

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

The present study reveals that status is a flexible concept which is frequently used in socio-economic and anthropological studies basically to refer to the power and position of people in their respective society. People exercise their rights and responsibilities within the society and society evaluates it accordingly through observation.

In this regard the status of women has become a key word to highlight their power and position in every society, who constitute a half of the population of the world but who are handicapped by the traditional social norms and values imposed by the society. This situation is more prominent in the underdeveloped countries, basically in south Asian region, where females are not regarded free by birth till death as males are.

But the situation has changed now through industrialization, urbanization and modernization. Science and technology have highly affected the life of people and women are not exceptional in this regard. She is also realising her potentialities in her family and in the larger society. So to perform her role significantly she wants to develop her carrier through education, training and work outside her home.

Nepal presents unity in diversity having multiethnic and multilingual population, and each community has its own rules and regulation regarding women's mobility, marriage options, access to resources and social status. But as far as women's access to property and modern avenues of education, skill development and knowledge are concerned, Nepalese women in general lag far behind men (Acharya, 1997). They suffer from higher rates

of malnutrition and mobility than men and have fewer legal rights than men, especially in property and family matters (Jansens, 1991).

The overall trends have shown that with regard to occupational distribution both male and female participation in agriculture has declined over the last 30 years, although many studies have justified that the proportion of female involvement in agricultural occupation is higher than that of males due to the heavy concentration of females in the family worker category. This has resulted in increasing trend in participation in secondary sector and basically for the women it is spinning, weaving, knitting, carpet making and tea and food processing as well as large manufacturing industries like textiles, carpets, bakeries, bricks, cigarettes, drugs, fruit processing etc.

The job is observed as gender based which requires high educational qualification, long training period, greater responsibility, mechanical knowledge and supervisory skill and obviously it is highly enjoyed by men.

It has been considered in this study that a woman wants to have her identity in the society as a human being through her work outside the home and do not want to confine herself as a housewife or supportive earning member of the family. Therefrom this study is carried out in a holistic manner.

In a changed situation of the city life as in Kathmandu most of the women either educated or uneducated want to get a job inside or outside their home which they are capable of doing such as tailoring, knitting, weaving, paper making, cotton and woolen cloth weaving, spinning, knot crafting, doll making, jewellery etc. because it does not require high educational qualification. In some of the works they even need not attend the workshop regularly if they are engaged in contract work. Both married and unmarried women have enough time because of their nuclear family and no farm work in the city, which has attracted me for the present study with the main

objectives of their socio-economic status as a whole and the attitude of their family members regarding women's work outside their home in handicraft production.

Sociological and anthropological studies on women in Nepal were much neglected before 1960s. After 1970s most of the studies on women have been done to examine the changing roles and attitudes of women particularly of the middle class educated and urban women. After the UN declaration of women's year 1975 only the issues of women were raised by the governmental as well as public sectors. Basically till the women's decade 1985 the studies on women have been superficial and related to women and development, only through the sixth plan (1980-85) the women issues have been raised in the government level. By that time many NGOs have also been established and are functioning towards women's development. Some studies have been carried out on the status of women and most of them are related to economic status, by the semi-governmental educational institutions such as Centre for Economic Development and Administration, Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies, Centre for Educational Research and Development.

The present study does not reflect all kinds of handicraft and the status of women in Nepal as a whole. This is the study of the socio-economic status of only those women who are involved in the specific handicrafts mentioned above in Kathmandu only.

Historically, Newars are found more dedicated towards the handicrafts as a traditional artisan of Nepal and as a highly urbanised section of Nepali population. They are found in every markets, towns and villages throughout the country. But now the non-traditional families are also found involved in handicraft production which have a high export value.

The ancient crafts and small industries in Nepal include handmade paper, metal and stone works, weaving, mining, casting of hard metals and production of artistic goods requiring great skill and talent. Likewise, bamboo and cane product, textile, stone, wood, soil and leather products were also famous and widely produced during those days. The life style of people was simple and daily needs were limited. The country was self-sufficient in respect of the agricultural tools and implements alongwith the household decorations and consumption needs.

Basically handicraft has highly attracted women since the last two decades and the trend is now increasing. This is an export production which helps to earn foreign currency, promote tourism and reduce the deficit of trade in the country. Similarly, the attitude of women working outside the home has changed and both female and male members are interested in it even if they are less educated or uneducated. Slowly the small scale industry and particularly the handicrafts have become the primary occupation along with agriculture.

