

Impact evaluation of the project
Empowering women for gender equality



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Acronyms/abbreviations

CBS	: Centre Bureau of Statistic
CeCRED	: Centre for Community Resource and Environment Development
CEDAW	: Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
DDC	: District Development Committee
DFID	: Department for International Development
EU	: European Union
GBV	: Gender Base Violence
GDP	: Gross Domestic Product
GoN	: Government of Nepal
GRB	: Gender Responsive Budgeting
HDR	: Human Development Report
HHs	: Households
ICIMOD	: International Centre for Mountain Development
ILO	: International Labour Organization
LSGA	: Local Self Governance Act
MDG	: Millennium Development Goal
NHDR	: Nepal Human Development Report
NLSS	: Nepal Living Standard Survey
NPA	: Nepal Plan of Action
NPC	: National Planning Commission
PIC	: Public Information Centre
SLC	: School Leaving Certificate
SNV	: Netherland Development Organization
SORDEC	: Social Welfare Resource Development Centre
UNDP	: United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	: United Nations Children's Fund
VDC	: Village Development Committee
WB	: World Bank

Executive summary

Nepal is a small, beautiful, patriarchal country and predominated by male in all major roles in the society. On the other hand, women have been treated as a machine for producing children or means of entertainment and limited them only into household chore. Actually, they have no freedom in the society and education status of woman in Nepal is very low. Nepal is the poorest country and listed into third world country. In Nepal female have no access to education and other productive resource as man have because of conservative social structure. For example, female should not be educated no more opportunity beyond home and keep them only in household activities. Moreover, some societies still wouldn't see positively if girls go to school. As a result, woman has no accessibility to get any job such as government and private.

Patriarchal culture dominant in Nepal, which from both to old age gives preference to men. Women's work is given little status while the ability of men to earn money brings respect. Women's decisions-making role and control over resources is negligible in most households. Issues concerning property, marriage, expenditure, and education are men's business and women can exert little or no influence over the outcomes. For instance, in all communities land is inherited from the father to the son. Instead of this, Nepal has made some progress in raising living standards of its people over the last 50 years, particularly since the 1990s. But the country's level of human development remains among the lowest in the world. Development outcomes have varied inequitably, manifesting themselves in gender, caste, ethnic and geographic disparities. Peoples needs have gone unfulfilled, institutions have weakened, and policies have not been sufficiently pro-poor, leaving vast segments of the population outside of the mainstream development. We found that the level of women participation in local authorities and institutions is extremely nominal and only fulfils the mandatory provision of Local Self-Governance Act (LSGA, 1999).

The project "Empowering the women for gender equality" was implemented in six VDCs of Myagdi with the financial support of EU Delegation to Nepal. It was implemented within the period of January 2013 to December 2015. 54 women's group were fully mobilized to implement the project activities. These groups and VDC level networks of women are considered as social capital in these six VDCs. In the first half of the project, capacity development activities (training and campaign) for local stakeholders were organized and then income generating activities were employed by targeting women who are involving women empowerment groups. The modality of resource mobilization is revolving fund which is considered best and commonly practiced method in rural areas for lagging class as they have no easy access to formal financial institution.

During this period women's level of participation in local development activities is improving significantly not only in quantity but also in quality. They are able to earn additional money by implementing income generating activities. Some of them are now proudly said that they are able to earn more money than their husband earn in Middle East and they now request her husband for backing home. LBs are started to make gender responsive village development

planning, all men are seen supportive to women's endeavour. Women are now express their view in public meeting and pressing the service providers for better service. All groups are found active and they are all registered in VDC and hopefully they all have crucial role in the day coming for societal change in those VDCs.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Women's lives in the world have improved importantly over the past decades. Women are able to enjoy higher education, women have greater control over their life choices. They use those choices to participate more in the labour force; have fewer children; diversify their time beyond housework and child care; and shape their communities, economies and societies. And the pace of change for many women in the developing world has accelerated. But progress has not been uniform. A vast change persists today in more than one way. There are women in every region of the world for whom life has not changed much. They still battle many of the issues that women before them had to face. Some girls still cannot go to school on a par with boys. They may not inherit assets from their parents. And they have lower legal and social status. Even in Sweden and United States, change is still hard to come by in many facets of life and the economy. Women are paid less and are still employed disproportionately in nursing and teaching, for example, while men dominate engineering and construction. Only 28 (2.8 per cent) chief executive officers of the fortune 1000 companies are women in the world (World Bank, 2012).

Women's role in Nepal have been playing a multiple role in each society. They not only play the reproductive role of a caregiver of the past, present, and future generations, but also contribute to the overall income of the household in cash and kind. In the context of a 'modern and developing' Nepal, they have also been taking the lead role in development activities in the community in addition to upholding their traditional religious and cultural roles in the larger society. History reveals that in the situation of conflict, women have had to accommodate a forcible change in their roles due to men leaving homes and families for long time. Women as pillars of strength during difficult times should be recognized, rewarded and publicized to bring hope and serve as role models.

Nepal is a signatory of almost all international conventions on human rights, women rights, and children rights as well as to agreements on international goals regarding education, health, and poverty alleviation. Nepal has thus committed itself to making rapid progress towards gender equality. Plan of Action for Women in Development in 1982; National Plan of Action (NPA) for Beijing Platform for Action in 1998; National Plan of Action on Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 2003; and National Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment, Revised Version of NPA for Beijing Platform for Action in 2004 are the major national efforts in this regard. These commitments reinforce the GoN's promises of non-discrimination on gender equality and social justice. Following the 'right-based concept' Government of Nepal (GoN) however, has been making policy, legal and institutional reforms and implementing the development programmes in order to protect and promote the women's rights by eliminating all forms of discrimination against them. There have been significant achievements in improving the living standards of women through the implementation of various programme including reservation, awareness against domestic customs, consultation treatment as well as

legal support to the women, skill and capacity enhancing programme, women development programme. Despite few achievements, considering the coverage and quality, the efforts for the women's socio-economic empowerment have remained inadequate.

There has been significant progress in raising living standards of its people over the last 50 years, particularly since the 1990s. But the country's level of human development remains among the lowest in the world. Development outcomes have varied inequitably, manifesting themselves in gender, caste, ethnic and geographic disparities. Peoples needs have gone unfulfilled, institutions have weakened, and policies have not been sufficiently pro-poor, leaving vast segments of the population outside of the mainstream development. At this juncture, empowerment of the lagging class people (mainly women) should be the major concern of the nation and other development stakeholders as concluded by NHDR 2004 (Empowerment and Poverty Reduction). Empowerment makes growth pro-poor by broadening human capabilities and improving the distribution of productive assets.

Women's decisions-making role and control over resources is negligible in many households. Issues concerning property, marriage, expenditure, and education are men's business and women can exert little or no influence over the outcomes. For instance, in all communities of land is inherited from the father to the son. In the 2001 census, only about 11 per cent of households reported only land in female legal ownership. Only 7 per cent recorded female ownership of livestock. Overall, less than 1 per cent of households reported female ownership of all of the three assets: house, land and livestock (Unequal Citizen, WB and DFID p. 24). Significant improvement is found in female headed household due to the excessive foreign employment rate of this last decade and men are not home. The status of female headed household is 26.6 per cent (around one fourth) according to NLSS 2011. But the percentage of the households with owned agricultural land has remained almost same in NLSS 2011. After the restoration of the democracy in 1990, two local level elections were held in Nepal, but only few women were elected in DDC and VDC chairperson and vice-chairperson in Nepal. We found that the level of women participation in local authorities and institutions is extremely nominal and only fulfils the mandatory provision of Local Self-Governance Act (LSGA, 1999).

Since the early 1980s, it has been realized that women in Nepal are vital contributors to the domestic economy and thus to the nation (Ojha and Weber, 1993). Their access to knowledge, skills, resources, opportunities and power, however, remains low. The adult female literacy rate (23%) is much lower than the adult male literacy rate (57%). While women's day-to-day work burden is increasing. The 1981 status of women in Nepal study showed a strong relationship between women's level of input in the outside economy and decision making process. However, the 1995 study showed a downward trend (UNICEF, 1996) which is not found improved yet. The gender equality and social inclusion commitments and policies of the government such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, covenants on Economic, Cultural and Social Rights, covenants on Political and Civil Rights, International commitments made by the GoN, such as CEDAW (Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women), the Convention on Child Rights,

ILO Convention 169 for indigenous and tribal people etc. underscores the provisions for adopting gender equality and social inclusion friendly approaches in government programmes.

The low level of economic empowerment reflects the low level of income, limited access to productive assets and gainful employment opportunities, which severely limits the scope to use the expanded human and social capabilities. The level of human empowerment decreases the gap of political and economic empowerment; income-generating and awareness raising activities are indispensable for women who have no access to productive resources and low level of bargaining power. Hence, the major concern of every development project should be to identify and promote the life giving forces of women through social mobilization, education and opening the doors of economic opportunities. In recent years, theoretically the decentralized governance, participatory planning and implementation approach have been accepted, but these have not been adopted very well in practice. Nepal is a small country; its diversity is vast also in terms of people's needs and aspirations. Naturally, therefore, there should be different types of development approaches, plans and strategies for different areas and groups. However, such types of developmental efforts have been nearly negligible in the country and hence the imbalance among places, classes, and people is increasingly prevalent. So this project aims to implement in the neediest area and class of the country.

1.2 Statement of the problem

People belonging to marginalized social and cultural groups like *dalits* and women bear even more of the burden than others. Members of these vulnerable segments of society struggle just to coexist. Religious fundamentalism and gender discrimination in rural village of Nepal have impeded human development. Religious beliefs have a profound influence over the lives of women and people belonging to marginalized groups. Most of them accept the cruelties experienced by them as their fate, destined from birth. A gender dimension of poverty affects health and education outcomes and leads to greater economic insecurity for women. To this end, it is believed that the empowerment process cannot become sustainable without eliminating entrenched socio-cultural norms and discriminatory practices. Gender, poverty, and exclusion overlap in many ways although not all women are poor nor are all people in excluded groups poor. Poverty, gender, and exclusion may be visualized in terms of three partly overlapping circles. Each circle is larger than the overlapping parts, but they reinforce each other. Women within the overlapping part suffer from a triple burden of being female, poor, and from excluded groups.

