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How Rural Women Experience Disempowered in Nepal?

An empirical study on women experience as the main obstacles to their disempowerment in their everyday lives

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I specially dedicate to my parents, my wife Yashu Baral and son Aayan Bhattarai

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ACRONYMS

AGI	Alan Guttmacher Institute
AIDS	Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome
BPFA	Beijing Platform of Action
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistic
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
DFID	Department for International Development
ESP	Enabling State Programme
GAD	Gender and Development
GDI	Gender- related Development Index
HDI	Human Development Index
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICPD	International Convention on Population and Development
ILO	International Labor Organization
INGOs	International Non-governmental organization
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MGEP	Mainstreaming Gender Empowerment Program
MMR	Maternal Mortality Rate
NDHS	Nepal Demographic and Health Survey
NGOs	Non Governmental Organizations
SIRF	Social Inclusion Research Fund
STDs	Sexually Transmitted Diseases
UIN	University of Nordland
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nation for Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
VDC	Village Development Committee
WID	Women in Development

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ABSTRACT

How Rural Women Experience Disempowered in Nepal?

An empirical study on women experience as the main obstacles to their disempowerment in their everyday lives

The general objective of this study is to explore the experience of disempowered rural women of Nepal in the framework of their involvement on social institutions and private decision making matter.

The essence of this thesis consists upon the primary data which was collected at Barbote VDC in Ilam District in Nepal. The supreme method to analyze the collected data is qualitative method and the experience of rural women at Barbote VDC of Ilam District has been illustrated in this study so as to explore how they are disempowered and isolated from decision making process in their family. Rural women in Nepal, are isolated from various things and the suppression begins at home. The study also expressed bitter experience of rural women and their plight background. Lack of education, superstition, cultural dogmas and other social and cultural factors are responsible to make women disempowered

Women are found suffering from social, cultural and political biases in the traditional male dominated society of Nepal. Compared to male counterparts women have limited access to educational, employment and leadership opportunities. They have less power and ability to do activities like men counterparts do; even they have the least authority to do something at their own initiation. Women are economically dependent on men (father, husband or brother), as men are traditionally considered as assertive and breadwinners of the family, they are focused on materialistic success. Women are found greatly confined to household and soft nature of farmyard activities. Still largely the households and society directly and indirectly deny or discourage women's role as decision-maker and leader in society.

Though the women of Nepal have substantial contributions both as labor and mentor in the household and outside, but their role is often underestimated and not counted as economic activity. Being heads of households, women have to carry out the full traditional roles with the added responsibility of household and production management. The connection between poverty and women's lack of power over resources and decision-making has now caught the attention of policymakers in government and mainstream development all over the world.

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1.1 Background

Nepal is a male-dominated so-called patriarchal country where men are considered superior and the leader of family prevailing socio-cultural traditions and norms. The status of the Nepali women is therefore linked to the social, political and economic positions of the men in every section of society mainly fathers and husbands. The strong bias in favour of sons in society means that daughters are discriminated against from birth and do not have equal opportunities to achieve all aspects of development. The women have access on low levels of education, healthcare, and economic, social, and political opportunities. Therefore, the overall situation of Nepali women, in particular rural women, lags far behind that of men. Despite increasing efforts different state and non-state actors to empower women, there has been only little improvement in the socioeconomic status of women. Nepali women are excluded due to political and traditional social system. There are various socially constructed so-called systems, which are the main responsible factors to create discrimination, prejudice against women in our society.

Women's empowerment is a prominent issue in Nepal because of the continuing deprivation of Nepalese women. In spite of Nepal's constitution and international agreements signed by Nepalese government has guaranteed women freedom from all form of discrimination. Therefore, empowerment process cannot become sustainable without eliminating entrenched socio-cultural norms as discriminatory practices.

1.2 Situation of Women in Nepal

1.2.1 Women Movement in Nepal

The women's movement, as a response to extreme domination from their male counterparts, the suffering of women, has created a long history. It is necessary to understand that political ideologies influenced the women's movement. If we see the history in 1770, Olympia de Gouge drafted the "Declaration of Rights of Women", which was followed by Mary Wollstonecraft's 'The Rights of Women". These were strong reaction to the discrimination of citizenship by way of restricting citizenship only to men. Engel's in his "The Origins of the Family" focused on women's rights and family issues. Marx in an article "Universal Suffrage, in 1850, New York Daily Tribune argued for universal voting rights including that of women.

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August Bebel, in 1883, took libertarian approach in his work "Women and Socialism", they encouraged and facilitated women's participation in the politics in response to the problems faced by women.[1] In the Nepalese context, organized women movement developed before 1950 in order to overcome Rana Regime. Women's movement influenced by different ideology.

The Nepalese women's movement started in organized way to end the gender discrimination and exploitation from 1950. It fought against inequality, injustice and all forms of feudal, capitalist and imperial exploitation, superstitious belief and social evils. It played crucial role to restore democracy each and every time. During the decade of 1980-1990, women's movement was in its climax.. After 1990 women movement put tired-less effort to establish state institutional development and mechanism. To fight against rampant existing patriarchal social behavior the women organizations realize the need of joint movement.

[2]1970s and early 1980s formulated with "Women in Development" (WID) approach did not change the position of women. After the failure of WID concept focused only in economic growth developed another concept of "Gender and Development" (GAD) replaced the welfare approach of development to right-based approach. The assertion of human rights at a global level, the linking of development with civil and political rights and the merging of GAD and feminist advocacy in the 1990s for "equal rights" evolved into rights approach to women's development concerns.

1.2.2 Socio-economic Situation of Nepali Women

The Human Development Index (HDI) rank of Nepal in 2003 was 143 out of 175 countries. This is indicative of low life expectancy at birth, low educational attainment and low income, and is reflective of the difficult development challenges confronting Nepal in human resource development. The Gender-related Development Index (GDI) rank of Nepal is also extremely discouraging. The human development gap is further aggravated by substantial gender disparities. Further, the difference between Nepal's HDI rank and GDI rank is -1, indicating that the country performs relatively worse on gender equality than on average achievements alone (UNDP).

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[1]Unpublished article on "Realization of Women's Human Rights in Nepal Through Their Participation in Politics" by Krishna Upadhyaya
[2] UNDP-MGEP Report, 2008

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Women comprised 50.1% of the total population of Nepal. Female literacy rate 42.5%, male 65.1%, life expectancy is 61.5 years male 60.5 years. MMR is 415/100,000. Gender development Index (GDI) of Nepal is 0.452[3].

Women have complex identity, made of class, race, and ethnicity. A woman coming from certain class, or orace or ethnicity has altogether different problems than that of women coming from other ethnic group, race or class. Therefore, women's movement though in totality appears to be one, there cannot be one movement for women, there is diversity of movements. Similarly, struggle against untouchability as millions of women undergo oppression in the system of caste, has adverse impact in the empowerment of women. Practical gender interests therefore are generally expressed as social and economic problems. These sorts of activities correspond to the category of "Politics of Everyday Life". Therefore, these areas must be included in the political agenda, which are much more beneficial to womenfolk.

Men and women alike is culture creature. They have culture that gives them a distinct identity from other groups. Women adopt their lives in specific cultures. Culture mainly serves as the network of safety nets to its members. But many of the problems also are culture specific. The practices of culture sometimes legitimize the exploitation of women. Thus, Politics of gender and culture, sometimes, clash. This politics of culture is against the politics of gender.

1.2.3 Socio-political Situation

Politically, Nepal entered into a democratic policy in 1990 following the success of the People's Movement. The constitution drafted and adopted thereafter transformed absolute monarchy to a constitutional one, guaranteed the human rights of every person, provided for periodic elections and, in principle, guaranteed equality of gender caste and ethnic groups.

Since 13 February 1996, a faction of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) declared an armed struggle naming People's War in Nepal. In the initial period people slightly support their activities like action to the exploiter of society. Later on their activities became violent so many killings in front of them, villagers imposed to serve and obey them, due to their

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[3] Source, Nepal – Human Development Report -2004

autocracy and violent activities people are living in under the fear and terror. Maoist has sacked the fundamental rights of the people. Youths are forced to join the Maoist arm subsequently youth started to displace and seeking job in the cities and foreign countries. Only children, women and elderly people are living in the villages. In this circumstances we can assume how is the situation, in some villages there is no one has left to carry dead body for cremation. Cultural and social value has been distorted, people cannot enjoy in their festive, they cannot organized, other political parties activities banned, developmental activities stopped, many communication, transportation, bridge, school, VDC, Hospital, Government administrative units have been destroyed by bomb explosion.

In February 1st 2005 King Gyanendra dissolved eight month long coalition government made of four parties and assumed executive power. A state of emergency was declared immediately after the proclamation and suspended fundamental human rights. Now the democracy is in panic condition. However king has withdrawn the state of emergency but still the human right violation quite often. There is absence of house of representative and local authorities. The power has centralized on King instead of people. All the democratic forces and mechanism has destroyed so the democracy and peace is the prime necessity of people. The gender equity is not possible in the absence of democracy.

1.2.4 Socio-cultural Situation

In the Nepali context, the empowerment and development of women is inextricably bound to the dominant Hindu social structure, which influences all aspects of social, cultural, and economic life. This structure assigns women restricted roles, which most often involve household and family responsibilities. Nepali women have internalized this system and this makes it difficult for them to envision themselves in roles outside the home. Women also harm each other by passively accepting societal attitudes. In Nepal, women's words are thought to be only half true and are not treated seriously. Surprisingly, both men and women accept this societal attitude. Women cannot expect men to take them and their demands seriously if they themselves do not take each other seriously.

Women's passive acceptance of their limited social status has resulted in the perpetuation of gender discrimination. Many women believe that this is the way it has always been and that this is the way it will always be. In the home, Nepali women are thought to be a source of life, but they are also compelled to slave away for male family members. Women are treated like

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seasonal workers and are sent away when they are no longer needed, often because they have failed to produce sons. Yet biology tell us gender is determined by the father's sperm. Social attitudes will not change as long as women believe them to be true and as long as parents choose to raise their children in homes in which gender discrimination is the norm.

1.2.5 Existing Policies Concerning Women Inclusion and Empowerment

Nepal has ratified the CEDAW, the constitution has also tried to follow the CEDAW but some laws are still contradictory to CEDAW. Nepali women are some of the most disadvantaged people in terms of human rights. As per constitution the women have been provided the right to equality they are privileged. But still there is legal, socio-cultural, economic discrimination has been existed.

A. Constitutional Provision for women (MOJC, 2009)

Right of equality

Article 11(1) all the citizens will be equal in the view of law. No one will deprive from the equal protection of law."

Article 11(2) In general use of law there will be no discrimination among citizens on the basis of religion, color, gender, race, ethnicity or ideological belief.

Article 11(3) State will not discriminate between citizens on the basis of their religion, color, gender, race, ethnicity or ideological belief.

But women, children, senior, physically or mentally disable (Differently able) or economically, socially or academically backward community can do special management by law for their protection and development.

Right of equal wage for equal work

Article 11(5) there will be no wage discrimination for equal work in between male and female.

Right of Freedom

Article 12 - By law women's and men's personal freedom will not be seized.

Right of Property

Article 17(1) All the citizens are guaranteed to earn property, selling and use of property for any business in the boundary of law.

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B. Women in National Plan

The 10th National plan has taken the major policies targeting to reduce the poverty, it has mention that, "The tenth plan seeks to address gender and ethnic/caste related disparities and facilitate social inclusion by mainstreaming such efforts, i.e. by taking actions under all four pillars of the poverty reduction strategy, instead of simply relying on targeted programs, accordingly, in implementing key sectoral programs, attention will be paid to ensuring equity of access to such programs for all, with special attention (and monitoring such action) to assuring access of women and deprived communities, with the explicit objective of reducing the existing gaps between these groups and the rest of the population." Gender mainstreaming will require a shift from the traditional reliance on welfare measures to ensuring equal access for women and children to social and economic infrastructure and income and employment generating opportunities created by the broad-based growth process. In addition, to ensure equitable access, women will need to be empowered by removing the social, legal, economic and other constraints, which have traditionally hampered their access to and use of resources. According to National Planning Commission (2010) the key areas where planned actions will significantly help women include:

(I)   Eliminating legal discrimination against women, by revising existing discriminatory laws; providing legal assistance to women to enforce the provisions of the newly revised Muluki Ain (inheritance laws)

(II)   Affirmative action to increase women's role in public office, administration and community level participation and management, all of which will contribute to women's empowerment; and

(III)   Introducing legal and other changes to prevent disorder against women, including a social education process, involving information campaigns and public discussions about the role of women and their rights.

The Tenth Plan has, for the first time, included gender and human rights as a crosscutting as well as sectoral issue. In order to restructure and reconstruct the existing gender relations and to bring about a gender-balanced development, "mainstreaming" was adopted as a key strategy for overcoming the exclusion of women in the name of "Mainstreaming Gender Empowerment Program (MGEP). One of the major approaches of mainstreaming is to formulate gender responsive policies/plans and to implement gender sensitive programs and projects. As gender equality is the goal of mainstreaming the major concern are:

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i. The legitimacy of gender equality as a fundamental value,

ii. Gender equality are brought into mainstream decision-making criteria and processes, and are pursued from the centre rather than the margins,

iii. The increased involvement of women in decision making process about social values, development directions and resource allocations, and

iv. It goes beyond the participation of women in equal numbers as beneficiaries to the actual "agenda setting".

C. Mainstreaming Gender Equity Program (MGEP) : MGEP has set up the Gender disaggregated indicators as differentials between men and women, power, legal rights, roles, constraints, opportunities and needs. Women's needs both practical, addressing their condition to ensures improving women's quality of life and strategic, addressing their position to ensures gender equality and empowerment of women.

E. ILO Conventions on Women

1. Convention No. 100 – Convention concerning Equal remuneration for men and women workers for work of equal value – ratified on 6 October 1976

2. Convention No. 111 – Convention concerning Discrimination in respect of Employment and occupation – Ratified on 19 September 1974 (United Nations, 1994)

1.2.6 Human Rights Situation of Women

The notion that "women's rights are human rights" is a new phenomenon in Nepal. People recognize the concept of as a demand of era but attitudinal behavior is still far behind. Affirmative action programs on behalf of women have rarely been statutorily implemented. The ratification of CEDAW is a milestone towards the promotion of women's rights in Nepal. The Nepali women's movement has paved the way for the passage of a crucial bill concerning the rights of women to inherit property. But still it is panic for the male counterparts, women have got partial achievement with condition, but the implementation is rare. In many instances, legal reforms have often been adopted in a vacuum, without actually involving that concerned or mobilizing public opinion as a whole. As a result, many women in Nepal are not even aware of their rights before the law or they do not understand the legal and administrative process well enough to be able to exercise those rights.

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Constitution of Nepal has provided equal rights to men and women according to the article 11 (1) all citizens are equal in the view of law. Article number 11 (2) has described that there will be no discrimination among citizens on the basis of religion, color, gender, race, ethnicity or ideological belief. There is a clear provision on positive discrimination for women. Women have equal rights on equal wages (11 (5)), right of personal freedom (12) and right of property (17 (1)).

Though constitution of 1990 has provided equal rights to men and women. But there are still discriminatory laws in tenant by the landlord; Compulsory guardian's permission to foreign employment; service hour of women; divorce; marriage; infertility and property rights and citizenship rights.

As emerging Trends, There have been rampant breaches of basic human rights, the government is gradually paving the way for equality before the law in response to mounting pressure from civil society, violence against women is now considered to be a violation of women's human rights, Various advocacy groups for women's rights have emerged, rehabilitation centers for women are being established and internal displacement and women's vulnerability are on the rise causing unprecedented suffering to women, the issue of citizenship issue is being a national now a days, there is many event has occurred to publicize the complex problem faced by women of various sector specially the those children who born from cross-country citizens, the problem from Badi community, the problem in Nepal-India boarder side in Teraian community. There is no equal provision for providing citizenship to the children. Only father can transfer citizenship to the children.

1.2.7 Women and Arm Conflict

The continuation of deteriorating democratic values and human rights, increasing reports of arbitrary arrest, [4]26,000 people abducted, torture, disappearances and killing related with the insurgency and counter-insurgency. 12,179 people were displaced only in the year 2004. 1996 to 30 April 2005 the violent conflict caused death is 12094, killings by state 7844 and by Maoist 4250. [5]Single women group disclosed that out of 200,000 widows more than 10,000 are affected by conflict. Those widows who have lost their husbands in their insurgency are

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[4] INSEC YearBook, 2005
[5] Women for Human Rights Report, 2009

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below 30 years and majority of them is younger than 20 years old – with no children. In the armed conflict, the widows of security personnel, government employees and teachers are entitled amount as lump sum compensation but widows of Maoists and other common people do not get anything from the government.

Violence against women in armed conflict situations is one of the most massive-scale violations of human rights, in terms of the atrocities and the number of persons affected. Rape has been committed against women in war conflict situation. Women of the enemy side are the objects of targeted aggression. They are raped in order to destroy their dignity as women and to demoralize and humiliate the male enemy. It is obvious that gross violations of human rights and fundamental freedom of mobility, livelihood, right to organize. Many women perceive conflict as something entirely outside their control. The conflict between the government and the Maoists insurgents has been escalating for the last nine years. Dialogues between the government and the Maoists have failed every time. Women and children have been ignored during this conflict, despite the fact that they are the most severely affected. The neglect of women's potential and their relegation to second-class status is a major constraint on attaining sustained and just peace.

Based on the 2003 report of the National Women's Commission, women account for around 33 percent of the Maoist militia in some districts, while the figure is as high as 50 percent in "the most highly mobilized Maoist districts." The report also states that 50 percent of cadres at the lower level. The conflict between the government and the Maoists insurgents has been escalating for the last nine years. Dialogues between the government and the Maoists have failed every time. Women and children have been ignored during this conflict, despite the fact that they are the most severely affected. The neglect of women's potential and their relegation to second-class status is a major constraint on attaining sustained and just peace. Forced recruitment of young women into the Maoist forces is another serious issue. Many young women have been displaced from their homes and forced to stay away because of constant threats of recruitment and indoctrination. There have been reports of women being forced to carry guns and satisfy the sexual appetites of the insurgents. On the other side, the security forces have sexually harassed and exploited many innocent women.

The violence has resulted in dehumanization, serious physical and mental stress on women, and concomitant increases in sexual violence. Many women have also suffered loss of family and homes. The majority of internal refugees are women and children. Most of the women who could not stand the harassment and associated economic hardships have moved to urban areas. If insecurity persists, displacement of women is likely to reach a crisis level.

In a situation of armed conflict, non-combatants are the major victims and they often make up 90% of the casualties. Women in particular have been under or misrepresented in stories of conflict, and are often seen as grief-stricken, powerless victims. They are the primary victims of death, disability, rape, displacement, family separation and economic destruction.