In the beginning there was only a government organisation called "Udyog Parishad" established in 1935 to look after small scale industries in the country which later on was called "Department of Cottage and Village Industry". Similarly, "Tri-Chandra Kamadhenu Charkha Pracharak Mahaguthi" was started publicly in 1927 as an organised industrial enterprise with spinning unit in different places of Kathmandu. Likewise, Cottage Industry Development Board, Trade Promotion Centre, Nepal Industrial Development Corporation, Agricultural Development Bank etc. are the other government organisations established later on to promote agricultural, industrial and commercial development of the country. Likewise, now a days, we can find many non-government organisations related to handicraft production such as Handicraft Association of Nepal, Federation

of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Association of Nepalese Cottage and Small Industry, Women Entrepreneur Association of Nepal etc. Which are working for expansion and promotion of handicraft.

The task of entrepreneurship can be done both by male and female. But history has shown that basically males are entrepreneurs and females are workers. It is because of the low profile of women in the society. Due to the lack of access to the technology and training their production is beyond subsistence despite of their hard labour. Women have no control over the productive resources, regardless of the investment of the most of the part of their life in productive work. In this sense women are less empowered, because the process of empowerment is multi-dimensional and it enables individuals and groups to realise their full destiny and powers in all spheres of life. Basically, a woman's empowerment begins with consciousness - perception about herself and her rights, her capabilities and her potentials, awareness of how gender and socio-cultural and political forces affect her. In fact, it is the utilization of one's potentialities through realization.

The traditional role of women prevailed in the society for many years and are still prevailing in some societies. But, mostly, now we can find an increased participation of women in non-farm activities. Higher educational level, economic hardship and breakdown of traditional norms and attitudes have all contributed to this sector . The development of women empowerment has been realised in terms of voice of women's right after the political change of 1950 in the country. Many organisations related to women development came into existence with the objectives of women development both in the government and non-government level. Obviously, the programmes launched by these organisations were limited to the welfare activities and not action oriented to empower them. Even the establishment

of the Ministry of Women in 1996 could not implement distinct and significant policies except the welfare programmes hitherto practiced.

The role of women in economic development can hardly be ignored but their economic activities outside the home depends upon various factors Such as economic need, educational attainment, husband's status, availability of job opportunity and family obligations as well as the attitudes and values of the community towards gainful employment of women.

Their involvement as an entrepreneur was an unknown phenomenon till the decade of 70s in Nepal. After the formation of industrial policy 1981 women were also inspired in this field of handicraft as an export item. After the restoration of democracy in 1990 women are found highly attracted towards self employed work and this trend is increasing in urban areas. The positive changes of the world view on women and their role in development and the emerging trends in international globalization has proved that women are equally capable, competent and strong minded to operate their own enterprises.

Keeping in mind the significant role of the individual background in the formation of his/her attitudes, beliefs, commitment to his/her work and all that makes up his/her entire personality and his/her family, caste, school, neighborhood, level of education, type of occupation and income derived therefrom, all determine to a great extent the type of quality of his/her attitudes and values, I have analysed the socio-economic background of women entrepreneurs involved in handicraft production. In this regard their age and caste, family structure, education, occupation, economic condition, political involvement and residential background of their family are analysed.

The study has shown that the women from different age groups are involved in handicraft production as entrepreneurs ranging from 24-60 years, among them the highest percent (28) are from 46-50 age group. Most of them are married; only a few are widowed and separated whereas a very few are unmarried. Among the total sample entrepreneurs, 40 percent are from Newar caste though the involvement of other castes like Brahmin, Chhetri, Gurung and others can not be neglected. Most of them live in nuclear family both in their parents house and husband's house (67%) and only a few have still joint (25%) and extended (18%) family.

All of the entrepreneurs families are educated and involved in an occupation like service (72%) and business (28%). Most of their family's economic condition is sound who belong to upper middle class and middle class. No strong political background is found among this group. Most of the entrepreneurs are indigenous Newar of Kathmandu valley, originally of Patan - a well known handicraft city of Nepal. Similarly some Brahmins are also from proper Kathmandu City. Only a few women are from outside the Kathmandu valley and they are Gurung, Tamang and Bhujel.

The present study has shown that most of the women entrepreneurs are educated, in which 36 percent are graduate, 14 percent each are post graduate and intermediate, 8 percent each are under high school and S.L.C. qualified whereas 19 percent are literate only.

Their involvement in handicraft is basically more in woolen cloth weaving, then in cotton cloth weaving, then in knitting and then in others such as jewellery, knot crafting, paper product, wood carving etc. Only 11 percent of the women entrepreneurs are found in caste occupation and 89 percent are involved in non-caste occupation. 33 percent of the caste people appreciate their women's involvement in concerned handicraft, 22 percent accept it as a work, only a few percent do not like it whereas 27 percent

does not care at all. Most of the women entrepreneurs are involved in handicraft production as an occupation.