Till the time, large number of rural women are involved in agriculture, besides other subsidiary work like livestock rearing, construction work, and cottage industry, teaching, nursing and clerical activities. However, until now women have not been encouraged to emerge as entrepreneurs. Unless and until entrepreneurship is developed among women, they will continue to be subjected to exploitation and discrimination by men. It is the demand of modern times that women's entrepreneurship be developed in order to expedite rural development. Empowerment of women, the landless/ marginalized people, and oppressed and

depressed caste groups has always been the core objective of all community based programs but the result are far from satisfaction.

The Constitution of Nepal 2015 stipulate non-discrimination and equality as fundamental rights of all citizens. Before this constitution, House of Representative was proclaimed that there should be the minimum 33 per cent women participation in every sector of the state. However, other state laws and institutions still relegate women to inferior status. Women's participation in development has been initiated since two decades but the outcomes have been profoundly low. Inclusion is one of the four pillars of Nepal's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) 2003. However, attaining its inclusion goal will require fundamental shifts not only in the structure of government and access to economic opportunity but also in the underlying hierarchical norms, values, and behaviours that govern social interaction.

The level of participation of the women in community development is very low. Due to lack of economic opportunities the rate of income per capita is very low and weak consideration to major gender related issues (availability, accessibility, affordability, security, and sustainability) fuelled the exclusion. Realizing this lacuna and reality, it is clear that the practical and social constraints to incorporate women in mainstream development endeavour are (a) lack of ownership over resources; (b) restrictions on participating in activities outside the house; (c) lack of income; (d) lack of education and access to knowledge and information sources; and (e) lack of opportunity to get involved in economic enterprises. Digging through the past development efforts and conclusions drawn from various studies indicate that:

- Lack of women's education and decision making power perpetuates inferior outcomes in child nutrition, child survival and school participation. Maternal education and child well-being are strongly correlated. The prevalence of malnutrition falls with increasing level of mother's education and with the mother's ability to make decision within the household.
- Gender related violence and domestic abuse are the most egregious signs of gender inequality in the domestic sphere. Outside the home, in the community, women perceive that they have much less ability to express their views or obtain support from local authority and other development and service providing agency than men.
- As in most households worldwide, household work is not considered productive. However, the work burden of women in Nepal (16 hrs) is much higher than the global average (NHDR, 2004).
- Access to assets and services is one part of the empowerment process.
- Empowerment and social inclusion play complementary roles in promoting equity and sustainable prosperity for all.

Women have only limited access to resources and only limited control over those they can access. Over 70 per cent women are confined to self-employed, unpaid and low-wage informal sector activities. Many women are forced to go to foreign lands (i.e. Yemen, Israel & other middle-east countries, etc). Representation of women in government civil service (8 per cent in Nepal) as well as in political leadership and decision making bodies is nominal

and often short-lived due to social stigma, family responsibility and economic hardships. Women's access to fixed assets, property, and credit is still very limited, discriminatory wage structure and unequal access to earned income have not been reduced, but have actually increased over the last ten years both in agriculture and non-agricultural sectors. Women are forced to concentrate at the lower end of the pay scale or wages. Traditional discriminatory social structures are transferred to work place, and poor rural women from *dalit* and disadvantaged ethnic groups are at the lowest level of the wage ladder.

1.3 Rationale of the study

Gender injustice is found in every society and the level of participation of the women in community development is very low. Women are forced to concentrate in low-skill jobs because of their weak education and training opportunities. And, the empowerment level of women is very weak in Hindu religious groups than that of other groups (*i.e. Magar*) in project area. The poor and disadvantaged groups hold the major parts of the population. Due to lack of economic opportunities the rate of income per capita is very low. Owing to these causes the overall status of women in the society is very low even the changed context. Self-motivated and employed women may able to increase the welfare of their families by creating new job opportunities and by that add to growth and sustainable development in their communities and nation.

Gender equality and women's empowerment are essential to the attainments of development goals, and the MDGs. It is clear that the socio-economic empowerment of women is not only a driving force for gender equality, but it is also fundamental to achieve overall economic growth in developing countries and reduce poverty. Furthermore, in all societies women are often powerful actors in the promotion of sustainable development and social justice, as well as agents for peace and democracy. Likewise, empowered women can contribute to the health and productivity of whole families and communities and to improved prospects for the next generation. Therefore, it is very critical to empower and capacitate women in general and poor women from the discriminated castes and ethnicities in particular and address issue of human rights violation of women, and also ensure women's effective participation and presence in all phase of reconciliation, reintegration and recovery process. Empowering women is an indispensable strategy for advancing development and reducing poverty.

The empowerment of women is fundamentally a human rights and social justice issue. But it is also important for poverty reduction, economic growth and human development. Interventions aimed for promoting women's economic empowerment work towards the full recognition and realization of women's socio-economic rights. The socio-economic empowerment of women contributes to poverty reduction for all especially in low income households which is vital for household survival. In addition, promoting women's economic empowerment facilitates the achievement of other important public policy goals such as economic growth, improves human development, and reduced violence. Women empowerment is seen today as the single most important factor contributing to equality between women and men. Economic stability increases an individual's option and choices in

life. Economic empowerment puts women in stronger positions and gives them the power to participate, together with men, in the shaping of society, to influence development at all levels of society, and to make decisions that promote their families and their own wellbeing.

Gender equality benefits both men and women but as women are marginalized as economic actors due to structural inequalities that leave more women than men economically insecure. Women's improved economic situation provides opportunities to escape exploitative relationship at home by breaking the economic dependence on a partner that is often at the root cause of domestic violence. Empowerment entails an expansion of women's choices. Similarly, investing in the women's empowerment and in the promotion of gender equality has broad multiplier effects for human development because there is a positive correlation with children's health and education and overall wellbeing of the family. Because well empowered people can earn more, save more, investing in children's education, educated people can get good job by which earn more, their economic activities will be high then contribute to the nation in overall economic development.

Past efforts have not been so effective in building an equitable society in Nepal by eliminating the regional, class-based, caste-based and other social discriminations. The gap of discrimination prevailing in various regions, classes, castes and communities can still be seen. The voices against such discriminations have obviously been pronounced in political arena today. A lot more still has to be done to establish women's access to the resources and means and control over them, to eliminate various sorts of discriminations and exploitations, to increase the employment opportunities, to make women's participation meaningful in decision-making process, to eliminate inequality among women, and to incorporate the women's contribution in the national level, this project is designed for addressing the above stated problem and issues.

1.4 Objectives of the study

Mapping the overall impacts of the project to the beneficiaries and local bodies of project VDCs of Myagdi is the overall objective of the study. However, the immediate/specific objectives are as follows:

1. To find out the impacts of the project in the way to empowering women; and
2. To assess the changes in the capacity of local bodies and women empowerment groups and networks.

1.5 Limitation of the study

This study is completed in very short period. It is based on and limited to the participants of the project empowering women for gender equality. The study is very specific, like a case study. So, the conclusion drawn from this study is only indicative rather than conclusive. The conclusion might not be generalized for the whole. But, the inference might be valid to some extent to areas that have similar geographic and socio- economic settings.

1.6 Organization of the study

This study is presented in seven chapters. The first chapter deals with introductory aspects of the study. It discusses the background of the study, statement of the problem, rationale or significance of the study, general and specific research objectives, limitations of the study.

The second chapter is for methodology adopted for this study which is divided into four subchapters: research design, study area and sample size, information generation methods and analysis of collected raw information.

Chapter three is for literature review. In this chapter existing knowledge is tried to describe in brief. Fifth chapter is for analysis and discussion of the information. Result of the study is presented in different eight subheadings. Information collected from different questions are presented in these sub headings. It tabulates, describes, and analyses the data and findings as scheduled in questionnaire.

The sixth and seventh chapter is mainly belongs to major findings the study, conclusion, and recommendations for further study and for policy decision.

CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was concluded with the help of some established system of research and following sets of methods were adopted while conducting impact evaluation of the project "Empowering women for gender equality".

2.1 Research Design

For research purpose, primarily a qualitative type of descriptive research design was applied for this study. As per the nature of an empirical study, it was mainly based upon primary data collection through field survey. A survey instrument – open ended questionnaire (annex 1) was framed and used to generate information at community level. The responses of the beneficiaries about the project activities and its impacts were obtained through face-to-face interview. It involved the systematic collection and presentation of data to give a clear picture of project status during of the project period. It is a fact-finding operation i.e. searching for adequate information. Qualitative method was used more, rather than quantitative method as per the nature of the study. The principal components of the research methodology and design, namely, selection of the study area, the sample design, the survey design, and the method of processing and analysing the data are presented hereafter.

2.2 Study area and sample size

All project six VDC was selected for conducting this study. Project activities were implemented in all ward of those wards. Among the directly benefited people 54 were selected from 54 wards of 6 VDCs for field survey on the sampling basis. The key information about project activities and its impact on social and economic life of beneficiaries; means of income generation adopted by farmers and its impact in their socio-economic life; and benefit sharing of the project were observed. Similarly, people's observation regarding the project were tried to obtain through informal discussion. A stratified random sampling method was applied to select the respondent. Wards of project VDC were considered as strata of diversities. Among the 54 respondents 48 or about eighty nine (88.9 per cent) were women and rest just more than eleven (11.1 per cent) were men. VDC wise details of respondents is mentioned in table 1, above. Similarly, respondents were also categorized in terms of caste. According to the table 2 including here around forty-three (42.6 per cent) respondents were from *Janajati* community and about forty one (40.7 per cent) respondents were from *Brahimin* and *Chhetri* community. Dalit were about seventeen (16.7 per cent).

