy makers. The findings clearly present the clear picture of the Madheshi society where education and economic activities and delayed marriage do not necessarily enhance every dimensions of decision-making autonomy at the household level. The most important is the raising awareness of gender discrimination by raising women's gender consciousness, providing support for the challenge of traditional norms which has been in the form of gender inequality in the society. This study finds that Muslim women are at disadvantage in terms of women's autonomy in almost all given areas of decision-making autonomy. However all the Hindu women had not similar autonomy status. Women of Terai caste enjoyed higher level of decision-making autonomy than upper caste/ethnic groups of women. Similarly the situation among Dalit women and janjati women was almost similar in all decision-making autonomy.

CHAPTER VIII

SEXUAL AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

This chapter analysed mainly sexual and domestic violence which are very common in India and Nepal and especially among Madheshi society of Nepal. 'Violence against women' cuts across social and economic situations of women and is deeply embedded in cultures around the world especially in third world, Cate (1997). Among violence against women, gender based violence in various forms including rape, domestic violence, trafficking in women are more common in developing countries like Nepal. Study has shown that millions of women in world require medical attention as well as psychological treatment. The women who are beaten were subjected to violence repeatedly and most of the violence occurs due to rejection of sex. It was also found that such violence generally occurs by someone she knows; see Ellsberg and Gottemoeller (1999).

The third world conference on women in Nairobi identified the areas of the reasons of violence against women. In Nepal, it has also been recognized a common phenomenon and this has not stopped due to the lack of legal literacy on women. However in each VDCs of Parsa district there is a paralegal committee in which only female members are members of this community. In the research, it was found from the survey that women are still victims of violence.

The declaration on the elimination of all forms of violence against women has also recognized. Family torture violence, marital rape, sexual harassment is the gender based violence. In this research some information were collected in this context. It is found that still women have faced gender based violence.

In patriarchal societies, the greatest violence is directed towards girls and women. These include not only physical violence but also the mental and emotional violence that arises because of discriminatory attitudes which affect women throughout their lives. Most of the innocent women who have been always treated digest any tortures, do not even realize that they are exploited, and thus must change, FWLD (2009). Domestic violence is more than an isolated instance of mental and/or physical abuse within an intimate relationship. It can be hampered women's right to dignity and life. In this study it was asked to question that have respondents

ever tortured by the respondents in-laws family members or from their husbands. Most of them said that they had experienced such types of violence by their in-laws family members.

8.1 Sexual Violence within Marriage

As in many societies, sexual violence within marriage is also common in Nepal. Very recently the government of Nepal has recognized it as a violence and made a law that acknowledges forced sex by a husband to his wife as a form of marital rape and made provision of jail sentences from there to six months depending on the type of sexual violence, WHO (2002).

Table 8.1 Distribution of Women who had Suffered Sexual Violence within Marriage

Sexual Violence within Marriage	Number of Women	Percent (%)
Yes	138	39.4
No	212	60.0
Total	350	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

Table 8.1.1 Distribution of Women who had Suffered Sexual Violence within Marriage by Literacy Status of the Husbands

Husband Beats or Give any Torture if you Refuse Sex	Literacy Status of the Respondent's Husband		
	Literate	Illiterate	Total
Yes	39.1	60.9	100.0
No	65.7	34.3	100.0
Total	194	156	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

According to the study, many women (39%) reported that they were forced by their husband to have sex against their desire during illness and exhaustion, menstruation, post partum period and pregnancy. However there were almost 61 percent said that they had not faced such situation of marital rape. In our societies women are not friendly to say or discuss in this private matters. Thus the proportion of women is high among not faced any violence or marital rape.

The situation had seen better among literate women. Approximately 39 percent of the literate women experienced sexual violence while among illiterate women, it was higher (66%). This shows that illiterate women face more sexual abuse than literate ones.

Table 8.1.2: Husbands Beat or Give any Torture for Refuse Sex by the Literacy Status of the Respondents.

Literacy Status of the Respondents (women)	Faced Torture for Refusing Sex					
	Yes	(%)	No	(%)	Total	(%)
literate	29	28.7	72	71.4	101	28.9
Illiterate	109	43.8	52	20.9	249	71.1
Total	138	39.4	212	60.0	350	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

Table 8.1.2 reveals that mostly (44%) illiterate women had faced torture for refusing sex than literate women (29%). Similarly study shows that more than 70 percent of the literate women had not faced any types of violence or torture only because of refusing sex. The data shows that violence is common for both literate and illiterate women.

But studies conducted in Nepal have shown that marital rape is widely common in many societies (Shrestha, 2008). Sexual based violence consequences emotional, psychological, social and gynecological and reproductive health problems.

Table 8.2: Distribution of Women who had Faced Torture and Violence by their Husbands or by other Family Members.

Women Faced any type of Torture by their Husband or Family Members	Number of Women	Percent (%)
Yes	137	39.1
No	213	60.9
Total	350	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

The Table 8.2 presents the proportion of women who ever had faced hit, slapped, and kicked or any types of torture or violence. As stated in earlier Table 8.1 similar number of women (39%) again reported that they had faced such types of torture in their married life either by their husbands or by other in-laws family members

Table 8.3: Distribution of Women by Causes of Torture, Faced by the Women

Conditions, Husband Gives any types of Torture	Number of Women	Percent (%)
If she goes out without telling him	203	58.0
If she neglects the children	40	11.4
If she argues with him	60	17.1
If she burns the food	22	6.3
Above all conditions	14	4.0
No torture	11	3.1
Total	350	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

Many studies have identified a consistent list of events that are said to “trigger” violence, see NDHS (2011). In this study there were various questions asked to the women who had ever faced any types of violence in their marital life. These include- not taking permission to go outside, if she neglects children, if she argues with her husband, if she burns food and or any reasons which their husband do not like. Table 8.3 indicates that majority of women (58%) faced torture mainly because of going outside of the house without telling their husbands. 11 percent of the women stated that she got punishment in the name of not caring their children properly and 17 percent said that they were punished for arguing with their husbands. 6.3 percent faced because of burning food. These data shows that almost all women had faced violence in the name of child, food, mobility and so on.

The case study also shows the condition of women in the family and how she has suffered domestic violence only because of giving birth of female baby

Case Study 2: A Case Study of Madheshi Dalit Women, who had Faced Domestic Violence

Only 23 years old woman, her husband left her after few days of marriages. She immediately returned to her maternal home. She gave birth of a daughter after some days. One day again her husband came and agreed to live with her but again after that night he left her. After nine month she gave birth of a second daughter. Now she has listened from others that her husband is living with another lady. Her husband neither come to see his children nor gave money to his wife. She has tried to meet him and live with him but her husband repeatedly tortures by saying vulgar words and many times by biting. She requested to the all villagers to talk with her husband but now villagers as well as her maternal family members blamed her that she is not a good wife and she must has any demerits that's why her husband left her.

Madheshi women own a little personal property as a gift by their parents and relatives during their marriage ceremony. But most of the time Bridesgroom's family demands cash, ornaments and many things like TV, computer, cow etc. In this demand if bride's family does not fulfill their demands during and immediately after marriage, bride has to face so many tortures by her in-laws-family. There were many cases in Nepal and India, many women were burnt, beaten, threats, and given psychological and social pressure for dowry. Many women have committed suicide and many times killed by their own husbands and by their family members.

Table 8.4: Women who had faced Different Types of Torture for not bringing Enough Dowry

Torture faced for not Bringing Enough Dowry	Number of Women	Percent (%)
Yes	87	24.9
No	263	75.1
Total	350	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

As shown in Table 8.4 25 percent of the women had experienced verbal and physical abuse in their husband's home not bringing dowry. However majority of women (75%) reported that they had not faced any torture for this.

The importance of dowry in securing a woman in her husband's home is increasingly apparent in Nepal and our neighbouring country India, Both through the alarming numbers of dowry harassment and death cases recorded, and studies that suggests that women whose dowries are large are less likely to have suffered domestic violence than other women with small size of dowry, Rao and Bloch (1993).