A space for women must be created in peace negotiations and conflict resolution, considering women's multiple roles and expertise as counselors, peacekeepers, educators, therapists and caregivers, in the family, in the classroom and in society at large. The government should mandatory observe international conventions and laws and declare genocide, rape, sexual slavery and forced pregnancy as war crimes. The special needs of women and children must be recognized while rebuilding devastated societies. There should be equality in every aspect of refugee emergency response, protection, rehabilitation and repatriation processes. Major emerging trends are, sexual abuse of women is increasing particularly in the conflict affected zones, starvation is occurring in violence affected areas with hardest-hit impact on women, a large scale exodus from villages is taking place because of threats of violence and intimidation, development work in affected areas has been badly disrupted and women have to bear the direct brunt and women are compelled to take on dual roles because of the death or exile of male family members.

Due to displacement family member women, elderly people and children left behind in village resultantly the women are overburdened and responsible for all so the traditional role of women has been changing.

1.2.8 Education and Training for Women

One tangible measure of women's status is their educational attainment. Although the constitution offers women equal educational opportunities, many social, economic, and cultural factors contributed to lower enrollment and higher dropout rates among girls.

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Women's comparatively low societal status has hindered their education, and in turn, their lack of education has hindered their status within society. Although the female literacy rate has improved noticeably over the years, in the early 1990s Nepal's female literacy rate fell far short of its male literacy rate but many social, economic, and cultural factors contributed to lower enrollment and higher dropout rates among girls. In Nepal education often corresponds with wealth. The level of educational attainment among female children from wealthy and educated families is much higher than that among female children from poor families. This class disparity in educational attainment is also true for boys. In Nepal, as in many societies, education is heavily class biased in addition to being gender biased.

Urban educational quality and facilities are often better than those available in rural areas. For women in Nepal, illiteracy compounds their other problems. It contributes to their marginalization within the family, the work place and public life. It accounts for the fact that women have often not benefited from socio-economic and technological progress. Illiterate women are caught in a vicious circle of patriarchy, poverty, repeated child bearing, ill health and powerlessness. This cycle restrict their ability to fully participate in the public life of their respective communities and hampers their ability to enter in the world of science, technology and information. With respect to access to vocational and technical education, females are once again under-represented. Moreover, girls are usually enrolled at the non-supervisory worker training level, rather than at the managerial technician one. Consequently, women are trapped in unskilled or semiskilled jobs and are not candidates for advanced training for positions requiring higher levels of education and expertise.

There have been some quantitative improvements in terms of the number of girls enrollment in the school and the numbers of women receiving various training such as sewing, cutting, beautician, handicraft and cottage industry but these efforts have not delivered any significant progress in terms of uplifting the overall status of women. A lack of qualified and trained female professionals at various levels and in various sectors is a significant problem in Nepal. The privatization policy of education has adversely affect the girl/women education, it is far behind of access for poor people. Due to the higher son preference culture son is privileged to study in better boarding school but girls are given the less priority and general school. Therefore the girl/women have less access in better employment opportunities. The literacy rate of women is 42.5% in Nepal. In total number of teachers 20.5% are female teacher,

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percentage of female in primary level is higher (25.3%) than lower secondary (12%) and secondary (7.6%) level. The enrolment of girls in primary level is 44.1%, lower secondary level 41.5% and secondary level 40.6%. The data shows that higher class higher the dropout rate, lower class lower the dropout rate.

As a major emerging trend parents send their daughters to non-formal education facilities rather than formal ones, so that they can use their daughters' labor during the day, parents are not interested in the higher education of their daughters because of socio-cultural and religious reasons, the need for more female professionals is on the process of being recognized, displaced children from poor families often stop attending school altogether, wealthy parents have started sending their children in large numbers either to domestic boarding schools or abroad due to conflict-related insecurity and irregular school operations.

1.2.9   Violence Against Women

The violence against women is worst form of human right violation, but it persists since long which has originate together with class, caste, gender discrimination we can categorize the violence against women as a traditional/Cultural violence which consist of [6]deuki, Jhuma, [7]badi pratha, [8]chhaupadi, [9]jari pratha, [10]tilak pratha, child marriages, polygamy, and unmatched marriages (marriage with wide age difference); violation of reproductive rights eg.demanding women give birth to son, discrimination against widows

i. Violence based on superstitions e.g. torture for alleged witchcraft it is happening quite often in many cases we found the widow, poor, helpless and powerless with low social status women most often hunting as a witchcraft, very brutal event has been revealed such as feeding stool, torture up to death.

ii. Sexual violence, trafficking and sexual harassment

Sexual exploitation, including trafficking and forced prostitution. Unfortunate developments in Nepal have seen uneducated rural girls become the hapless victims of scrupulous urban and semi-urban thugs and power brokers. As a result, thousands of innocent Nepalese young

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[6] System of offering a woman to a god in which she is expected to devote her whole life to the god
[7] The traditional practice of prostitution
[8] Practice of isolation during menstruation and post-delivery
[9] Paying a fine to the husband of a woman with whom one marries
[10] Fulfillment of the demands of a groom during the marriage ceremony

women end up in the red-light districts of Indian cities and elsewhere every year. Some ultimately return home with terminal diseases, such as AIDS. There is an enormous problem of trafficking in young women and girls; the sex trade, sexual exploitation and prostitution have flourished within Nepal. Young women are not provided with sex education. Most of them do not know about HIV/AIDS or other sexually transmitted diseases. They are not even aware that unsafe sex is the main means of contacting HIV/ AIDS.

iii. Family violence, (domestic violence, polygamy, child marriage) and
Domestic violence against women is also a problem in Nepal. The root cause of domestic violence is the power imbalance between the victim and the accused, especially when violence occurs between the sexes. Domestic violence is just one of the social evils, characterized by gender inequality and age-old socio-cultural milieu, that impedes women's development. Apart from this, poverty, economic dependence, illiteracy, negative social customs, lack of social awareness, superstition, baseless social prejudices, etc. are also causes of domestic violence. They range from marital rape to pre-natal sex selection in favor of male babies, female infanticide.

iv. Untouchability related violence, dalit women and men are considered untouchables in the Hindu caste system. They have no access to public places, including drinking water sources, they face violence in home, in public places and at work. They are also trafficked in higher numbers than other women, mostly dalit women are victimized by accusations of witchcraft also they have been the victimized by violence associated with inter-caste marriage.

v. Dowry-related violence, mostly in the Terai region and boarder side of India the Nepalese women are subjected to victim demanding more dowry they are torture (both mental and physical) and murder also, it has been transferring to other community also.

vi. Conflict related violence Nepal's long-running conflict has been marked by an extraordinary level of brutal human rights abuses, including sexual violence against women. Countless acts of violence against women and children in Nepal continue.

Major emerging trends are, women are threatened by the ongoing insurgency particularly in remote and rural districts, women's organizations and mother's groups in rural areas have

become sensitive to issues relating to violence against women and they are starting to react, there have been few instances of public outcry relating to domestic violence against women, more civil society organizations are starting to work on the issue of violence against women, there have been observable changes in men's attitudes regarding women and violence, media has been playing crucial role for disclosing the facts.

The legislation has been drafted to combat domestic violence against women, to combat the trafficking of women and children by parliament, but it has been pending due to the absence of parliament, "Female police cells" have been established in numerous districts.

1.2.10 Women and Poverty

In Nepal, 40.4% of women and 59.6% of men over the age of 10 are considered economically active. This indicates that women's economic participation is lower than men's. This is due, at least in part, to the fact that subsistence agricultural work which is almost exclusively performed by women, is not considered to be economic activity and is excluded from surveys. The vast majority of the economically active population (81.2%), particularly in rural Nepal, is engaged in agriculture and allied industries. The proportion of the persons engaged in this sector is substantially higher among women (90.5%) than among men (74.9%). (CBS, 2011)

The Nepalese women work for 16 hours/day in average, which is the highest in the world. But their work still considered as unproductive in practice. Above 10 years of economically active labor force 40.4% are female and 59.6% are male. More than 75% of women are involving in informal work. Among economically active female population 90.5% are involved in agriculture. Due to lack of education, vocational and technical training most of the women are unskilled, low paid, so the feminization of poverty is common phenomenon of Nepal. Only 10% of total land is under the ownership of women. Though government has launched different poverty reduction programs like micro-credit, awareness raising and skill development programs are not much effective and satisfactory. Women are more vulnerable to the negative social effects of economic restructuring and recession as they are generally unskilled. Programs and services developed by the government to address unemployment are less accessible to women and the potential that investments in women's skills and opportunities has to increase overall family status are rarely taken up.

Measures to fight poverty prove ineffective when poor women are perceived as the passive beneficiaries of social welfare. For the best results, it is important to emphasize the role of women first and foremost as active economic agents. Similarly, it is necessary to increase women's productivity in home-based, informal and agricultural work while expanding their opportunities of employment and the income they receive from their work. The transformation of women's economic activities requires profound reforms, for example: policies giving women access to land and assets, credit and technology; measures favoring independent work by women; and programs of training which make them competitive on the job market.

The major emerging trends are he need for women's involvement for planning, policy-making and implementation of poverty reduction strategy has been widely recognized, gendered data desegregating has been accepted as essential act, at both the local and national level, for gender balanced planning, collaborative efforts between the government and NGOs are taking place with respect to poverty issues related to women.

1.2.11 Women in Power and Decision Making

Representation in government and political positions increases people's agency by acquainting them with legislation, decision-making on allocation and distribution of state resources, access to information and delivery of services and involving them in these activities in the civil service amounts to a mere 8% of approved civil service positions. Moreover, as compared to the 1999 figures, all those of 2000 have decreased – with the exception of the Non-Gazetted level, which shows a 0.2% increase. Although in increasing number of women have stood for election to the House of Representatives, their share still covers at less than 10%. (HDI, 2004)

Women have remained voiceless and their representation in social, economic and political life has been minimal. Problems related to women in power and decision-making have qualitative and quantitative dimensions. The first dimension involves the capacity of women to assert and exercise their rights, and the lack of an enabling environment in which to do this. On the other hand, some quantitative improvements have been made with the introduction of reservations in local elections. The overall participation of women in decision-making positions is very low and remains unsatisfactory. The statutory provisions alone do not adequately facilitate

women's entry into these positions. Quantitative growth has been horizontal and only observed at the lowest levels of representation. Higher levels, of both local and national politics, are still regarded as the 'male sector.' Thus far, the political parties and legislatures have failed to substantiate their commitment to ensuring women's access to powerful decision-making positions. Even though the law does not discriminate with respect to voting rights, some women have still been denied the right to vote during elections. There have been only an inconsequential number of women at different levels of governmental administration.

The emerging trends are five percent of the candidacy level seats are constitutionally secured for women in the Parliament. Women have become interested in working in other sectors, rather than in government offices, women's awareness about the lack of female participation at the policy level is increasing, a general trend of mainstream acceptance of women's political participation is emerging among younger generations, the number of women's organizations at various levels and in different sectors is increasing, despite ideological differences women have come together and organized around common issues related to women in decision-making, more women are interested in and have joined national politics, twenty percent of seats are secured for women at the ward level of the local self-government, special capacity building programs have been initiated for elected female representatives at various levels, (I)NGOs and development agencies have given priority to women candidates in various positions and have tried to achieve gender balance within their workforce and personnel policies.

But there is many obstacles which prevent, political parties have not fully manifested their commitment to mainstream women in the decision making level of their respective party hierarchies discourage to women to come in decision making positions, such as the household responsibilities, Socio-political and religious factors, in conjunction with patriarchal dominance, corruption and criminalization of politics, female politicians often experience character assassination and defamation, female politicians' safety and security is often threatened due to social resistance

1.2.12 Women and Health

Under CEDAW, women have the right to the highest attainable standard of physical, mental and reproductive health. Such rights have a direct relation to the enjoyment of their right to

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life and liberty. The declaration has further accepted a woman's right to decide freely on matters related to her sexuality, including reproductive health. This right was established by international convention on population and development (ICPD) in 1994. However, the health situation of Nepalese women is very poor. The law does not secure their right to health including reproductive health.

In addition, the maternal mortality rate (MMR) of Nepali women (451 per 100,000 live births) ranks among the highest in the world. One out of every 185 pregnant women dies because of pregnancy and child birth-related complications. Currently, only 53.4% of women receive any antenatal care, through this has increased from 28.4% in 1991, and only 18.8% receive post-natal services. Almost all deliveries take place at home; a skilled birth attendant assists only 13% of deliveries. More than 70 % of pregnant women suffered by anemia. The health vulnerabilities have been increasing and challenged the health facilities and women rights by privatization of health sector. (HDI, 2004)

There is a various cause for higher maternal morbidity and mortality rate as a serious problems such as various myths and traditional practices related to the reproductive health of women are still strong which perpetuate discrimination against and suppression of women, instead of resulting in women receiving special care, general trend of investing less in women's health than in men's health is still prevalent within the society, illegal and unsafe abortions are jeopardizing the lives and health of more and more women, health services are becoming very costly because of privatization, the focus of family planning is only directed towards population control not holistic family care, domestic violence, forced prostitution and rape continue to be health problems.

Nepal is passing through a critical time in terms of its adolescent population. The present trend indicates there is a need to encourage adolescents, particularly girls, in reproductive health programs. In past nine years of insurgency, Nepal's limited health infrastructure has suffered the rage of destruction with the upsurge in violence, many health centers, including rural health posts and health units were destroyed, resulting in a scarcity of medical facilities for pregnant women.

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Most Nepalese women are ignorant about the reproductive rights regarding control over their bodies, from unsafe contraceptive methods, from unwanted pregnancies or coerced childbearing, and from unwanted medical intervention. Family planning programs often emphasize medically efficient methods of contraception to the exclusion of barrier methods. This failure to offer women protection against STDs and HIV infection results in their exposure them to morbidity, infertility, or death. Women are the victims of the side effects of contraceptives. In addition,

Despite its legalization, post-abortion complications are still a major problem in Nepal, with 20-27% of maternal deaths in hospitals caused by such complications. Studies conducted showed that five percent of maternal deaths in villages are caused by unsafe abortion. The Ministry of Health has recently extended its post abortion care program to 19 hospitals.

According to a government survey, three in four women dying of delivery complications were illiterate. Educated women had better access to a doctor or medical worker. According to the Nepal Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) 2001, conducted by the Health Ministry's family health division, just over one in ten births are attended by a trained doctor or paramedics. The maternal mortality and morbidity study shows the majority of maternal deaths are caused by postnatal complications. This is a failure of state's policies and programs on health issues on women. The concept and the roadmap seem perfect in formulating programs, but their implementation has always been weak which demands to take drastic steps to reduce the maternal mortality rate.

Major emerging trends are women are beginning to participate in healthcare services from the local to the central level, family planning schemes are becoming popular even at the village level with noticeable drops in birth rates, condom use is increasing because of publicity about the consequences of HIV/AIDS, supply and demand for both maternal and child health services is increasing, more recently, the fundamental sexual and reproductive rights of women are being recognized as fundamental rights both by the state and the people.

1.2.13 Women and Media

The involvement of women workers are less than 30% in media i.e. newspapers, radio, TV and less than 10 % women in the management level. Few publications and program are

focused on women issues but they are also facing financial other problems such as security, sexual harassment etc. Mostly the women are used as a commodity in advertisement and entertainment. However, women's participation in the existing Nepali media as journalists, editors, reporters, writers and scriptwriters in both print and electronic media is minimal. Unfortunately, for several years the mainstream media has shown little interest in women's issues and existing coverage is mostly negative. The media has not given adequate attention to important issues that concern women's rights, welfare and dignity. Coverage of women and women's issues has gradually improved in recent years, due at least in part to the combined pressure of the national and international lobbies and advocacy campaigns. Despite significantly socio-political changes in recent years, Nepal's media continue to present women in gender-stereotyped roles. They are generally confined to household work, while men are portrayed as individuals with specific expertise and professional skill. There is obvious media hesitation in introducing progressive female role models. Even in the media's presentation of female celebrities, more emphasis is placed on their personal affairs than on their capabilities and achievements. The media rarely associate women with "serious" issues like politics, conflict, unemployment and international geopolitics. Moreover, female experts are rare quoted in news analysis or feature articles.

As a positive trend more women are joining the media workforce and their numbers are likely to approach a critical mass, women have started to demonstrate their willingness to work in tedious and challenging work environments

The major problems in the media sector are women's participation is very low at the managerial level of mainstream media, the working environment of mainstream media is still not conducive with enabling women's involvement because of unfavorable support structures, most women can not afford modern technology and as a result they lag behind their male counterparts in both training and professionalism, voices from underprivileged and rural women rarely reach the mainstream media.

1.2.14 The Situation of Girl Child

According to CBS the girls in Nepal comprise 51% of the total child population. Malnutrition affects 56.2% of children, and girls are more vulnerable to this problem than boys. Literacy rates among girls are 42%, as compared to 65% among boys. The percentage of girls

attending primary school is 74%, as compared to 86% of boys. Girls married under the age of 16 represent 34% of total marriages and 7% of child marriages involve children below 10 years of age. Most of the household chores and child rearing activities are the responsibility of girl children. Girls, between the ages of 10 and 14, work twice as hard as boys do in the same age group. Approximately 2.6 million children are engaged in different fields of labor, among which 56% are reported to be girls. Young women are trafficked for a variety of purposes including domestic work, forced begging, and compelled marriage, carpet weaving and most often for work in the sex industry. About 20% (i.e. 40,000) of the total women trafficked in the flesh trade are under 16. (CBS, 2011)

Nepal has one of the highest indices of son preference in the world. Girls considered unimportant and risky to educate, given the high value attribute to virginity and the dangers that schooling in the company of boys and men outside the household might pose to virginity. By contrast, early marriage (child marriage) constitutes a kind of virginity insurance. There are vast discrimination on rearing and caring of girl child on her beginning of life. The society perceives girl/women are weaker than boy/men thus the socialization process adversely affected. These factors play vital role on the development of personality and carrier of the girl child from the very beginning of her life. Automatically girl remains backward mentality. Girl child has been found 56.2% malnourished, only 42% of girl child are literate. Household involvement of girl child is doubled than boys. Among total trafficked 20% are found below 16 years girl child. Still child marriage is in practice.

Almost 60% of the survivors of child sex abuse and rape are girls below 18 years. Most of them are abused either in homes, educational institutions or work places. Discrimination against girls is a common practice in every sector of society, including education, the economy, healthcare and wages. Among 5,000 street children in Nepal approximately 5% are girls, which is a precarious scenario.

Girls are regarded as "untouchables" during periods of menstruation. In some parts of Far Western Nepal they are not even allowed to stay inside their homes and are often forced to sleep amongst the livestock. Despite legal prohibitions, sexual exploitation of girls continues through traditional and religious customs, such as Deuki.