Table 1 : Respondents by sex				
SN	VDC	Men	Women	Total
1	<u>Ghatan</u>	1	8	9
		11.1	88.9	100
2	<u>Patlekheth</u>	0	9	9
		0.0	100.0	100
3	<u>Jhin</u>	1	8	9
		11.1	88.9	100.0
4	<u>Kuhun</u>	2	7	9
		22.2	77.8	100
5	<u>Babiachaur</u>	1	8	9
		11.1	88.9	100
6	<u>Singa</u>	1	8	9
		11.1	88.9	100
	Total	6	48	54
	Per cent	11.1	88.9	100

Source : Field survey, 2016

To conduct the field survey, households were considered as the lowest level sample units, no more than one member of each sampled household were identified and consulted as the respondent. Thus, the total numbers of respondents were 54 from grassroots. Similarly, consideration was given to make more inclusive nature of respondents from different caste, ethnic society, and sex. The number of respondents from each institution was varied and were selected based on population distribution of the concerning VDCs and municipalities.

Table 2 : Respondents by caste					
SN	VDC	<u>Brahimin</u> <u>Cheetri</u>	Dalit	<u>Janajati</u>	Total
1	<u>Ghatan</u>	4	1	4	9
		44.4	11.1	44.4	100.0
2	<u>Patlekhet</u>	4	1	4	9
		44.4	11.1	44.4	100.0
3	<u>Jhin</u>	1	0	8	9
		11.1	0.0	88.9	100.0
4	<u>Kuhun</u>	4	2	3	9
		44.4	22.2	33.3	100.0
5	<u>Babiachaur</u>	3	3	3	9
		33.3	33.3	33.3	100.0
6	<u>Shingha</u>	6	2	1	9
		66.7	22.2	11.1	100.0
	Total	22	9	23	54
	Per cent	40.7	16.7	42.6	100.0

Source : Field survey, 2016

2.3 Methods of information generation

This study was carried out and completed by using the following set of methodology. Both primary and secondary data/information were collected to fulfil the basic requirements of the study. As per the nature of the study, it was mainly based on primary data, although secondary data are also used for conceptual clearance and shaping the primary information. Therefore, it is a combination of both sources of information generation.

A. Secondary information

Secondary information are needed right from the conception of the study, that is, to identify the problem under study, to base the research rationale, to decide the tools which are used in the study (data generation to analysis), demarcate and describe the study area. Besides, they are useful in comprehending and comparing against certain fresh findings in order to draw more realistic inferences.

The principal sources of secondary information comprising relevant literature/documents published or unpublished books, research reports, seminar papers, academic and professional journals, newspapers, news magazines were studied and analysed. Report of strategic partners related to this project such as Office of the Women and Children, DDC, District Agriculture Development Office (DADO), District Livestock Support Office (DLSO), Ministry of Agriculture and Department of Agriculture were consulted duly.

B. Primary Data/Information

Primary data are collected through the use of standardized questionnaires and completed through interviewing the sampled respondents in community level. Questionnaire for field survey were finalized after pre-testing them in the appropriate field. Likewise, an informal

talk and consultation was done with the agencies/stakeholders those are also indirectly related to such practice in study area. All sets of questionnaire for field survey were translated into Nepali, printed and photo copied with adequate number of copies. The researcher himself visited all respondents and collected information to omit possible errors. To standardize the research outcomes and making the task more valid and sensitive, few other relevant data collection tools were also used before-during-after process of information collection. Opinions and ideas of local officials, especially teachers, community people, leaders were also mentioned during generalizing the findings.

2.4 Analysis and presentation of information

The quality of research output depends not only on the accuracy of information collection, but also on how the collected information is handled. Careful scrutiny, editing, and standardizing of the information is therefore the prerequisites for processing data.

Completed questionnaires were cleaned immediately after the interview and corrections were made wherever required. Therefore, all verified or checked raw data were sorted, presented, interpreted, and analysed with the help of computer methods and those were truly and sincerely looked or checked before presenting them into report. Analysis was done both qualitatively and quantitatively. Simple descriptive and frequencies were used to get the general analytical outlook of the information. As the main statistical tool Microsoft excel was used for analysing the collected and compiled information.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

Unless and until people are empowered the aim of development will not be achieved. Empowering lagging class people is essential to mainstream them in development process. Gender equality and women empowerment is essential to attain the international development goals, and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It is clear that the economic and political empowerment of women is not only a driving force for gender equality, but it is also fundamental to achieve overall economic growth in developing countries to reduce poverty and social cleaves. Furthermore, in all societies women are often powerful actors in the promotion of sustainable development and social justice, as well as agents for peace and democracy during conflict or in post-conflict situations. In recognition of this important link, MDG 3 strives to promote gender equality and empower women and MDG 5 seeks to improve maternal health. However, success in reducing poverty and in achieving equality between women and men will depend on ensuring that all MDGs were addressed in a way that promote gender equality and empower women. Despite this, there is still a tendency on the part of both partner countries and donors not to priorities actions for gender equality.

Nepal is well known about the multi caste nation and it is one of the caste divided society heavily influenced and dominated by a patriarchal worldview; women are seen as a lower to men and are treated as their dependents regardless of their education or economic attainments. Discrimination against women starts from their birth and continues throughout their life. But it is different among societies, castes, places and time. At home they are second to their sons and inferior to husbands, in office they are clerks and secretaries to male officers. In the socio-political public life they are used as eye witnesses to policies and decision made by men. In all spheres, Nepali women are well behind their male counterparts. Various significant efforts have been taken to empower the downtrodden people. Sectoral policies and programs were also developed to address their specific concerns and issues.

Nepal has made significant achievements in educational attainment. Literacy levels have been increased significantly, particularly during the last two decades. Male literacy in six years and above age group reached 75 per cent in 2012, 65 per cent in 2001 from 34 per cent in 1981. Similarly, the female literacy rate is also increased so far and reached 57 per cent in 2012, 43 per cent in 2001 which was 12 per cent in 1981. The progress in literacy levels of the younger group is quite significant. The difference in male/female literacy level has also declined in 15-19 age group. However, in the younger age group the progress seems to be much slower. As education level increases, the number of women with comparable educational degrees decreases. While 77 women had primary education per hundred men with similar level of education in 2011, only 43 had School Leaving Certificate or higher and only 23 had graduate degrees or higher. The later ratio has remained virtually unchanged since 1991.

Gender division of role and responsibilities has been creating unequal access of girls and women to education and other sectors. Girls are facing much more discrimination in access to quality education. Boys everywhere are given better educational opportunities by parents, who send them to private school or to cities while the girls, particularly those from villages,

have few such opportunities. Families usually send their boys to India or overseas for further education, but few girls get such opportunities. The primary reason behind this is the gender aspect.

Gender-based violence against women has always been a vexing issue in Nepalese society. It occurs in all communities irrespective of class, caste/ethnicity, religion, social status, educational background or geographical position. With the modernization and heavily use of means of mass communication, women's mobility and assertiveness have increased. Increasing erosion of the land-based economy has increased their need to work outside the family. But in a society dominated by patriarchal systems, this has given rise to new kinds of clashes within the family. An old form of violence in the domestic and public spheres is intensifying. Along with this, women face situation of violence in streets, workplace, police custody, and as victims of war and conflict. Gender-based violence is not only committed physically, psychologically, and emotionally, it is also committed in the name of culture and tradition. Such manifestations include polygamy, polyandry, *deuki*, *badi*, bonded labour, *jari*, widowhood, child marriage, witch-hunting, dowry related violence, etc. Cultural violence such as seclusion and banishment to cow sheds, forcing women and their newborns to live in inhuman conditions and risk their lives, is widely practiced in Mid and Far Western region, especially among the so called high caste groups.

A large part of women's work is not considered as economic activity, although women work for more hours than men and take the major responsibility for maintaining the family. Available data (UNDP, 2004) indicate that women face higher levels of unemployment and underemployment in both rural and urban areas. Most women workers-over 70 per cent are confined to self-employed, unpaid and low wage informal sector serviced with their contribution although extremely significant often underreported and unrecognized. The development of export industries, such as carpet, garment and woolen goods has opened up some avenues of formal employment for women.

The number of women in nonagricultural work force has increased from 20.2 per cent in 1991 to 34 per cent in 2001 (CBS, 2001). However, here also women are concentrated in low income and low capital intensive jobs. In overall, women earn about four fifths of what men earn in the agriculture sector and three fourths of men outside agriculture (NLSS, 1996). On the bureaucratic front, out of 93,716 civil service posts only 8.55 per cent are occupied by females (CEDAW, 2002). So far, only one woman has served as an ambassador and as a judge of the Supreme Court. Head of the state, Parliament Speaker are also women in Nepal. However, in university job, still there is no women vice chancellor yet in Nepal. Access to and control over sources of the total land holdings, females own only around 20 per cent (CBS, 2012).

The issue of violence against women and girls cuts across all classes and all ages in Nepali societies. Gender-based violence serves as a brake in the path of socio-economic development. Deep rooted superstitious beliefs and attitudes still prevail in our society. In the name of such beliefs many women and girls are accused of being possessed by a witch or of

practicing witchcraft. They become victims of physical and mental torture and are compelled to live a life of humiliation and neglect.

The goal of equality between men and women and the promotion of women's rights are enshrined in international conventions and commitments such as CEDAW, the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and are also a fundamental value and principle for the European Union (EU). However, despite substantial progress over the last few decades, women and girls still constitute the large majority of the world's poorest subsisting on less than 1 US dollar a day. Women are under-represented in governments and decision-making bodies have fewer opportunities within the labour and financial markets and are paid significantly less than their male counterparts. Moreover, the current financial and economic crisis will have a gender-specific impact which, if left ignored, could hamper the progress achieved in gender equality in recent years.

The proportion of economically active women in Nepal has always been high compared to other South Asian countries. The predominance of subsistence agriculture and male migration from the hills, poverty and the cultural composition of the population (a large proportion of which does not observe taboos on female seclusion) partly account for such high activity rates. As per the 2011 census, women's economic activity rate was 57 per cent, 11 per cent above the 1991 rate. This increase is accounted for by three factors: increase in actual participation defined as economic, redefinition of the activities themselves, and more detailed and specific description of activities in the census manual and training. All these factors are positive from a gender perspective, as they contribute to making women's work visible. However, this presents some difficulty in comparative analysis.

