

Chapter 7

Conclusion and Discussion

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Jhapa district is situated in far eastern part of the Nepal. The district comprises diverse social and economic strata of local and hill migrated community. Agriculture is the livelihood of the people. The agricultural system in the district is primarily composed of crops, vegetables and livestock and it is subsistence oriented. However, the productivity of the system is still low due to the insufficiency in production related services and facilities. All the components of agricultural system are interrelated and contributing to the well being of the people of the district. The off- farm activities are also the major source of income especially for poor economic classes.

Men and women both shared the responsibilities in agriculture as well as in off farm activities. The differences among men and women in the study area regarding crop, vegetable and livestock production and management were found significant. In spite of reproductive work, women of the Jhapa district actively participated in the productive as well as social works. Males were mainly responsible for the field work, however, some activities of livestock production were shared by both male and female. Both men and women spent more time in summer than in winter in crop and livestock production activities. Time hours spent by the women in various household activities and agricultural production was 11 hours 25 minutes in winter and 13 hours 30 minutes in rainy season. However, for the same tasks men spent 8 hours 15 minutes in winter and 10 hours 10 minutes in rainy season. Generally, farmers were most busy during the months of June, July, October, and November. During these months, both men and women are equally distributed in their workload. During January, March, April and August, women were busier than men while in February men were busier than women.

Even though women's overall contribution in paddy, wheat and maize production, were 35, 34, and 37 percent, respectively, their involvements in labor-intensive activities such as transplanting of paddy, FYM carrying, weeding, and harvesting was higher than that of men. Land preparation, irrigation, fertilizers application and selling of crops were performed exclusively by men. Unlike food grain production, women shared 63 percent of works in vegetable cultivation, which was significantly greater than that of men. The women of different economic classes more or less equally shared their works in the production of crops and vegetables.

The rural women played a significant role in animal husbandry in Jhapa district. It was observed that the women's involvement in cattle, goat, pig and poultry rearing was 57, 77, 79, and 90 percent respectively, which was greater than men's involvement in the same tasks. Men contributed 58 percent works in buffalo rearing, which was significantly greater than that of women. In cattle raising, women's work share was greater in the activities like collecting green grasses, feeding animals, grazing animals, cleaning animal sheds, and composting, caring sick animals, milking and men's labor contribution was higher in selling and buying of animals. Like wise, women's work share was greater in activities like cleaning shed, selling of milk and milk products and men's contribution was greater in feeding management, milking, caring sick animals, selling, buying of animals in buffalo rearing. All activities of goat, pig and poultry keeping were almost exclusively managed by women, however, in most cases; the selling and purchasing of animals were carried out by men.

The study of labor use pattern in agriculture showed that women spent more mandays in agricultural production through out the year. Women and men devoted 290 and 246 men-days respectively per year in crops, vegetables and animal production. The result showed that women's labor used in cereal crop production was 95 mandays as against 116 mandays of men's contribution in the same task. Men contributed significantly more mandays than those of women in land preparation, sowing, fertilizer application, irrigation and selling of crops. Women generally spent more men days in activities like transplanting of paddy, FWM carrying and application weeding, and harvesting of the crops. Women's labor share was more than that of men in every

aspect of vegetable cultivation and animal rearing. Women spent 42 and 153 mandays and men spent 23 and 109 mandays in vegetable production and animal rearing respectively. Women spent more men-days than men in cattle rearing while reverse was found in case of buffalo. Similarly, women's labor share in small animal rearing was significantly higher than that of men.

The result of analysis indicated that there was not much difference in work shared by the women of hill migrated and local communities. Women of hill migrated community owned more land than the women of local community. Although, women of both communities have less access to decision making in different activities, more men and women of hill migrated community jointly made decisions regarding selling, mortgaging, renting of land, selecting the crops of their choices, taking credit and using capital in agricultural production than women of local community. Individually more women of hill migrated community were engaged in decisions making related to cereal and vegetable production and animal rearing. However, more men and women of local community made decisions jointly in crop, vegetable production and animal raising.