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In the past nine years, children have died as a result of the internal armed conflict. Among them, 81 were girls. The armed conflict has involved many incidences of sexual abuse of girls. In addition, many children, including girls, have been displaced to urban areas and have become involved in exploitative labor.

Among the 2.5 million girls aged between 15 and 19, approximately half are already married and nearly quarters have become mothers. The recent UNFPA report states that 60 percent of girls marry before they turn 18. Young girls from rural communities are rarely prepared for pregnancy and motherhood. In addition, they are often malnourished and under-fed, and as a result their maternal mortality rate is higher. Studies have shown that unsafe delivery, postnatal complications, early marriage and unsafe abortion are responsible for these miserable consequences.

In order to alter the current state of Nepali girls, NGOs, INGOs and the government are working hard on education and social mobilization. However, the process and pace of change has been rather slow. If substantial changes are to be made in society, all forms of discrimination and exploitation of girl children must end.

As a positive response, Nepal has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and has been submitting periodic reports to the concerned treaty monitoring body of the UN, special programs to abolish the worst forms of child labor from various industrial sectors have been initiated, the Children's Act has been promulgated in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and provisions have been made for a Special Bench in the district court to deal with juvenile cases, "Children as zones of peace" initiative has been implemented to safeguard children from violent armed conflict, special awareness programs have been implemented by concerned parties to combat girl trafficking, the SAARC Convention to combat trafficking has been adopted with ratification by a majority of the states in the region, rehabilitation programs carried out by NGOs for trafficking survivors have been impressively successful.

In the present emerging trend, young girls have been inducted into the insurgency, they have become victims of violence perpetuated by both of the warring parties, many internally displaced girl children have been exposed to risk of sexual violence and trafficking, inter-governmental agencies such as UNICEF and the ILO have adopted special measures to

address the worst forms of child labor, including trafficking and other critical issues associated with girl children.

1.2.15 Institutional Mechanism for Women Empowerment

While this field has seen little improvement over the past 15 years, its recognition as a precondition for effective implementation of women-focused programs is a significant achievement in itself. The government has been proactive in the creation of institutional mechanisms for the empowerment of women; however, conventional attitudes within the system have prevented such mechanisms from being effective.

Amendment of the civil acts, laws, by-laws, and directive principles is a prerequisite for introducing a 33% reservation for women in civil service at all levels and for the creation of strong institutional mechanisms in favor of women. Nepal demonstrated its commitment to the UN resolution to guarantee 33% representation of women in decision-making by the year 2000. A sizeable and visible representation of women in the parliament must constitutionally guarantee in order to create a critical mass of female leaders who will pave the way for the realization of gender justice. The political parties can play an instrumental role in the advancement of women's causes in collaboration with the civil society, NGOs and the media.

The existing legal reform is not encouraging towards the development of institutional support system in favor of women. Even where legal reforms have been instituted for the institutional advancement of women, the government often fails to enforce them. The current conflict has further jeopardized the existence of already fragile institutions. In spite of the creation of a separate Women's Ministry, women's issues invariably remain a low priority. Social structures also often reinforce biased attitudes in the application of the law. When prejudice is deeply ingrained in the social fabric and there is a lack of massive public pressure for effective implementation, the CEDAW provisions remain ineffective. Cultural beliefs and traditions that discriminate against women may be officially discredited, but they often continue to flourish at the grass-roots level resulting in hindrance for the advancement of women.

Capacity building of women for creating an enabling environment for them to access opportunities to participate in every sector of social, political and economic activities is vital to gear up institutionalized efforts to enhance their status. This also includes capacity building

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for planning, implementation and monitoring programs and projects in line with BPFA and CEDAW including removing gender stereotypes from the media. Institutions that address women's cause should be established both at national and district levels to ensure the easy access of the most disadvantaged women.

Gender equity programs at all levels of state machinery are the pillars of institutional mechanisms to boost up women's status in the society. Such programming should be blended with new policies and legislation that progressively alter women's *status quo*. Political parties must create space to accommodate women in all tiers of their party hierarchy besides reserved seats for election purpose. Similarly, the creation of gender focal points in each ministry and department will help galvanize women's capability in the nation building process. Institutional linkage with higher establishment of education, government line agencies, and civil society has resulted in the achievement of a coherent and holistic impact on the advancement of women.

The government has pursued some affirmative actions in this regard. Major institutional progress, made by the government, related to the Beijing Platform of Action has included: (I) the establishment of a Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare as a focal point; (ii) the preparation of a National Plan of Action based on the BPFA; and (iii) the placement of special emphasis on gender mainstreaming in the Tenth Plan. However, strong and consistent political will is needed to demonstrate the progress towards women's advancement on ground reality.

Present emerging trend are women, even at the village level, are actively participating and asserting their rights as citizens, the government has received national and international attention and is feeling pressure to make its programs and policies more gender sensitive and gender balanced, numerous advocacy groups and alliances have been formed to advance the political empowerment of women, additional issues relating to the political disenfranchisement of women have surfaced as a result of the conflict.

Some affirmative action after 1990 multiparty democratic system has taken during 14 years (recently it has been stagnated after royal coup), the Ministry of Women, Children and the Social Welfare has been established, women's Development Offices have been established in

all districts, working Committees for the monitoring of the Beijing Platform of Action have been formed, decisions have been made regarding gender focal points in each ministry, a non-statutory women's commission has been formed, but is currently defunct, women have been allowed to enter the Army, liberal policies have been adopted to facilitate women's participation in foreign employment, 20% reservation at the local level has been guaranteed, women's participation in the Public Service Commission, the National Human Rights Commission and the National Planning Commission has been increased, the office of the National Rapporteur on trafficking in women and children has been created within the National Human Rights Commission.

There are obstacles prevalent due to lack of resources and political commitment has hindered the advancement of women in politics, no critical mass has been created to mainstream the advancement of women, charismatic, dynamic and non-controversial leadership has not emerged, the state power structure still remains patriarchal, women working in the Women's Development Office are still temporary employees though some of them have been working for 20 years,

1.2.16   Women and Economy

Women's role in the economy goes largely unrecognized as most women are deprived of active participation in mainstream economic planning. In the agricultural sector, women are key participants. They are responsible for 60 to 70 percent of output, and work more than three hours longer each day than men (an average of 11 hours a day, compared with 7.5 for men). The greater work burdens that women bear, their generally poor health and limited access to health care, and a persistent gender gap in education, are severe constraints on the country's economic growth.

Although Nepali women play a vital role in the economy through unpaid work in the home, their contributions to household incomes go undocumented. Interventions to strengthen women's economic participation are based on the assumption that bolstering women's contributions to household income will increase their influence over decisions related to household spending. Research has shown that women are more likely than men to spend income on nutrition, health care, and education, so putting money in their hands through micro-enterprise should result in households spending more on the family's well-being.

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Additionally, groups of women brought together in economic empowerment groups will remain active participants long after completing a literacy program.

To foster women's increased participation in the market economy, access to economic opportunities such as secure savings, non-collateral credit, and business skills training are vital. Training enables women to access capital and to start or expand their own income generating micro-enterprises. This, in turn, will expand household income. Integrated empowerment programs also result in measurable behavioral changes in women

While women's contributions to the national economy had previously gone unrecognized, in the last nine years their contributions have been acknowledged. The national labor survey recognized the economic value of work done by women in the agriculture sector. Women's work in the informal economic sector has also been recognized in a national audit. In addition, the design process of new economic and poverty alleviation programs give due consideration to women's economic contributions. The challenge now is to institutionalize this concept within both national and local planning processes.

Production in the absence of women's participation is beyond imagination. On a traditional farm, women do all of the manual work until planting starts. Women reserve and preserve the grain tend to livestock, grow kitchen vegetables, transplant saplings at the start of the growing season, and later they are responsible for threshing and cleaning the harvest. Women's activities are not restricted to the village economy alone; they are also equally involved in construction work.

Extension of micro-credit programs, income-generating programs, and skill development training should be major strategies in women's economic empowerment. A gender-based analysis of these programs will be essential to gauge the real benefits acquired by women. Women's empowerment not only be limited to monetary gain; it must also include efforts to increase women's social capital.   In the ten years since the Beijing Conference, democratization, decentralization and education have been identified as important ways to accomplish this goal.

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The positive trends most people have started recognizing women's inheritance rights as fundamental, due to increasing poverty fueled by the conflict, women are under tremendous pressure to generate cash income for the survival of their families, the escalating conflict and political instability have jeopardized the advances made in the field of women's economic progress, systemic discrimination against women has yet to be eliminated.

1.2.17 Women and Environment

Women's relationship with the environment is vital to their daily lives. It is their source of water, fuel, food and other basic needs. Women in Nepal not only bear the brunt of environmental degradation but also play a crucial part in the environmental management. Their importance as key stakeholders in the achievement of sustainable development cannot be overstated. The issue of women environment and development has been recognized in some sectors, but is not yet a prime focus of the development framework.

Women are the first to be affected by environmental changes regardless of whether they are negative or positive. Women's participation in environmental programs such as community forestry or environmental protection is highly encouraging. The relationship between women and the environment in rural communities has yet to be properly understood by the development sector. Women are vulnerable in the conflict prone zones due to the heavy presence of military personnel and Maoist in forest and field. The women have encountered difficulties in collecting firewood; grass and fodder, as these resources have been encroached upon during the ongoing conflict.

The use of chemical pesticides in the agricultural sector has affected the women's reproductive health. Increasing trend of urbanization and displacement, population growth caused environment, natural disasters, deforestation, land sliding, flood, global warming.

1.2.18 Women in Decision Making

The strength of women's role in the decision-making varies with the type of decision. Thirty-six percent of currently married women reported that they alone made the final decision about daily household purchases. Although 20 percent of women make sole decisions on their own health care, one-third say that their husband make such decisions mainly by himself. Decisions on large house hold purchases are most likely to be made jointly by the respondent

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and husband (37 percent). More than one-third of women say that decisions to visit family or relatives are made jointly with their husband (NDHS, 2011).

In the Nepalese context the status of women is very low due to the lack of decision-making power. So the decision-making power of women should be increased. Most of Nepalese women don't have power of decision due to the culture. To empower women in Nepal social injustice and gender disparity in socio-economical as well as decision-making process should be addressed.

1.3 Purpose of Study and Research Question

As mentioned above, the status of women is not equal as man and they are complied to face various types of injustice and discrimination in society. They are excluded and disempowered in various form of socio-cultural, economic and political sector in Nepal. Therefore, the specific significance of the research is to analysis main obstacles to their disempowerment in their everyday lives.

Therefore my research questions in my study are:

- How Rural Women Experience Disempowered in Nepal?
- What do they experience as the main obstacles to their disempowerment in their everyday lives?

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter explains the theoretical and conceptual aspects associated with women disempowerment. The focus is to obtain the deeper understanding of the concept and its relevance for the women empowerment.

2.1 Anti-Oppressive Practice

There are different aspects on Anti-Oppressive Practice. The purpose to focus this theory in my study is to define and explain the critical components of an anti-oppressive practice to understand about the dominant and powerful society through the empowerment of those who are oppressed.

Anti-oppressive practice is part of the critical social work tradition (Healy, 2005). Critical social workers urge social workers to recognize that problems that are faced by service users originate primarily from unfair and unjust social structures, rather than in their personal histories. In anti-oppressive theory, Healy (2005) expressed two influential group in society whose interests are opposed and irreconcilable. Whereas the privileged groups include people such as social worker with professional status and access to institutional power, the service users, who are relatively powerless and suppressed, represent another group.

As Thomson (1992, cited in Healy, 2005: 180) advises, social workers must take a stand by recognizing that

'There is no middle ground; intervention either adds to oppression (or at least condones it) or goes some way towards easing or breaking such oppression. In this respect, the political slogan 'If you are not part of the solution, you must be part of the problem' is particularly accurate. An awareness of the socio-political context is necessary in order to prevent becoming (or remaining) part of the problem.'

Indeed, anti-oppressive practice recognizes that even interventions aimed at emancipating the oppressed can themselves be oppressive (Healy, 2005). This means that intervention can be nothing but a mere action of replacing one form of oppression with another. It must be noted that sometimes this oppression against service users like disadvantage groups women,

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disabled or the poor in interventions aimed at liberating the same service users from oppression and other forms of social justice can be perpetrated by service providers without their knowledge or intention. In other words, it is very possible for social workers and managers not to be aware that their intervention strategies are actually oppressive to the very same people that they are trying to liberate.

By analyzing the basic concept of this theory that this is something we are asking ourselves as social worker all the time. How can we do our work in ways that recognizes the power and influence we have? How can we make our services as accessible as possible? How can respect and recognize the local territories on which we do our work? What does it mean to do anti-violence work in a feudal society? How can we address multiple forms discrimination in society? How can we use our privileges and power for social justice?

Anti-oppression concept is developed conceptual clarity to recognize the oppression that exists in our society and attempts to mitigate its affects and eventually equalize the power imbalance in our communities. Basically there are certain groups in our society and communities that hold power over women in the name of religion, cast culture, social custom and tradition.

2.2 Power Theory

Power is a system of domination is made possible due to the existence of social structures of rule and authority. Power is a central concern of critical post theories particularly Foucault and feminist post structural authors such as Cixous and Keristeva (Healy, 2000:202.). She mentioned that Foucault explicitly rejects the 'juridico-discursive' modal of power, which represents power as the possession of individuals and a force that is imposed by one set of subjects, such as the ruling class, on others (Sawicki,1991:52; Healy, 2000: 43). Power is medium and ability to control its environment, including the behavior of other entities. The term authority is often used for power perceived as legitimate by the social structure. Power theory provides power relationship of male and female as well as different groups of society.

We all have power in some aspects of our lives and in society. Therefore first step is to recognise the areas of power that we have, and commit ourselves to use it for the benefit of people and not to oppress them. Oppression in society is often the result of powerful people or social forces exerting power over the weak. Sometimes it is the majority exerting power over

a minority, using the power of numbers.   What I understood that the power related with empowerment that involves addressing the imbalance of power between groups in society. Even when weaker groups in society achieve a certain degree of empowerment, the extent is often still controlled by a more powerful social group, and credit for the 'gift' of empowerment is claimed by those in power. Power relationship of male and female as well as people of different social group is highly unfair in our society.

2.3 Theories on Self Identity

Self identify is a person's knowledge that he or she belongs to a social category or group (Hogg and Abrams 1988). A social group is a set of individuals who hold a common social identification or view themselves as members of the same social category.

According to Giddens (1991) the self identity is a routinely created phenomenon which sustains through the reflexive activities of the individual. Self identity is often linked to the term self consciousness developed over time. Social activities are seen as key elements in the process of developing self identity. As a result people are tended to look upon other people to see the image of the self identity which will be reflected back in terms of words, attitudes, expressions and actions (Burkitt, 2008).

The concept of self identity implies that what the individuals becomes is to a large extend depend upon their reconstructive efforts. The self identity helps to realize an enduring conception of their aliveness. Moreover, it is also considered important to elevate the capacity of individual to keep a particular narrative going (Giddens, 1991:54). Self identity therefore helps to get to know oneself better and to build up a coherent sense of understanding.

Therefore, the central point of the self identity approach is that the impact of social groups on the way people see themselves and others around them cannot be understood without taking into consideration the broader social context in which they function.

2.4 Theories on Participation and 'Change from Below'

According to Tesoriero (2010: 120), change from below is the idea that 'the community should be able to determine its own needs and how they should be met, that people at the local level know best what they need and that communities should be self-directing and self-

reliant. He argued that community people involve valuing local knowledge, resources, skills, and culture.

Tesoriero (ibid) continues to emphasize that the idea of 'change from below' is coming out of the realization by community development practitioners and social workers that true, meaningful and sustainable change is only possible when it is demanded and needed by the local people themselves. This is actually in consistent with most ecological and social justice writings which are promoting the need for communities to be self-reliant and self-directing. This now fashionable and popular operation principle in community development is very relevant in social work interventions because Social Work has respect, empowerment and self-determination as some of its principles or values.

Taken to the issue of women, women are the part of community with their own needs, knowledge, skills and resources. Any initiative aimed at empowering women, from the perspective of 'change from below' should be seen to be participating and recognizing the women themselves because they know better what they need and their ideas and skills must be incorporated in the overall strategy and implementation of activities .

The advantage of participation of women in deciding and implementing what should be done is that they are likely to own and support the initiative, thereby increasing its success in meeting the intended goals. This study has some interesting findings in this regard in as far as how the entire process planning, implementation of activities, monitoring and evaluation of women in local context.

2.5 Theory on Community Development

According to Tesoriero (2006) 'Community development aims to assist communities to become better informed and to have a more effective voice, and to take an active part in the determination of matters affecting their common welfare.'

The principles of empowerment, human rights and social justice are key underpinnings of community development theory and practice. As Tesoriero (2006: 265) argued that empowerment should be the aim of all community development.

…empowerment means providing people with the resources, opportunities, vocabulary, knowledge and skills to increase their capacity to determine their own future, and participate in and affect the life of their community.

There are many different models of community development, and different models will suit different communities because community development is about building relationships between people with different views and backgrounds, it should involve a broad range of techniques and methods.

I found many such activities in my study field in relation to women empowerment such as consciousness raising, self help support groups, community legal education, building networks – undertaking joint projects with other local community groups on local issues, community building, leadership development activities and other many more.

This theory is provided very wider concept of development activities in local level. I discussed many research questions with based on this concept. Such as, what kinds of activities are running in community by state and non-state actors? What is the level of participation and understating of women on women empowerment activities? What are they understand about the empowerment and community development? How is their roles and responsibility in project cycle.

2.6 Theory of Empowerment

According to Tesoriero (2010) that empowerment is achieved by ensuring people with resources, opportunities, vocabulary, knowledge and skills needed to increase their capacity. Based on his views, the empowerment strategy is understood as a means of overcoming the barriers of people so as to enable them to exercise power. The empowerment strategy helps people achieve the social justice by challenging oppression and making it possible for them to take charge of matters affecting them the most.

He introduced the concept of empowerment on individual and community level. For the individual –the empowerment process is a process of increasing control and transition from a state of powerlessness. Community as whole – is a collective social process of creating a

community, achieving better control over the environment, and decision making in which groups, organizations or communities participate.

Towards the understanding on women empowerment with the based on theory that we can say it is process of transition from passive situation to a more active situation. The need for it is part of the realization of one's very humanity, so much so that one could say that a person who is powerless with regard to his life and his environment is not realizing his innate human potential. Since the sources of powerlessness are rooted in social processes that disempowered entire populations, the empowerment process aims to influence the oppressed human. This theory is based and road-map to my study therefore I used this theory in developing concept of women empowerment and exploring the empowerment activities.