In Nepal, women constitute 48 per cent of the agricultural and 34 per cent of the non-agricultural labour force. The new definition of the non-agricultural sector includes water and fuel collection and processing food for household use and thus is less useful for comparative analysis through time. The subsistence sector is becoming more feminized than what is visible from these statistics. This is not favourable from a gender perspective, as it suggests further segregation of women to low paying activities. A more relevant indicator is their proportion in non-agricultural wage employment, which is only 18 per cent compared to 51 per cent in the agriculture sector.

A substantial proportion of women are confined to household work due to social and reproductive reasons. Even if homemaking activities, such as household maintenance and childcare, do not fall within the production boundary defined by the systems of national accounts, such activities nevertheless are necessary for human reproduction and no economy can survive without them (UNDP, 1995). For Nepal, Acharya (1998) shows that valuing such services even at minimum prices would yield an amount equivalent to measured Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Women's access to health and education services is often taken as an indicator of their social status and achievements in this area as indicators of their empowerment. A woman's health and educational achievements are products of many dimensions of her subordination to

patriarchal structures and ideology. The social ideology of gender roles determines her access to education, information, division of labour and employment avenues, and ultimately her opportunity spectrum and life options.

The proportion of widowed, divorced and separated women is declining, but still there were women already widowed by 19 years of age. Young widows, particularly in the Indo-Aryan community, are subject to covert and overt violence and face both psychological (as forerunners of misfortune) and physical violence, often for their share of property. In other communities where traditionally remarriage was accepted, the influence of the dominant Indo-Aryan culture is making widowhood more and more of a problem, especially among the ethnic elite. Children in remarriages suffer most from violence.

Women's empowerment maintained by education and awareness have not gained sustainable position yet. The approach of governmental, and various private sectors lighting lamp of women empowerment have shown some fruitful improving outcomes. But it seems not enough; the rising critical contraction is visualized by prominent gap of women status between urban and rural areas of Nepal. There are a lot of things to be improved from each and every member of Nepalese society. After all, women empowerment is not only burning issue representing women's right but also a duty of every man which should be radiated as heat of inspiration; respect and love from their soul (helvetas, 2016).

Empowerment doesn't only include efficient approach to education and employment but also natural right to decide, equality and understanding. Withdrawing any of these factors can lower women's status in human society. Urban areas having effective education and awareness have maintained a good slandered of women potential in socio-economic aspect but it still seems unserviceable in field. Although there is easy reach to legal activity, communication, awareness and other activities like; indoor gender discrimination, sexual harassment and assault in public place, illegal polygamy etc. is still prevalent in city areas. Education not only formal but also informal is a key drawback of Nepalese society resisting women empowerment in Nepal.

CHAPTER 4: THE STUDY AREA

4.1 An out look over Myagdi district

As of the study area, it is here necessary to provide short background information about the Myagdi district. Discussed in this chapter are the physiographical setting and as well as the social, cultural and economic circumstances in brief.

A. *Physiographical setting*

Nepal was divided into four development region in 2022 and added another one in 2037 by the aim of decentralized development approach. Among these five development regions of Nepal, WDR is one, in which there are 16 districts, among them Myagdi is one which has now 1 municipality and 38 VDCs and 27,762 households. It is located 28° 20' to 28° 47' north latitude and 83° 08' to 83° 53' east longitude in world map. It is situated in the middle part of the Western Development Region and is one of the small districts of the country. Parbat, Kaski and Manang in the east, Baglung lies in south, Baglung and Rukum in west, and finally Dolpa and Mustang districts are in north part of this district.

Beni is the districts headquarter of Myagdi which is 290 KM far from capital city Kathmandu and 80 KM far from Pokhara to the west. Beni is declared municipality two years ago by joining the adjoining three VDCs (Arthunge, Ghatan, and Singha). Including these three VDCs, Patlekhet, Jhin, Babiachaur, and Kuhun are the study area. The elevation of Myagdi is 792 m Khabara village of Ratnechaur VDC to 8163 m Dhaulagiri Mountain (Mudi VDC). The total area of the district is 229,706 ha in which 19,498 ha is arable (*khet* land: occupies 3954 ha and *bari land* 15,544 ha, and forest area 84,452 ha). There is a great vertical differentiation in the land where 233.4 ha is above 40° in steepness (Gaudel 2004:21). Only 1.72 per cent of the arable land in Maygdi has irrigation facility. Temperate and sub-temperate types of climate prevail in Myagdi district where average maximum temperature is 36° c and minimum -6°c.

As it is elevated from north to south it has got different customs, cultures and conventions which are differ from each belt to another, VDC to VDC in some cases. Similarly, a geophysical and climatic condition of the district is varied in the different altitude. Due to the remoteness and inaccessible landscape of the district there is limited scope of modern development in a cost effective manner. Vehicular roads and electricity supply in remote villages have to be reached. However, as the recent developmental activities, especially the extension of the road network, have been bringing about significant changes into the study area much more is extended to occur in the future. But, some new opportunities are being opening by making North South Highway and local motorable roads to mitigate the hardships of mountain people. *Kaligandaki* highway is one example in this way.

B. Socio-cultural and economic characteristics

Out of 113,641 total populations (in 27,762 households) 51.74 per cent are economically active population (DDC: 2067). Ethnically, there are 16 castes and various tribal groups reside in this area. There is total 2.1KM all season road (only around Beni). Owing to the different numbers and types of castes resides here; Myagdi is rich in cultural practices and various religiously important places. Among them, *Malika*, *Galeshwor Dham*, *Paulatsya ashram*, *Maharani than*, and *Jagannath temple etc.* are the major in this regards.

Despite some exception of above stated overall situation of the socio-economic and geo physical conditions of the Myagdi, it has got more opportunity for tourism development. One of the biggest trekking routes of Nepal, the world famous Annapurna trekking route lies in the district. One of the mountain districts (Mustang) of WDR is now connected by motorable road to the southern hilly districts. *Kaligandaki* Highway is now constructing to connect Mustang to Sunauli within a short span of time. It would be the great opportunity for the people of Myagdi and other adjoining districts to the easy access of outside world. Fruit production (mainly apple and apricot production in Myagdi and Mustang, for instance) and promotion of herbal production, religious tourism and adventure tourism, and promotion of home stay programme in the district is mostly feasible as it is rich in culture.

Similarly, the overall status of peoples of Myagdi district is slightly above from national average. Country's most important highway: *Prithvi* Highway connected Myagdi to capital city and other major city of the country by Pokhara Baglung highway, which opened up the door of development as an economic infrastructure of development. People of this district mainly are able to obtain remittance from foreign employment. People of low land area, mainly *Myagdi Khola* corridor of this district are now gradually associating to the commercial farming (fruits, vegetable and other cash crops such as coffee).

The people of the Myagdi are seen more development oriented having self-managing skill and knowledge. Around 49.02 per cent ethnic and tribal groups are even resides in this district. They have separate forms of traditional local development means and approaches. The *Dhikuti* system of *Thakali*, *Bheja* of *Magar*, *Guthi* of *Newar* are also seem very effective in this regards. In most of the ethnic and tribal groups in this region, most social problems and conflicts are self-managed (*Mukhiya* of *Thakali* and *Gurung* society is one of the successful example of this). It is the most successful example of traditional community development practice of Nepal. Since the time immemorial, more locals have been found in active participation in the decision-making of the local affairs. After, restoration of multiparty democracy in 1990 and second mass appraisal of 2006, 9 political parties are active in Myagdi with different ideologies and approaches, and they hold the most significant role in decision-making as local government bodies are vacant since July 16, 2002. In most of the VDCs, the level of people's participation in local development and decision-making is now seeing reducing sharply, because citizen's groups are now fragmented and make frustrated due to excessive party politics with corruption and irregularities in local bodies.

In recent year, the trend of foreign employment has been raised in everywhere of country. Young generation of VDC is flying over the Gulf countries, developed countries and industrial countries e.g. Japan, South Korea and German etc. in search of foreign employment. Likewise, several young from this village are serving as labors in the cities of India. Foreign employment of this VDC can be taken as a source of income and major drive of socio-cultural changes, but it has bad impact on their agrarian economy and cultural preservation.

The Brahmins are culturally agrarian people in this VDC. Their economy is largely based on agriculture. Their economy is characterized as subsistence economy. Nevertheless, than that of other occupational group of the VDC. Some of the Brahmins are seemed engaged in the government services.

Some people of this VDC are seemed to be inclined towards the trade and business e.g. tea stalls, poultry farm, agro-processing mill to other cottage as well as small industrial activities outside and inside the village. Most of the trade and business is situated at the Beni *Bazaar*. The majority of occupational group (so called untouchable) *Kami*, *Damai* and *Sarkis* are landless or small size landholders. Most of them passing their life by serving high castes as hired waged labors in agricultural work. During agricultural off-season they work as porters, construction workers and wage labors within and outside of the VDC. Most of the *Damai* and *Kami* households have still carried out their traditional occupation of tailoring and making agricultural and household utensils.

As a whole, the economy of the VDC is characterized by subsistence economy. In the aspect of trade and business it has not yet growing rapidly but started smoothly. But, in the level of literacy the village has the sound literacy rate even in the entire district.

CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

There are two fairly distinct purposes for which people at local levels can come together to act collectively for contributing their own development: (a) to improve their productivity and well-being by self-help measures; and (b) to advance their interests through advocacy-making claims on government for more services or subsidies, seeking better enforcement of laws, proposing policies that would be more favorable, creating alliances to put more pressure on outside agencies. As stated above, the main aim of this project is to increase rural women's access to services - not only to credit but also to education, health care, and social standing through group formation, to increase their involvement in community level decision-making process. Major result of the project "Empowering women for gender equality" is discussed in this section.

5.1 Basic information about respondents

During the field survey, some social and demographic background of the respondents was recorded. In the background information of the respondents there is name, VDC, and caste is mentioned in questionnaire. Among them, name is found meaningless and it is not computed during the analysis. The social and demographic backgrounds of the respondents have been cross tabulated by VDC. Among six project VDCs, Ghatan and Singha have *Brahimin* and *Chhetri* in more number. But in other four have *Janajati* people are higher in number. Some parameters and computed figures are tried to describe hereunder in succeeding paragraphs and sections.