Table 8.5: Distribution of Women who's Husband Supports or Protects when Other Family Members Give any kind of Torture or Harashments

Husband Supports	Number of Women	Percent (%)
Yes	195	55.7
No	155	44.3
Total	350	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011

Respondents were also asked about their husbands' behaviour when other family members give any types of torture in the household to know that whether their husband supports to their wives or not. Because it has seen that the understanding between husband and wife has very much affected in the behaviour of other family members. In this survey, 55.7 percent of the respondents reported that their husband protects them during this but 44 percent of them reported that they did not protect them during any abuse/torture given by others.

The case study presents the situation of women of higher caste and the perception was given by the husband of the women of the respective caste. It was also attempted to generate opinions/perceptions of the Madheshi Male population towards their female population, their socio-economic status from Focus Group Discussions has tried to explore. These have been presented in the summary versions below in the boxes to supplement the quantitative findings.

In the course of my field work in the Madheshi community, I recorded an event, which shows that Madheshi women of high castes and also Terai middle-castes have very low status in their societies. Although it would be common in the high caste society, Bennett (2002); Stone (2000) where women are frequently treated unequally and they are socially more oppressed than other castes.

Case Study 3: A Case Study of High Caste Madheshi Women and Attitudes of her Husbands on the Women

A typical day for a Madheshi woman among higher caste begins around sunrise said a women aged 35 of Brahmin caste. She said that daughter-in-law has to wake –up very early in the morning, before all the family wake-up. The younger women do all the household-chores first. Her husband was listening her and suddenly came to her and started saying that in their culture daughter has to obey her mother-in-laws and to all in-laws family members. She has to do all things without replying. He said, “ek bar doli uth gaila par marle par se sasural se hatal jala”. This means a daughter can not leave her laws family before death of herself. He also said that a woman’s status is only high when she follow and does all things according to her parents desire, her husband’s desires and her in-laws desires. A woman can not get status only by education and or employment. If she is educated and employed but not obeying her families rules, in such condition in their society she will be excluded.

Respondent name was Anu Tiwari and her husband Hari Tiwari from Basdilwa VDC

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, FGD, 2011

Summary of the Chapter

The findings of the chapter shows that Women lack of control of wealth and decision making within the family and marital conflicts in the name of dowry, sex, work etc, as strong predictors of abuse. Women’s lack of social support predicts higher rates of violence. In conclusion, we can say that social and economic status of women can be a cause and consequences of violence against women. So it is necessary to emphasize that all data from this survey only refer to women who had faced any types of torture are included in forms of violence against women.

In Nepal economically dependency, poverty especially among Madheshi women, illiteracy, low decision-making have combined with a deeply entrenched culture of male authority to make domestic violence endemic in Nepal and especially in Madheshi society.

CHAPTER IX

WOMEN'S ACCESS TO MASS MEDIA AND POLITICAL AWARENESS

Women's political participation and access to positions of power are two different issues. It has been seen that number of women participate in political activities or in politics but very limited number of women have represented actively at decision making levels.

Barban and Chaudhary (1994) have pointed that women all over the world participate widely in political movements in times of crisis, but once the crisis is over, they are relegated again to the domestic arena. This situation is true in Nepal. History shows that Nepalese women have very actively participated in the political movements, throughout the underground struggle and mass movement for democracy in 1990 and also during the Panchayat era. But once the multi-party system was restored the bargaining of various male dominated interest groups started to suppress women's voice and in taking ministerial positions, Acharya (1994). In the context of Nepal women's participation as voters has increased. Now women are aware of their own voting rights. Many women's organizations have been working in the area of awareness programs.

In Parsa district study has shown that women's political participation is restricted by many families and societies. Women have no autonomy to take their own decisions to whom they give vote or in which political party they participate.

This chapter looks at the respondent's knowledge and perception of basic issues and amenities in their area, awareness of government and non-government programs, political activities and access to various services and facilities. Finally we asked the respondents the name of their Constituent Member to know their political awareness among Madheshi women.

9.1 Awareness of Development Programs

In Nepal many different types of IEC activities have been implemented at district, regional and national level to support gender related programs. The main activities at the local level in Parsa district are health education programs, material productions and distributions and the

presentation of regular, weekly and periodic audio-visual programs, the dissemination of health message through the mass media, social mobilization, advocacy, workshop/seminars, and street drama etc, Annual Health Report (2066/067). Table 9.1 shows that more than 50 percent of the women were not member of any groups or organization.

Table 9.1: Respondents who were Member of Group/Organization

Women who were member of any Women's Group/Organization	Number of Women	Percent
Yes	168	48.0
No	182	52.0
Total	350	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011

But very few women had reported that they had knowledge of such activities conducting in their localities. Below Table 9.1.1 shows that literacy status also affects on the knowledhe of their surroundings development activities. Among literate women about one third of them reported their knowledge on these empowerment progrmans. However majority of illiterate women (75.7%) were not aware of these programs.

Table 9.1.1: Percent Distribution of Women who were familier with Women Empowerment Programs running in there place of living

Literacy Status of the Respondents	Knowledge of any women Empowerment Program				
	Yes	(%)	No	(%)	Total
Literate	31	30.7	70	69.3	101
Iliterate	63	25.3	186	75.7	249
Total	94	26.9	256	73.1	350

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011

An overwhelming number of literate women (69.3%) were unaware of any women development programs. This indicates that lack of awarness many literate as well as illiterate women were unaware of such women development programs.

Table 9.1.2: Percent Distribution of Women who had Knowledge of any women Empowerment Program by Caste/ethnicity

Caste/ethnicity	Knowledge of any women Empowerment Program			
	Yes	(%)	No	(%)
Terai High Caste	13	13.8	24	9.4
Terai Caste	48	51.1	95	37.1
Terai Janjati	20	21.3	53	20.7
Terai Dalit	12	12.8	62	24.2
Muslim	1	1.1	23	9.0
Total	94	100.0	256	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011

The majority of Terai caste women who were aware of some programs (see Table 9.2.1). 21.3 percent women of Terai Janjati had knowledge of any women empowerment program. Very few Muslim women (1.1%) had knowledge of such programs. Among Terai high caste 13.8 percent in all caste/ethnicity reported to have knowledge of women development programs running in their localities.

The above data indicates that the majority of respondents either literate or illiterate and among various caste/ethnic groups have not had access to them. Lack of awareness was the main problem among women, seen during the field study.

According to a key informant (Kunti Shrivastav), 45 years of age, Allau VDC, president of Paralegal committee, president of Women Development Program of Allau VDC, conducted by Women Development Committee, Parsa), there are many programs i.e. The Poverty alleviation fund, Maiti Nepal, DACAW programe etc running in the villages. These programs have been mainly focused on the skillful trainings like sewing, cutting and made so many women's groups, saving/credit groups at the local level. But it has seen that mostly Dalit women, Janjati women and some Terai caste women participate and benefited with such women development programs. She also said that, in most cases whenever and whatever program come, distributed among party representatives. However such programs have changed the social and economic condition of women. She stressed that awareness trainings are always fruitful for empowering women and such activities has definitely affects on the status of Madheshi women.

The above description shows that Terai caste women and Muslim women have still not actively participated in many women development programs mainly due to their social and traditional attitudes and lacking awareness among these women and men in the respective society.

9.2 Women's Access to Mass media

The mass media deserve to be called the one of the branch of power because of its influence on public opinion and public consciousness. It is also known as the strongest branches of power which can be used to cultivate gender biases and promote a stereotype about the women's place in the society.

The Table 9.2 focuses on access to the mass media-television, radio, and newspapers. As stated above the socio-economic and low literacy society, non print mass media-i.e. radio and television has been the important and more source of entertainment and information than the print media, especially for women. Data collected on the accessibility of mass-media suggests that, the proportion of women who watched television on a regular basis is over 10 percent and the proportion of respondents watching television is much larger than those reading news papers and listening radios.