2.7 The Strengths Perspective

The strength approach mainly focuses on the capacities and potentialities of service users (Healy 2005). It is devoted to enabling individuals and communities to articulate, and work towards, their hopes for the future, rather than seeking to remedy the problems of the past(Healy,2005). The promotion of participation and involvement of service users in interventions planning and implementation as described above isbased on the recognition that every human being has strengths, capacities and resources (Healy, 2005). It is this recognition that every human being has strengths, capacities and resources that the strengths perspective is founded.

The strength perspective has a very simple formula which is 'Mobilize clients' strengths (talent, knowledge, capacities) in the service of achieving their goals and visions and the clients will have a better quality life...' (Saleebey as cited in Healy, 2005: 152). The strengths perspective is growing in popularity partly because of its embodiment of social work values, particularly its emphasis on respecting service users and allowing them (service users) to exercise self-determination.

The strengths perspective is relevant in this study because it explained present scenario of women of local context and how we can aimed at empowering women with capitalizing and building on already existing their strengths and capabilities.

2.8 Concept of Intersectionality

The concept of intersectionality was firstly coined by Crenshaw in 1989, and then the idea was reintroduced by the sociologist Collins in 1990 (Crenshaw, 1989). In feminist studies women and men were analyzed as different and heterogeneous across and within the female and male categories. It is thus an idea often used in critical theories, the ways in which oppressive institutions (caste, class, religion, ethnicity and gender) are inter-connected and cannot be examined separately from one another that power and oppression rest upon. In addition, the intersectionality concept is specifically used to address the experiences of people who are subjected to multiple forms of subordination within society, where it claims that gender as the primary factor determining a woman's fate. It is therefore a methodology of studying relationships among multiple dimensions and modalities of social relationships and subject formation.

I have used the concept of intersectionality to present the issues related on cast based discrimination. Some factors I address such as caste, gender and religion are often critical to empower women in Nepal.

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CHAPTER – III

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter presents literature on social exclusion/inclusion and women's empowerment based in available reports, articles and some web-based information prepared for particular purposes of the study.

3.1 Theoretical Literature on Social Inclusion/ Exclusion

The term social exclusion and inclusion were introduced at first in France and then popularized in social polity discourse in Europe in 1970s to crisis of the welfare state and then used in other regions especially in development paradigms based on poverty reduction (Silver, 1994). Though the forms of exclusion and inclusion were emerged at first in 1970s but lots of studies have shown that social exclusion and inclusion exist from the very beginning of civilization.

The concept of social exclusion is about all those individuals or groups that are excluded from basic means of livelihood, but it is also about those excluded form the process of political and economic decision making, and those excluded from any conceptualization of social security. At wider level it may refer to exclusion from education health care and ultimately the freedom that and individual must have to organize or control his/her life in a given social settings (Nayak, 1995).

Saith (2001) has defined that social exclusion as the exclusion from participation in the normal activities of society. Further Barry suggests that a group is considered socially excluded if they actually desire to participate or not. The five dimensions of social exclusion in relation to lack of participation in normal activities may be measured as the consumption activity (being able to consume at least up to some minimum level goods and services considered normal for that society), saving activity (accumulating, savings, pension entitlement or owning property), production activity (engaging in economically or socially value activities like paid work, education or training, retirement if over state pension age or

looking after a family), political activity (including voting, membership of political parties and of national or local campaigning groups) (Saith, 2001:5).

Social exclusion is, thus a complex and multi faceted notion. It refers to both individuals and societies and to disadvantage, alienation and lack of freedom. However, de Haan and Maxawalle (1995) have identified the key arenas of social exclusion and inclusion. They have emphasized that people are basically excluded from their rights, resources and relationships. Social exclusion refers to exclusion in the economic, social and political sphere. It goes beyond the analysis of resource allocation, mechanism and includes power relations, agency, culture and social identity (de Haan, 1995:12).

Social exclusion and inclusion are "Contested Concepts" defined from the perspective or framework of different social science paradigms and disciplinary and theoretical perspectives, political ideologies and even national discourses (Pradhan, 2006:1).

Social inclusion describes the state of being included in a community and society as a whole; a condition in which individuals and groups can access the range of available opportunities, services and resources, and contribute actions and the processes needed to transform the situations and changing the perceptions that create and sustain exclusion. The aim of having specific work on social inclusion is to support the involvement of the most excluded groups and to try or insure the betterment of the most excluded and marginalized groups.

Women are named as vulnerable, marginal and excluded groups worldwide. Gender based exclusions from access to resources i.e. in particular land rights and common property resources, employment opportunities and income control, knowledge are mainly due to patriarchy values. Exclusion of women from the public arena and devaluation of their work have been highly realized for long. It was realized that their subordination is embedded in their role as care – taker and nurturer (Pokhrel and Mishra, 2001:3). Furthermore, women are being deprived socio-cultural, economic, legal and political rights. Economic discrimination against women is responsible for socio-cultural, legal, educational and political backwardness of women in the context of Nepal (Pradhan, 2006).

Social exclusion is the root cause of disempowerment of women. Empowerment is seen as occurring at the individual and group level and, to an important extent has to do with increasing their access to assets, capabilities and voice; and helping them to realize he power, they gain from collective action. Indian sociologist Kamala Bhasin defined, "Empowerment means the enhancement of social aspect, self dignity, self reliance and going control over resources"(Chaulagai and Others, 2003:36).

DFID/World Bank (2006:9) defined, as "Social-Inclusion is the removal of institutional barriers and the enhancement of incentives to increase access of diverse individuals and groups to development opportunities. And Empowerment is the enhancement of assets and capabilities of diverse individuals and groups to function, and to engage influence and hold accountable the institutions that affect them".

Hence, Social-Inclusion and Empowerment are closely related but separate concepts that through the social inclusion process, the empowerment process operates. Bennett put her statement that social inclusion and empowerment play their contemporary role for equity and development (Bennett, 2005).

3.2 The Women's Empowerment and Disempowerment

The three world conferences of UN-Decade for women held in 1975 (Mexico City), 1980 (Copenhagen) and 1985 (Nairobi) were important mobilizing and awareness of the valuable opportunities for organizing locally, nationally, regionally and internationally and for influencing policy making (UNIFEM, 1995: 3).

On the issues of women's empowerment various conventions and conferences are held. Gender equality has become a motto for all international conventions and conferences sponsored by the institutions under UN-umbrella. All UN conferences and conventions have emphasized women's participation and their empowerment and mainstreaming. Since the 1975 UN conferences on women (Mexico) the world community has acquired or great deal of knowledge about the situation of women worldwide and gained valuable insight into process of development from a gender perspective (Acharya, 1997: 1,7).

The Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) 1979 is the first legally binding convention on the women's issues. It concerned to eliminate the obstacles to the participation of women, on equal terms with men in the political, social, economic and cultural life. This convention purposed to ensure the human rights of women and their fundamental freedom in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field. It focused the full movement of women such as education, employment, marriage and maternity field and political, which ensures their empowerment (Surethri, 2002: 214-223).

The fourth World women conference (1995) was held in Beijing, was the milestone in the field of women's issues. It has identified the twelve critical concerns area of women. It has focused on women empowerment and development by promoting their social, economic and political participation. The critical areas of concern of Beijing, emphasizing that the advancement of women and the achievement of equality between women and men are a matter of human rights, social justice and women's empowerment. All the actions of Beijing and Beijing+5 review has given main focus on women's right and empowerment through their equal participation in all aspects of production, employment, income-generating activities and social activities, full involvement in decision-making and policy making activities.

The MDGs (2000) has focused that by empowering women, the sustainable development will be achieved. It forced to ensure the women's education, their reproductive, productive rights as well as combating all kinds of discriminations against women. Therefore," promote gender equality and empower women" is one of the goals of the MDGs.

3.3 Empirical Literature on Women Status

Although women are economically active, and female labor participation is underreported, many women are excluded from economic activities. Women are over represented in activities on land holdings often as unpaid family workers a sphere, which tends to disappear with the monetization of agriculture. Women are also active in the urban labor market, which is highly segmented and where barriers to entry are much greater for women than men. Thus, female labor market participation may mean inclusion, access to gainful activities (de Haan, 1995).

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In many parts of the developed regions, there have been increases in women's economic activity rates over the past two decades. women's highest shares in wage and salaried employment are in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, something that could change as new economic policies create wide spread unemployment there. Women tend to be in clerical, sales and domestic services. Women hold a mere 10-20 percent of managerial and administrative jobs worldwide and less than 20 percent of the manufacturing jobs (UN, 2004).

Women are poorly represented in the ranks of power policy and decision-making, women make up less than_5 percent of the worlds heads of state, heads of major corporations and top positions in international organizations. Women continue to be denied equal access to high-status and high-paying positions but there has been some progress since United Nations Decade for women began in 1976. Many countries have set up special offices to review complaints of discriminatory practice in political parties, parliaments, Unions and professional organizations (UN, 2008).

Women's political participation at the political level is very less even in highly developed countries such as America, Europe. The United State of America, which has been preaching practices of democracy, equality and human rights to the world, is very conservative regarding women's participation in politics. The participation of women in the world politics, there is only 13.7 percent. As per UNDP statistics, there is 43 percent women participation in politics in Sweden, 37 percent in Netherlands, 35.8 percent Norway and 30.4 percent in Finland. Women's participation in politics has become an issue of serious contemplation since the UN World conferences on women and Development in 1975 to the fourth world women's conference in Beijing, China in 1995 (Dhital, 2005: 97-100).

In Nepal only a few (14%) of women are household heads (NLSS, 2004) and only 17 percent of women own either house land or livestock (CBS, 2003). Large proportion of women are engaged in agriculture (49.3 %) and 43.6 percent are engaged in elementary works (Pradhan, 2006). The adult female literacy (15 years+) is accounted only to be 34.9 percent (CBS, 2004), which shows the pathetic social condition of women. The women participation in the local election (19.33 %), professional jobs (18.75 %), women share in income (0.302%) and

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GDI and GEM of 0.452 and 0.391 respectively shows the lowered social condition in Nepal (UNDP, 2004).

In recent times, the social and political participation of women has slightly been increased when the state formed a policy of positive discrimination but which is not in a satisfactory condition. The interim constitution of Nepal 2007 has provided 33 percent reservation in all ate mechanism based on the caste/ethnic composition of women through the amendment of relevant laws and policies. It has also repealed of all discriminatory laws as according to the Nepalese international commitments. The state has taken the policy of increasing the access to and control over natural resources, making National Women Commission (NWC) autonomous, eliminating all discriminatory social norms to women and building women's capacity by providing modern skills and training are some positive actions to improve the condition of women in Nepal. Furthermore, property rights, sexuality rights, abortion rights and marriage and family laws after the 11th amendment of Civil Code in 2002 and further improvisation by Interim Constitution 2007 are important benchmarks in the process of women empowerment.

The eighth plan promises to include program designed to enhance women's participation in economic and social sectors such as agriculture, forestry, industry, education and health (Acharya, 1997: 23). It also emphasized increasing women representation at decision-making levels in the government, non-government, at semi-government sectors (UNFPA, 2007: 35).

A gender approach to development was reflected fully only in the ninth plan. The plan adopted mainstreaming, eliminating gender inequality and empowerment has its major strategies. In policy terms it promised to integrate gender in all sectors at the regional and national levels and to eliminate gender inequality. For the empowerment of women it included mandatory representation of women in formulating policies and programs at all levels and ensuring equal rights in ownership of land and the services others services.

The tenth plan has integrated gender concerns in the program of some major sector traditionally accepted as important for women; including agriculture, education, health and local development, public administration and decision-making positions of government services.

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CHAPTER IV
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

As title suggests, this chapter begins by providing an overview of the research methodology. According to Silverman (2006:15) 'methodology' as a means of planning and undertaking research by making choices on the cases to study, methods of data gathering and forms of data analysis. Therefore, the methodology can be understood as a set of strategic methods which is included various tools and techniques to gather information and evidence from specific social phenomena. It discusses about field work, research tools and techniques, organization of research, process of data collection, challenges and dilemma on the course of this study as well as field experiences and presentation of informants.

4. Research Design

A social science research needs a design before data collection, analysis and interpretation. It is not just a work plan but also an abstract tool to complete the research. As Frankfort-Nachmias, Chava & David Nachmias (1996) mentioned in their book that a research design is a program that guides the investigator as he or she collects data and interprets observations. The function of a research design is to ensure that the evidence acquired enables us to answer the initial question as unambiguously as possible. The Obtaining relevant evidence entails specifying the type of evidence needed to answer the research question, to test a theory, to evaluate a programme or to accurately describe some phenomenon. In other words, when designing research we need to ask: given this research question, what type of data is needed to answer the question in a convincing way? How it will be possible in actual way?

Therefore, here, I mentioned important components which I applied in this thesis to explore the knowledge, information, experiences, attitudes, feelings, and thoughts of women from field. Basically, this chapter discusses research methodology that I used in this study, which includes an overview of data collection methods, tools and techniques, and the challenges that were encountered during the study.

4.1 Brief information about Field/Research Location

I chose to conduct my research in a small village called Barbote. It lies in Ilam district in the eastern part of Nepal, which is 5 kilometre far from district headquarter. It has a population of about 5,000, representing many different ethnic groups such as the Brahmin, Chhetri, Limbu,

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Rai, Tamang, Sunuwar, Gurung, Shrestha, Magar, Damai, Kami, and Sarki. The VDC established its first school in 1957 and today its schools educate about 1,400 students from the surrounding area. As in other parts of Nepal, here, agriculture is the main profession and the major crops are rice, maize, wheat, and millet. Other economic ventures include raising livestock and rabbits, growing cardamom and vegetables, and producing milk. The village stands out for its farmer's cooperative and milk chilling centre. The proximity of the village to Ilam Bazaar, a regional marketplace, makes it easy for farmers to bring their goods to market. This is a learning place for agriculture products specially Cardamom, Ginger, Tea, Milk and vegetables.

4.2 Sampling Procedures

In social science research, sampling is very important instrument to carry on research in actual field thus we have to understand the sampling. Normally, there are two types of data available in research, first is the population and another is the sample. Due to time, money and other various reasons, it's difficult to collect and interpret data with all population. There are different types of sampling method are applied in research such probability, non-probability, purposive and quota. We have to decide ourselves which method will suit for our research to make more research more reliable and valid.

In my topic it is impossible to conduct research with all population so I have to select a sample method. I used the purposive sampling method to select my informants that fall in the each category, as the sample was selected in a deliberative manner to achieve a certain goal (Trochim, 2006). I prepared a simple sampling procedure chart with the number of informants that I wanted to interview in different categories. It included housewife, illiterate women, woman leader, dalit and disadvantage women. I involved with different group of women because I want to know different opinions from different groups in term of class and social status, though they all are women, how they experiences gendered disempowerment can be very different.

Therefore, for this purpose research, I decided to research in a small village called Santi tole (peace zone) of Barbote Village Development Committee. This is very small tole where there 20 family and 115 people were living. I selected this village because where there were living multicultural groups, geographically bit remote and backward society. Also, people were

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suffering from different social problems. I decided to take interview with 10 informants aged 20-60 with various social and ethnic backgrounds. I consider 10 enough, as feel that the information I gathered from them are enough to answer of my research question "How Rural Women Experience Disempowered in Nepal?" Also, I selected small numbers of informants because I used in-depth interview to collect information from this village so as Boyce and Neale (2006 : 3) mentioned in their book that 'in-depth interviewing is a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program, or situation'.

4.3 Choice of Qualitative Research

This research has adopted a qualitative research methodology. The qualitative research methods have therefore the ability to investigate not just the questions of what, where and when but also why and how which are fundamental to understanding phenomena being investigated (Silverman, 2006). He argued that the qualitative research is a method of data collection and analysis which covers a wide range of different aspects and perspectives in research study. It create diverse scope in research filed and analysis of data, which means an understanding of context, peoples' inner feeling and their behaviour, words, image and their priority rather than statistical data. Its encourage understanding behaviour of people with meaningful way. According to Berg (2009), qualitative research is good when the purpose of the research is to answer the 'why, how, and what' of people's actions and associated meanings, beliefs, values, and feelings. The argument is that such kind of information cannot be meaningfully answered in numbers, which are the core of quantitative research methods. In this study, I intend to explore "How Rural Women Experience Disempowered in Nepal?". To answer this question, what I need is exactly the narrations which associate meaning, people's beliefs and values. That's why I have chosen a qualitative approach in my study. Thus, this proposed study is well suited for qualitative research design because it was appropriate tool to collect necessary information with rural woman of my field.

4.4 Qualitative Research Methods and Tools

This study depended mainly upon primary data. Primary data were obtained from the field work through field observation and interview. This study is conducted with highly motivation to get the accurate and rich information about the women experience in the countryside, I

walked around the village, organized interviews and informal talked during field work with some state and not state actors and local personalities to understand how women experience themselves being disempowered. As I introduced earlier, I focus on these two aspects: being excluded from public participation and private decision making. To access to the data, I have chosen field observation and interview as my research methods.

4.4.1 Field Observation

By field I mean the concrete geographical area where I collect my data. It is important factor while conducting research therefore I must select a study area where I will be able to reach and collect data. When I decided to carry out this study, I already had some work experiences in the field of women empowerment and community work in eastern Nepal. Therefore, I motivated to start with based on my past experience working with women groups and community people. Their stories always made me interested in gaining more knowledge, which encouraged me to choose this research topic. Being a social activist, I had passed through the study area many times and always wondered women experience themselves being disempowered was really interesting for me. I choose the same area for data collection, because I have already had good background knowledge about this area, I consider it as an advantage which can facilitate my research, not least the data collection.

Before the fieldwork, I already had a list of informants obtained through my network which I developed from my work experience in that area and suggestion of Village Development Committee (VDC) that I was going to meet and interview with them and many people from the settlement were also pre-informed by women group leader that was coming for the research, which made my initial work much easier. Before starting research I felt a bit confusion to select the informants because there were many people on village but after I guided by my research question i.e. how women experience themselves being disempowered: Being excluded from public participation and private decision making therefore I decided to select from some illiterate women, some were dalit women and some were from other ethnic groups which gave me different perspectives with based on their social background. Therefore, I recruited informants based on my network which developed from my early work experiences in this area. After some preliminary talks with the inhabitants and local women leaders of the study area, I made proper plan for field observation and interviews which I applied my research tool to collect the data.