The study area comprise multi ethnic group mainly *Janajaties* are in majority position. So, larger number of *Janajati* people were selected for one to one interview. In total, 8 caste were encountered and interviewed during the field survey. Among the recorded castes of respondents, *Brahimin Chhetri* holds the highest position with around forty-nine, and followed by *Janajaties* group and *Dalit* comprises in third position. Respondents visited during the field survey are tabulated and analysed.

5.2 Effectiveness of group

Group base approach is one of the model of community mobilization. It has long history and government of Nepal has been started to adopt this approach since 1980s. It was formally introduced when Government of Nepal was tried to implement decentralization in local governance and local development process. At first it was started by government as user group, community forest user group is one of the success model for instance in this regard. It was commonly used in practice since after restoration of democracy when NGO movement is high.

Various types of group has been practicing since after 2047 for mobilizing the community for their own betterment. Somewhere separate groups of men and women are forming and in some cases it was forming with the participation of men and women in single group. In this project 54 women empowerment groups were formed in the inception period of the project. Some groups are formed with the participation of both men and women and few are formed with

single sex (women only). During this study respondent were asked by what type of groups are found more useful for this project. Majority of the respondents observed that mixed groups are more effective to empower the women.

Table 3 : More appropriate or preferred group				
SN	VDC	Mixed	Separate	Total
1	Ghatan	8	1	9
		88.9	11.1	100.0
2	Patlekhhet	6	3	9
		66.7	33.3	100.0
3	Jhin	7	2	9
		77.8	22.2	100.0
4	Kuhun	6	3	9
		66.7	33.3	100.0
5	Babiachaur	5	4	9
		55.6	44.4	100.0
6	Shingha	3	6	9
		33.3	66.7	100.0
	Total	35	19	54
	Per cent	64.8	35.2	100.0

Source : Field survey, 2016

About sixty-five (64.8 per cent respondents claim that mixed type of group are seem more effective and remaining around thirty-five (35.2 per cent were observed that single sex or separate groups are more appropriate. In VDC specific discussion around 90 per cent respondents of Ghatan VDC were observed participation of both men and women in women empowerment group is more effective as gender issue is not easy to address without joint efforts of men and women. But around sixty-seven (66.7 per cent) respondents of Singha VDC observed separate groups are easier more. The detail information about this issue is can be observed from table 3.

5.3 Support to women by family

In under developed society like Nepal, in house activities are mainly assigned to women. Some studies shows that Nepali women spent more than 18 hours in household chores. But their contribution is not counted while calculating GDP. This situation is different in diverse situation, caste or in places. Some societies are more open to women empowerment or women are open to play decision making role in household affairs, but some are more rigid. In mountain and upper hilly area, women have more decision-making role but it is too weak in *terai* area. Men of some societies still considered women should do household activities and outdoor activities are traditionally assigned to men. In more cases, men are not entertained to see women's involvement in societal activities and moving around the villages and district in the name of development. But *Janajati* families are found more open in empowering women. *Thakali*, Sherpa and in other family women have more decision-making power than that of men. And thus women form those society are able to earn money by conducting various businesses.

Table 4 : Support from family while involving women in group					
SN	VDC	Totally barrier	Little bit constraint	All satisfied	Total
1	Ghatan	1	2	6	9
		11.1	22.2	66.7	100.0
2	Patlekheth	1	3	5	9
		11.1	33.3	55.6	100.0
3	Jhin	2	2	5	9
		22.2	22.2	55.6	100.0
4	Kuhun	2	3	4	9
		22.2	33.3	44.4	100.0
5	Babiachaur	1	2	6	9
		11.1	22.2	66.7	100.0
6	Singha	1	2	6	9
		11.1	22.2	66.7	100.0
	Total	8	14	32	54
	Per cent	14.8	25.9	59.3	100.0

Source : Field survey, 2016

While conducting this study respondents were consulted how can you assess the response of your family member about your involvement in group activities. Whether they are supportive or you are blaming by your family. Three options were provided to them and about sixty (59.3 per cent) people claimed that their families are satisfied of her role and function by involving in group for community development activities. About twenty-six (25.9 per cent) respondents claimed that they felt a little bit barriers while they are talking about community development activities and participating in development activities. About fifteen (14.8 per cent) women respondents said that they have no opportunity to join group and active for development. During the discussion women from *Janajati* community observed that they are more open in outdoor activities and moving around villages and district headquarter to fulfil social responsibilities. However, women from *dalit* and *Brahmin* and *Chhetri* community have still some problem to involve social activities. Ghatan, Babiachaur and Singha VDCs have found similar response in this regard. The detail information about this issue is mentioned in table four above.

5.4 Benefited people

Women are the targeted direct beneficiary of this project but benefit achieved from the action is not remained to women only. Other family members are also equally benefited from the project because women's empowerment is not just remained to women. It is considered that or various studies shows that if mother is socially and economically empowered their children's health and educational attainment is also improved than other women. Similarly, in which family both men and women are able to earn their economic status will naturally high and their social status will also high. So, if women are empowered it will have multiplier effects in societies not only remained to women.

Table 5 : Mostly benefited people by the project						
SN	VDC	Janajati	Brahmin Chhetri	Dalit	Don't know	Total
1	Ghatan	1	4	3	1	9
		11.1	44.4	33.3	11.1	100.0
2	Patlekhhet	0	6	3	0	9
		0.0	66.7	33.3	0.0	100.0
3	Jhin	0	7	2	0	9
		0.0	77.8	22.2	0.0	100.0
4	Kuhun	1	5	3	0	9
		11.1	55.6	33.3	0.0	100.0
5	Babiachaur	1	6	2	0	9
		11.1	66.7	22.2	0.0	100.0
6	Singha	0	6	2	1	9
		0.0	66.7	22.2	11.1	100.0
	Total	3	34	15	2	54
	Per cent	5.6	63.0	27.8	3.7	100.0

Source : Field survey, 2016

Six VDCs of this project have belongs various caste groups. Majority of the people of these six VDCs are *Brahimin Chhetri* but Jhin and Kuhun VDCs are the Magar dominated. While discussing in the community about the impact of this project, one another question, in which caste group this action is found more effective was asked to each respondents. Sixty-three per cent respondents observed that it was more fruitful to *Brahimin* and *Chhetri* community which is followed by Dalit community with about twenty-eight (27.8 per cent). About six (5.6 per cent) claimed that it effective to *Janajati* and about four (3.7 per cent) were opined that they have no idea about this.

It was considered that *Janajati* communities are more opened in women's issue and such result is also observed in this action too. Gender related discrimination are commonly seen in *Brahimin Chhetri* community than other *Janajati* community in Nepali society. Similarly, *dalit* communities are also seen rigid in some extent in openness to the women. In Ghatan, Patlekhhet and Kuhun VDC, one third part of respondents said that *dalit* members are benefited from the project which is more than overall figure. The VDC wise detail about the beneficiaries of this project is mentioned in table 5, above.

5.5 Women's involvement in community development

Among key factors that make a development programme succeed, community participation is vital. It is observes that the levels of civic participation and civic trust has been declining during the last two decades of the 20th century. Many community and public leaders as well as many public officials are beginning to realize that public participation is important in an environment where the citizens have a diminished trust in government and are demanding more accountability from public officials. Administrators, elected officials, and community leaders have found that institutionalized neighbourhood participation in the policy processes results in a more informed, effective and participatory citizenry. But citizen must be empowered to achieve accountability, both in general and in relation to laws and rights

regarding various kinds of participation. Where public participation is weak there is more chances of capturing public resources by elite, it would create the deep social cleavage and widens the dimension of poverty, and consequently it increases inequality in underdeveloped countries, which may lead to conflict. Therefore, special controlling mechanism is essential to enhance democratic participation of poor and marginalized groups. Democratic participation will yield strong mechanism of accountability, which in turn, will improve the distribution of benefits to groups that are traditionally marginalized.

Table 6 : Level of women's participation in development					
SN	VDC	Same as before	Improved in quantity	Improved in quality	Total
1	Ghatan	0	2	7	9
		0.0	22.2	77.8	100.0
2	Patlekhhet	0	3	6	9
		0.0	33.3	66.7	100.0
3	Jhin	1	2	6	9
		11.1	22.2	66.7	100.0
4	Kuhun	2	3	4	9
		22.2	33.3	44.4	100.0
5	Babiachaur	1	3	5	9
		11.1	33.3	55.6	100.0
6	Singha	1	2	6	9
		11.1	22.2	66.7	100.0
	Total	5	15	34	54
	Per cent	9.3	27.8	63.0	100.0

Source : Field survey, 2016

During the discussion in what extent women's level of participation is increased after the implementation of this project was asked to respondents. According to the table mentioned here, sixty-three (63 per cent) respondents observed that their participation level is increased qualitatively not only in quantity. About twenty-eight (27.8 per cent) respondents claimed that women's level of participation is just improved quantitatively and 9.3 per cent respondents said that level of women's participation is same as it was earlier. About seventy-eight respondents from Ghatan VDC have observed that women's level of participation is increased both in quantity and quality.

5.6 LBs response to women

Local government are the key decision making bodies in democratic local governance system. People of certain area are develop the concept about the state and political system applied in the country. If the local bodies are able to recognize the importance of people's involvement in decision making then they are call the local people while making important decision. One of the objectives of this project was to strengthening the local government body's capacity and activities were implement in this way. Responsive, responsible and accountable local government are considered the important driver to enhance democratic, participatory decision-making or development system.