Since radio is the most effective channel for reaching the vast numbers of rural and urban people and it is also cheaper than television. But the rise of television has clearly reduced the importance of media. Only 4.9 percent of the respondents reported that they had frequently listened radio. The proportion of respondents who read news paper was extremely low (1.1%).

Table 9.2: Distribution of Women by their Accessibility of Mass media

Types of Medias	Respondents Watch TV		Respondents Listen Radio		Respondents Read News Paper	
	Number of Women	Percent (%)	Number of Women	Percent (%)	Number of Women	(%)
Frequently	36	10.3	17	4.9	4	1.1
Oftenly	95	27.1	73	20.9	13	3.7
Rarely	111	31.7	88	25.1	76	21.7
Never	108	30.9	172	49.1	257	73.4
Total	350	100.0	350	100.0	350	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011

The infrequent exposure to mass media shows that limited access of women to information and limited contact with the world. A large proportion of women had often exposure to mass Medias.

Table 9.2.1 Percent distribution of Women by Type of program Respondents prefer to see read or listen from these media

Types of Program	Number of Women	Percen (%)
Songs	197	56.3
RH progrms	15	4.3
Adolescent program	5	1.4
Women program	17	4.9
Agriculture program	12	3.4
Development program	6	1.7
Others	98	28.0
Total	350	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011

The respondents were also asked on the types of program which they generally prefer to see and listen from these Medias. Majority of them preferred to see or listen songs either in the TV or radio (56%). Very few of them saw other educational or development programs (see Table 9.2.1), limited proportion of women access to media shows that women have stills less knowledge of importance of other educational as well as development programs which increase their awariness level and better socio-economic life.

9.3 Political Awarness of the Madheshi Women

Political expression for women, as defined by Giele and Smock (1977), is the right “to join in community decisions, to vote, to hold property or public offices on an equal basis with men.”

The respondents were asked several questions in orders to gauge their political awarness, among them whether they were aware on their voting rights, their general knowledge on the name of their Constituent representative member of their own constituency. Table 9.3.1 presented the number of women whose name was in voterlist.

Table 9.3.1: Percent Distribution of Women, whose name was in Voter List

Name in Voter list	Number of Women	Percent (%)
Yes	255	72.9
No	95	27.1
Total	350	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011

Available statistics shows that approximately 73 percent of the respondents had name in the voter list. However there were also some respondents (27%), who reported that still their name is not in voter list. It was mainly because of citizenship and age factor and also lacking awareness among madheshi women.

Table 9.3.2: Percent Distribution of Women who Ever Caste Vote in the Election

Caste/Ethnicity	Ever Caste Vote in the Election			
	Yes	(%)	No	(%)
Terai High Caste	27	71.7	8	22.9
Terai Caste	104	72.2	40	27.8
Terai Janjati	54	74.0	19	26.0
Terai Dalit	44	59.5	30	40.5
Muslim	22	91.7	2	8.3
Total	251	71.7	99	28.3

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

Among different caste/ethnic groups, 72.2 percent of the Terai high caste women had ever casted vote in the election. The proportion of women who had ever caste the vote was found relatively low among Terai Dalits (59.5%). The situation of Terai high caste was also seen poorer than other caste/ethnic groups in the experience of casting vote in the election.

Table 9.3.3: Women who Casted Vote by Own Conscience or Guided by Others

Vote Casted	Number of Women	Percent (%)
Self Conscience	197	58.1
Others' Guidance	15	33.2
Pressure	5	7.1
Economic enticement	17	1.2
Other	10	0.4
Total	251	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011.

The respondents who had ever caste the vote were also asked that whether they caste vote by their own conscience or they were guided by others. Majority of them reported that they casted vote by their own consciences (58%). 33.2 percent of the respondents mentioned that they had gavin vote where their family members and the villagers suggested. 7.1 gave vote in the pressure and 1,2 percent got money to give vote.

Table 9.3.4 The Cause of not Casting Vote

The Cause of not Casting Vote	Number of Women	Percent (%)
Name in not in Voter list	95	96.0
Someone forged on my name	1	1.0
Ignorance about the importance of Vote	3	3.0
Total	99	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011

Those women who had not caste vote in the election were asked the main causes of not casting vote. 96 percent of the respondents reported that their name was not in voter list. One percent said that some one else had given vote without their knowledge and 3 percent of them stated they were not aware of their voting rights.

Table 9.3.5: Respondents Know the Name of CA Member of their Constituent

Caste/ethnicity	Respondents Know the name of CA Member			
	Yes	(%)	No	(%)
Terai High Caste	11	3.1	24	6.9
Terai Caste	51	14.6	88	24.1
Terai Janjati	15	4.3	52	14.9
Terai Dalit	11	3.1	61	17.4
Muslim	5	1.4	19	5.4
Total	93	26.6	257	73.4

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011

Among different caste/ethnic groups Terai caste was more familiar on their CA member than other caste/ethnic groups in this study area. Most of the Muslim women (1.4%) and Terai high caste women (3.1%) were unaware of this (see Table 9.5.4).

Table 9.5.5 Respondents know the name of CA Member by Literacy status

Literacy Status	Know the name of CA Member of your Constituent Assembly					
	Yes	(%)	No	(%)	Total	(%)
Literate	36	35.6	65	64.4	101	100.0
Illiterate	57	22.9	176	77.1	249	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011

Awareness on the name of their Constituent Assembly Member shows that 27 percent of the respondents who knew the name of their CA member (see Table 9.5.4). And among them 35.6 percent of the literate women were found that they were familiar with the name of their CA member of their constituency. A large literate proportion of women were unaware of their CA member's name. Among illiterate women it was worst condition. Data shows that only 23 percent of the illiterate women were aware on their name of CA member.

Conclusion of this Chapter

The infrequent exposure to mass media is a trend to be noted that defines access to information in the Madheshi women's status. Mass media plays important role in increasing awareness level and creating a climate for development by changing attitudes and behaviour of the people. But study shows that there was limited access to mass media, was the main reason for not familiar with women development programs. The respondents were seen only limited in entertainment and commercial programs. The main problem was seen that high illiteracy and over burden of domestic works, women were not interested in such development programs.

Women's political awareness as well as their participation as a voters or as a candidate of representative of any political party, is crucial to the functioning of inclusive democracy. Literacy status also shows that such types of political awareness were high among literate women than illiterate women of the respective caste/ethnic groups. It is also seen that awareness of political activities were found better among Terai caste and in second Terai Janjati caste (see Table 9.5.4). The situation of awareness found that the Terai high caste and Terai Dalits was similar. But awareness level was very low among Muslim women.

It is about time that it should be realized that investment in women is the single most important path to higher productivity for society as a whole. Experience shows that women oriented development projects have been resulted in terms of social benefits.

CHAPTER X

CHARACTERISTICS OF HUSBANDS AND WOMEN'S STATUS

Patriarchal society, there has been argument that a woman derives her status from that of her husband, i.e. her husband status is ascribed to her. The implication of such argument is that the women's individual characteristics may ultimately be less important for their status than those of their husbands. However the research does not uphold the assumptions of the greater importance of husband's rather than own socio-economic characteristics on women's status. Kishor, (1995) had pointed out the relationship between the husband characteristics and wife's status. In this study the general perception of the respondents on their husband's characteristics and prestige of women in the society was asked.

In this chapter, the characteristics of husband are compared to their wives. Specifically, wives and husbands are compared on their education and occupational characteristics. The wives reports of their current husbands are used to make comparisons of the characteristics of husband and wives.

10.1 Literacy Status of the Respondent's Husbands

Wives reported that more than 55 percent of their husbands are literate. Among them more than 70 percent of the husbands were studied primary and secondary level of educational attainment. 21.7 percent of the respondents reported that their husbands were studied higher secondary level and only 8.3 percent of the husbands had studied graduation level of educational attainment and above.