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Filed observation is technique that applies to gather first-hand information about livelihood, daily activities, workload and general situation of women in community. It gives 'firsthand' information of of filed. The understating the word 'firsthand' we must participate by ourselves rather than observe people at distance (Silverman, 2001: 45). This statement also is focused to go around household talk with people and observe many different situations will actually reflect about the women's situation. Taking points of Bryman (1988 in Silverman ,2006) that 'seeing through the eyes of viewing events, actions, norms, and values from the perspectives of people being studied'. Thus, I applied field observation in my study that gave me a glimpse of community about social value, lifestyle, structure, cultures, social system and local context of women. It explored understanding the overall situation of women and accumulates data and information for analysis in depth. I wrote a note of filed observation where I mentioned information related women daily lifestyle and other social aspects which I observed in village.

I agreed with the Malcolm's Methodological Chronicle (In Silverman, 2009) about the field observation where he mentioned that 'we must go out into the observation, live among the people of the world as the life, learn their language and participate in their rituals and routines. Watch and listen, touch and be touched, write down what we see and hear how they think and we feel. Enter into the world observe and wonder experiences and reflect'. So, field observation is a practical method to express the curiosity of the others those are constructing their way of living differently then researcher. I spent two days in field, walking around the village and talked with local people about their daily life. I was bit excited because I was travelling this part of village taking different role after five years. I worked there for five years on women empowerment project when I associated with local NGO. But this time, I informed the village very clearly that this visit is the village is for the purpose of my study instead of social work. Finally, it was a nice experience to enroll with them and listened to their experiences of disempowered.

4.4.2 Interview

Interview is a methodological tool for collecting data and it is a way of communication with people and understating of their knowledge and meaning in particular issues.   It gives rooms of interpretation and makes to understand in depth details of some things. Interviewing may

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be defined simply as conversation with a purpose. Specifically, the purpose is to gather information. This standard definition discussed by Denzin (1978 et.al in Berg, 2007). In some description, interview has been described as an art rather than skill or a science (Grobel, 2004; Fontana and Frey, 1998 in Berg, 2007). So, we can say that interview is a skill of conversation for cause and it demands two way communications, or involve an active interaction. It gives room to share the respondent voices and make better understanding on issues and context. Interview is using as a tool in different activities such as research, job, Medias and investigation and others. It is a face to face interaction which creates an opportunity to get hold of the respondent opinions, experiences and interpretations.

There are different types of interviews: in research interview, newspaper interviews, police interrogation, marketing questionnaire, (Gjernes and Fronter in Berg 2007). Some sources mention only two types of interview namely, formal and informal (Fitzgerald and Cox, 2002 in Berg 2007). Other sources refer to this either research process as structured or unstructured (Fontana and Frey, 1994; Leedy and Ormrod, 2004 in Berg, 2007). But, in this study, I have chosen to apply in-depth interview a kind of semi-structured interview. I consider it as an appropriate research method because it helps to analysis in depth meanings and comprised all different techniques and tools As Boyce and Neale (2006) said that in-depth interviews provide much more detailed information than what is available through other data collection methods, such as surveys.

4.4.2.1 In-depth Interview

In-depth interviews provide researchers the access to individuals' attitudes, values, interpretation of events and understanding (Silverman, 2006). He continues to argue that access cannot be easily obtained using other methods like the formal questionnaire. In-depth interviews are also an excellent way for exploring participants' feelings, opinions, and beliefs (Marshal & Rossman, 1997: 57 as cited in Silverman).

Moreover, as Byrne and Bridget (2004 as cited in Silverman, 2006) point out, qualitative interviewing, for which in-depth interviewing is a part of, is particularly effective in exploring the voices and experiences of ignored groups of people like disempowered women.

In depth interview is a methodology for collection of information and data in qualitative research. As argued by Silverman 'if we have been thinking about doing a research project the likelihood is that the first method we have considered to the in depth interview. Interview gives a wider space to data collection, analysing and interpretation. The main purpose of in-depth interview is to search valid and reliable information and create wider space for analysis. It is interrelated with values and attitudes of people so in-depth interview helps to understand values and attitudes and reflected inner feeling during interview and discussion in subject matter. It is a relatively cheap method in terms of time and money. This type of interview can bring different perspectives and issues in same subject but there I should be reliable and valid information.

It provide researchers the access to individuals' attitudes, values, interpretation of events and understanding which cannot be necessarily obtained using other methods for instance a formal questionnaire and structured interview (Silverman, 2006). One of the essence of the in- depth interview is to combine structure with flexibility. In addition to this, the in-depth interview is both interactive and generative in nature. As a result the researchers have the opportunity to achieve a depth of answer and to produce new knowledge or thoughts by exploring the participants, feelings, opinions and beliefs (Ritchie and Lewis, 2004).

The strength of in-depth interview is also that it provides room for informants to come with their personal stories and experiences, as well as detailed description of situations, which again can enrich the qualitative data for analysis.

I organized in-depth interview with 10 informants of selected area. As I had studied in university I felt this would be the appropriate methodology for my research. Before my study, I didn't have any idea about the qualitative method but I had some experience about quantitative research method so I was bit confused to select methodology   and research analysis because we applied some of the tools in quantitative method but when started to think and re-think about my research question and reflect my study knowledge than finally made in this form.

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4.5 Researcher's Position and Role

During the field work, I felt the peculiar position of being both an insider and outsider, something I had not expected when I was planning the field work. Simply, my position as a middle-class educated man from same village who lived in that village long time ago and and currently studying abroad. This positioning had both positive and negative affects during my study period so I had thought that it would take some time for me to get social acceptance and ties with local people. However almost from the beginning, I was overwhelmed by the attention and interest of the inhabitants of the people because many local villagers know me very well. As my position of researcher I have to be professional and maintained ethical consideration in any situation

So I spent some time for rapport building which was crucial to build trust and understanding with my informants, so that they could express their thoughts freely. When I travelled village I talked with people and shared my past experience of that village which made me easier to be accepted. I drank tea many times with local people when they kindly offered me. As a researcher I should avoid what they offered me but I kept in mind my Nepali culture about the gust welcome. Our society is believed on *Atidhi Devo Bhava* (The guest is truly our god). When they offered food and tea I accepted only tea because I was full already and I did not want to eat in my informants house but as a Nepali I did not say no when they gave me tea. If I said no they thought negative about me. Normally, in my culture, still exiting in country side, that they always offered food and tea, milk, water whatever they have either we are hungry or trusty or not.   If I drink or eat some-thing it's ok they accept me but I neglect everything and they will angry little bit and says *Kati Thulo Bhayeko* pani pani nakahyeko (How big you are that you are not drink even water that I offered you).   More than that my situation was different if I disagreed to drink they will angry with me and will says, *Bidesh Basera Hamile Choyeko Chiya Pani Nakhane Bhayecha, Bidesi ni Bhayecha, Hamro Sanskriti ni Bhulecha* (Now, you are living in foreign country and you are trying to forget our culture so you are not drinking even tea which we make). I remembered my past experienced there when I hungry I took some food from kitchen from some of family. It is still normal if you are familiar with local people you can cook food and eat as well as you can offer to them. They sit with you together and eat also.

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As an outsider and researcher I should be professional but some time we should be bit flexible within the framework of researcher norms and rules. If any conflict of interest arises by both side by researcher or respondent we must change the modality. But In my case there were no any conflict of interest between my respondents and myself. I noticed them very clearly that I was going there as a researcher but not social worker. But, some of the local villagers were asked about some project during my field visit although I convinced them that I did not take any position that time. Therefore, with the great motivation of respondents and local people as well as myself I enabled to organized research in timely.

4.6 Challenges and Dilemmas

Regarding the interview, it was not easy to arrange a date and time appropriate for all of the participants. I planned during normal working hours but they were very busy in agriculture field and house work therefore most of respondents did not participate even if they were invited. So, I interviewed with five respondents individually and as well as three respondents in one agriculture farm and two respondents in a local shop.

As Silverman (2006) said that every researcher faces some challenges and dilemmas during the fieldwork there does not exist guidelines that can predict every possible event in the field. This study is not an exception to this reality. Yet, the occurring challenges and dilemmas were tackled with the based on my experiences and knowledge on research work. One of the most challenges was managed the time of respondents because they were very busy most of time. Although with the help of local a women leader (one of the respondent), I managed to took interview in their appropriate time.

But also I found some disadvantages of in depth interview. Sometime, I did not able to control some of respondents because there were talking long time and unnecessary issues. But, I talked I diverted issues related on my research question. As Kitzinger and Rapley mentioned (In Silverman, 2009) that I got one of troubling issues. Some of respondents did appear to give us direct access to 'facts' or and some other respondents did not tell directly about their 'experiences' but instead offered indirect 'representation' of those experiences. For example (Case 4, Sabitra). She is educated women in my study areas so I am interested to understand her experience but when I interviewed her she was always more interested to refer to other women. I convinced her about my interview modality as well as secrecy of data than she openly explained her experiences. Also, some respondents , the voices of respondents can

interrelate with their family, society and cultural and associated with other factors and so it's very complicated to understand the impact and rationality behind of outside factors and environment such as mass Medias, celebrity and advertisement. Also, I realized that medias and advertisement are directly effecting to this problems. According to Silverman (2009: 6) the romanticism and tourism has implications for analysing interview data and he called 'under-theorization' and made argument that it theorizes tacitly or unconsciously. Also, he mentioned about the over-theorized also the problems in research. There are some other disadvantages in process. Some-times interviewer interpreted the issues with their own perspectives. It demands some skills for data coding, analysis and interpretation.

According to of Bruce L. Berg (2007) 'the quality of data is deeply influenced by the skills of the facilitator to motivate and moderate'. As well as some times not so easy to get a common position in one issues. In ethically sound research, the researcher must give attention to the issue of informed consent, avoiding the deception of research participants, ensuring the participants" privacy and confidentiality, the accuracy of data and their interpretation, and respect and beneficence for the participants (Christian, 2005 cited in Berg, 2007). During the fieldwork, as a researcher I was always playing very neutral position. Also, I explained very clearly about my objectives and concern of research. However, some of respondents questioned about the financial support as well as they asked why and how it is being conducted. As it has stated, "a major part of research ethics consists of the ethical dilemmas researchers face in the contact with the field and the concrete persons in it". Even I explained my situation as an international student and my objectives and motive of research I found that they have some expectations of support for women empowerment in their village.

As I mentioned previously, 10 informants interviewed. It was not that much easy to arrange interview because women were busy to daily life so I was little bit careful to handle every things in proper way but I felt very comfortable because I was familiar with local people and also I understand the situation when I can talk with them. Although, I was wondering for appropriate time to start field work.

I established non-hierarchical relationships with the women and consciously tried to keep away from my previous NGO`s protocol. I did not feel any problem to build trust because I belongs local people and my knowledge of the local dialect helped in face to face communications. I talked to respondents in their homes or at their work places, and as far as

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possible, alone. However, as Patton (2002) cautions, I tried to be careful about drawing on the wisdom of the informed perspectives of key informants, keeping in mind that their perspectives are selective.

4.7 Data Analysis Methods

As mentioned above, this study has used qualitative methods to analyze primary data. During the fieldwork, most of the interviews were tape recorded, and observations were carefully recorded in the field notes. The interviews were transcribed in Nepali language and then translated in English. I was careful with the transcriptions and translations, and also used both Nepali and English dictionaries when needed, to make it as accurate as possible. Those transcriptions were carefully read several times. I focused about the story of women which I made during my interview. With the based on interview guideline I developed some important points and some long paragraph during my interview after reading many times and analysis myself about important aspect I had written on computer. These interpretations are presented according to the themes in some section, and used in the analysis of findings and discussions on basis of the theory and also other relevant studies. Relevant literature from secondary sources is used in the literature review and background analysis.

4.8 Interview Guideline

I developed an interview's guide (Berg, 2004) which helps me to handle the group perfectly. This guideline covers my introductory activities, basic rules and regulations, short questions for discussions, some special activities and exercises and guidance for dealing with sensitive issues. Also, I prepared checklists (Axelord (1975) & Byers and Byers (1996). et al. in Berg, 2007). I selected ten women from different sector according to cultural and religious, age groups, geographic as possible, to get different dynamics, it gave me a some clear picture and their perspectives and understating of status of women experiences on public and private decision making.

Firstly, I built-up rapport by sharing very informal issues about their daily life, feeling, health situation etc then I explained my objective and first 2-5 minutes. We spent some time very informally to understand to each other and introduction. Then I started to discuss on topics. I got very interesting experiences of women. (Details interview guideline in Annex A)

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4.9 Presentation of Key Informants

I mentioned some cases that I got during interview and field observation. I made commitment to keep confidentiality and privacy of respondents So due to the my ethical consideration, all the name cited in this thesis are pseudo names.

Case 1, Kalpana (30 years old) did not get to change go to school. Even, now she did not able to read and right. She was forced to married at the age of 15 by their parents. After married she tried to join literacy program but it was not possible due to her daily burden of housework and responsibility of children. Presently, she has four children (there daughters and one son). Now, she started small agriculture farm. She did not satisfied with her life because she always felt lack of education.

Case 2, Kumari (35 years old), she was dalit (so called untouchable) women. She did not go to go school because she forced to work in other house and cared her younger brothers and sisters because her parents need to work very hard to survive. She was facing many social problems. According to her dalit illiterate women were excruciating in community. I felt very interested talk with her because she had very good understating about the society and social problem of dalit.

Case 3, Binda (50 years old), she is a local women leader and she won local election as women member in VDC committee. I talked with her few details about the situation because she is one of countable literate women in village. She got chance to literacy school and learned from his father. When I asked about her progress on leadership that she said very proudly that god blessed her for her progress. But I tried to find-out some previous background which made her to be educated and leader. I asked her childhood. She born in middle class family belongs to so called upper class (Bramin family), her father was local priest and mother was housewife. She is older daughter so his father interested to give education although she was unable because she dropped-out from child school.

Case 4, Nanu (46 years old) was married at the age of 18. She never got chance to go school. Although, she has great motivation on education so she was putting her all effort to teach her one daughter. She is living alone after divorced because her daughter is studying in capital city. She said that she is going to finish master degree soon and will come back in village and

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teach other girls. As she mentioned that she convinced her daughter that she will fulfill her desire of education.

Case 5, Apsara (23 years old) was married at 12 and had her first daughter when she was 14 years old. The child survived for only three days. Her next two children suffered the same fate. Now, at 22 years old, she has given birth to her first surviving child. Her parents believed traditional Hindu culture of early marriage (marriage before ministration). She did not want to tell any things negative to her parents because they are illiterate and innocent till today but she she is against with this system.

Case 6, Sapana (42 years old), was born in poor family and also married poor as well very traditional family. Her parents arranged her marriage but she never happy with married life because her parents in law always created problem in her life. She did not get enough food to eat. She faced discrimination on food, cloth and every-thing. She looked like a servant of house. She lived together with her family more than seven   years than now she was separated.

Case 7, Meena (30 years old), she worked as a house servant more than five years in a local politician. She had to cook food his family and take care children. It was not her desire but her father decided to send her to his home when she was ten years old.   She mentioned that her family was suffering by extreme poverty. They have no any land to grow food so her parents worked very hard to landlord every day. Her parent interested to send school although it was not possible due to poverty. She seems not happy with her life because still see need to worked very hard to survive. She complained to politicians and local NGOs that they made commitment for upliftment for life poor people but they made corruption and uplifted their own family.

Case 9, Sunita (45 years old) was married women. She belongs to the ethnic community (Rai). She is little bit forward than other women because as their traditional culture that women take responsibility of household decision. Normally, man work on field and women take care the children and mange daily housework. Sunita also managed house expenses and control the family. She handles small tea shop near her house. Her family has not enough land to grow so they need to do other work to survive.

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Case 10, Krishna (32 years old) married women and she had finished the school level certificated from local school but she did not find any difference either she learned many years in school or just literate because she had to do what other woman are doing. She did not get opportunity of job. Also she has very poor role of decision making in her family. Her husband and father decided what they want and they never asked to Krishna. She was bit confusion because if she make disagreement with them and there will be the problem in family but if always listen to husband and father in law that how long she will be depended with them.

FINDINGS AND RESEARCH ANALYSIS
Chapters V-VII

These chapters present the empirical material, the analysis and the interpretation of the main findings. The empirical material has been organized under three main chapters discussing the different issues related on women experiences of disempowerment. In the first segment of chapter five is related obstacles of illiteracy and second segment is related to the marriage experience of women as well as third segment is related experiences of women on cast based discrimination and fourth segment is disused experiences of women on cultural issues. Thereafter, in first segment of chapter six is related on food and nutrition experiences and second segment is related on experiences property and financial situation. As well as third segment is related about findings of filed based experiences.

CHAPTER- V

5.1 Experiences of Disempowerment of Illiterate Women: How Does Education Effect on Public and Private Decision-Making?

Empowering women through education is very important for everyone, but it is especially for women because education is a first door to other opportunities. Educated women can have ripple effects within the family and across society.

Educated women have more powerful and have strong decision role in family. It helps women to know their rights and to gain confidence to claim them. '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'. (ICPD program of Action, United Nations)

Therefore, in this chapter, I am going discussed about experiences on private and public decision making of illiterate women.

I discussed with Kalpana (one of the illiterate respondent) about her childhood and current situation which she was facing problems due to illiteracy.

When, I introduced with her and started to talk about my interest that she felt bit uncomfortable to talk with me. But I understood that was common for almost all Nepali illiterate women who

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lived in countryside. But, slowly she talked very openly about her story of life. I asked about her childhood story and current daily life. It was very interesting long story but I am able mentioned here some necessary issues related about illiteracy.

My parents did not allow me to go to school. They didn't know importance of education. They understood if I went school I became bad girl because I didn't follow the traditional culture. Also, I had to help them in farming and take care of cattle but they were so proud with my young brother because he went to school every day and shared his experience of school. I just enjoyed listening him. I have no any role even today about providing education to my child. I don't interfere to my husband in any decision making either education or any other.

The parents are primary person to socialize and provide necessary education, health and basic social security to every children as well government is also the main stakeholder to provide necessary social service to infants but in our society neither   parents nor government is taking responsibility therefore children are existing in very critical condition till today. In Nepali context, parents have important duties and responsibilities towards their children.

Parents should give equal education to their children as their basic need together with their food, clothes and health but parents give priority to boy due to various reason. If they should think if their children well educated then they will have good decision making role in family and society.

The higher literacy status and educational attainment affects the people's Participation in socio-economic, developmental as well as in policy making level. Education enhances the ability and capacity of human being to judge for right and wrong. As Paulo Freire said that, the way we "read the word and the world", critical consciousness, the creation of liberation, and escalating economic production as people come to understand their surroundings. He links literacy, education, production, and social change; a harmony rising from the interrelationships of the four. He mentioned that learning to read and write means creating and assembling written expression for what can be said orally. Definitely, nowadays without word it will be impossible to understand the world. Education is a way of life, communication tool, means of livelihood and important component for human being. Without education, it is hard to survive. It is not enough to simply decode print; what must be addressed is the relationship of power,

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knowledge, and signals of reality which are designed to delude or disclose, and then to act on that understanding. In addressing mechanical decoding, Freire distinguishes illiteracy from political illiteracy.