Women entrepreneurs are involved since 5-8 years (36%), 1-4 years (33%), 12-16 years (14%) whereas 5 percent each are since 17-20, 21-24 and 30 years. Most of them are involved in this sector due to their own interest and some are involved to create women employment some for their own skill and for the easy availability of raw materials. All of them want to expand it more. Most of the enterprises are family based in which 33 percent women have invested Rs. 1100-5000 initially, 19 percent have invested Rs. 1600-50000, 14 percent have invested only Rs. 100-500, 8 percent each have invested Rs. 600-1000 and Rs. 51000-100000 whereas 6 percent each have invested Rs. 200000-600000, 700000-1100000 and above 1200000, which show a vast difference in the amount invested initially.

They are able to earn a good amount of money from handicraft production using hired labour force. Most of them share their income with their families and some of the families depend totally upon their income but some of them have none to share and they reinvest it in their workshop. 69 percent women entrepreneurs keep their family budget with them, 11 percent with their husbands, 6 percent with their in-laws and 14 percent with either father or brother or mother.

Almost all women entrepreneurs are happy with their present work whereas only a few women are unhappy. 78 percent women entrepreneurs feel that their position within their family and society has improved through their present work, but 22 percent do not feel any change in their position before and now. It is because of the negative attitudes of their family members and caste people towards womens' work outside their home. No direct involvement of these women in national or local level politics has been

found. But most of them are involved in different kinds of organisations related to handicraft production.

Women entrepreneurs have helped women to strengthen their economic as well as social empowerment by providing skill oriented job opportunity. It has, to some extent, stopped on the one hand the idle sitting of uneducated and illiterate women and raised their earning capacity on the other. It has also helped to change the attitude of women as well as men positively regarding women's work outside the home.

Similarly, the study on working women involved in the same handicraft production is carried out at the same time. Work can best be regarded as a very general, all-embracing term used to refer to all those physical and mental activities which are intended to transform natural materials into a more useful form, to improve human knowledge and understanding of the world and/or to provide or distribute goods and services to others in whatever context such activities are carried out (Brown, 1978).

This study has proved that the educated working women want to utilise their education and develop their personalities to the fullest extent. But all of the working women, though not educated, want to take part in adult social, economic and political life within the limits of their individual interest, attitudes and abilities and at the same time want to fulfil their roles in their own families.

Women want to work outside the house not only because of the economic need but also because of the community in which they live, the size of their family, their field and/or their past training and level of education.

Mostly all women work though it may be household work or work outside their home. But working in the unorganised sector means working without

job security and for low wages. Most of their involvement in unorganised sector has been found due to their economic need too.

Similarly, the women worker's involved in handicraft production are mostly of two categories, the first one is regular employees who work in other's enterprises and get in return salary or wages on a regular basis and the second is casual labourers who are also engaged in other's enterprises but get in return wages according to the terms of daily or periodic work contract. Their earning is considerably lower than those of the regular employees owing to a large gap in wages and number of days of work between the two categories of workers.

The study of socio-economic background of women workers has shown that most of them involved in handicraft production are married some are unmarried and only a few are widowed and separated. These women belong to different age groups ranging from 16-55 years. Among them women from 21-25 age groups has been found highest i.e. 32 percent and 22 percent are from the age group 26-30, 15 percent are from the age group 31-35 and 14 percent are from the age group 16-20 but the number of women involvement is decreasing from the age of 36 years.

Regarding the caste community background 31 percent working women in handicraft production are from Newar community, 20 percent from Brahmin community, 14 percent from Chhetri community, 9 percent from Limbu community, 6 percent each from Tamang and Gurung community, 3 percent from Magar and Khawas community and 7 percent from other community has been found.

Likewise, 72 percent working women live in nuclear family both in their parents' house or husband's house; and 28 percent of the working women

live in joint family but not a single working women is found from extended family.

Regarding the educational background, among the total sample working women 55 percent have educated, 9 percent have literate and 3 percent have illiterate husbands whereas 4 percent have educated, 11 percent have literate father and no illiterate father. But not a single women have educated mother, 9 percent have literate and illiterate mother.

Most of the working women's families are not economically sound; 47 percent working women's family belong to the lower middle class and 53 percent working women's family belong to the lower economic class. Most of their family member's occupation is either in service or in labour work.

The present study shows that all the sample women worker's families are not directly or indirectly involved in the state level, or grass root politics. Besides they have been found only as the vote banks of the different political parties of the country. Even then the male members of the respondent are politically conscious to some extent in comparison to their female members.

In regard to the religious background it is found that 90 percent women workers are from the Hindu family, 8 percent from Buddhist family and only 2 percent are from Christian family. Though all the working women of the sample are not strictly follower of any religion, they do not hate other religion. The parents of 52 percent women are somewhat religious, 30 percent are quite religious and 11 percent are very religious whereas 6 percent are somewhat not religious and 1 percent women do not know about their parent's religious attitude.