Table 10.1 Literacy Status of Respondents and their husbands

Literacy Status of your Husband	Number of Women	Percent (%)
literate	194	55.2
Illiterate	158	44.8
Total	350	100.0
Primary	59	30.7
Secondary	76	39.6
Higher secondary	41	21.4
Graduate and above	18	8.4
Total	194	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011

10.2 Occupational Status of Respondents and their husbands

Table 10.2 presents the occupation of the respondent's husbands. Majority of the wives (47%) were reported that their husband's main occupation is agriculture. 13.2 percent of the husbands were worked in non-agriculture sectors. There were 11.2 percent of the husbands worked in the service sector and 2.6 percent in teaching profession respectively. Similarly data also shows that approximately 5 percent of the respondent's husband worked outside the country as a foreign employee. The proportion of respondent's husband who had worked in business sector was 13 percent and very few of them were worked in social activities, as a main occupation.

Table 10.2: Occupation of the Respondent's Husband

Occupation of your Husband	Number of Women	Percent (%)
Agriculture	165	47.0
Non agriculture	46	13.2
Service	39	11.2
Teacher	9	2.6
Foreign employee	13	3.7
Work in India	4	1.1
Own business	45	12.9
Social activist	21	6.0
Other	8	2.3
Total	350	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011

Table 10.2.1: Perception of Women on the Occupation of the Husband Increases Status of the Woman

Occupation of Husband Increases Status	Number of Women	Percent (%)
Yes	265	75.8
No	85	24.2
Total	350	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011

The husband's occupation increases their social status or not, was asked to the respondents to know their perception on this. More than 75 percent of the respondents reported that husband's occupation helps to increase their status in the society. These perceptions of majority of the wives show that in our patriarchal society a woman derives her status from that of her husband. It also clears that wife's husband's status is ascribed to her.

10.2 A Comparison of literacy status between Wives and Husbands

In almost all countries, generally male are more literate than female (World bank, 1990). The Table 10.3 presents the comparison of literacy status between husband and wives. The data shows that those wives who were literate, their husbands were also found literate (see Table 10.3). Illiterate wives had also 50 percent literate husbands and 50 percent illiterate husbands. 30.5 percent of the illiterate wives had literate husbands and similar numbers had illiterate husbands. The data shows that mostly literate women marry with literate men.

Table 10.3: A Comparison of the Literacy status between Wives and Husbands

Literacy Status of the Respondents	Literacy Status of the Respondent's Husbands		
	Literate (%)	Illiterate (%)	Total (%)
literate	85.7	14.3	100.0
Illiterate	30.5	30.5	100.0
Total	55.2	44.8	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011

10.4 A Comparison of the educational levels of wives and Husbands

A Comparison of the educational levels of wives and Husbands shows that wives of husbands who had primary or secondary education were more likely in almost all Madheshi caste/ethnic

groups than wives of husbands with primary education to have less education than their husbands (see Table 10.4).

Table 10.4: A Comparison of the Educational levels of Wives and Husbands

Literacy Status of the Respondents	Educationla Status of theRespondent's Husband				Total (%)
	Primary (%)	Second ay (%)	Higher Seconda ry (%)	Gradu ate and above (%)	
Primary	35.0	40.0	20.0	5.0	100.0
Seconday	0.0	50.0	50.0	0.0	100.0
Higher secondary	0.0	41.7	41.7	16.7	100.0
Graduate and above	0.0	25.0	0.0	75.0	100.0
Total	14.6	39.6	33.3	12.5	100.0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011

Wives with higher education had also found their husbands were educated more than their wives. In all the educational level, the higher the share of hoghly educated husbands in the study population, the more likely the wives are to have lower education than their husbands (see Table 10.4).

10.5 A comparison of the employment of wives and Husbands

Table 10.5: Comparison of Employment Status between Husband and Wife (Respondents)

Occupation Of the Respondents	Occupation of the Respondent's Husbands								
	Agricultur e (%)	Non agricul ture (%)	Servic e (%)	Teache r (%)	Fore ign empl oyee (%)	Wo rk in Ind ia (%)	Own busin es (%)	Soc ial acti vist	Ot he r
housewife	51.3	18.2	5.9	3.7	3.2	1.1	9.6	7.0	0. 0
Agriculture own	84.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.5	0.0	0.0	5.3	0. 0
Agriculture labour	73.1	26.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0. 0
Non-agriculture labour	.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0. 0
Service	50.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0. 0
Teacher	14.3	14.3	14.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.3	28. 6	14 .3
Own Buiseness	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	0. 0
Total	17.6	5.7	2.9	3.3	0.8	8.2	6.5	0.4	10 0. 0

Source: Status of Madheshi Women, Field Survey, 2011

This section explores whether a woman's employment status is associated with her husband's occupational status. Table 10.5 suggested the occupation of husbands and wives is very much interrelated with each other

The Table 10.5 suggests that majority of the respondents who were housewives; their husband's worked mainly in their own agriculture sector (51.3%). Similarly around 18 percent of the housewives respondents reported that their worked in non-agriculture sector, 5.9 percent in the service, 3.7 percent in teaching profession, 3.2 percent foreign employed, 9.6 percent had their own business and 7 percent worked as social activist. This shows that there was many respondents' husband worked in different sectors. The respondents who were worked in their own agriculture sector, their husbands generally worked in the same field (see Table 10.5). Both husbands and wives worked in the non-agriculture sector accounted 100 percent. The women who worked in service sector, mostly their husbands also worked in the white color job (see table 10.5).

Above figure suggests that husband's occupation has very much affected on the occupation of wives. Generally it is seen that women worked in white color job whose husband were also worked in these areas of work. Similarly the wives of husbands in agriculture or in service or in business occupations were assisting their husbands without getting paid for such work as housewives (see table 10.5).

Summary of this Chapter

In this chapter wives reports of their current husbands's characteristics and was used to make comparisions of the characteristics of husband and wives.

Data shows that wives were most likely to have less number of years of education as their husbands (Table 10.4). Woman's employment status is associated with her husband's occupational status. Occupational status of the husbands is also indicators of the status of wives (Table 10.2.1). Similarly the wives of husbands in agriculture or in service or in business occupations were assisting their husbands without getting paid for such work as housewives (see table 10.5).

CHAPTER XI

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 Summary

Nepal has committed itself to making rapid progress towards gender equality. The convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), signed by Nepal in 1991, committed Nepal to constitutional and legal equality in all fields while the Beijing Platform for Action Commits it to promoting women's empowerment and formal and informal equality in all fields, economic, social and political. The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), (ICPD+10) and (ICPD+15) commit Nepal to ensuring women's universal access to reproductive health as well as equal access to all other health services. Similarly Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), committed Nepal to achieving minimum educational, health and poverty reduction targets and making sure that women and girls shared benefits equally without discrimination on the basis of sex.

Nepal's cultural landscape is extremely diverse, Nepalese society consists of people of various caste/ethnic communities holding different beliefs, customs and culture, hence the status of women differs from one corner of the country to another. The socio-economic status also differs from one caste group to another caste group. The gender bias affects distribution of power and resources in the family and society. It has been observed that the women's status, both within the household and in the community, is lower than that of men. However, this study is not a comparative study of people across caste/ethnicity and male or female. It focuses on women's status among Madheshi women of Parsa district, which lies in Terai (Madhesh) region of Nepal. This study is descriptive as well as analytical. It has an exploratory research design. The sample population is drawn from the population of Parsa district using Population Proportionate Size (PPS) and multi-stage random sample survey method. Among sample VDCs, 350 currently married Madheshi women, aged 15-49 years are selected from each sample household. Only one woman has been randomly selected from each household. Similarly qualitative information was gathered by using focus group discussions and case studies and

observation. This helped to know the clear picture of the socio-economic condition of households and women. The information collected from the study area has been analysed to know the status of Madheshi women in Nepal. However, the data do not claim to have described the condition of the whole Madheshi women living in all parts of Nepal.

The main objective of this study was to explore the status and condition of Madheshi women in the households and also their decision-making autonomy in the households.

Moreover, the available statistics often do not depict the real condition of all Madheshi women; but it can help to draw conclusion about their general condition and status in the society.

The summary presented here is based on the survey results which have been presented in the earlier chapters.