Most of authors emphasize that literacy is often related to written language including text, numeracy, pictures, charts etc used as means of communication. Literacy is mostly regarded as „a set of skills "related to the ability to read, write and calculate in a meaningful way (Lind, 2008; Street, 2005). Also, I understand that if people able to read and write than we can say he or she is literate. In this scientific age it will very hard to survive with our education although many Nepali women are still surviving in country in the dark illiteracy.

According to recent reports (CBS, 2011), has found out that Nepal has an literacy rate of 56.6 % with a huge variation between men and women. While male literacy rate is 71.6 percent and it is only 44.5 percent for women, revealing Gender Parity Index (GPI) at 0.62, with women still lagging behind men by more than 27 percentage points. According to the Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2011, out of 7.6 million adult illiterates in Nepal, 67 % are female.

I asked Kalpana about her feeling about the discrimination of girls in the issue of education, because she and her brother are treated differently in terms of possibility for education

I thought that my parent wanted to see to my brother became doctor or engineer after complete the education because they had very high expectation with him. If he had good education then he would get good money as well as social respect. But if I had education I would become bad girl that I would unable to manage family (means not satisfied to parents in law and husband). There were compulsory provisions that I should be married and satisfied to husband's parents as well as husband. There were very few family thought that education was important. Otherwise, first priority to be married and have children could be the good sign of women. So, my parent was also same as other in that society.

There were many women like Kalpana in that village who were out of the education and basic literacy. I discussed with her considered that being literate would not only help them to achieve better economic opportunities, but also help them to get rid of the bad label of being

non-literate. They have very poor decision making role due to illiteracy. So, they considered 'learning to read as a change in their identity) and their position in the society (Wedin, 2008). During interviewed with her she mentioned interesting quote that used as slogan by illiterate women when they saw any written paper.

When we can see through our eyes and not be able to read, we say „kalo akshyar bhaisi barabar" [black letters are equal to black buffalo] (…). So, if it is so, then should we stay like that black buffalo or we try to know those letters?

Definitely, this feeling of Kalpana is a kind of self-ironi of the illiterate women, to see the black letters with-out knowing the meaning is same as black buffalo because there is no any sense in letters. So, illiteracy is first closed door to get out from the dark room. It is major challenging issues still remain in society. Without eliminating illiteracy there is no meaning to discuss equality. As we discussed above that education is fundamental building block to empower both man and women. Only educated women can lead the family, society and nation.

There are many problems due of illiteracy and ignorance. Because of illiteracy women are working as housewife and service provider of man because they are depended mentally and financially on man. Kalpana explained more about her life.

I faced lots of problems in my life as I could not read, even though we had lot of property. Therefore, I wanted my son to study but I felt very difficult because my husband was very busy on field and he didn't have time to teach my son but I have enough time but I didn't understand even a single word. Without knowledge of reading and writing I faced mostly challenges to feed the medicine to child because my child became ill many times and doctor gave medicine but I was unable to give in timely because I didn't understand the time given by doctor. I did not know the about the other places because I did not understand the newspaper, just I listened radio and TV but I thought my husband could do better than me because of my illiteracy.

Its look like very simple thing but as mother she wants to keep her child always healthy but due to illiteracy she couldn't decide e in time. Also she had experience that when her children asked many question related on their book she would unable to answer so she felt very uneasy

many times. She did not do minor calculation and thus, sometimes cheated by the people. She didn't able to educate all her children in the proper way because of her misunderstanding and deep rooted traditional values and mores. She bears altogether four children and there is also a deep rooted traditional dogma prevails. Her last child was son after three daughters. It clearly signifies that she increased the number of children with the hope of son. In her society, there is clear distinction between son and daughter. Son is given high priority than daughter. Such mentality haunts Kalpana all the time in the family and her husband and other family members such as mother-in-law and father-in-law too forced her to bear the number of children until the son is born. Her husband is literate but follows traditional dogmas and thus does not support his wife, Kalpana. To say precisely, education plays vital role in the society but if the people are illiterate, they do have a lot of problems in the society. If she had been educated, her life wouldn't be like that. She had able to cope with the problems and make her life meaningful. She has to live in the complete tradition environment where social justice is beyond her reach.

A mother is the principal provider of the primary care that her child needs during the first six years of its life. It is understandable that her educational status has been reported to influence her child-care practices. During the past decade, evidence has accumulated from several studies (UNDP, 2004) that maternal education is an important determinant of infant and child mortality proposed that children born of educated mothers have a lower mortality risk because educated women tend to marry and have their first child at a later age than uneducated women. They also are likely to be more assertive and to play a greater part in intra-family decision making in favour of their children's needs. Their husbands tend to be economically better off than those of uneducated women. Educated mothers may also make earlier and more effective use of health services and provide good service to their children. Similar experience had of Nanu .

Nanu (Case 4) is only woman in the village who has not compromised in her life that she will be able to accomplish her desire to educate her daughter. Initially, there was dispute between her and her husband who denied that the investment to girls would be worth because they would forget the contribution of their parents after getting married. It is the traditional notion which is preferred by most of the people in the rural areas. Nanu's husband was like that. He was typical sophisticated person who didn't want to send his daughter to school. But Nanu

wished to educate her daughter by all her means and capabilities. That dispute was the major issue of their separation. Ultimately, they separated and Nanu is now completely devoted to educate her daughter. Her sole aim is to complete her daughter's degree and make her model of educated women. On the other hand, Nanu wants to fight with traditional dogmas and superstition in society with the weapon of education. She wishes to present her daughter to serve the society, spread the value of education and run the campaign program solely to educate rural women in Nepal.

One important aspect in mentioned above different gendered expectations towards the girl and boy in the Nepal, The parents are willing to invest son`n future because it is the son who are bearing the family line; the daughter will be married away to other families.   The practice has been very difficult to change because marriage is a social issue. There are many different stakeholders including government involved to stop these practices of girl early marriage although there is bit progress on delaying the age of marriage.

5.2 Marriage Experiences: Child Marriage Affects Women and Girls throughout their Lives

Marriage is universal in our society. In Nepal, marriage is compulsion for both men and women. Marriage determines the social roles and responsibilities of the people. So it is one of the important social institutions.

The right to free and full consent to a marriage is recognized in the United Nations (UN) Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN 1948) with the recognition that consent cannot be "free and full" when one of the parties involved is not sufficiently mature to make an informed decision about a life partner. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (UN 1979) states that the betrothal and marriage of a child shall have no legal effect and all necessary action, including legislation, shall be taken to specify a minimum age for marriage. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommends this age to be 18. Based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN 1989), child marriage refers to marriage in which one party is under the age of 18 years. National and international communities are increasingly recognizing child marriage as a serious challenge, both as a violation of children's human rights and as a barrier to key

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development outcomes. Child marriage disproportionately affects young girls, who are much more likely to be married as children than young boys.

According to Nepal's Demographic and Health Survey (Ministry of Health and Population Nepal, New ERA and ICF International Inc. 2011), 41 percent of Nepalese women aged 20 to 24 were married before they turned 18. A recent study (SOLID Nepal 2012) on child marriage found that 52 per cent of women and 34 per cent of men aged 20 to 24 were married before the legal marriageable age. Child marriage was most prevalent among non-literate, Janajati and Dalit castes of Nepal (especially among the women in these groups).

Girls who were born into the highest wealth quintile marry about two years later than those from lower quintiles. In Nepal, there are indications of strong son preferences and sporadic studies (Aryal 2007; Thapa 1996) have shown that even educated boys demand high dowry and prefer early marriage.

The Eleventh Amendment to the Nepalese Country Code states that individuals can marry at age 18 with parental consent and at age 20 without consent. The punishment for child marriage is imprisonment for up to three years and a fine of up to 10,000 rupees (€87). While progressive legislation is a positive step against child marriage, high numbers of girls continue to be married before the age of 18 (ICRW 2012). When talking about how they experience being disempowered in the local society, some of my respondents talked about their experience of early marriage, Apsara is one of them.

As mentioned on Case 5, Apsara (23 years old) was married at 12 and had her first daughter when she was 14 years old. The child survived for only three days. Her next two children suffered the same fate. Now, at 22 years old, she has given birth to her first surviving child. Her parents believed traditional Hindu culture of early marriage which is also called child marriage and it is done before the menstruation period of women. She did not want to tell any things negative to her parents because they are illiterate and innocent till today but she is against with this system. She said that the Hindu culture is one of the route cause to create discrimination.
Apsara is not alone in terms of early marriage. There are many cases of child marriage in that local society. Child marriage and early marriage is created discrimination between man and

women because there is very little chance for women to go school after married. Most respondents said that they had spent their time to care children and house work.   Most of the illiterate, those are living under poverty, follow very traditional Hindu religion and cast system. It might be the patriarchy society; but the decision of the early/child marriage is directly made by girls' parents.

I tried to ask Apsara more about decision making on having children and she seemed very shy because this is normally not an open topic in our culture. In addition, I am a male researcher. Women are not discussing about sexual issues because there is a social taboo about sex. If some women is talking about sex or issues related to having children there would be problem in family. Their family members and even her husband has negative attitude to her. Because the issues related sex and having children, decision making process had come through male side only and it's still exiting the across the country Nepal. Being aware of this cultural taboo, I changed the questing a little I asked a bit more about her marriage decision;

When I was ten years old and my parents started to talk about my marriage. Some time they angered with me if I made mistake to work and they said that they were planning for my marriage. They believed that I understood how to work in good way only after marriage. I had no any idea about marriage when I was 12 years but my parents decided to marry me. I did not sleep last night of my house because I had to go next day into the new house with unknown person. I forgot many things because I was so poor on decision making at that time. But I disagreed with my husband sometime about giving birth on initial days of marriage. I gave birth to two children without knowing it myself. I came to know when I started to vomiting daily. I was unaware about the safe pregnancy because I did not get any ideas of having babies. I had no any option except follow the order from my husband.

In our society society whatever the husband did, considered as good deed. Every married woman had to obey what her husband did. So, decision making in traditional society is beyond the reach of women.
Her story is not unique because many girls were facing the same fate. But, nowadays, little bit changes in young generation but there are many issues related and still remaining which start conflict into their family and society. All respondents were agreed that it was not possible to disagree to marriage in early age because parents always forced them to decide

whatever they plan and the women or marriageable girl or even teen age girls have to follow their parents. . But those parents are educated; they are likely to ask their daughter before marriage and try to get their ideas and feelings regarding marriage.

Normally, husbands were the major decision maker on pregnancy or having a baby. It was found that if the husband decided to keep the unintended pregnancy the women had to follow what he thought. Woman did not have any alternative option. It seems that they had to bear baby without their intention and desire.   Many study shows and also my study explained that many Nepali women those lives in country side, illiterate have no any independent ideas to their marriage decision and sexual related issues.

Getting married at early age, Apsara had a tremendous problems and she suffered a lot. She had already lost her three children due immature pregnancy in the early age. She was illiterate woman and she couldn't manage to face with the problems of her health. Her husband has agricultural profession and thus he works all the time in the field. A farmer has to so much work in the village area and in the case of remote village, the workload might be doubled. Apsara is still young and wishes to study in literacy class but her family especially her husband doesn't support her much. He argues that being literate is nonsense thing which corrupts the mind of the people. But Apsara understands the true power of education and she wants to study and explore her world through the light of education. In my interview, she clearly stated that she wished to read and write and become a good citizen. She realized that education plays vital role in capacity building and women empowerment.

5.3 Bitter Experienced of Discrimination: Cast System is a Root Cause of Disempowering Women in Nepal

Also, still, in this society retains its centuries-old caste system. Dalits, the discriminated people under this system, suffer from restriction on the use public amenities, education, deprivation of economic opportunities, and general neglect by the state and society. In remote areas of Nepal, Dalit students could not sit beside the so-called high-caste students.

Kumari (Case: 2), is a dalit illiterate women, one of the respondent. She explained many issues related on dalit (low caste people in the context of Nepal). She said that she did not have chance to study because her parents worked very hard in farm so she cared her brothers

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and sisters. Also she had responsibility of house work. I was very interested to talk with her because she had very good understating about the society and social problem.

How could I explained the situation of dalit there were hundreds of issues related of dalit but she said that if I was interested to know about education and decision making role in family I wanted to shared my history first. When I was child my family suffered by poverty so we had to work with high class family every day. We did not have land and other occupation so my parents used to work all the time in the farm owned by (Mukhiya) local leader.

With based on her discussion, there were many issues related on dalit discrimination on education. Firstly, dalit people were not motivated to send school for their kids because they wanted to take their support on field and house work. Likewise, the so-called high-caste headmaster and other teachers of local school do not want Dalits to become teacher because they do not want to do the traditional gesture of giving respect to them. They also do not want to eat and drink together with them as is the custom among teachers. Competent Dalit teachers are discouraged from occupying higher executive positions in school.

Still in my society there was much discrimination to dalit people. High cast people did not eat if we touch any food even the water of tap. We had no allow to enter the house of high cast family. Even school there were discrimination by teacher and headmaster. They did interested to give admission to dalit students normally. They discouraged to educate the dalit community because most of teacher was in high and local so they thought if dalit got education there were faced labor scarcity. Also, they believed that dalit are the different human so they should be in lower position always. As like other women I had no any rights to talked against such kinds of discrimination. I did not decide in family because my parents and my husband made most of decision.

She told me one of the very interesting story that she felt when she had participated in local school meeting which organized one political party. She was invited first time on meeting of school therefore it was good news to her and she was so excited to attend that meeting because she felt it was one of achievement of dalit society. First, she should informed about the invitation to one of dalit leader of her village, where there was system that one of the oldest man could be a leader of dalit for that village. She wanted to ask some agendas that she need to discuss in that meeting but even her leader also didn't support to go in meeting

because he wanted to follow the traditional system which made by high caste and didn't want to break even the school invited her. She added that he afraid because if the local leader from high cast knows about that he can block the water which they were drinking and also block the road. I asked her how it would be possible to block the road. She mentioned that she had some experiences of past that leader of high cast created big problem before. She said:

I was invited in one of meeting of school. It was the meeting related to the school building because last time one of the leader came in my house and gave message that we should work labor 5 days in school. They forced to do something always but that time I thought little bit change because they invited in meeting but I was unable to participate in meeting because I did not get positive answer from our (Baje) leader.

Interestingly, she mentioned that because of that threat she didn't participated meeting. Here, power theory is more relevant to discuss again because as Keristeva (In Hehaly, 2002) mentioned that Power is a central concern of critical post theories particularly Foucault and feminist post structural authors such as Cixous and Keristeva (Healy, 2000:202.). Oppression in society is often the result of powerful people or social forces exerting power over the weak. Sometimes it is the majority exerting power over a minority, using the power of numbers. What I understood that the power related with empowerment that involves addressing the imbalance of power between groups in society. Even when weaker groups in society achieve a certain degree of empowerment, the extent is often still controlled by a more powerful social group, and credit for the 'gift' of empowerment is claimed by those in power. Power relationship of male and female as well as people of different social group is highly unfair in our society.

Also, situation of Kumari reflected the concept of intersectionality. The concept of intersectionality was firstly introduced by Crenshaw in 1989, and then the idea was explained by the sociologist Collins in 1990 (Crenshaw, 1989). This theory presents issues related various interactions of cast, class, gender and religion.

The case of kumari is about how she was discriminated from education firstly as a girl, secondly as a dalit. It is in combination/intersection of both gender and caste, she was positioned unfavorably in the society and was disempowered.

Kumari believed that the people in the society are born to dominate her. An untouchable woman has very adverse time in the society. She wants to read and write. In one of my question, she tells me her dream that one day she might able to write her name and sign in the document and paper instead of thumb stamp. Education plays vital role in the life of every ordinary people. Untouchability is one of the great social problem in the country like Nepal where woman like Kumari suffers much. They do not any proper option to do something and they remain silent all the time. If they have proper education and fair judgement, they can go ahead and play equal role to develop their society like male. Being poor, illiterate and untouchable woman, she has to face a pile of problems in the scoeity. She wishes to educated her brother and sister though she works as a servant in the third person's house.

According to the census held in 2001, the total Dalit population is 2,962,591 (13.05%); of which the whole female population is 1,496,622 and the male population is 1,465,969. Also national literacy rate is 48% where as Dalit literacy is 10.7% and women literacy rate is 3.3%. Among Dalits, the female literacy rate is 12% which is lower than that of male (33.9%). The literacy rate of Madhesi Dalit is only 11%. Therefore, the literacy percentage of Madhesi Dalit women is very lower than that of Hill Dalit women.

Schools are concentrated where power concentrates

According to one of the respondent who said that the dominant inhabitant of the village is indigenou community-Kami so called untouchable cast. There was a lower secondary school. The school was supposed to be upgraded to the secondary level, but due to the influence of local elites the school with the same name was transferred to another place which was in the easier access to the local elites. After passing the grade 8, the children had to go to join the grade 9 to the school which was around 5 Kilometer away from their home. Hence significant dropout case has been marked after the grade 8 in the village.

There has been significant progress in the education sector in last 20 years, making MDG goal of providing universal primary education to all by 2015 more achievable. Literacy rate in the age group 15-24 years went up to 86.5% in 2009 from 49.6 % in 1990, and the net enrolment in primary education went up to 93.7% from 64 % in 1990 (MoE 2009). These are some positive sign to achieve the goal of universal primary education.

Although the net enrolment is high, the survival rate to grade 5 is just 79.9% (MoE 2009). The high drop out rate is linked with the broader dimensions of poverty- gender, caste, class, and geography. About 9.9 % of the students drop out immediately after they enrolled in the schools; they get enrolled just to receive the school materials such as books, stationeries, and uniform (MoE 2009). The same student enrolls next year, and it seems reflect some portion of the increase in rate of enrolment every year, however there is no segregated data to know the culture and nature of such enrolment.

Majority of drop out comes from the poor families whose livelihoods are based on daily wages; the children are helping hands at home looking after the cattle, and younger children rather than going to school. They are more useful at home for the families who cannot afford them to remain in school even though the schools are free of cost. The child labors in urban centres are also devoid of the educational service with few exceptions. A survey on the child labour shows that almost 70% households in the city area have child labours (CWIN 2010). Similarly street children, child labour in various business sectors like hotels and restaurants, transportation and workshops also need to be addressed. Without including these groups, target for education for all will not be achieved.