Table 7 : LBs response to women after this action					
SN	VDC	Respond positively	Slightly changed	Same as earlier	Total
1	Ghatan	6	3	0	9
		66.7	33.3	0.0	100.0
2	Patlekheth	5	3	1	9
		55.6	33.3	11.1	100.0
3	Jhin	7	2	0	9
		77.8	22.2	0.0	100.0
4	Kuhun	6	2	1	9
		66.7	22.2	11.1	100.0
5	Babiachaur	6	3	0	9
		66.7	33.3	0.0	100.0
6	Singha	6	2	1	9
		66.7	22.2	11.1	100.0
	Total	36	15	3	54
	Per cent	66.7	27.8	5.6	100.0

Source : Field survey, 2016

During the discussion respondent's responses were tried to find out in what extent VDCs are seems responsive and responsible while taking important decision. Three alternatives: respond positively, slightly changed and same as found in earlier years were provided to choose. According to the table above around sixty-seven (66.7 per cent) respondents observed that project VDCs are respond women and their group positively these days. While, about twenty-eight (27.8 per cent) respondents were opined it changed just slightly. VDC started to realized or remember women they are one of the key stakeholders. About six (5.6 per cent) respondents observed that LBs habit in this regard is same as earlier. About seventy-eight (77.8 per cent) respondents from Jhin VDC observed that VDC now acknowledging the women's participation in LBs decision-making system.

5.7 Women's participation in LBs decision making

Among key factors that make a development programme succeed, community participation is vital. It is observes that the levels of civic participation and civic trust has been declining during the last two decades of the 20th century. Many community and public leaders as well as many public officials are beginning to realize that public participation is important in an environment where the citizens have a diminished trust in government and are demanding more accountability from public officials. Administrators, elected officials, and community leaders have found that institutionalized neighbourhood participation in the policy processes results in a more informed, effective and participatory citizenry. But citizen must be empowered to achieve accountability, both in general and in relation to laws and rights regarding various kinds of participation. Where public participation is weak there is more chances of capturing public resources by elite, it would create the deep social cleavage and widens the dimension of poverty, and consequently it increases inequality in underdeveloped countries, which may lead to conflict.

Therefore, special controlling mechanism is essential to enhance democratic participation of poor and marginalized groups. Democratic participation will yield strong mechanism of accountability, which in turn, will improve the distribution of benefits to groups that are traditionally marginalized.

Participation of local people is one of the elements of good governance and basis for empowering people. It is considered that if people are involving in local decision making process they are able to know the importance of involvement in development activities and for empowering themselves. If people have not provided opportunity to join decision-making process their capacity will not be enhanced and they could not contribute to the society. During the discussion respondents were consulted about the status of their participation in local development process and in what extend VDC invited them to join planning and implementing process. To explore this four alternatives: a) VDC invited to in each planning step, b) only in village council meeting, and c) only to join user committee were given to respondents.

Table 8 : LBs invited women in policy decision					
SN	VDC	In all planning cycle	In VDC council only	Only in UGs	Total
1	Ghatan	9	0	0	9
		100.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
2	Patlekhet	8	1	0	9
		88.9	11.1	0.0	100.0
3	Jhin	8	1	0	9
		88.9	11.1	0.0	100.0
4	Kuhun	8	1	0	9
		88.9	11.1	0.0	100.0
5	Babiachaur	9	0	0	9
		100.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
6	Singha	8	1	0	9
		88.9	11.1	0.0	100.0
	Total	50	4	0	54
	Per cent	92.6	7.4	0.0	100.0

Source : Field survey, 2016

According to the table above, vast majority or about ninety-three (92.6 per cent) respondents observed that their VDC invited them in all steps of plan cycle after the implementation of this project. Just over seven (7.4 per cent) opined that they are only invited while publicizing the annual development plan or to join as audience of village council meeting. Few years ago women were invited to participate in user committee to fulfil the mandatory provision of Local Body Resource Mobilization Guidelines 2013. But nowadays women are not invited to join just in user group or committee. This situation shows that women's participation in local development activities or in LBs decision making system is started to improve.

5.8 Use of targeted group development fund

According to the LBs Resource Mobilization Guidelines 2013 prepared by the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development all LBs should be allocated 35 per cent capital budget to targeted group (at least 10 per cent for women, 10 per cent for children, and 15 per cent for other excluded people). Since the promulgation of this provision all LBs are allocating fund as per the provision in paper unless they are not succeed in MCPM mapping. But such budget is usually twisting in other sector. They are regularly fail in using the targeted group development budget. Most LBs are using targeted group development fund in road construction and they are fail to mainstreaming the excluded people. The aim of targeted group development fund is to making them capable to claim their rights and access to public services. But it is the common problem in LBs (DDC, municipality and VDCs) of Nepal. In this connection, one question such as how can you asses the targeted group development budget using by your VDC. Three options (a) allocating in respective sector but make expenditure in another sector, (b) allocate in respective sector and make expenditure as per plan, and (c) the practice in this regard is same as earlier were provided to respondents.

Table 9 : Use of targeted group development budget by LBs					
SN	VDC	Allocate in one sector but expend in other	Expended as per guidelines	Same as earlier	Total
1	Ghatan	2	7	0	9
		22.2	77.8	0.0	100.0
2	Patlekhhet	3	5	1	9
		33.3	55.6	11.1	100.0
3	Jhin	3	5	1	9
		33.3	55.6	11.1	100.0
4	Kuhun	4	5	0	9
		44.4	55.6	0.0	100.0
5	Babiachaur	2	7	0	9
		22.2	77.8	0.0	100.0
6	Singha	2	6	1	9
		22.2	66.7	11.1	100.0
	Total	16	35	3	54
	Per cent	29.6	64.8	5.6	100.0

Source : Field survey, 2016

According to the above mentioned table significant changes can be observed in these six project VDCs. About sixty-five (64.8 per cent) respondents observed that their VDCs is now using targeted group development fund in respective sector for which they were decided during the planning stage. About thirty (29.6 per cent) respondents observing that LBs are still twisting targeted group development fund. Once they decide women targeted budget for women's capacity development activities but it is diverted in other activities in the time of implementation. Around six (5.6 per cent) respondents claim that the status is not change and it is same as earlier found. In Kuhun VDC is found twisted in other sector but in Ghatan and Babichaur it is expended in same sector for which they were once decided.

5.9 Gender responsive planning

Gender responsive budgeting (GRB) is a means of integrating a gender perspective into all steps of the planning and budgeting process – planning, drafting, implementing and evaluating – so as to ensure that budget and programme policies take in to consideration the gender issues in society and neither directly nor indirectly discriminate against either women or men. Governments' policy makers, researchers and community groups all have an interest in GRB as a strategy for promoting gender equality, because it is through budgets that policies and programmes are taken beyond paper promises and put into practice. However, very little consideration is given to the impact budgets have upon men and women respectively. A link between government budgets and gender issues is usually not explicitly made, and gender issues are often addressed by social rather than economic policy. Consequently, government budgets are often perceived as gender – neutral. This gender – neutral assumption ignores the fact that budgetary impacts are often different and unequal between men and women.

Table 10 : Adoption of gender responsive planning system by LBs					
SN	VDC	Adopted	Not adopted	Don't know	Total
1	Ghatan	7	1	1	9
		77.8	11.1	11.1	100.0
2	Patlekheth	6	2	1	9
		66.7	22.2	11.1	100.0
3	Jhin	5	3	1	9
		55.6	33.3	11.1	100.0
4	Kuhun	6	2	1	9
		66.7	22.2	11.1	100.0
5	Babiachaur	6	2	1	9
		66.7	22.2	11.1	100.0
6	Singha	6	2	1	9
		66.7	22.2	11.1	100.0
	Total	36	12	6	54
	Per cent	66.7	22.2	11.1	100.0

Source : Field survey, 2016

Respondents were asked about the gender responsive planning: whether their VDCs are making gender responsive plan or not. Three option (a) Yes, VDC adopted this approach, (b) no VDC adopted this approach and (c) I don't know was provided to respondents go give response about in this issue. According the table mentioned above about sixty-seven (66.7 per cent) said that VDCs are started to make gender responsive plan. Just over twenty-two (22.2 per cent) claim that VDCs are not show any response about the gender issue till the date and they are not practicing the gender responsive planning system. Similarly, around eleven per cent respondents shows their ignorance about this question. In VDC about seventy-eight respondents of Ghatan VDC said that their VDC is adopted gender responsive planning system while making annual development plan. This information shows that grass root level government bodies are now familiar about the gender responsive plan in some extent.

5.10 Support to women related project

All local bodies in Nepal now implemented various specific project by targeting various target groups and areas as guidelines directed. Some remarkable result can be seen in women targeted budget in some area of this district. In some cases these project VDCs are tried to making and implementing women specific projects from women targeted budget and from other source too. But male people's support to such types of project is always the matter of discussion. It is believed that if men are supportive to these activities then their success rates will high if not it is not so meaningful in real sense. Many people nowadays realizing that men also benefited from women targeted budget indirectly and show readiness to support for women but in some case it has some problem to gain support from men. In what extend male peoples are found supportive to women related projects was asked to respondents during the discussion. They were given four different alternatives: a) fully satisfied about male people's support, b) partially satisfied, c) not satisfied at all, and d) no idea about this.

Table 11. Satisfaction about the support of men to women targeted project						
SN	VDC	Fully satisfied	Partially satisfied	Not satisfied	Don't know	Total
1	Ghatan	6	2	1	0	9
		66.7	22.2	11.1	0.0	100.0
2	Patlekhhet	5	2	1	1	9
		55.6	22.2	11.1	11.1	100.0
3	Jhin	3	6	0	0	9
		33.3	66.7	0.0	0.0	100.0
4	Kuhun	3	5	1	0	9
		33.3	55.6	11.1	0.0	100.0
5	Babiachaur	4	3	2	0	9
		44.4	33.3	22.2	0.0	100.0
6	Singha	3	3	2	1	9
		33.3	33.3	22.2	11.1	100.0
	Total	24	21	7	2	54
	Per cent	44.4	38.9	13.0	3.7	100.0

Source : Field survey, 2016

According to the table above, more than forty-four (44.4 per cent) respondents are agreed that they are fully satisfied to the male people's support over their activities or initiatives. About thirty-nine (38.9 per cent) respondents are partially satisfied about the support of the male people. Thirteen (13 per cent) respondents are not satisfied at all about the role and response of men to the directly women benefited project implemented in the VDC. Similarly, around four (3.7 per cent) respondents were not able to assess this issue. In Ghatan VDC about sixty-seven (66.7 per cent) respondents observed that they are fully satisfied with the men's role in women targeted project which is followed by Patlekhhet VDC. Similarly, about sixty-seven (66.7 per cent) people observed that they are partially agreed the support of men. From this result it can be assume that there are still some problem in gaining support from men to women targeted group. And women are not satisfied more about the male people's support for women related project conducted at local level in these VDCs.