- The survey results indicate that proportion of dependent population was higher than working population. But female population at younger age was high, which shows high fertility and high birth rate.
- Table 5.3 shows that female household headship was found lower/fewer in all caste/ethnic groups.
- Majority of the population (94.6%) were of Hindu religion, while only 6.9 percent of the populations were of Muslim religion. Among them, the Bhojpuri language was the mother tongue of 74.3 percent of all caste/ethnic and religion people and the second language was Nepali for the people of all caste/ethnicities.
- Mostly women, more than 74 percent in the households were married. The proportion of male marriage was found lower at 66.9 percent..
- The literacy rate was very poor among household heads. Majority of the household heads, both male and female were educated upto grade one only.
- Overall 55 percent of the people of the study areas were dependent on public tubewell and 39 percent had used own tubewell for drinking, or cooking purposes. Only 7.8

percent of the households had gas for cooking purpose. Similarly 77.4% households had no toilet facilities. Majority of the Madheshi people are still living in houses which were non-brick/concrete structures.

- Citizenship problem was still seen in this society. Among Terai high caste only 81 percent male had citizenship while only 54 percent of the female of the same caste had citizenship. Similarly among Terai castes only 60.5 percent of the male and female had citizenship. The situation is worse among Terai janjati and Terai Dalits where 54 percent had only citizenship and the situation of women was worst among all caste/ethnic groups of Madheshi society.
- More than 50 percent of the households had land ownership but majority of them had very small size of the land for agriculture. But there were no families found, who reported the agriculture income was enough for whole year.
- It was also found that almost all Madheshi women marry within 25 years of age. Most of the Madheshi women entered into their sexual life in very early ages and this might be resulted high fertility, poor educational status and poor economic status. There were also few women (3.7%), said that she did sexual relation before Gauna with her own husband.
- Studies have shown that the 5.1 percent of the husbands were 15 years and above older than their wives. Almost 97 percent of the husbands were older than their wives.
- As expected, 92.3 percent of the respondents had given live births and among them, most of the birth occurred (70%) before the age of 19 years.
- The educational level of women was found a little bit high in primary level (1-5) was 38.6 percent. Similarly 1.8 percent had studied (lower secondary education, Grade 6-8) and around 25 percent of the literate female was studied in secondary level (9-10). Those who had passed 10 and studied up to Intermediate level (10+2) accounted 6.9 percent of the literate women.

- Dowry was found very common in this society. 93 percent of the women had brought dowry during and after marriage and 70 percent of the respondents thought that dowry increases social status of women in their respective caste/ethnic groups.
- More than 81 percent of the respondents remembered that their parents never discussed or involve them in their life partner selection process.
- With less than two percent of the economically active female worked in service sector. It is quite clear that they can make at best only limited impact in decision-making autonomy. It is also clear that less than one percent of the female was employed in the non-agriculture sector.
- The majority of women (83.7%) said that they were quite satisfied with their current jobs. From the recorded responses of dissatisfied women with their occupations, it is evident that the main reasons for not being satisfied with their current jobs were low income (42.5%), no respect (27.5%), and low wages (12.5 percent).
- Most of the women (92%) had no land in their own name.
- About 63 percent of the respondents reported that decisions regarding the expenditure of money earned by the respondents were made by them jointly with their husbands.
- 47 percent respondents reported that the decisions regarding expenditure of money earned by the respondents' husbands were made by them both jointly.
- About 7 percent of the decisions related with expenditure of income either earned by the respondents or their husbands and also expenditure of large items at households were taken by the respondents. Otherwise most of the decisions related with these were made by their husbands only (Table 7.1). The proportion of female who had autonomy to take decision in the purchase of small items was 29 per cent. But in the

decision regarding mobility, very few women (7%) reported that they had autonomy to go outside to meet their relatives or friends. Generally, women go outside by taking permission from the in-law-family members or from their husbands. However, large proportion of the respondents mentioned that they made decision jointly for going outside of the house. Similarly decisions regarding the number of children and own health care, both respondents and their husbands jointly make decisions.

- In almost all decisions, very small proportion of women had made decisions in all seven areas of decision-making. In all areas of household's decision-making not more than 7 percent of the respondents report taking decisions themselves excluding expenditure of small household items (29%). Similarly question on their mobility autonomy were asked to know the mobility status of women, especially visit to health centres, the parental home or relatives, markets and in working place outside the village. The data show that very few women (6.9%) had autonomy to go outside for any given reason.
- Women's occupation also affected their decision-making autonomy. The women who were employed mainly in government/private service and teaching profession were more likely to make decisions themselves, 55% in the former and 79% in the later than own agriculture (42.5%) and agricultural labour (24.2%).
- Similarly, higher level education of the respondents helped them to enjoy some autonomy (29%) to use their husbands' income. Simialrly, a very small number of women of all caste/ethnic groups reported that they had autonomy to decide the use of money earned by their husbands.
- Among all caste/ethnic groups the situation seems better for the Terai caste women. (3.7%) reported that they had autonomy to spend their husbands' income as their own, which is higher than other caste/ethnic groups of women. Only 1.1 percent of high caste madheshi women, 0.3 percent Madheshi Janjati women and 0.6 Madheshi Dalit women had autonomy to take decision on the use of their husbands' income.

- Those women who were older than their husbands had more autonomy (37.5%) than those women who were younger than their husbands (3.6%). However, autonomy status was found better among spouses where there was no age gap (8.3%).
- The number of children had also affected the decision-making autonomy of women. Data show that women who had more than three children had made more decisions regarding their children (13.9%) than those who had two children (2.5%). Similarly among educated women who had studied graduate and post graduate courses decision-making autonomy was found higher (50%), than in case of less educated women who had primary level educational attainment
- Most of the decisions were made by husbands, the remaining decisions being made jointly. But in the case of small items of households, women were the main decision makers.
- 39% women reported that they were forced by their husbands to have sex against their desire during illness and exhaustion, menstruation, post partum period and pregnancy. However, there were almost 61 percent who said that they had not faced such situation of marital rape.
- Violence against women has been recognized as the world wide phenomenon which has crossed all boundaries. It has not stopped due to the lack of legal literacy of women, lack of adequate laws and non-compliance with the existing laws. In spite of the declaration on the elimination of all forms of violence against women, the study has shown that 29 percent of literate women and 44% illiterate women had faced torture for refusing sex. Similarly, study shows that more than 70 percent of the literate women had not faced any type of violence or torture only because of refusing sex.
- The study found that majority of women (58%) faced torture mainly because of going outside of the house without telling their husbands. 11 percent of the women stated that she got punishment in the name of not caring their children properly and 17 percent said that they were punished for arguing with their husbands. 6.3 percent faced

because of burning food. These data shows that almost all women had faced violence in the name of child, food, mobility and so on.

- In Nepal economic dependence, poverty, illiteracy and inadequate decision-making power have combined with a deeply entrenched culture of male authority to make domestic violence against women endemic, especially in Madheshi society.
- Majority of illiterate women (75.7%) were not aware of the women empowerment programs.
- Access of media was also found very low among the respondents. Only 4.9 percent of the respondents reported that they had frequently listened to radio. The proportion of respondents who read news paper was extremely low (1.1%).
- 73 percent of the respondents had name in the voter list. But in total around 71 percent of the women were casted vote in the election.
- More than 73 percent of the respondents were unaware of the name of their constituent assembly member's name awareness level was very low among Muslim women.
- Wives were most likely to have less number of years of education as compared to their husbands. Woman's employment status is associated with her husband's occupational status. Occupational status of the husbands is also one of the indicators of the status of wives.
- Similarly, the women whose husbands were in agriculture or in service or in business occupations were assisting their husbands without getting paid for such work as housewives. Similarly wives with higher education had also found that their husbands were still more educated, more than their wives. In all the educational level, the higher the share of highly educated husbands in the study population, it is more likely the wives are to have lower education than their husbands.

- Husband's occupation has very much affected the occupation of wives. Generally it is seen that the women who worked in the white color jobs were the very those women whose husbands also worked in these same areas of work. Similarly, the women whose husbands worked in agriculture or in service or in business occupations were assisting their husbands in their jobs directly or indirectly without getting paid for such work (see Table 10.5).