As per the Report on Gender Experience in Public Schools of Nepal, 2004, (CERID, TU, Kathmandu, Nepal), the economic condition has been one of the factor in keeping girls away from school. Due to limited financial resources, most of parents give priority to boys and the meaning of "equality" thus has been ignored. Report concludes that providing education means helping to acquire economic independence. But only economic independence is not enough. The principal necessity is gender awareness. Until and unless people are gender-aware, no program for girls and women can be expected to succeed. Female teachers are one of the instruments for attracting girls towards school. But the government policy of recruiting at least one female teacher in each primary school has not yet been fully successful. In the primary level textbooks, gender aspects are depicted through language and pictures. Gender issues are looked from positive and negative sides. Gender discrimination is based on socio-cultural practices.

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As I discussed with respondents the keeping girls in school beyond puberty is nevertheless a major challenge. As most of respondents told me, girls' education is not a priority for many families. Their daughters are often needed to work in the fields and at home. Many are married at an early age. At the same school, two of respondents said they married in thirteen years old.

I asked to Binda (one of the respondent) why she didn't go to school. She said that her parents were very poor and they had gone to work every day so she should stay at home and take-care her younger brother.

Binda is clever and literate women and she managed everything in the family. Her family is good and her husband and all the members of the family supported her much. She has political consciousness which is not denied by her relatives and family member and it is the output of her basic education. She has two daughters and two sons and she has decided to provide complete education. Though there is discrimination between son and daughter. She sent her sons to private boarding school and daughters to government school. In Nepal there is a concept that private boarding school is highly superior to government school. In private school, there is qualitative education provided but in government school, teachers seem passive and neglect their duty and responsibility. Binda understands the value and importance of quality education and thus does not compromise to provide quality education to her sons and daughter but she is guided by deep rooted traditional dogmas that sons and daughters are not equal. She believes that girls will get married and then goes to her husband's home, so much investigation to their higher schooling is useless. She just wishes to make her daughters literate only but on the other hand she wants to make her sons doctors and engineers. This vast difference can be seen everywhere in the rural areas and Binda in this case, is a representative of such tendency and traditional practice.

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Binda one of the countable women who has leadership role in family although there are very little improvement of women literacy but there has been some quantitative improvements in terms of the number of girls enrolled in school and number of women receiving training, these efforts have not delivered any significant progress in terms if uplifting the overall status of women.

Therefore, education for women is an important pre-requisite to hold the decision power and for overall development of nation. Napoleon once said, "Give me good mothers, I'll give you a good nation". Women are not only the the mother they are the teacher of their new generations. Thus, if women are educated, the future generation is also educated. All educated mothers teach their children good values, norms and enables them to become responsible citizens of tomorrow. Moreover, the living standard of people will be increase by female education as educated women gets good employment opportunities and play the important leadership role in nation. They can handle their family financially also. This way, they no longer have to depend on males and the socio-economic condition of women improves. As a result, gender discrimination in society is controlled. Education of women can also be helpful in eradicating social evils like dowry problem, caste discrimination and other social and political problems in society.

5.4 Socio-cultural Construction: Religious Tenets and Taboos also Play a Role in Establishing Women's Lower Position in the Society

Religion determines women's position in the family and in society. Though existing religion differs in their approach to god and salvation, one common feature they share in the allocation of inferior status of women. Nepal has two major religions; Hinduism and Buddhism, among them 86.51 % are Hindus and 7.78 % are Buddhist (CBS, 2011). Broadly speaking, Buddhist women do enjoy better position compare to Hindu women, but within their own community, their status is lower in compared to men. The notions of purity and impurity, which are dominant cast system, are even more stringent in relation to women. Menstruation and child birth are considered impure and these accords women lower status than men. Even women from high cast are considered lower in the status than men from lower cast. Furthermore, women are so influenced by the religious scriptures that they consider themselves subordinate

to their male counterparts, as especially Hindu women consider it their duty to take orders from their husbands. Their whole life revolves around their husbands and children and only few have individual identities.

I talked with Nanu (Case 4) about family behavior during ministration period when she lived together with family.

As hindu nari (Women) I have to followed the custom therefore according to our custom I did not touch water or any food in house. Normally, my mother in law cooked and shared to all family members. But, I had to clean the all dishes. I did now allow sleeping in same bed with my husband and I had to keep my dishes in separate place and eat every day in same dishes till for four days. In five days, I had to bath and some cultural procedure to be clean. But now I do not follow like before because now I am living with my daughter.

Many Nepalese women face a discriminatory practice during their menstruation, popularly known as Chhaupadi practice. In the Far-West, adolescent girls and women are confined in a small hut ('chhau hut') or livestock quarters, as they are considered impure. The chhaupadi practice is a social tradition that prevents women from participating in normal family or communal activities during their menstruation. Many women believe that if they don't follow these practices, their families will blame them for all harm that may befall them or their livestock. Women are not allowed to use the same water resources and sanitation facilities as other family or community members, which can result in poor and unsafe personal hygiene.

Discriminating women during their menstruation is not limited to the rural areas of Far West Nepal. The "educated" people in big cities of Nepal, including the capital, are no different when it comes to traditional superstitious beliefs. During monthly periods, women are not allowed to touch kitchen utensils. The explanation provided is that this will allow them to rest as they are physically weak during menstruation, though the real reason is superstition. Some women are not allowed to sleep in beds. Cultural factors (individual beliefs and perceptions) are notoriously complex concepts and shape people's identities and influence their attitude and behaviours.

CHAPTER VI

How Rural Women Experience Disempowered in Nepal?

6.1 No Power to Decide to Eat Food: Half Stomach is not Adequate Food to Survive

At the household level, adequate food implies access to foods that are enough in terms of quantity and nutritional quality to meet each person's needs. But, still, many Nepali women are not getting enough food even to full their stomach. In countryside, rice and vegetable are the main sources of daily food but even these foods are not available to women. There is usually the senior member of the family, female, serving to everyone. She will repeatedly offer food to her family members. Mother or sister in law eats at last and she makes sure that everyone eats well therefore if food is already finished than just she will eat rest of food either enough or not. In some house, it is believed that women need to eat different food than men so they will have to cook two types of food. Poor feeding habits are also a problem of women: "We only want to eat rice, rice and rice," Sapana (Respondent) said.

As previous study on women health by National Demographic Health Survey (NDHS, 2006) states, the nutritional status of women aged 15–49 years, showed that 24% of Nepalese women were malnourished. One in seven women with height of < 145 cm is likely to suffer from under-nutrition. Nine percent of women were overweight or obese. In the *Terai* more than one-third of women and half of all children under the age of five are anemic (CBS, 2011). Therefore, here I am going to explore; how do my respondents shared their experience concerning food and nutrition?

Sapana (Case 6) shares her experience with me. She explained about discrimination on daily lunch and dinner. *She says,*

I never ate full stomach food when I lived with my husband's parents. I had to cook to all family members, but I couldn't eat when I was hungry because I must wait until all family members finished eating. At last, there would be very little bit remaining than I could satisfy myself. I know that in some family two kinds of food are cooked and served, one is more hygienic and nutritious, the other less hygienic and nutritious. And of course, the more hygienic food are served only to the father and the son, as well as other male family members.

From this quote, we can see that specific cultural practices in Nepal place daughter in-law at the lowest rank in the family hierarchy. I had some information about the food discrimination

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in rural areas in Nepal, but Sapana's experience is new to me. In my interview, she was quite open to tell her personal life because she already separated from her parents-in-law's home, so felt more comfortable to talk with me. I heard that women cannot get enough food even during their pregnancy, so I asked her further about her experience of food during pregnancy period, she said,

When I was pregnant I felt extreme pain in my stomach, so I did not to eat normal food which I was eating before. Normally, I used to eat rice, vegetable and milk. My family was vegetarian so there was no chance to eat meat instead I had to eat fruits but my family forced me to eat rice. The problem is my stomach did not tolerate rice at that time. When I had eaten rice I vomited all the time, then I had just drank water and tea to survive.

Food discrimination is one of main challenge to empower the women. Without enough and healthy food women cannot take any role in family. It is quite unfair that men eat good food whereas women eat raw and bad food which directly shows the discrimination on food and it ultimately hinders women empowerment. Also it's directly effect to future generation because many children are facing problems of malnutrition. I talked with Sapana about the health situation of her children.

My son was very unhealthy when he was born. His was so thin and small and unable to eat much. He did struggle to get in normal weight because as I mentioned before I did not eat healthy food during pregnancy period. He became sick many time so we spent much money to recover him.

Women like Sapana are suffering by various types of discrimination and are being humiliated by men in the name of religion, super power, cast, ethnicity, culture and many more. Men hold the supreme power in family, society and leadership in state and non state mechanism therefore women need to struggle to survive.

There are other problems in Sapana's family life. She was poor enough to tackle such problem and her husband couldn't do anything to maintain their quality of life. Her husband seems passive and inactive all the time. He has no job at all and wanders all round the house throughout the day. Sapana has a son and a daughter but she can't educated them properly. They dropped out their school very early and they are unable to complete their study. When I

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asked about the reason of the drop out from the school, their mother, Sapana answers that they are financially very weak to pay her children' educational materials and other things they require. The children are now looking after animals and remaining at home without education.

I felt very bad and disappointed from that situation and realized that the women in rural areas of Nepal are being prevented from education and they are unable to get any sources of income generation and thus living in extreme poverty.

With the recent trend of education system and globalization as well as modernization, women are quite well aware about their rights and duties. There are some significant changes in rural areas of Nepal because the government and non-government agencies show their presence in such areas. So, girls and women are encouraged to go to school, avoid early marriage and even promoted or assisted by such organizations. But typical cultural and traditional system in the rural areas challenges the government to implement its programs.

6.2 Experiences on Sharing of Household Property and Daily Expenses : Family is Rich but I have no Single Penny to Buy

A published report shows that women represent over 50 % of the total population (CBS), 2011). Traditionally, women in Nepal have been contributing more actively than their male counterparts, mainly in domestic and household chores and agricultural sector. But the economic contributions made by women at household level or in agriculture sector are not recognized by society and as a result most Nepalese women suffer from unequal power relations with men concerning rights on property. Certain statutory laws, especially in the areas of property and family matters, discriminate against women.

Sunita (Case 9) comes from a better-off family compares with my other respondents. However, she shares her experience with me about how she was managing her daily expenses.

I don't need money because my husband is buying everything which I need in home. Normally, we don't spend money for food because we have enough land to grow vegetable and food. If I need some money I ask to my husband and he will give me some. Some times, I could buy cosmetic.

Sunita is semi-literate women and thus able to handle small sum of family income and expenditure. For example, she helps to run the small tea shop of the family, she also sells local liquor in the evening time because the local people from Rai community are habituated to drink local wine. It's because they remain busy throughout the day in the field and they drink such local wine to avoid tiredness and fatigue. Sunita answered me if she had been educated, she would be able to manage all the problems in the family and enrich her family. The role of her husband is quite passive in the family. She then tries to uplift her husband. She has a son and a daughter and the sole responsibility of teaching and looking after the children goes to Sunita as well. She is clever and capable woman, and is thus trusted by the other village members.

Sunita is a one of the female representative of the society but almost women of countryside don't have authority to decide financial matter in home. Nepalese women, particularly those who belong to marginalized groups in rural areas, arc still suppressed, exploited, neglected, discriminated and forced to live insecure and economically poor lives because of illiteracy, lack of skill and capacity and ignorance.

Although, rural women's work burden reveals that women contribute 74 per cent of the labor input to subsistence economic activities and 86 percent of input to social and domestic work. Statistics show that rural women's total work burden is extremely high that at an average of 11.44 hours per day in contrast to 8.34 hours per day for men (Acharya & Bennet, 1981).

I talked more about the property issues with Sapana and she says.

I don't have enough food to eat in one day so I have to go every day for labor work. My husband has some land but he has to take care his parents also so he will distribute half production of the land to them so our family survive only 3 months from the land production. In other days we have to work every day to survive. I asked about the money to my husband because he had to pay school fee for children and medicine, cloths and other things at home. If I earned some money by daily labor my husband collected that money and decide how they should be used. My husband took my earnings and I became penniless. I couldn't pay school fee for my children on time and I would get loan from my relative to manage the expenditure.

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In this rural village, major occupation or sources of income are their traditional farming. However, some of them are shifted in many kinds of occupation like service, business, etc. I discussed with two respondents who were interested in taking their economic participation in family and other income generating activities.

One of them is Krishna (Case 10). She started a tea shop near by her house because she was unable to manage her family by labor in farm of other family.

I have started tea shop because my daily expenses are very high but sources of income are few. Most of time we (me and my husband) worked in farm and managed daily house expenses but now I am little bit ill and unable to work very hard so I thought this tea shop would help to manage at least school fee of my children.

Like other respondents, Krishna cares a lot about her children's education. That is one of the main reason she opened the tea shop. Though, she lives in the village which is also remote part of Nepal. But she wished to do something in her life. She clearly told me in my interview that she would like to join government civil service job. She is good in her education and passed her SLC with good marks but always lacks jobs. She feels disappointed to do the same job in the house like other semi-literate and illiterate women. She knows that education plays vital role in the life of common people but she does not have any proper idea to do something in her life. She feels troubled with the idea that to get job there will be link with high rank people and government officials but being poor, she doesn't have any link yet and there will be trouble everywhere in her life. She wants to go ahead in her life. But the way is not easy. She even tried to go to meet some of the official with the help of her neighbor, but their intention was negative. She looks quite pretty when she crossed her thirties. So, people who would like to help her., also tries to get some benefit from her as well. This indicates again how even a resources-strong, capable woman is positioned unfavorably in the Nepali society; how difficult it can be for capable women to achieve something and to fulfill their dream.

Economically, respondents are not found in a better situation and not hold decision on family. Very few of them have the legal ownership of land and most of the respondents are engaged in income generating activities. Women are lagging behind in terms of land ownership and income generating activities. Their participation in social and economic activities is in the bottom line even today. I asked about financial situation of Binda (Case 3) and she explained:

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My husband is a local priest, a respected person in society. He has medium income but I am very satisfied with him because he always gives me money when he comes home from work. Also, I earned little bit from my vegetable garden. Normally, I return back him some money when he needs money. Some time I asked about use of money to my husband though he did not spend money on unnecessary things. I didn't need much money because he managed everything as I expected.

As she mentioned, I found that those who has a little bit better economic status also involve in decision making at home, directly or indirectly. But still, they are depended on man. Like Binda, she was satisfied with that her husband managing and making decision on everything. In this way, man has all power and decision on financial issues because if man disagrees in any matter then women can't rise in family and it would be very hard to implement. Here, I want to use another respondent, Nanu's experience to further expound this issue. Nanu (case 4) shares her story as such:

I am a single woman and proud to be single because I had faced many challenges to live together. My ex-husband was habituated to drink alcohol everyday so he spent a lot of money. He did not care the children and me at all. He enjoyed with his friends all the time. When he came back from work he started to quarrel with me and many times he bitted me. Although I was still surviving due to my daughter otherwise I would be subsided. I did not have earning. My child was very small so I have to stay with him whether I like to him or not.

This is major challenges of many women in rural areas due of their financial insecurity. They have to stay with their husbands, because men have right to get property from their parents and they used to survive or get daily need. By law male and female have equal rights but social tradition and culture give prioritize men only. I asked Nanu more about her experiences because there were very few women who broke the relationship with men. If a woman is divorce from her husband, it is difficult for the local society to accept her. So, she has to move to other places, where she will often face many new challenges. For example, Nanu added,
I was in a very critical condition and for some time I thought I would die. But I looked at the face of my daughter then I recovered myself. Not only that all family of my husband was against me, but also they wanted property (dowry) from my parents but my parents were also

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very poor so that it was not possible to give what they wanted. I tried to survive but we always felt crisis. Luckily, I met one lawyer and with his support, I filed a case against my exhusband. Then court decided positively to me and I divorced him and got half of poverty from him. So, now I am very happy with my daughter. I have many problems due to illiteracy so I convince my daughter to teach illiterate women like me then they will be able to understand their rights.

Again, Natu's story confirm my earlier analysis: illiteracy is the main obstacle for women's disempowerment and it prevents them to realize the equal rights with men. In Nepal, a father can get worried when a daughter is born, as the birth of the daughter can mean an economic burden for the family. He gets tensed about the arrangement of marriage of her daughter because he has to manage dowry i.e. things (money, luxurious materials, property and other) to satisfy her mother in law and future husband. This also explains why women are not favored concerning the rights to posess the family's property.

Some of Nepali women are still facing this problem even government and Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are actively working to eliminate the dowry system from society. Due to illiteracy and ignorance as well as financial insecurity this system is deep routed as cultural tradition. The program implemented by different stakeholders are not effecting that much otherwise it would be control already.

In spite of the reality of the significantly patriarchal structural of Nepalese society, which positioned to women towards a subordinate status, there were meaningful variations between communities in the context of women's participation in the wider market economy and the overall household decision-making process. These variations fall into a consistent pattern, suggesting that women's household decision-making input in a given community is directly related to the strength of the inside/outside dichotomy. To varying degrees the 'inside' private domestic sphere is characterized as the proper domain of women and the 'outside' sphere of candidacy, water/irrigation system construction, budget allocation, village development programs, selection of extension workers-are mostly ascribed to men.

Because of the very form of discrimination women are facing a kind of identity crisis. According to Giddens (1991) the self identity is a routinely created phenomenon which

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sustains through the reflexive activities of the individual. Self identity is often linked to the term self consciousness developed over time.

As Meena (Case 7) mentioned that she is still single and she does not have any intention to get married. She witnessed the sinful deeds of politicians that they exploited the young ladies in the name of training and improving the comradeship. She has closely observed everything and every situation in politician's house and concluded that politics is the dirty game where everything seems fair only in surface. She was not physically attractive, so people avoid her. But in my interview, she told me that she had saved herself from the attack of men with the intention of sexual violation. She lived at the house of politician, so people or wicked person can't contact her directly but when she has gone to visit market and other places, they tried to approach her with the intention of rape. It shows that the weak and poor women are easily cheated in the society and the attitude of men towards them is always negative. She is illiterate woman and thus she does not know many things about the changes in the society. She remained busy all the time cooking and serving at the house of a politician and she has to serve them all the time. She can't go away from that house because it is her ultimate destiny. If she had been educated and well-aware of what can be possibilities in the society, she can do something else she can run her own small shop and seeks alternative way of sustainability.

As I talked with some women about the felling of their life but they were not satisfied and they were very frustration because of financial matter and other issues related to family management. As Nanu (case 3) mentioned that she decided to even die. Same kinds of feeling had with Kumari (case 2) also. She said:

As dalit and illiterate women I am very poor here to hold social position. I feel discrimination in home, society in nation, so how I can go ahead? It will not possible to empower the women without giving proper education and employment. Our life is a slave for man. Sometime I think too much about myself although I have to come in normal form.

Women has a great role to enhance the social status and overall development of country. There is huge gaps in terms of property distribution among male and female and decision making process which created fundamental variance of discrimination.