Women of hill migrated community was relatively better than the women of local community. The reason behind the inferior position of local women might be due to the strict cultural beliefs. Though, both communities are bounded by the same Hindu tradition, the customary and religious practices in local community are more strict than in hill migrated community. Generally, women of the local community can not expose directly outside activities. Such traditional norms and values limit the mobility of local women more than the women of hill migrated community. The women of hill migrated community have more access than women of local community on productive resources so that they have more access on household income. This directly affects the situation of women in term of health, education and nutrition of women. Education has a critical role to play in tackling gender inequality in society, and is vital for the personal growth and self-realisation of all people. The most important reason behind the inferior situation of women of local community than the women of hill migrated community perhaps, due to the lower level of literacy and lack of awareness. The literacy rate in

local community is lower than that in hill migrated community and women of local community are less aware than the women of hill migrated community.

The study also showed no significant difference in labor share in different activities of crop and animal production among women of poor, medium and rich economic classes. The women of poor economic class owned higher percentage of land than the women of other economic classes. Women of poor economic class also have more access on decision making rights relative to women of higher economic classes but joint decisions by both men and women were more common in medium and rich economic classes.

The women in the Jhapa district are socio- economically far behind and without improving women's over all situation, development goal will be difficult to achieve. Realizing the facts that government has initiated socio- economic development programs through policies intervention in different sectors. In the past, there were none of laws clearly spelt out women's property rights. The eleventh amendment of civil code recognized that daughters and sons are equally entitled rights to ancestral property by birth and the wife has the right to husband's property immediately after marriage. However, the law still retains that the daughter should return the remaining property after her marriage.

National policy has committed to increase women's share in productive credit through Productive Credit to Rural Women (PCRW) and Micro Credit Program for Women (MCPW) programs. Women' farmer development policies were first included during Sixth Five Years Plan. The development plans stated to launch the women farmer development program with the long-term vision to create an environment for the equal participation of men and women in the all aspects of agricultural extension programs. The plans adopted the policy of fixing quota to enhance women's participation in agricultural extension activities and to formulate and implement location specific income generating programs for women farmer.

As women are the main actors of development, limited accesses to resources not only depress women's quality of life, but also limit productivity and hinder economic development. Improving women's status and access on productive resources contributes to poverty reduction and enables women to contribute to household income. Overall, development programs that include measures to expand women's economic opportunities and increase their incomes, and education, result in greater economic efficiency and decreased levels of poverty. Gender equality in household and society as a whole promote, support, enhance, and ensure women's participation and more equitable sharing of the benefits of development.

There was significant difference between men and women in term of land ownership. In the district most of the land was owned by men and women only owned 18 percent of land. As women hold no or small fragment of land and the land which they owned, they did not have full access and control over it. Only 18.5, 25.0, 30.0, and 42.7 percent of women can decide to sell, mortgage, rent and grow crops as per their needs in the land which registered in women's names. Several types of customary, religious norms and civil laws limit women's access to land. Women have fewer rights than men to own land, and traditional cultural norms and values often exclude women or allow them negligible share of parental property than the male heirs. As a result, women may not be able to acquire land by tenancy. In Jhapa district, women get negligible amount of agricultural credit from the formal sources. Of the total loan disbursement in the district women received 9 percent only. There was significant difference between male and female in average size of disbursement that they were getting smaller size of loan than that of men. Very few numbers of women were involved in making decision to take credit and to use the capital in agricultural production. 50 percent men were involved in making decisions to take loan while 38 percent decisions were made jointly by both men and women. Even though, 28 percent of decisions regarding the use of capital in agricultural production were made by both men and women jointly, 62 and 12 percent men and women were independently engaged in making such decisions. Poor rural women's access to credit in the district was curtailed by many factors such as lack of collateral, poverty, illiteracy, lack of awareness, traditional beliefs, cumbersome procedures of lending

institutions and distant lending institutions. Both public and private lending institutions often discriminate against credit applicants on the basis of their sex or marital status. Like wise, woman's access on over all household expenditure was 37.5 percent as compared with her male counterpart which was 62.5 percent. This clearly indicated that women have lesser access on household income. Rural women are illiterate and because of low educational levels and other social reasons, women are unable to get high earning jobs. Women perform the bulk of domestic and child rearing duties, which limits their participation in paid work. Women receive lower wage as compared to the men for the same kind of works. Traditional cultural norms directly restrict the women's mobility and restrict women's access to the information and resources needed for income generation. These all factors lower both income level and access to income, which directly affects their welfare.