11.2 Conclusion

The data generated from field study suggest that Madheshi women are disadvantaged in many areas of social and regional activities which has affected their overall status in the respective society and in Nepal. Of those recorded as economically active, only an insignificant minority was engaged in professions other than agriculture. Besides their domestic works women engage in activities relating to their own agriculture. But their contribution goes largely unrecorded and treated as merely domestic works without remuneration or wage.

This study concludes that education and employment have played an important role in improving women's status. But there are also many other important factors, emphasized by Malhotra and Mathar (1997), which contributes to improvement in women's status and which need focus. They are largely responsible for determining household decisions related to domestic and organizational matters. It is about time now that we all should realize that investment in women is the single most important factor in higher productivity for society as a whole, both in industrial as well as in developing countries.

From a methodological perspective, this study is only a beginning in trying to understand the status of women which influences women empowerment.

Future research is needed to experiment with alternative methodologies as well as to explore the different variables which play different roles in different as well as in the same communities or cultures that contribute to their individual level of empowerment. Nepal has been a party to

various International Conventions which make it an obligation for the country to work for the upliftment of women and make its laws gender sensitive.

Until women get essential opportunities in their daily lives in economic, social and political areas, they will not be able to take part in the decision-making processes within the family as well as in the community because of the lopsided relationship between men and women. In this, Niraula and Morgan (1995) stated that autonomy refers to the ability to obtain information on technical, social and psychological matters and also ability to use it. Madheshi women can only raise their status by increasing their ability in decision-making at the household level first. It is also found that only education and employment are not enough to bring improvement in status of women in the society. The approach of Madheshi people towards their daughters has to be changed. So, awareness is necessary among men of the Madheshi society to treat female members of their family with dignity. For this female education has to be realized first to improve the socio-economic condition of women. However, a combination of factors, which include low economic status (i.e. financial constraints), low educational attainment, scant opportunities and a certain amount of conservatism are responsible for the continuing absence of Madheshi women in public arena.

Experience shows that women oriented development projects are often highly successful in terms of social benefits. If we are to succeed in strengthening the position of women of deprived and disadvantaged society, changes will have to make at the global as well as national level.

11.3 Recommendation

There are very few studies on Madheshi women and their socio-economic issues. So the demographical, sociological, anthropological and health related studies on the Madheshi women should be encouraged.

The media helps in transmitting and exchanging information, views and knowledge about status of women among individuals, communities and societies. But the media, especially, the local media has not been able to do this job adequately and properly. It is, therefore recommend that the matters relating to the status of women in different caste/ethnic groups and their socio-economic status should be covered by the media so that local people as well as all the Nepalese can familiarize themselves with actual condition of women living in different ecological belts of Nepal. Women should also use as much as possible electronic information devices to maintain contact with others and to gain access to sources of alternative information. This would enable women to enhance their status and to develop their power.

Most of the housewives were unable to do outdoor jobs because there were none to look after the households. It will be useful to train them in cottage industries such as weaving handicraft production, knitting and sewing, etc, which can be done in their respective village and within the household. This will not only raise household income, but also will help to develop their self-confidence and finally increase their status in their own societies first.

Illiteracy was very high in the study area and one of the main causes of poor status of these women is the illiteracy in all caste/ethnic groups. Therefore, it is necessary to give compulsory education to girls. Most important guardians must be convinced about the girl's education.

Women's literacy rate should be increased through adult literacy classes. It is also necessary to conduct awareness programs especially for the guardians so that they can realize the necessity and importance of girl's education.

Women should be educated for the fulfillment of national goals. There is a beautiful proverb that is "if a male is educated he is educated for himself, if a woman is educated all the family is educated". Only good education can create awarness. As a result human development is

possible and ultimately it helps to increase women's status and decision making autonomy both within and outside of the households

Positive action measures should be taken to ensure representation that reflects the full diversities of societies, with the target of the 'gender balanced' legislative bodies.

Awareness among Madheshi women of all caste/ethnic groups about their rights is a must. Massive movements are needed to educate, organize and empower the Madheshi women. There is an urgent need of making new constitution on which, it should be guaranteed of secular state, periodic reservation system in all sectors for all caste/ethnic especially disadvantaged Madheshi castes for example: Dalit, Janjati, Muslim community and adequate provision to eradicate discrimination and untouchability based on caste and gender.

Special legal provisions should be made to safeguard women from all sorts of violence and additionally effective measures should be adopted to provide liberation and dignity to women being beaten and given torture in the name of dowry or witchcraft.

It is necessary for the Madheshi community to join pro-Madheshi political parties and try to influence them to incorporate Madheshi issues as a political agenda.

There should be proper representation of Madheshi women in all government, semi-government, civil society and NGO sectors. The movement cannot be successful in isolation. Hence, this movement should join hand with the whole Madheshi Movement, Human Rights movement, women movements and all kinds of democratic movements by forming proper mechanism. The reality is that women liberation is a part of the total liberation of the whole oppressed people.

The concentrate authorities, GOs, INGOs and NGOs must concentrate on an educational program especially in needed areas, may follow the awareness programs and also concentrate on income generating activities.

A vigorous campaign should be launched to educate the people and convince them that a girl child is as important as a male child/son.

Similarly the government should encourage women to undergo specialized training needed for job market requirements. For illiterate women government should give skill training free of cost.

Citizenship Certificate is the legal as well as social right of each and every citizen of the country. Therefore, citizenship rights of people, particularly Madheshi women should be guaranteed through law and Constitution

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APPENDIX 1

HOUSEHOLD AND INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONNAIRE

A STUDY ON STATUS OF MADHESHI WOMEN IN NEPAL, 2010-2011 (A Case Study of Parsa District)

HOUSEHOLD QUESTIONNAIRE

District: _____ VDC/Municipality: _____ Ward No.: _____ Village/Tole: _____
 Caste: _____ Cluster No.: _____ Interview Date:- Day: _____ Month: _____
 Year: _____ Household Number : _____
 Name, Surname and Signature of Interviewer: _____
 Name and Signature of Supervisor: _____

Respondent agreed to be interviewed....1 Respondent did not agree to be interviewed....2 Name and Surname of Respondent: _____
 Interview beginning Time : _____

S.N.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	Name of the Household Members (Starting from Head of the Household)	Relation ship to Head of the Household	Age	Sex Male-1; Female-2	Literacy Status Literate..1 Illiterate..2	(If literate) Highest grade of school (Name) has completed?	Caste/ Ethnicity (Give Code No)	If age 15+ Occupation (Give Code No)	(If age 16 and above) Does (Name) have Citizenship certificate? Yes...1 No...2	(If Age above 15) Has (Name) Ever been Married?	Remarks
1											
2											
3											
4											
5											
6											
7											
8											
9											
10											
11											
12											
13											
14											

Now we would like to have some information about all family members on the basis of following Details (Record detail information of all family members, use next sheet if needed)

Code for Relationship (Q.2): 1.Head; 2.Husbandor/Wife; 3.Son/Daughter; 4.Daughter-in-law/Son in-law 5; Grand Child 6. Father/Mother 7; StepFather/Stepmother 8; Brother/Sister 9; Sister-in-law/ Brother –in-law 10; Nephew/Niece 11; Servant 12; Others (Specify)

Code for Educational Attainment (Q.6): (If age 5 and above), 0.Less than grade 1, 1for Primary Level; 2 for Lower-Secondary Level; 3for Secondary Level; 4 for SLC or Intermediate 5 for Bachelor and; 6 for Degree and above

Code for Occupation/Work (Q.8): (If age 15 and above), 1.Housewife; 2. Agriculture (own); 3.Agriculture labour; 4. Non-Agriculture labour; 5.Service; 6.Teacher; 7. Foreign employee; 8. Work in India; 9.Own Business; 10.Dependent; 11.Student; 12. Tailor; 13. Others (Specify); 98. Don't Know; 99. Not Stated

Code for Marital Status (Q.9): (If Age above 10), 1.Unmarried; 2. Currently Married; 3.Widow/Wodower; 4.Separated/Divorced; 5. Not having Gauna (Married but never living with her husband); 6. Others (Specify)

Code for Languages (Q.101a; Q101b): 1. Nepali; 2. Bhojpuri; 3. Maithali; 4. Tharu; 5. Hindi; 6. Marwadi; 7. Newar; 8. Others (Specify).