5.11 State of domestic violence

Various forms of gender based violence are occurred in Nepali society since the time ago. It is one of the main causes of under development of Nepal society in overall and low empowerment level of women in particular. Both men and women's equal role is essential to make their society advance but in Nepal women still facing various torture and violence from family and society or institution. In recent times, there have emerged extensive accounts of violence against women. Systemic rape and other forms of gender based violence are increasingly used. Indeed, rape and other forms of sexual violence have been cited as major factors in undermining post-conflict peace process. Some of these issues, particularly domestic violence, and trafficking may reach higher levels after the conclusion of a conflict than were experience by the society before and during the conflict period.

One of the themes of the project implemented in these six VDCs of Myagdi district was to reduce gender based violence at household and beyond. During the field survey this issue was also taken for discussion among beneficiaries. Different four alternatives answers a) satisfactory, b) moderate, c) weak, and d) poor were given to them to judge in what extend this project is succeeded to reduce gender base violence those were frequently observed in this project VDCs. This issues was raised seriously while discussing to the respondents.

Table 12 : Achievement in reducing domestic violence						
SN	VDC	Satisfactory	Medium	Low	Poor	Total
1	Ghatan	4	3	2	0	9
		44.4	33.3	22.2	0.0	100.0
2	Patlekheth	5	2	1	1	9
		55.6	22.2	11.1	11.1	100.0
3	Jhin	4	4	1	0	9
		44.4	44.4	11.1	0.0	100.0
4	Kuhun	3	6	0	0	9
		33.3	66.7	0.0	0.0	100.0
5	Babiachaur	3	4	1	1	9
		33.3	44.4	11.1	11.1	100.0
6	Singha	3	4	2	0	9
		33.3	44.4	22.2	0.0	100.0
	Total	22	23	7	2	54
	Per cent	40.7	42.6	13.0	3.7	100.0

Source : Field survey, 2016

According to the table above, larger number (42.6 per cent) of respondents observed that this project's contribution in this sector is medium. Around forty-one (40.7 per cent) are agreed that the level of improvement in domestic violence decreasing is satisfactory. Thirteen per cent respondents opined it is low and about four (3.7 per cent) claim that it is poor or this project unable to address the domestic violence against women. Majority respondent or 55.6 percent people of Patlekheth were agreed this project is succeed to address the women's domestic violence cases. About sixty-seven (66.7 per cent) respondents of Kuhun VDC are observed that the achievement in this sector is medium.

5.12 Women's access and control

The main aim of the project is to empowering women through strengthening the capacity of women empowerment group. One of the specific goal is to enhance the access and control of women over local productive resources and services provided by various institutions (GO or NGO). Women empowerment group in all ward of the project VDCs were taken as a means and grass root level institution to implement the intended activities. All six project VDCs have one VDC level network of women groups that is now leading to raise women's issues and implementing women related project within their jurisdiction. Women groups' leadership has been found changed at least in two years terms. VDC level networks are found success to build positive relationship with VDC and other local development stakeholders.

Table 13 : Women's access and control over resources and local institutions				
SN	VDC	In natural resources	In social and financial institutions	Total
1	Ghatan	2	7	9
		22.2	77.8	100.0
2	Patlekhhet	2	7	9
		22.2	77.8	100.0
3	Jhin	3	6	9
		33.3	66.7	100.0
4	Kuhun	2	7	9
		22.2	77.8	100.0
5	Babiachaur	3	6	9
		33.3	66.7	100.0
6	Singha	2	7	9
		22.2	77.8	100.0
	Total	14	40	54
	Per cent	25.9	74.1	100.0

Source : Field survey, 2016

To find out the further information related to capacity development (institutional or personal) of women, few question were discussed among them during field survey. First of all they were consulted in which areas their access is increased significantly and two alternatives a) in economic or financial resources, and b) in social institution were given to choose any one.

Among 54 respondents 40 or more than seventy-four (74.1 per cent) respondents were claim that women's access and control is increasing in social and financial institutions after the implementation of this project. Just around twenty-six (25.9 per cent) were observed that their access and control is increasing in natural resource utilization and conservation. While talking with them they are claim that women's participation in school management committee, user groups, clubs is increasing not only in figure but also in quality as well. From the table above it can be seen that level of access and control of women in social and financial institution is high in Singha, Ghatan, Patlekhhet and Kuhun VDC. Most of them said their access in local economic resources is increased with the help of this project and rest of them observed their access in financial or social institutions is increased in overall figure. After this project women's participation is now increasing and they are gaining more attention from villagers.

5.13 State of women's capacity development

Capacity development is one of the prerequisite for empowering people and or enhance productivity of institutions. It is well known that unless and until institutional capacity is enhance it cannot providing service effectively. Similarly, individual's capacity is also necessary to perform better job and earn more. In this study, four options were given to respondents while they are consulted by in which area you are empowered: a) in public speaking, b) increased in income, c) organization management, and d) increase in social status. Different views were found talking with them.

Table 14 : Areas of capacity development of women						
SN	VDC	Public speaking	Income earning	Group management	Social status	Total
1	Ghatan	3	2	2	2	9
		33.3	22.2	22.2	22.2	100.0
2	Patlekheth	3	1	1	4	9
		33.3	11.1	11.1	44.4	100.0
3	Jhin	2	2	2	3	9
		22.2	22.2	22.2	75.0	141.7
4	Kuhun	2	2	0	5	9
		22.2	22.2	0.0	45.5	89.9
5	Babiachaur	2	2	1	4	9
		22.2	22.2	11.1	44.4	100.0
6	Singha	1	2	1	5	9
		11.1	22.2	11.1	100.0	144.4
	Total	13	11	7	23	54
	Per cent	24.1	20.4	13.0	42.6	100.0

Source : Field survey, 2016

Among them about forty-three (42.6 per cent) respondents observed that their social status is increased unexpectedly after this project. Now they say that public responsibility is necessary to build up capacity. All local (women and men) are acknowledge their role and responsibilities and achievement also. Just more than twenty-four (24.1 per cent) opined that their public speaking capacity is increased so far. They can now express their views and ideas openly in mass meeting and some of them are now easily handling or anchoring mass meeting at VDC level. More than twenty (20.4 per cent) respondents claimed that their economic status is enhancing after this project. Just 13 per cent respondents observes that their organizational management capacity is enhanced in this time while involving in group activities.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The major achievements or findings of this project activities are mentioned very briefly in this chapter in following points. These are drawn from the result of chapter five discussion and observation during the field survey.

6.1 Major findings

This study is tried to find out the major area of private and public life of women in which their status is improved or not by the end of the project as envisaged by the project. Questionnaire survey was conducted in the project VDC and they are analyzed or presented in previous chapter here is the major findings of the study.

1. *Capacity of LBs increased*

Local governments are the main vehicle to fulfil the local people's necessity as per the established rules and rules of the game. In the context of local body's capacity in Nepal, since last two decades, LBs have provided too many responsibilities and funds also provided to perform their responsibility. But their capacity is remained constant and it is the most important concern for each development stakeholders (local or national). This project has few activities for enhancing capacity of LBs. After this project, project VDCs have adopted gender responsive budgeting and planning while they making annual development plan. They have better result in targeted group development activities. They are now well adopted 14 step planning process. Local people's participation in ward level planning is increasing nowadays not only in quantity but also in quality. Once Ghatan VDC was failed while mapping MCPM before this project but its performance is improved now.

2. *Organizational development*

Local women were joined in different women empowerment groups from each project VDC and they also have one village level network in which all groups' representatives are joined and act collectively for their betterment. Village level network is found successful to coordinate all ward level groups and also make good collaboration with VDC also. During this project period, the organizational capacity is found developed all the decisions are practiced to taken with the consultation of all members joined in the group. All members are informed with agenda prior to the meeting of the group. Role and responsibility is said divided as per the member's capacity, though such groups are poor in resources but they are organized some capacity development training such as public speaking. Members' knowledge and skill in the field of social institutions is increased so far. All the documents such as minute, books of account, register, and other records are kept duly and members are informed about the financial health of their group. Each group active in the ward are now organizing mass meeting once a year and publicizing income and expenditure. They are now bearing social responsibility and support to LBs to use public accountability tools (public hearing, public auditing, social auditing, gender budget audit etc.).

3. *Women's access in decision-making*

One of the main aim of inclusion and empowerment process is to mainstream the excluded groups in local decision-making. Only access in small scale credit don't empower them, because there are no problem of small scale credit but there is need of entrepreneurship development skill. Resources are easily available at local. All the VDCs should allocate at least 10 per cent budget for women related project each year, similarly other development organization are also active in the rural area to empower excluded people. But unfortunately such opportunities are meaningless if they are not empowered and claim for the resources collectively. During this short period of this project the empowerment level of empowerment of local women is increased in some extend. VDCs are started to invite them in all planning steps and process. Women's participation in forest user groups, school management committees, and in other social institutions is found increased. Women are now found engaged and active to resolve the dispute included some incidents of gender based violence and talked in various human rights issues at local level.

4. *Decreasing gender based discrimination*

Gender is the socially constructed role, responsibility, norms, and values between man and woman. Nepali women are left behind in mainstream of development still nowadays because large number of women in Hindu dominated societies are deprived from development participation. There are too many legal provisions in the name of women. Women now are rich in legal provision but most of them are unknown about such provision. Local Bodies Grant Mobilization Guidelines 2067 made the mandatory provision about to allocate at least 35 per cent development budget to targeted group but they have no concern and unknown about this and VDC used to allocate this amount in another sector and fail while mapping minimum conditions of the VDCs. This is just for an example. During the project period legal awareness classes were organized in regular basis at community level and grass root level women who are never get such opportunities are benefited significantly. They now able to talk about legal rights of women and other excluded section of the societies in this changed context.