6.3 Struggle to Survive: Findings from Field Observation

The major concerns of the study is to explore experiences of women at Barbote stating how is their daily life, working and doing something in the village and see how their life style is improved or remain constant.

The physical appearances of these women seem bad and they too seem miserable as well. When I approached to them, they hesitated to talk with me as they did not use to talk with stranger. but I slowly introduced myself and clarified that I was also the resident of this place, then they felt freer to talk with me. These small conversations provides me with firsthand information which I expected to abtain from the field. They are part of my qualitative data .

The daily life of women as I studied, bound with household affairs and agricultural tasks. From the early morning to the late night, they are very busy on several household jobs.

When I went to the village, the women were almost reluctant to approach to me due to their oddness. They are not used to talk with the stranger and I was not the researcher there but the stranger at that time. Later I coped with the circumstance and made them convinced that I was also the member of that village and slowly continued the research. It is very obvious that women showed a kind of reaction when a guest or a stranger arrived in the village. According to my local knowledge, this is a normal reaction.

The major intention or planning in my field experience is to find out the experiences of women in that village and ensure that how the women are surviving and find in what extend they are doing their work as the part of their struggle to survive. They had to clean the house in the early morning and sweep it properly. Then they have to fetch water from the tap and prepare tea and breakfast for the members of the family. But most of the women don't have breakfast due to extreme poverty. They directly have lunch at noon. Their husbands don't have reliable source of income and they wander somewhere in the village by playing cards and assembling with friends. They don't have good clothing as well and wear torn out clothes. The women's life style is not satisfactory in any sense. They are living the worst life and scarcity of everything what they wish to require. Women remain outside most of the time to do agricultural work and father frequently goes out of the home for gambling and chatting

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with his friends. The responsibility of father is not fulfilled and the mother has to take the burden of the entire family. Let's take the case of Nanu (Case 4). She was very hardworking women but her husband was a gambler who always goes out from the house and returns with complete drunken state. She did not have enough money to manage the family. She doesn't have good food at home and the corps she gets from the field does not last more than six month. So, she has to do the work of villagers to get some wages to support her family.

I saw very pitiable life style around the village, road was very narrow and muddy and some of children were back from school. Some of the women were looking to me when they were collecting water from tap near the road. Some of them asked to little bit with my brother who helped guide me travel the village. Some of the young gentle man interested to talk with me. When I was walking around the village, its normal culture that if some -one new face come in their village they seem interested to chat. Some were going to harvest rice from their field. When I said hello to them and they asked my introduction and objective to there. I introduced some people and said very clearly my objective to be there than some of them happy to support me further information if needed.

Precisely, the women at Barbote are living a critical life. Their life style is very poor and miserable. They are facing extreme problems and struggling to survive all the time. The basic needs and requirements of the women in that village are not fulfilled and promotion of women at village is not given any importance. Women are just considered as an object and men are considered as superior. It is mainly due to gender inequality and lack of positive attitude towards social security.

CHAPTER – VII

CONCLUSION AND LESSON LEARNED

7.1 CONCLUSION

The study has attempted to describe and analyze how rural women experience disempowered in Nepal i.e. women experience as the main obstacles to their disempowerment in their everyday lives. In the previous chapters, I have demonstrated the various causes of women's

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disempowerment by looking at how the rural women themselves experience it in situations of public and private decision making. The study also identifies some primary cases to disempowered Nepali women i.e. early age marriage, dalit discrimination, food and property distribution and other socio-cultural issues. Similarly, it also shows the importance of the education to rural women and expresses how this can be the main obstacle for women's empowerment in the context of 21st century.

The study further explores that the women are struggling for equal rights in family and society. They are suppressed by their family members such as mother-in-law, father-in-law and husband too. They are discriminated to access education, health, food and employment. In most of the cases, the rural women are quite powerless and they are unable to do what they like. As I illustrated earlier, they are not able to decide what to do in their family as well, so involvement in social and political intuition their reach. In addition to lack of education, week awareness, superstition and other traditional dogmas are the major causes which makes women backward.

It has concluded that majority of the respondents are deprived from education. Their socio-economic as well their political participation including decision making in both private and public arena are minimized. In this way, they are directly suppressed by men. In general, the social-economic status of all the respondents' is not good and the majority of them are excluded from their education as well as income generating activities. However, there are also several cases which show that rural women begin to be aware of the importance of education. In spite of difficulties, they try their best to improve their daughters' education. As I mentioned earlier chapter case of Nanu (Case 4) that she was motivated to study her daughter and work towards raising awareness on education. Also, some other women like Binda (Case 3) was more positive towards education because she had learned basic education and she was working for sensitize to local women.

This study has also concluded that majority of the respondents are not participating in any local committees and other social activities regularly though they had a desire and willingness to participate. I talked about their involvement in social institutions like VDCs and schools. They did not participate in any intuitions rather than women group. As I mentioned experience of Kumari (case 2) that she had faced to attend school meeting even school invited her to attend the management committee meeting. In social work theories, participation to social activities are the key for empowerment (Tesoriero, F, (2010) that when rural women,

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like my respondents are excluded from social activities, they can't catch up with the society's development, still less to gain equal rights and empowerment. It is through the local society as the platform that woman can go ahead and develop themselves.

Most of the respondents had heard about their rights, which is ensured by constitution but in practice they are totally excluded from their basic rights. What is different from the western countries is that the people seem used to the fact that what stands in paper can be totally different from the realities. Due to exclusion of women in nearly every key sector in the society, they are lag far behind to influence the social development, as well as to make self-decisions. In my opinion, this is also a great loss or waste of resources for the society as the whole. However, in recently years, we have witnessed that those few educated women, or women elites are more aware about their rights as a woman, and they are making themselves more visible in the public arena by actively participating to various social activities, income generating activities and decision making process than illiterate women (UNDP, 2008). In this comes back to my main finding in this study that "EDUCATION" is the key to social inclusion and empowerment of women. Women's participation/inclusion is a good indicator of their empowerment. Therefore, it is essential to improve educational status as well increase their participation in all sectors of the society and development then only women will be empowered. However to achieve equal education for women, the society and the government must conduct great efforts to enable the changes. Some of NGOs are working towards education development in local areas although effort is still not enough. Also, I worked as a social motivator to organize women education campaign and I took initiative to establish women literacy class. I realized that illiterate women were very eager to learn but effort of NGOs was very short term and covered only small areas so there should be government initiative to improve overall situation of illiteracy.

Therefore, I conclude that education to all women of this village as well as in nation is most and first important issues to disempowered women. As Paolo Fereie argued that there is not important of eyes rather than light in dark. So, education is light for those who are facing darkness till today. When women will be educated than they will be seen the way to ensure an equal rights, share in the decision-making process in house and society. Women's empowerment aims to recognize women's voice, acknowledge their wisdom and increase their access to political, economic and social sectors and reforms in legal provisions also.

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Due to the ecological, socio-economic, and cultural diversities, the constraints and opportunities for rural women vary in terms of the ecology (Mountain, Hill and Tarai), class, caste/ethnicity, religion, and the developmental region. Most of the women in rural areas survive with agriculture. Women contribute almost 70% labour force in subsistence farming (MOFA, 2011) the feminization of agriculture is becoming the trend in many of the rural and remote areas of the country. Though my respondents are different class, caste, culture backgrounds, they share some common experiences concerning the question of disempowerment.

There are many of interrelated factors overlapped to create power imbalances causing gender inequality in education and economic sector. Also, the welfare system is very poor and makes depend fully on the family and husband. As I discussed before the religious values and cultural issues related about marriage and property distribution are the main case to structured discrimination. Besides religious tenets, taboos also play a role in establishing women's minority situation in the society.

There is no argument against the empowerment of women, and it has been recognized that the social, economic and political empowerment of women is essential for their sustainable development in all areas of life. Thus, it has been well accepted that women's empowerment and full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including in the decision-making process, and access to power are fundamental to the achievement of equality, development and peace. According to Tesoriero (2010) that empowerment is achieved by ensuring people with resources, opportunities, vocabulary, knowledge and skills needed to increase their capacity. Based on his views, the empowerment strategy is understood as a means of overcoming the barriers of people so as to enable them to exercise power. Accordingly, appropriate policies and programmes have been formulated to address women's development issues and problems in various ways at national as well as local levels. But, due to the absence of effective mechanisms and political commitment to implementing them, women's concerns and needs tend to be marginalized and lost during the course of implementation.

The biggest constraint on empowering women is the wide gap between policies, plans and programmes on the one hand and their actual implementation on the other. On top of it, weak

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governance, lack of capacity for gender analysis and gender planning, insufficient efforts to include women's representation in decision-making roles, lack of interest and commitment to implementing women's development programmes at die district level, absence of a coordinating mechanism, attitudinal problems and lack of understanding on the part of decision-makers, less attention towards women's empowerment, emphasis on women's physical rather than qualitative participation are the major reasons for the weak implementation of women's development plans and programmes. As Tesoriero (2006: 265) argued that empowerment should be the aim of all community development with the participation of both man and women. Although the involvement of women in development activities in that community has advanced to some extent in the past some years, the progress achieved so far has been uneven and inadequate. Inequalities between women and men, discrimination against women and domestic problems including violence have been persisting with serious consequences for the well being of all people and with adverse effects on the national development.

7.2 LESSON LEARNED: LEARNING BY DOING

7.2.1 Selection Research Question was Challenging More than Writing the Thesis

When I started to select the topic of my research I was so confused myself. I felt very difficulties because there were many factors that should be academically sounded, researchable as well as manageable. In beginning, I started to read the some literature and old thesis related issues which I was interested to research. So, I started to collect materials related dailt and women issues of Nepal because I worked some years on women empowerment in that areas where are some dalit people also, associated in small project of local NGO. But there were many issues related dalit and women so it was very big issues to make research question in concrete form. So, when I started to work-out little bit about dalit issues and discussed with supervisor that she did not agree in my research question and she gave suggestion to rethink my research question than I changed mind to organize issues related women empowerment. I started to read literature about situation of women empowerment and found that women are surviving in very critical condition in Nepal. They don't have proper education, health facilities, drinking water, sanitation, no decision power in family and facing from various form of discrimination in society till today. Therefore, I am interested to know the experiences of women those women being disempowered. However, I coined a research question i.e How Rural Women Experience Disempowered in Nepal? with

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the many time discussion with my supervisor. I realized that writing thesis is not easy job that we think and not possible alone with-out proper guide of supervisor. I will not be able to develop in this form if my supervisor not suggests me time and again. To write a academic thesis a good supervisor and his/her advice always will be very necessary. They can give road –map to ahead.

7.2.2 Challenges to Select Appropriate Methodology

I decided to write on women related issues but I had confusion always on methodology because I saw in some literature they used qualitative and quantitative both methods in their research. Also, I had little bit experiences of quantitative method but I am interested to qualitative method which I studied in university. I have learned many methodologies although it was big deal to select one. I tried using at least two methodologies but I am not able to include in findings because when I used many tools than I got confusion on findings so finally I decided to applied open –ended interview, one of the data collection tool of qualitative method, is mentioned above.

7.2.3 Selection of Sample Size and Field Work Look Like Easy But That Was Not True For Me

As I mentioned above if we are writing thesis, selection of sample size and field are the fundamental things. I felt many problem mostly selection the sample size because I was confusion on methodology. When I discussed with supervisor than I came to know it would be impossible to organize interview with many people if we are going to organize qualitative research. Because qualitative research not focused on number it looks in depth with small sample size.

Also, filed work is a mirror what we want to look so as I highlighted above there would be many problems in field. Time arrangement of local people, walking around village, location problem and communication are the major problem which I faced during my field work. Although, if we get proper coordination of local people than wan manage and every things go in easy manner.

7.2.4 Writing and Analysis Was Not Like Joke: Not Easy Like Listening and Talking

We can talk and listen too much. It very hard to stop to talk or listen music or anything but we feel full-stop in every time when we start to thesis writing. It could be bit easy to develop story, event note but I found very hard to during writing thesis. When I started to write I felt something was lacking always in mind. I thought due to my practices and analysis skills of data. I had story in mind which told by respondents, information and data, as well as I know situation very well but I realized always during writing and analysis that there was lacking somewhere. I think is not problem of only me that most of student faced same problem because when I asked my colleges about their writing also they said same as me. Also they stopped during data analysis. I asked with supervisor many times without hesitation and request to read draft thesis whether it is in right track or not. When I got comment line by line and suggestion to improvement and also thinking, rethinking, making note, listening voices of informants and reading other thesis I am able to develop in this form. I realized that I can be good teacher but not good writer.

7.2.5 Some Limitation that I Realized During Study

The proposed study will not be free from some shortcomings. It will be particularly related to the women experiences of disempowerment therefore study can't give political and other interrelated perspectives in details. The study is carried out in Barbote VDC of Ilam District, thus confined to a specific area this study does not and cannot portray views and ideas of all the women of the country as views and ideas expressed by the women of village might differ from other women from other villages of the country. While collecting primary data in the course of fieldwork for the study the respondent biases may move unnoticed.

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ANNEXES

Annex A: Interview Guideline

How Rural Women Experience Disempowered in Nepal?

How Rural Women Experience Disempowered in Nepal?

What do they experience as the main obstacles to their disempowerment in their everyday lives?

In-depth interview with the women (20-60 years old)

1. Rapport building
2. Introduction
3. Sharing the objective of the interview.
4. Consent agreement

Interview pints

Respondent introduction

Name

Age

Address

Experience of illiteracy and their feeling of obstacles in their daily

1. Did you go to school? Tell me your education background.
2. You were unable to go school? Who made decision? Was it father decision or mother or any other person?
3. How you feel and manage your daily life with-out literacy? Who will help to read and write? What kinds of problems are you facing due to illiteracy?
4. Please describe your situation, story or challenges you faced in your life related about illiteracy.
5. Do you have further motivation of education or literacy class? Why you did not join the adult or women literacy class?
6. Tell me some more about your household work (Cooking, cleaning, farming, caring, shopping, washing, harvesting and others), Do you make decision in any issues? If yes what kinds of issues are? If no; why not? What are problems on decision making? Tell me your role in family.
7. Do you send school to your children? Including girl or not?
8. Tell me other issues if you want to share.

How Rural Women Experience Disempowered in Nepal?

Marriage Experiences

9. When you got married, in which age? Did you know that you were going to marriage in early age?

10. Who made decision to your marriage father or mother? did they asked for decision? Did they tell about your future husband?

11. How was your marriage (Tell little bit your feeling during marriage ceremony)

12. Did you make any decision during marriage (shopping cloths, foods, other preparation)

13. How was different before and after marriage?

14. What kinds of positive and negative things you found after marriage?

15. Could tell your story of daily life after married. (Cooking, cleaning, farming, caring, shopping, washing, harvesting and others)

16. Are you satisfied with your married life? If yes why and how, what kinds of positive things you got after marriage, why you were happy, due to love of husband, children, family, role in family, economic reason, social- cultural or any other reason. If no, why ? What kinds of negative issues that you had faced after marriage.

17. Tell about the decision making role on having children and health issues. Did your husband ask before your pregnancy? Are there any problems on decision making to have   children?

18. Any other story related on your marriage and household decision making.

Experienced of Discrimination

19. What kinds of problem were facing dalit women in this society?

20. Why did not dalit women able to schooling? What was problem to school when you were child?

21. Why cast based discrimination is still exiting in society? What is your onion on it ?

22. Do you have any story that you faced cast based discrimination?

23. How is your daily life? What you do? What kinds of problem you are facing in society?

24. How young people are thinking about cast based discrimination?

25. What is your opinion to eliminate the cast based discrimination?

Socio-cultural Construction: Religious Tenets and Taboos

How Rural Women Experience Disempowered in Nepal?

26. What kinds of social tenets and taboos are still exiting in society? What kinds of problems you faced in ministration period? Do you get support from husband and family?

27. Do you eat together and shared food?

28. Do you have culture of Chaupati?

29. How many days you do not allow to touch food and water?

30. Do you sick any help when you feel uncomfortable during ministration?

31. Any other story during ministration period.

Poverty Experiences and Discrimination on Food

32. Do you get enough food to survive?

33. What kinds of foods you eat every day?

34. Do you feel any differences of food for you and other family members.

35. Who cook food and distribute food? Who eat first and who eat in last? Do you get any support to cooking and cleaning?

36. Did you get enough food nutrition during pregnancy?

37. What other problems related on food in home?

38. What is the changing patron on food system before and now?

Experiences on Sharing of Household Property and Daily Expenses

39. Do you have any income sources now?

40. How are you managing to your family? What are the major income sources in family?

41. Who make decision to buy some things? Do you feel that you have any role on resources

42. Do you have any property (land, house, share or any other)? How you got that property?

43. Why you did not get job?

44. Did family recognize your household work and support you when you need money ?

45. Do you have involvement in any social, economic and political institutions?

46. Let me know any other story related property distribution?

Conclusion

- Summarize collected information from respondent and take consent to write in thesis

- Reassurance to maintain secrecy of data

How Rural Women Experience Disempowered in Nepal?

- Take consent to write pseudo name
- Give thanks a lot for their time and contribution on thesis

ANNEX: B

Informed Consent to the Respondents for a Master Thesis in Comparative Social Work

How Rural Women Experienced & Disempowered in Nepal? An empirical study on women experience as the main obstacles to their disempowerment in their everyday lives.

………………………..

Santi Tole, Barbote-9, Ilam

Nepal

Subject: **Request to participate for interview/sharing experiences**

Dear Madam**,**

I would like to introduce myself and purpose of my study first. I am a student of master degree in comparative social work at the Department of Social Science, University of Norway. In this regard, I have to organize a research on "How Rural Women Experience Disempowered in Nepal? An empirical study on women experience as the main obstacles to their disempowerment in their everyday lives" therefore I would like to invite you to participate for interview on 20.9.13 at office of red cross at Santi tole, Barbote, Ilam.

This study is an academic one and will be shared amongst my supervisor and other appropriate members related to the University of Nordland. The master thesis that results from this research will be published in hard copy and will be housed at the library of University.

You will participate as interviewee and I will organize a very informal interview which takes at least one hour. This research will be conducted with a guarantee of confidentiality and will maintain the anonymity of all participants. I am going to use pseudonyms instead of your real name in writing in order to protect your identity.

Your participation is voluntary and you also have the right to ask for more information about this study and to withdraw from the study any time during the interview without the need for providing any reasons and without any consequences.

The data will be destroyed after finishing my thesis i.e. on 15th May 2014.

I appreciate your cooperation in this study.

Thanking you!

Arjun Kumar Bhattarai

University of Nordland, Norway

Department of Social Science

Date :

How Rural Women Experience Disempowered in Nepal?