Code for Caste/Ethnicity (Q.7): 1.Terai High Caste (Brahmin, Rajput, Kayastha, Bhumihar); 2.Terai Caste (Yadav....; 3. Terai Janjati; 4. Terai Dalit; 5. Muslim; 6. Khas; 7. Hill Janjati; 8. Hill Dalit; 9. Others (Specify)

S.N.	Questions	Coding Categories	Skip
101	What is the first language spoken in your family?	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	
101	What is the second language spoken in your family?	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	
102	What is the religion of your family?	Hindu.....1 Buddhist.....2 Christian.....3 Muslim.....4 Other (Specify).....6	
103	Does your family have own land? (Probe this question)	yes.....1 No.....2 →	105
104	If yes, How much land do your family have?	Bigha Katha..... Dhur	

105	Is the total income from farming and animals enough for your family's livelihood for a whole year?	Enough.....1 → Not Enough.....2	108
106	If not enough, how long will it be enough to carry on?	Less than 3 months.....1 3 to 6 months.....2 6 to 9 months.....3	
107	Are you a member of saving and credit group?	Yes.....1 No.....2 →	110
108	Have you ever drawn loan from saving and credit group?	Yes.....1 No.....2	
109	How did you use the loan?	Used in Agriculture.....1 Animal farming.....2 Household expenditure.....3 Used in Business.....4 Other (Specify) 6	
110	Did/does any member of your family work in government office?	Yes.....1 No.....2 →	112
111	If yes, where do you or your family members work?	In Civil Service.....1 In teaching.....2 In Army.....3 In Police.....4 In Corporation.....5 Other (Specify).....6	
112	What type of house the respondent has? (Circle by observing the house)	Kacchi.....1 Ardha-Pakki.....2 Pakki.....3 Hut.....4 Other(Specify).....5	
113	Is it your own house?	Yes.....1 No.....2	

114	What type of devices do you have?	Yes	No	
114a		Radio	1	2
114b		T.V.	1	2
114c	(Mention each one)	BiCycle	1	2
114d		Cart	1	2
114e		Tractor	1	2
114f		Rikshaw/Tempo	1	2
114g		Motorcycle	1	2
114h		Electricity	1	2
114i		Telephone	1	2
114j		Refrigerator	1	2
114k		Cooking Gas	1	2
114l		Nothing/Don't know	98
115	What is the main source of drinking water for your family?	Own piped water.....1 Public piped water.....2 Own tubewell.....3 Public tubewell.....4 Neighbour's Tubewell.....5 Neighbour's piped water.....6 Well/Kuwa.....7 Pond/Lake.....8 River/Stream/Spring.....9 Collected water from Rain fall..10 Other (Specify).....96		
116	How long does it take to get water from there? (Write 00 if water facilities at premises) convert into minutes	Hours..... Minute..... Total Minutes=		
117	Do you have toilet at home?	yes.....1 No.....2	→	119
118	If you have, What type of toilet facility do you have?	Khalte(Only pit) toilet.....1 Toilet with saftytank.....2 Flush Toilet.....3 Other(Specify).....6		
119	Is there any family member have migrated since last ten years?	Yes.....1 No.....2		

INDIVIDUAL-QUESTIONNAIRES

Section: 2 Social Status					
S.N.	Questions	Coding Categories	Skip		
201	Do you know your age	Yes.....1 No.....2			
201.	How old were you at your last birthday? (Probe to find out age and finally guess age with the help from others)	Age in <table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"><tr><td style="width: 30px; height: 20px;"></td><td style="width: 30px; height: 20px;"></td></tr></table> completedyear			
202.	Have you ever attended school?	Yes.....1 No.....2	204 205		
203.	What is the highest grade have you Completed?	Grade <table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"><tr><td style="width: 30px; height: 20px;"></td><td style="width: 30px; height: 20px;"></td></tr></table> Complited 1-5.....1 6-8.....2 9-10.....3 10+2.....4 Graduation5 Masters.....6			After this Go 206
204.	Why did not you attend school?	Poverty.....1 Help to mothers in household works.....2 To care younger brother and sisters.....3 Marriage.....4 Too far from house.....5 Others causes(specify).....6			
205	Have you ever participated in literacy programme that involves learning to read and write?	Yes.....1 No.....2			
206	Are you a member of any groups like Aama Samuha, Mahila Bachat Samuha etc	Yes.....1 No.....2			
207	Are any Women Empowerment Programme or related developmental activites launched at this community? (Probe the questions)	Yes.....1 No.....2			
208	What is your marital status?	Currently married.....1			

		Widowed.....2 Divorced.....3 Separated.....4 Not having Gauna.....5	
209.	How old were you when you got marriage?	Age---- Below 15 years.....1 15 years-19 years.....2 20 years-24 years.....3 25 years-29 years.....4 30 years-34 years.....5 35 years +.....6	
210.	When did you first intercourse with your husband	After marriage.....1 After Gauna.....2 Before Marriage.....3 Others.....6	
211.	What is the age gap between you and your husband?	Age Gap..... <input type="text"/>	
212.	Can you speak/write/read Nepali language clearly?	Yes.....1 No.....2	214
213.	(If yes) what can you do?	Only can Speak.....1 Only can write.....2 Can speak and write.....3 Can speak, write and read.....4 Can only read.....5 Only can understand.....6	
214	What did you do at the household when you were the age of 5-14 years? N1. Helped in kitchen works N2. Helped in caring younger sisters and brothers N3. Helped in agriculture N4. Helped in bringing goods from the shop N5. Helped in grazing the animals, collecting grass and wood N6. Others (specify)	N1- Yes....1; No.....2 N2- Yes....1; No.... 2 N3- Yes....1; No.....2 N4- Yes....1; No....2 N5- Yes....1; No....2 N6- Yes....1; No....2	

215	Did your parents ever discuss about your marriage with you before taking decision of your marriage?	Yes.....1 No.....2	
216	Did you bring Dowry with You?If Yes then ask..	Cash.....1 Vehicles for husband.....2 Others(specify).....3 Not brought Dowry at all.....4	
217	Do you think that you got prestige, respect from husband and other family members by bringing dowry with you?	Yes.....1 No.....2	
218	Have you given live births which is living with you or living outside?	Yes.....1 No.....2 →	223
219	What was the age when you give first birth ?	Age Less than 15.....1 15-19.....2 20-24.....3 25-29.....4 30-34.....5 35 and over.....6	
220	Where did you give birth of your last child?	Home.....1 → Governmental Hospital.....2 → Private Medical sector.....3 ↗ Others.....4 →	221 222 221
221	What was the main reason for not delivering births in Health facility?	Cost too much.....1 No facility.....2 Too far.....3 Husband/Family does not allow.....4 Other(Spec.....5	
222 222a 222b	How many children do you have? No of sons? No of daughters?	Total Nos= Son (Nos)=..... Daughters(Nos)=.....	
223	Do you think giving birth of a son ?increases your social status in your community?	Yes.....1 No.....2	