5. *Increased bargaining capacity of women*

Women and their groups were not consulted by the VDC before introducing this project. Women's participation in village level planning process is usually ignored by the villagers. But now women's bargaining capacity about their rights is enhanced. Local development stakeholders are found serious about the women's issues and their functional participation in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating and to sharing benefit of the development projects. All project VDCs are now include women related project in their annual village development plan not only by targeted group development budget but also by open budget. Women's access in VDC level decision-making is started to increase and their male partner also seen positive to their involvement in development campaigns.

5. Alternatives for livelihood

People of rural Nepal are still depending on the traditional means of livelihood; agriculture is the main source of income and life giving forces of vast majority people of Nepal. Larger part of agricultural land is now become barren due to the lack of young generation in village. Agricultural profession never became the profitable business and attractive for young generation and farmers are never respected by the state. Due to this reason, there is a problem of hand to mouth in many areas of the country. In this situation, women members are established one revolving fund at VDC level. Fund is mobilized to only group members in groups' collateral to income generation activities. Mainly women members are associated to the small scale poultry farming, goat rearing, tea stall etc. in the village. By the use of this fund members are able to earn NRs 10,000 to 100,000 additional income from the project. Some of the beneficiaries women proudly claimed that they are able to earn more than their husbands are earned in Middle East. They now started to growing fresh vegetable in rented land.

Getting loan from financial institution by women is not easy in Nepal as they have no land and other properties for collateral. So, all women empowerment groups in these project VDCs are established one seed fund and mobilizing this turn by turn and they are able to create informal lending mechanism in their own settlement. They all are managers for this fund. Almost all of the income generating activities are now implementing through this revolving fund. VDC and other nongovernmental institutions are provided fund in this. Thus, this project is also seen successful to support economic empowerment women or alternatives for livelihood. Revolving fund is found more effective till the date and it is considered the main base of sustainability.

Revolving fund 'a key for keeping people joining'

Patra Bahadur Malla age of 83 renowned social worker who lives in Patlekhet VDC 4 of Myagdi. He claims women of Patlekhet are now empowered significantly in various aspects. Now they are able to earn money by involving in farm base income generating activities and their social status is also increasing significantly. According to him women had no idea about how to active in social activity. Here we had VDC level two women's network one of Brahmin Chhetri and other of Magar. They are now one when SORDEC implemented project activities and organize community level discussion about gender or women related issues. I found that revolving fund established by this project is only key for keeping together all people not only women. SORDEC have been introduced first about concept of revolving fund. I had no idea about this in my sixty years of experience in community development. This organization is pioneered in introducing farming plastic house and I would like to salute project team for their contribution in livelihood of rural people. We will keep this fund active in the long run.



6.2 Conclusion

"Inclusion without empowerment is meaningless" it is the main finding of this project. After the mass movement of 2063 BS inclusion issue is talked much in each public forums. Empowerment is not easy to achieve as it require multidisciplinary approach. In this project women were organized in women empowerment group. One of the major responsible factor of social cleaves is gender it was discussed in VDC to in each wards with the involvement of husband and wife. This method was effective overcome the family and social barriers to women in the way to public life and joining income earning activities. Literacy classes were found so effective to know local people about the women's rights mentioned in various state laws and regulations. LBs are found more responsive towards women and lagging class people. Thus this project is able to achieve expected outputs mentioned in project document.

Women are underrepresented in many areas and there are inadequate opportunities, which are the major obstacles that prevent mainstreaming them. The best strategy for mainstreaming is to involve men and women equally while having a welfare approach in the development field. The mainstreaming of women through social mobilization process in development is desire for women to be at centre stage and the participation of women as decision-makers in determining development priorities. The skill of women will improve not only their own productivity but also that of their children, creating a virtuous circle. When women participate in all development decisions and through this process it will be possible to bring about change in the existing development paradigm. The empowerment of marginalized and disadvantaged groups must be enhanced by the provision of income-generating opportunities, coupled with education and skill development training, so as to promote awareness about education, health, sanitation, environment, human rights and legal protections. Then their political life would be sustained.

CHAPTER 7: RECOMMENDATIONS

In the response of the findings of this study which are discussing in previous section, few points are raised here further study and intervening at local level. Empowerment process is not completed ever so it should be keep in mind by each development actors or by state authority.

7.1 Recommendations

Women are the vital contributors to the national economy in Nepal indirectly but unfortunately their contribution is not think about while calculating the GDP. Women's role in resolving the dispute and sustainable peace building is found crucial. Various studies shows women in development are more transparent than that of their male counterpart. One of the major causes of Nepal's under development is not to mainstreaming women in decision-making. Women's participation in party politics and local development is not seen functional and they only participate just fulfill the mandatory provision of law and regulation. So, development outcomes are not better enough as expected. In this regard, following points are mentioned here for future consideration which will support to empowering women.

1. Gender responsive budgeting

Gender responsive budgeting (GRB) is first and foremost tool for increasing accountability and accelerating the implementation of commitments of public institution to gender equality and human rights. GRB can also be used in enforcing and monitoring human rights, not just for budgetary allocation. GRB can change the way human rights are considered and respected, it is believed that GRB challenge the notion that government should only be concerned about economic growth. They also need to be concerned about citizens' rights, including those of women; promote democratic mechanisms that also respond to demands for democratic governance and state reform from a citizen's perspective. GRB is also useful for increasing the efficiency of budgets not only to government but also to nongovernmental institutions by allowing better informed financial resource allocations.

Gender equity has always been an important rationale for policy makers to undertake GRB, as it can contribute to more equitable budget allocations. GRB helps to understand and illustrate the existence of inequality in budgetary impacts on women compared to men. It also supports to hold government both central and local more accountable to their gender equity commitments. Gender responsive planning and budgeting is now practicing by various government entity in central but local body still are not apply, so GRB concept should be integrate in local body with their capacity enhancement. Similarly, gender budget auditing should be include by each responsible institution to be responsive to the local people.

2. Opportunity for political participation

The level of empowerment of grass-root people is closely related with the development of democratic values and practices at local level. The concept of participatory or inclusive

democracy or development can be better encouraged in those areas where the people are politically aware about democratic values. Community empowerment is encouraged in a better manner where the high degree of politically aware population and political participation is existed. The people knowing more about global democratic values like free fair and competitive elections, multiparty system, independent judiciary, rule of law, and civil liberty can better participate in development, if the political participation of the local people is high. If development is to be promoted, the people have to be educated in modern global democratic values at least in adult suffrage, grass-root democracy and political participation. Effective political participation provides leadership for the local community, build trust and maintain open and accommodating relationships with local stakeholders. They promote broad-based participation through mechanism such as interest group meetings, public hearings, and participating in planning and budgeting process. If community people are well informed and provide input into decisions that affect their lives then level of empowerment of local people will increase significantly. So, women's greater participation in politics would support to strengthen democracy at grass root.

3. Legal awareness class

We often believed that the level of legal awareness is not so poor as level of political empowerment is high in Nepal in comparison to social and economic empowerment [According to Nepal Human Development Report, (NHDR) 2004, country's economic empowerment index is 0.337; social empowerment index is 0.406, while political empowerment index stands at 0.646]. By analyzing existing literatures and during this survey we found that women's level of awareness in important legal provision is not improved yet though there are some positive changes occurred. Similarly, people always show concern about their rights but they do not pay more attention towards their duties and responsibilities towards community and nation. They should make aware that rights and duties are two sides of same coin; people need not have rights if they are regularly neglecting the duties. Hence, it is advised that legal awareness class should be integrated as one component of coming project.

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Annex 1: Questionnaire

Namaste, this is me I am here with you for studying the impact of the project **"Empowering the women for gender equality"** as an external evaluator. Now, I am here to obtain information to examine impact of the project in the area of empowering women. You are the one who is directly or indirectly involved in this project activities at local level and getting some service from project executing agency. So, I hereby, kindly request you to provide your response and experiences in the following issues. All the information provided by you will be used solely for this above stated purpose, despite this all the information will be kept secret.

Name:

VDC:

Cast: (Dalit, Ethnic group, Brahmin Chhetri)

Sex: (a) Man (b) Woman

Please, tick (✓) in one option, only.

1. In your observation what type of group is found more applicable in addressing gender issues in your community?
 - (a) Only women's
 - (b) Mixed (both men and women)
2. What type response you get from your family member while you are active in the group activities and paid time to social activities?
 - (a) Having barriers
 - (b) They are interested to not to give more time
 - (c) All are satisfied
3. People from various caste groups are involving in this project activities, in your observation what type of society is mostly benefited from the project activity?
 - (a) Janajati
 - (b) Brahmin / Chhetri
 - (c) Dalit people
 - (d) I don't know
4. How can you assess the women's participation in various mechanism in your societies after the implementation of this project?
 - (a) As found earlier
 - (b) Improved in quantity
 - (c) Improved both in quantity and quality
5. Whether your VDC is called or not the women empowerment group or women's VDC level network while taking important decision?
 - (a) Yes, VDC inviting them
 - (b) A little bit improvement
 - (c) It is same as earlier

6. If VDC invited to women empowerment groups or network, when they are inviting?
 - (a) In all planning stage
 - (b) In VDC council just
 - (c) To form user committee
7. What type of difference you can observe in the mobilization of targeted group development budget of LBs, after this project?
 - (a) Allocate in respective sector but expended in another
 - (b) Make expenditure in respective sector
 - (c) As earlier
8. Whether your VDC adopted gender responsive budgeting after completing this project?
 - (a) yes, adopted
 - (b) Not so far
 - (c) I don't know
9. Are you satisfied with men's support to women related projects in your VDCs?
 - (a) Yes, fully satisfied
 - (b) Partially satisfied
 - (c) Not satisfied
 - (d) I don't know
10. How can you assess the overall achievement in reducing women's domestic violence?
 - (a) Satisfactory
 - (b) Moderate
 - (c) Not so effective
 - (d) Poor
11. In what sector women's access and control is improved after this project?
 - (a) In natural resources
 - (b) In social institutions
12. In what sector your capacity is increased after this project? Select just one, please.
 - (a) In public speaking
 - (b) In income generation
 - (c) In group management
 - (d) In social status