In Jhapa district, Agricultural extension services were not adequately reaching to rural women. Women's participation in agricultural trainings, farmer's group and other extension programs such as farmer's workshop tour, demonstration, seed kit distribution of vegetable, fruit and fisheries were much lower than their male counter parts. Of the total participants of these agricultural trainings, farmer's group and other extension programs women's participation was found only 28, 33, and 38 percent respectively. Additionally, out of total participants in livestock production and management trainings women's involvement was 19.7 percent in farmer's group 33.7 percent and in other livestock extension programs 26.1 percent. Many social, economic and institutional factors are responsible for the limited access of women in the agricultural extension program. Including above-mentioned factors, women in the district were loaded with household and agricultural production activities. Women from poor households engage in a variety of income-generating activities. Poverty has adverse impacts on women, which usually increases the burden of work to women. The agricultural extension services in the district are similar for men and women and these programs actually do not reflect the needs and interests and problems of women farmers. Similarly, women of the district were less aware with agricultural extension programs. There was lack of women extension workers in the district so that women generally were reluctant to expose male extension workers. Women's have limited

access to decision-making power, acts as a constraint to economic well-being of the family and also the societal change. An increase in women's participation in decision-making process is critical for empowering women. It is crucial for women to participate in decision-making processes in agricultural and household activities so that their experience can be used to benefit the household and entire society.

Only 20 and 28 percent of women were involved in decision making of cereal production and large animal rearing respectively. Even though, women's involvement in decision-making of different activities of cereal production and large animal rearing was lower their participation in decision making of production, consumption and marketing of the vegetables and small animals was greater than that of men. 41 and 48 percent of women were found to involve in making decisions of vegetable cultivation and keeping small animals respectively. Individually, men and women almost equally involved making decisions related to household activities and 55 percent both men and women made such decisions jointly.

Some of the major reasons behind the failure of the women farmer development policies were ineffective planning and implementation of programs at grass root level, lack of awareness on gender sensitive planning, lack of effective co-ordination among different line agencies, lack of appropriate monitoring and evaluation mechanism. Even though, the national policies cover the whole country, the specific situation of district may not often match by the broad gender policies. As a policy, gender sensitization should be the first step to create awareness among different stakeholders. The specific needs, interests and problems of the women of the districts should be assessed and based on assessment intervention should be made by suitable programs. The group extension approach might be the appropriate means of technology transfer; hence it should be implemented by providing all the necessary services in a package. Likewise, the training curricula and methodology should be modified as per needs, interests and problems of women and separate trainings will be helpful to ensure greater women's participation. Another means to secure higher women's participation in training programs will be the provision of mobile and on the spot training. Special micro-credit programs should be designed and the lending

procedures should be revised suitable for women. The quotas and the amount of fund for group revolving fund should be increased reasonably. More over, attempts should be made to divert the attention of District Development Committee and Village Development committees to mobilize their resources in gender empowerment programs. Appropriate co-ordination and effective monitoring and evaluation mechanism need to be established at district level for the effective implementation of gender related plans and programs.

7.2 Suggested agricultural policies for women in the district

The gender issue in agriculture does not only make women's labor efficient and productive but also enables them to participate equally with men in the development process. The five years plans prior to Eighth Plan failed to identify the appropriate modalities and area of intervention to address the gender issues in agriculture. The five years plan onward Eighth Plan made many attempts to improve the women farmer's situation by formulating policies at national level. In The Eighth, Ninth and current Tenth Plan have set quotas for women farmer in different field of agriculture. In spite of the firm commitment of different periodic plans to the gender issues in agriculture, no significant progress has been achieved. As Women's Farmer Development Division (WFDD), 2000 reported that the major reason behind the ineffectiveness of the women farmer development policies was that district level planning was not very effective to achieve the targeted level of women's participation in agricultural development programs. The plans of the District Agriculture Development Office (DADO) are still rhetoric and not included gender issues adequately in annual plans. The lack of awareness on gender sensitive planning, lack of effective co-ordination among different line agencies at the grass root level and lack of appropriate monitoring mechanism are other reasons for lower level of targets achievement of gender related plans and programs. In the district, there are many governmental and non-governmental organizations working independently on gender. There is no co-ordination among these organizations in planning and implementation of the programs and also there is no responsible organization for monitoring and evaluation of those programs.