307	Do you do this work for a member of your family, for some one else, or you self employed?	For Family members.....1 For some one Else.....2 Self Employed.....3	
308.	Do you have land in your own name?	Yes.....1 No.....2	
309	Do you buy and sell land by own?	Yes.....1 No.....2	
Section: 4 Decision Making Status			
401	Who usually decides how the money you earn will be used? (do not ask to housewives who doesn't earn at all)	Husband.....1 Respondent.....2 Both jointly.....3 Other family members.....4	
402	Who usually decides the money earned by the respondents husband will be used?	Husband.....1 Respondent.....2 Both jointly.....3 Other family members.....4	
403	Who decides making large household purchases?	Husband.....1 Respondent.....2 Both jointly.....3 Other family members.....4	
404	Who usually decides making small daily household purchases?	Husband.....1 Respondent.....2 Both jointly.....3 Other family members.....4	
405	Who usually decides when to visit the family or relatives?	Husband.....1 Respondent.....2 Both jointly.....3 Other family members.....4	
406	Who usually decides how many children to have?	Husband.....1 Respondent.....2 Both jointly.....3 Other family members.....4	
407	Who usually decides about own health care?	Husband.....1 Respondent.....2 Both jointly.....3 Other family members.....4	
Section: 5. Domestic Violence (Ask these questions by making privacy)			
501	In which condition	If she goes out without telling	

	husband gives any types of turture?	him.....1 If she neglects the children.....2 If she argues with him.....3 If she burns the food.....4 Above all conditions.....5	
502	Have ever any family members have given tourcher for not bringing enough dowry with you?	Yes.....1 No.....2 (Probe this question)	
503	Do your husband beats or give any turture if you refuse sex?	Yes.....1 No.....2	
504	Do your husband support or protect when other family members give any kind of torture or harashment?	Yes.....1 No.....2	
505	Have you ever had hit, slapped, kicked or suffered any type of torture by your husband or family members?	Yes.....1 No.....2	
Section: 6 Knowledge of Human Resources, Communication and Awarness			
601n1	How often do you see T.V?	Frequently-1; Oftenly-2; Rarely-3; Never-4	
601n2.	How often do you listen Radio?	Frequently-1; Oftenly-2; Rarely-3; Never-4	
601n3	How often do you read News Paper?	Frequently-1; Oftenly-2; Rarely-3; Never-4	

604	Which type of program do you see, read or listen from these Media?	Songs.....1 RH programs.....2 Adolescent Program.....3 Women program.....4 Development program.....6 Agriculture program.....5 Political discussion.....7 Others (specify).....8	
Section:7 Political Status			
701.	Is your name in voter list?	Yes.....1 No.....2	
702	Had you ever cast vote in election?	Yes.....1 → No.....2 →	703 704
703	While casting the vote, what had you done- used your own conscience or guided by others?	Self conscience.....1 Others' guidance.....2 Pressure.....3 Economic enticeme.....4 Other (Specify).... 6	
704	Why didn't you cast the vote?	Name is not in voter list.....1 Someone forged on my name.....2 Ignorance about the importance of vote.....3 Local elites' intimidation/threats.....4 Unaware about election.....5 Other(Specify).....6	
705	Do you know the name of CA member of your Constituent Assembly	Yes.....1 No.....2	
Section: 8 Husband characteristics			
801	What is the age of your husband?	Age.....	
802	What is the occupation of your husband?	Agriculture.....1 Non Agriculture.....2 The service.....3 Teacher.....4 Foreign employee.....5 Work in India.....6 Own business.....7 Social Activist.....8 Local Leader.....9 Other (specify).....10	

803	What is the literacy status of your husband?	Literate.....1 Illiterate.....2 →	805
804	What is the educational status of your husband?	Primary.....1 Secondary.....2 Higher Secondary.....3 Graduate and above.....4	
805	Do you think the occupation of your husband increases status of yourself in the family or society?	Yes.....1 No.....2	

APPENDIX 2

Checklist for the Qualitative Data

**Checklist for Focus Group Discussion among the currently married women aged 15-49 years
(Five in each alternative sample cluster)**

Topic: Attitude Towards status of women of Madheshi community and their decision making autonomy at the household level.

Date: Day___/Month___/Year_____ Moderator's Name: _____
Recorder's Name: _____

- 1.0 District:
- 2.0 VDC/Municipality:
- 3.0 Ward:
- 4.0 Cluster No:
- 5.0 Number of Participants:
- 6.0 Type of Participants:

7.0 Characteristics of Participants:

(Instructions: Make the opening statements. Then hand in a piece of paper and request each participant to give the following information. Collect them and complete the table below :)

S. No.	Name	Age	Ethnicity	Occupation	Education
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					

(Instruction: After the table is complete, please turn on the tape-recorder and proceed).

8.0: How many of us are household head? (Define household head and Probe it)

9.0: What do you think about the role of women as a household head? Probe, are they doing all which a household should get chance to do.

10.0: What do you think about the decision making autonomy at the household levels? Ask them, do they get autonomy to take part in decision making in these areas: 1. Birth of child; 2. Purchases of small things; 3. Go to outside; 4. Own health care.

11.0: What do you think about girl education and women paid employment? Do these help to get status in your community?

12.0: What do you think about birth of a son increases status of women?

13.0: What do you think bringing Dowry can help women to get status in your community?

14.0: What do you think about the age differences between husband and wife? Probe does Women suffer more due to more age gap?

15.0: What do you think women should involve in politics or not?

16.0: How often women suffer domestic violence and sexual violence?

17.0: What do you think about poor status of women, their anxiety, insecurity and poor self-esteem? As a responsible member of Madheshi community, what should we have to do for getting status in our community to empowerment of woman?

(Instruction: We can also ask related questions to get more qualitative data)

THANK YOU

APPENDIX 3

Checklist for Case Study of the Currently Married Women aged 15-49 years

- 1.0: Caste/Ethnicity:
- 2.0: Completed Age:
- 3.0: Marital Status:
- 4.0: No of Children:
- 5.0: No of Family Members:
- 6.0: Types of Family:
- 7.0: **Social Condition:**
 - 7.1: Age at first marriage
 - 7.2: Age at first birth
 - 7.3: Literacy Status
 - 7.4: Works before marriage
 - 7.5: Involvement in any women empowerment programmes
- 8.0: **Economic Condition:**
 - 8.1: Occupation
 - 8.2: Ownership of land and House
- 9.0: Decision Making Condition:
 - 9.1: Autonomy to decide household purchases
 - 9.2: Autonomy to decide to go outside to meet own
 - 9.3: Autonomy to decide about own health care
 - 9.4: Autonomy to decide the number of children
- 10.0: **Domestic Violence:**
 - 10.1 Suffer any domestic violence
 - 10.2 Suffer sexual violence
- 11.0: **Political Condition:**
 - 11.1 Has right to give vote as she wants
 - 11.2 Suffer any problem due to political involvement
- 12.0: **Husband Characteristics:**
 - 12.1: Age gap between husband and wife
 - 12.2: Occupation of her husband
- 13.0: Social Stigma and Discrimination:
 - 13.1: **Dowry**
 - 13.2: **Son preference**
 - 13.3: Discrimination in education, employment, treatment between son and daughter
- 14.0: How do you think to get status of women in a community?
- 15.0: What are your experiences as being a Madheshi woman which other communities' women mostly do not experience or suffer?

APPENDIX 4

Checklist for the Key Informant Interviews

Note: Three Key Informant Interviews in randomly selected clusters with the chairman of the VDC, local women activist and other important NGOs /INGOs working in the field of women empowerment.

Date: _____ Interviewer Name: _____

1.0 District:

2.0 VDC/Municipality:

3.0 Ward:

4.0 Cluster No:

5.0 Name of the Key Informants:

6.0 Themes of the Interview:

7.0 Have you or your organization worked for the women empowerment?

8.0 If yes, what are the programmes have you conducted for these women?

9.0 How many women of this community participated and benefited by these programmes? Request for the available number of records and also try to disaggregate the figures of employee from this organization by gender.

10.0 Have your organization conducted trainings (non-formal education programme, saving groups, awareness trainings, awareness trainings of voter rights and other rights etc)

11.0 Which of them are more effective and participation is high?

12.0 Has you/your organization established information centres and counselling centres to provide needed information on domestic violence, sexual violence, reproductive rights, etc which are also important for empowering women.

13.0 If yes, do you have records on the number of women reached and benefited by these centres?

14.0 What are the difficulties facing by you/your organization during organizing or conducting such empowerment programmes? Could you please suggest how we can solve these obstacles?