Family unity is regarded as the most important advantage of their present work. Whereas parent's lack of self decision power, misunderstanding among the family members, joint family, negative attitude towards girls education, early demise of parents, domination, misbehave, tension, unhealthy environment, separated parents, step relations, bad economic condition, early marriage, lonely atmosphere, bad relation with relatives, bias behaviors with girl children and having more daughters, sick parents etc. are the disadvantages of women's parent's family which make these women's lives serious and are compelled to work outside the home.

Most of the women workers involved in handicraft production in Kathmandu are from outside the Kathmandu valley and particularly from the nearest district. The trend of internal migration is concentrated in the city areas of the country. Mostly lower middle class and lower class families are leaving their villages to provide better education to their children, job opportunity and better life. They do not have any source of living except their manual work. They have found themselves in an entirely new environment after shifting to the cities. Neither they can give up their traditional way of living, nor can they adjust themselves immediately to the new environment.

Regarding the present status of women workers in handicraft production 59 percent women are found married, 37 percent are unmarried, 3 percent are widowed, 1 percent only are separated and some of the married women get married in their early teen age. Likewise, among the total sample working women 37 percent are literate, 14 percent are illiterate, 30 percent are under high school, 13 percent are high school qualify (S.L.C.), 5 percent are intermediate and only 1 percent are graduate.

They are involved in various types of handicrafts, 51 percent of women are involved in woolen cloth weaving and knitting, 25 percent in cotton cloth

weaving, 15 percent in paper production, 3 percent in boutique print, 2 percent each in jewellery and knitting, and 2 percent in wood carving and knot crafting. Among them 97 percent women are involved in non-caste occupation whereas only 3 percent are involved in caste occupation. Likewise 74 percent women's caste people accept their women's present job as a work, 13 percent do not care, 6 percent do not like, only 5 percent appreciate their work whereas 2 percent feel insult as being a low paid job.

Regarding the duration of their involvement in present work, 38 percent women are found involved since 2-3 years, 19 percent have just entered, 17 percent are working since 4-5 years, 18 percent are working since 6-7 years, 2 percent each are working since 8-9, 10-11, and 12-13 years and 1 percent each are working since 14-15 and 16 years. Among them 58 percent are working on contract basis, 38 percent are working as a service holder whereas 4 percent are working as a labour. Self interest, their own skill, lack of education, lack of job opportunity, self satisfaction, use of free time, support to the family are the main reasons of their involvement in the present work.

Among the total married women 80 percent have grown up and school going children, 2 percent women's children are already married, 5 percent women's children are taken care by parental members, 7 percent women's children are looked after by mother-in-law, daughter, sister-in-law, servant, day care centre (run by the enterprises) etc.

Likewise, 53 percent working women share their income equally with their male counterpart, 7 percent women's family totally depend upon them, another 7 percent partly share with their male counterpart, and 31 percent use their income personally. Whereas 72 percent women's family members take initiation in her work, 30 percent women's family members do not and 8 percent women are not sure whether their family members take initiation

in her work or not yet they have to work. In regard to the position of women 36 percent women's position within the family is improved through this work whereas 63 percent do not feel any change, now and before, but 1 percent feel the negative effect too. When any suggestion is needed 65 percent women's family members need female member's suggestions in family concern. 18 percent do not need, 6 percent women do not know whether their family members need their suggestions or not, whereas 8 percent women's family members only listen to the female members but do according to their own interest and 3 percent women's family members need her suggestions only occasionally. Likewise, 34 percent women's family members obey her, 31 percent family members obey her to some extent, 11 percent women are not sure about it, rest of the women's family disobey her. In regard to the satisfaction of work 70 percent women are found happy with their present work, 11 percent are extremely happy but 13 percent are neither happy nor unhappy and 5 percent are unhappy too, but there is no way out of it.

It is really needless to talk about these women's political position, because the level of political awareness among these women is extremely low.

It has become already clear that most of the working women are from Hindu family, but among them 57 percent are somewhat religious, 28 percent are quite religious, 7 percent are somewhat not religious whereas 6 percent are very religious and only 2 percent are found not religious.

Regarding the attitude of the family members, particularly the male members, on women's work outside the home, specially in handicraft sector, 78 percent male members attitude was found positive and 22 percent negative.

This study has helped to conclude that the status of women within the family and society has improved with the involvement in the handicraft work though the process of change is very slow. In the present situation working women in this field are enjoying more power and freedom regarding their work in non-traditional occupational work in comparison to that of the traditional ones. It is because of the changing attitude of people on women's role in different activities. Similarly, the emerging trends in international globalization has also proved that women are equally capable, competent and strong minded to operate the work outside their home. Their work performance itself is an evidence of it in the present study.