Though, national policy on gender reflects its commitment, it does not necessarily cover the specific situation prevailing at the grass root levels. The national policies are broad and general guidelines and based on those guidelines one should formulate the specific policies which not only reflect the specific situation of the district but also include needs, interests and the problems of the target groups. The ultimate objectives of these policies are to reduce the gap between men and women farmers. Based on the national gender policies, following policies for Jhapa district are suggested.

- Gender sensitization is the key for the success of any gender related plans and programs where level of literacy is low. It is futile to expect action without creating awareness. Therefore, gender awareness programs for both men and women should be launched as a precondition for any gender related plans and programs to be implemented. Likewise, the orientation regarding gender and gender sensitive planning should also be provided to the district and field level development workers.
- Most of the programs designed in the past have not reflected the problems, needs and interests of the women farmers. Therefore, specific needs, interests and the problems of women farmers should be assessed.
- There should be separate specific women farmer's development program in the district and a certain percentage of total budget should be allotted for that program.
- All agricultural development programs in the district like delivery of agricultural inputs, credit, extension services, production and post harvest activities of the crops, horticulture, livestock, fisheries etc should be implemented in such a way that women participation should not be less than 50 percent.
- Immediate income generating programs such as vegetable farming, mushroom cultivation, goat, pig, poultry rearing etc. should be implemented to raise the income level of rural women.
- Group approach has proved most effective means to disseminate the agricultural extension services to the target beneficiaries. Group approach in

agricultural extension helps women to build up confidence in making decision in various aspects of agricultural production. Therefore, the group extension approach should be implemented in such a way that a leader farmer should be selected among the group members and all the necessary services including trainings to impart specific skill and knowledge required for particular commodity program should be provided on package basis.

- Training is the basic input to raise the production. Many studies have shown that most of farmer's training are too general and are not appropriate for specific target group especially for women. Therefore, the training curricula and methodology should be revised to make them specific and provision of separate trainings should be made as per needs, interests and the real problems of the women farmer. To match the time and the schedule of trainings with the free time of the women farmer, provision of mobile and on the spot training should be made.
- Women farmers receive many skill-oriented training; however, due to the lack of capital they cannot apply the knowledge and skills in the real field situation. Therefore, provision should be made to provide credit with specific skill oriented trainings to fulfill their immediate needs of capital.
- Among all, credit is the main resource for the agricultural production. In order to raise women access to the financial capital required for production and other activities, there is a provision of providing revolving fund for groups. However, due to the limited quota and small amount (NRs.5000) of fund provided from the DADO, program is not much effective. Therefore, the quotas and the amount of fund for such revolving fund should be increased reasonably.
- Even though, Agricultural Development Bank is providing necessary micro-credits for the small farmers and women through Small Farmers Development Program, the women farmers are not included properly and the lending procedures are also inappropriate for the women. Therefore, micro-credit program should have a fixed target to serve the women farmers and the lending procedures should be revised to be more suitable for women.

- The extension agents mostly contact the male farmers and the women especially from local community reluctant to expose to the male extension agents. Therefore, it is better to have female extension worker to provide extension services for women.
- The PRA discussion pointed out that the most of the technologies are general and not suitable for women farmers. Therefore, attempts should be made to establish link with research institutions to develop women friendly technologies.
- Local governments like District Development Committee (DDC), Village Development Committee (VDC) run their own development programs, which have direct contact to the rural people. However, these local bodies have not paid due attention on the gender issues in their development programs. Therefore, attempts should be made to divert their attention and mobilize their resources gender empowerment programs.
- There are many governmental and non-governmental organizations independently implementing gender related programs in the district. Therefore, a co-ordination body with appropriate co-ordination mechanism should be created at the district level.
- Little attention has been given to the monitoring and evaluation of the gender programs. Therefore, an effective monitoring and evaluation mechanism need to be established at district level.

7.3 Suggestions for further research

The study was focussed on limited issues; hence, this study can be extended to gender roles in other aspects like fruit production, fisheries etc. and post-harvest and marketing. Further more, in the recent years most of the feminists argued that the modern agricultural technologies such as short duration varieties of crops which has increased the cropping intensity that have also increased the workload for women in agricultural production. Therefore, this issue needs to be analyzed in particular situation.